

GANGDOM'S DOOM

Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. AN INTERRUPTED FLIGHT

TWO MEN sat facing each other in a luxurious penthouse atop one of the Boulevard's newer apartment houses. One was pale and nervous. His face twitched as he puffed his cigar with great rapidity. His companion was a sharp contrast. Short, chubby-faced, and calm, he bore the air of a man who seldom became perturbed.

The roar of Chicago's night traffic seemed far away, yet it disturbed the nervous man. He threw his cigar in an ash stand, and walked to the window. He drew the curtains aside with caution and stared toward the twinkling lights of the Loop. Then he turned to face his companion.

"I'm through with it, Fellows," he said, "I'm through. I want to get out if I can. But there's no getting out of this "

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He swept his hand toward the window, to indicate the city below. His eyes were pleading as he stared at the quiet-faced man in the chair.

Fellows was thoughtful for a few moments; then he spoke with deliberation.

"How soon do you expect trouble, Prescott?" he asked.

"Soon," was the reply. "Very soon!"

"To-night?"

"No. I think I can count on a few days of grace. But after that "

Prescott began to pound one palm with the fist of his other hand. His haggard face showed signs of long, uninterrupted strain. He was nearing the breaking point. With an effort, he regained control of himself and sat down on the edge of a chair.

"Fellows," he said, "I've talked too much. I did it to cover up. I thought that if I acted wise, as though I'd been checking up on gang stuff as a hobby, no one would ever suspect that Horace Prescott was in the racket, himself.

"It worked all right until I became foolish. It was when I began to play with rival gangs that they figured I was giving them the double cross.

"Now I'm slated to be put on the spot. On the spot, Fellows! You know what that means!"

The other man interrupted.

"Outside of Chicago " he began.

"It's all the same," replied Prescott. "They'll follow me anywhere. They'll get me!"

"Outside of Chicago," repeated Fellows insistently, "you will be safe. I promised you that you would be protected, once you were clear of this city.

"You have done your part. You have given me the information I needed. You have had contact with both Pete Varona and Mike Larrigan."

"Yes," agreed Prescott, "I know how those gangs work. I've seen too much of them" there was bitterness in his voice "and when I said that the big shot, Nick Savoli, can be reached through Pete Varona, I meant it. Pete's in with the big shot, all right."

"You are right when you say that you talked too much," resumed Fellows quietly. "At the same time, your future safety lies in that very fact.

"I represent a man, Prescott, who is more powerful than any of these gangsters!"

"Not in Chicago," objected Prescott.

"Not in Chicago," agreed Fellows. "Not here, at present. But later" – his voice was prophetic "the situation may be different."

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HORACE PRESCOTT seemed somewhat reassured by the quiet manner of his visitor. He looked at Fellows inquiringly, hoping that the man would tell him more.

"The man I mentioned," said Fellows, "has been planning a most astonishing campaign. Even I, his agent, do not know its details.

"I know only that it concerns the present situation here in Chicago; that gangdom is about to learn the power of this man. I came here as a confidential investigator. I learned of you through Clyde Johnston."

"He knows a lot about me," observed Prescott. "Johnston is a good friend of mine.

"I've told you my racket selling booze to society and to exclusive clubs. The cops never bothered me. I was a society man, with a good income that came from an inheritance. That's partly correct. Only, I've been making lots more by running bootleg liquor than I have from clipping coupons."

"My instructions," Fellows spoke again, "were to make contact with a man of your type.

"I am an insurance broker by profession. My clients are men of means. It was easy for me to learn who was active in selling liquor to wealthy customers. In talking with Johnston, I discovered that you had admitted to him that you were in difficulties."

Prescott nodded.

"Johnston doesn't buy liquor," he said. "He gave me plenty of advice when he found out that I was in the racket. Old friend, you know. Thinking of my welfare. Told me to get out of the dirty game. I told him that I couldn't."

"Yes," said Fellows, "he was very apprehensive about you. He told me all he knew about you when I suggested that I might find some way of helping you. He called you on the telephone when I was in his office. Hence our interview to-night."

"I've played square, haven't I?" asked Prescott pleadingly. "I told you everything, didn't I? If you want me to write down all the details –"

"There's no need for it," said Fellows dryly. "I have an excellent memory. I shall make out my report later.

"The real task now is to get you clear of Chicago. In New York, you will be safe."

"In New York!" exclaimed Prescott, in sudden alarm. "Why, there's gangsters there who work hand in glove with these Chicago mobs "

"That is true," interposed Fellows, "but the man whose instructions I follow is also in New York. He will see that you are free from harm.

"You are willing to quit the racket. You have told all you know. In return, you will be sent to safety."

The chubby-faced man drew an envelope from his pocket and handed it to Horace Prescott.

"This envelope contains a ticket to New York," he said, "with reservations on the eleven-thirty train, Michigan Central. You leave to-night.

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"In New York, register, under my name Claude H. Fellows at the Metrolite Hotel. You will receive immediate instructions from my patron."

"Are you going with me?"

"No. I have a ticket for Omaha, Nebraska. I have certain business there.

"Remember, Prescott, that I am an insurance broker. I travel considerably. I brought my bag with me tonight. You will accompany me as though you were simply going to the station. But our routes will be in opposite directions.

"Those who follow me will be on a false trail. Yet after you have dropped off at the Michigan Central station, there will be no clew other than myself."

A look of satisfaction appeared upon Horace Prescott's face. He had trusted this man because he was in an uncomfortable situation. He believed everything that Fellows had told him.

Now he felt assured that to-night would be his opportunity to elude the threats that hung above him.

PRESCOTT pushed a button on the wall. A Japanese servant entered. Prescott was about to speak to him when a sound came from the street. It was the loud back-fire of a motor.

Prescott leaped to his feet and was halfway across the room before he could restrain himself. He regained his composure with effort. Traces of alarm still remained upon his face. He had mistaken the noise for a revolver shot.

"Togo," he said to the servant, "Mr. Fellows is leaving in ten minutes I shall drive to the station with him. Tell Louie to have the car ready immediately."

The servant left to telephone the garage. Prescott looked at his watch. He lighted a panatella and puffed nervously, then threw the cigar away.

"I'm trusting you, Fellows," he blurted suddenly. "I know your proposition is on the level. If these rats wanted to put me out of the way, they wouldn't use any complicated plan to do it.

"I thought, for a few minutes, that your proposition was phony; but that would be ridiculous. I'm out of the racket now. I'm going to play straight. I don't know who your boss is; but you have plenty of confidence in him. I'm glad I was on the level with you."

He glanced at his watch.

"Louie ought to be here by now," he said. "You go downstairs first, with your bag. Get in the car. If you see any one prowling around, come back as though you forgot something.

"If I don't hear from you, I'll come along in a few minutes. Leave the door of the car half open."

Fellows nodded. He picked up his bag and left the penthouse. When he reached the street, the insurance broker saw Prescott's limousine standing in front of the building. The chauffeur was in the front seat.

Prescott had sent the car to bring Fellows to his home; hence the observant insurance broker recognized the car immediately.

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Fellows opened the back door and entered. He closed the door and peered through the window, up and down the street. He saw no one. Then, to his surprise, the car began to move.

It started suddenly and Fellows lurched back into the seat. His outstretched hand struck a human form. There, beside him, was a man, trussed with rope and gagged.

THE car stopped around the corner, just as Fellows turned on the light in the rear. So intent was the insurance broker that he did not realize the car was no longer in motion.

For the light had revealed the features of the bound man, and Fellows looked upon Louie, Prescott's chauffeur!

"What's the big idea?"

The voice came from the front seat. Fellows looked into the face of the man who had taken the chauffeur's place. The speaker had the ugly countenance of a professional thug.

"How did you get in here?" he demanded, still glaring angrily at Fellows.

Before the insurance broker could reply, he was startled by a volley of revolver shots.

The sound came from around the corner, back at the entrance where the car had been standing.

"Come on!" ordered the driver. "Scram out of this car before "

Fellows needed no urging. He knew instinctively that murder was under way. He leaped to the street and dashed back around the corner.

A car was pulling away from the curb. A body was lying on the sidewalk.

Fellows ran toward the fallen man. Shots hit the paving beside him. The men in the fleeing car had seen his action, and had fired as their car turned the corner.

Fellows ducked into the entrance; then, realizing that the danger had passed, he hurried toward the man who lay on the sidewalk.

"Dead!" he exclaimed, as he lifted the man's shoulders. The form was limp and lifeless.

The head dropped back as Fellows raised the body. The light from the front of the building fell directly on the face. A gasp of horror came from the lips of the insurance broker.

The murdered man was Horace Prescott!

CHAPTER II. FELLOWS SPEAKS

A SMALL group of men stood about the spot where Horace Prescott's body lay. Three uniformed policemen were on duty, ordering the passers-by to keep moving. Another gang killing was sufficient to draw a crowd even in Chicago.

A few plain-clothes men were on the scene. The only other privileged individuals were two or three men who had eluded the vigilance of the policemen, and who were standing in the background.

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The detectives were watching five persons who were temporarily under their charge.

One was Claude Fellows; with him were two men who had witnessed the shooting from a distance. The others were Togo and Louie.

The Japanese servant had come downstairs with Horace Prescott. He had heard the shots as he was returning to the elevator.

Louie had been found in the automobile by the policemen. Fellows had led them there. The car had been abandoned.

A police car drove up and two men made their exit. One was Police Captain Julius Weaver. The other was Barney Higgins, assistant detective commissioner. He was well known as an investigator of gangsters.

The detectives became suddenly alert when their superiors appeared. They had been instructed to await the arrival of Weaver and Higgins, both of whom were at police headquarters when the news of the killing had reached there.

Barney Higgins looked at the body on the sidewalk. He turned to Weaver and nodded his head.

"They got Prescott, all right," he said. "He had it coming to him, I guess. I knew he was in the racket but I didn't think he was in deep enough for this."

HIGGINS began a quick inspection of the scene. Satisfied with his observations, he rejoined the police captain. Orders were given for the removal of the body.

The detective commissioner approached the group of men near the detectives.

"These two was witnesses," explained a detective. "This one" he pointed to Fellows "was upstairs with the guy that was killed. He came down and got in the car. They ran him around the corner and told him to scam."

Higgins stared at Fellows for a moment; then turned back to the detective.

"This man" the detective indicated Louie "was the chauffeur. They had him tied up in the car."

"Landed on me the minute I arrived," volunteered Louie.

"What did they look like?" questioned Higgins.

"Dunno," answered Louie promptly. "Couldn't see 'em in the dark."

Higgins looked at him as though he doubted that the chauffeur was telling all he knew. Then he turned to study Togo.

"Jap servant," he was informed by the detective. "Came downstairs with the guy that was bumped off "

"Bring them down to headquarters," ordered Higgins. "No wait a minute."

He looked at Claude Fellows.

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"What's your name?" he asked.

"Claude H. Fellows," came the response.

"Business?"

"Insurance broker from New York."

"Did you see the shooting?"

"No. I was in the car. The man in the front seat drove me around the corner."

"What did he look like?"

"About medium height, I should judge," replied Fellows thoughtfully. "Dark complexion, and an ugly face. He looked like a gunman."

"Would you recognize him if you saw him again?"

"Yes."

Higgins studied Fellows carefully.

"What do you know about Prescott?" he questioned suddenly.

Fellows was ready with an answer.

"I knew that he was expecting this," returned Fellows calmly. "I met him through a friend and found that he was anxious to leave the city. He told me why."

"Because?"

"Because of his gang connections. He gave me all the important facts concerning them."

Higgins looked at the police captain and caught an approving nod.

"Come along with me," said the detective commissioner. "You can tell me your story when we get to headquarters."

Claude Fellows smiled. He had no reason to keep anything from the police. He did not know, however, what use they would make of any information that he might give them.

Higgins appeared to have considerable knowledge of Prescott's connections. Yet Fellows was sure that he possessed vital facts which would be news to Higgins.

A YOUNG man stepped up and waved a greeting to the assistant commissioner. It was Jerry Kirklyn, reporter for a Chicago daily.

"Hello, Barney," said the reporter. "What's the dope on this? Looks like some mob has social aspirations, when it comes to killings. Got a story for me?"

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"Later, Jerry," said the assistant commissioner. "See me down at headquarters, after I interview the witnesses."

He drew the reporter to one side.

"Wait until this man Fellows testifies," he said. "We're going to get the real low-down on Prescott's hook-up with the mobs. But lay off until then."

"The detectives tell me," said Kirklyn, "that Prescott pulled out a gun and fired back when three men fell on him at the door of the lobby. He wounded one, they say. Is that right?"

Higgins questioned one of the detectives and received the man's affirmation.

"What about it?" questioned the reporter. "Can you trace the man through the hospitals?"

"You know better than that, Jerry," he said. "These gangsters have their own physicians. Don't you remember the doctor they bumped off six months ago? He was a sawbones who was going to pull a double cross.

"This gangster that Prescott wounded is on his way to some crooked medico right now."

Jerry Kirklyn eyed Claude Fellows curiously. He recognized that the chubby-faced man was not of gangdom's realm. He was anxious for a statement, and he made a quick approach.

"You were with Prescott before he was killed?" he asked. "What do you know about him?"

"I know everything," replied Fellows. "He told me all his story before I left him. We were going to the station in his car.

"I am willing to give the police a complete statement that will "

"Not here," objected Higgins. "Come along to headquarters. You can tell me about yourself on the way down." He turned to the reporter. "You see me later, Barney."

The assistant commissioner gripped the insurance broker's arm. He turned and drew Fellows toward the curb.

There were a few hangers-on standing near by. One of them, a sallow-faced youth with a cigarette hanging from his lips, looked sharply at Fellows as he passed. The insurance broker entered the police car with the officers.

The man began to stroll away as the car moved from the curb. He turned the corner and walked rapidly toward a drug store which had a telephone booth sign on the window.

IN the police car, the detective commissioner disregarded Claude Fellows for the moment. He spoke to Captain Weaver.

"There'll be a stew over this," he said. "The newspapers have been saying it's time we stopped these killings.

"Our policy of letting gunmen bump each other off is all right until something like this happens. We've got to get the man who did this.

"Prescott was phony himself we can prove that. Still, he was a man known in society circles. He wasn't a

gorilla type."

Higgins turned to Fellows.

"When we get to headquarters," he said, "you can spill what you know. In the meantime, tell me something about yourself. We can have your statement on Prescott later."

Fellows explained his presence in Chicago in a quiet, convincing way. He spoke of his insurance business and the wealth of his usual clients.

He said nothing about his mysterious chief in New York.

"Prescott was in a tough spot," he declared. "He wanted me to help him out. We were going to the station. I was to take the Northwestern for Omaha; he was to drop out and take the Michigan Central for New York."

Higgins nodded. He interrupted with a few words addressed to the police captain.

"The orders to kill Prescott came from higher up," was his comment. "Larrigan may have done it. Varona may have ordered it. If Varona is responsible, the instructions probably came from the big shot."

"Savoli?"

"Correct."

As Higgins turned to Fellows, the police car stopped suddenly. They were at headquarters.

Captain Weaver alighted and walked away from the car, leaving Higgins with Fellows. The assistant commissioner followed with the insurance broker. Fellows was speaking as they moved along.

Fellows had been doing some thinking during the ride. He was ready to tell the police everything he knew about Horace Prescott. It would be the opening shot in a drastic campaign against gangdom. Higgins would be able to act with the startling information he would gain.

With it all, Fellows could easily avoid mention of his real purpose in visiting Prescott. Neither Togo nor Louie knew anything of Prescott's revelations.

Prescott had satisfied Fellows on that point. His servants had been chosen to create respectability, not to act as associates.

"I know who killed Prescott," said Fellows quietly, as he stepped along beside Higgins. "I can positively name the men in back of it, and tell why they struck."

Higgins stopped and clutched the insurance broker's arm. Something in the statement impressed him.

"Wait until we're inside," he ordered. "I want Weaver to be in on this. I think you've got the dope. Remember now, play square. If you do "

The assistant commissioner turned suddenly. A large touring car was coasting silently toward the curb.

In an instant, Higgins realized the menace.

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"Duck!" he shouted, as he released his hold on the arm of his companion. "Duck for cover!"

BEFORE Fellows could respond, the staccato rattle of a machine gun drowned the commissioner's words.

Claude Fellows was the living target of the steel-jacketed bullets. Standing alone on the sidewalk, he went down beneath the metal avalanche.

A gasp escaped his lips as he fell. It was the last sound he uttered in this life.

The motor of the touring car purred as the automobile swept away. In a few moments it was traveling at reckless speed, disappearing around the corner before any could identify it.

Higgins had escaped the attack. He rose from the spot beside the steps where he had flung himself.

He knew that the killers had not desired his death; yet he also realized that his position with the police force would not have deterred the slayers in their mad desire to blot out Claude Fellows. Only through his prompt, intuitive action, had Barney Higgins evaded a similar end.

The assistant commissioner bent over the body of the murdered man. He saw in an instant that Fellows had expired. The man's lips were half open. They seemed on the point of speaking; about to cry their knowledge of gangdom's crooked ways.

Claude Fellows had been wiped out; and with him, the revelations had been suppressed. He had begun to speak, and the powers of the underworld had silenced him.

"We'll never know," muttered Barney Higgins. "We'll never know what he was going to tell us. We know who this man is but that is all."

There was conviction in the commissioner's tone. He was amazed by this bold stroke of gangdom the killing of a man who was about to enter police headquarters, accompanied by an assistant commissioner.

Higgins wondered what secrets had perished with this murdered man.

Yet, he connected Claude Fellows only with Horace Prescott. Had he known of the greater secret which Claude Fellows possessed, Higgins would have been completely bewildered.

For Claude Fellows had not mentioned his unknown employer in New York. Barney Higgins had no inkling of the most important factor regarding Claude Fellows.

He did not even begin to suspect that the supposed insurance broker had been the confidential agent of The Shadow that strange, mysterious being, whose name was a word of terror to the denizens of New York's underworld!

CHAPTER III. A VISITOR TO CHICAGO

Two days after the episode which had resulted in the death of Claude Fellows, a young man arrived in Chicago, and appeared at a restaurant known as Marmosa's Cafe, in the Loop district.

It was afternoon, and the large restaurant was virtually deserted. A hawk-eyed waiter, standing at the top of a stairway with gilded railings, spotted the new arrival, and approached to talk to him.

"What do you want, sir?" he asked.

"I came to see Mr. Marmosa," replied the young man.

"I will see if he is here," responded the waiter. "What is your name, sir?"

"Harry Vincent."

The waiter ascended the curving stairway, and disappeared when he reached the balcony. The man who had introduced himself as Harry Vincent sat down at one of the tables, and studied the sumptuous surroundings of the cafe, with both ground floor and balcony filled with tables and booths.

Vincent's thoughts were interrupted by the return of the waiter, who beckoned to him to come upstairs. When they reached the top, the waiter turned abruptly to the left, and conducted Vincent to a partitioned office, hidden behind a corner pillar of the balcony.

Entering the office, Vincent discovered a man seated at a desk. The office was very small scarcely more than a nook, and the man who occupied it seemed out of proportion to his surroundings.

He was heavy-set, and slightly bald. He weighed at least two hundred and fifty pounds, and the chair in which he was sitting was almost invisible beneath his bulk.

"Ah!" The man's voice was suave, and melodious. "You are Mr. Vincent, eh? I am Mr. Marmosa Frank Marmosa. You have come here as I asked you, eh?"

"Yes. I received your wire yesterday afternoon."

"Sit down, Mr. Vincent. Let me talk to you. I am glad that you have come, and I think that you will like it here."

There was a chair opposite the desk a chair crowded into the extreme corner of the tiny office. Harry Vincent took his place there, and looked quizzically at Frank Marmosa.

There was a real friendliness about the big man beyond his suavity. Vincent sized him up as a man who could be trusted, with reservations. Marmosa was presumably of Italian ancestry, but one could not have judged his nationality without knowing his name.

"My telegram surprised you, eh?" chuckled Marmosa, as he studied Harry Vincent. "Well, my boy, it was just by a chance that I learned of you.

"I have been waiting for two weeks to hear from my friend Barutti, in New York. I had asked him for a man to work with me here. I received no reply, until night before last, when Barutti called me up by long distance. He told me to wire you in Michigan; that you would be the man I needed."

A SUDDEN light dawned on Harry Vincent. Now, for the first time, he understood the connection that had brought him to Chicago.

He had suspected that the hand of The Shadow was behind this mission, for Vincent was a trusted agent of the strange man whose name carried terror to the minions of gangdom. But he had never before heard of Frank Marmosa, and only the mention of Barutti gave him the inkling that brought realization of the situation.

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Barutti operated an Italian restaurant in New York. Harry Vincent had chosen the place as a favorite eating spot, when in Manhattan.

Barutti was not a figure in the underworld; on the contrary, he operated a legitimate business. But, like many others, he had certain connections of a doubtful sort.

Two weeks ago, Harry had been dining in Barutti's restaurant. The Italian had exhibited a letter, remarking that it was from a big man in Chicago.

"A verra big man," Barutti had said, with a grin. "A big man in bizness a big man like dis" and he had qualified the final statement by spreading his arms to indicate a person of enormous size.

Barutti had then talked with a man seated at another table in the Italian restaurant a chap whom Harry had seen there on several occasions, and who talked both English and Italian.

From the snatches that Harry had heard of their mixed conversation, Barutti had told the other customer that his friend in Chicago had asked a favor, but that he would not grant it at present. For Barutti was going away for a month's vacation. His friend in Chicago could wait.

Harry had also left New York for a vacation to the town in Michigan where his family resided. He had been there ten days, and had then been startled to read of the death of Claude Fellows.

This news, furnished by a Chicago paper, had stunned Harry Vincent. He was one of the few persons who knew that the insurance broker was an agent of the mysterious Shadow. He had wondered what would follow.

The result had been a telegram from Chicago, signed by Frank Marmosa, telling Harry to come to see him immediately.

A complete theory had now formed in Harry's mind.

His thoughts went back to that day in Barutti's place. Barutti had shown the letter to the stranger who dined there. That stranger, Harry felt sure, was none other than The Shadow!

Immediately after the death of Claude Fellows, The Shadow must have called Frank Marmosa by long distance, representing himself as Barutti, to tell Marmosa that he had found the man he wanted.

WHILE Harry Vincent still pondered on this idea, Frank Marmosa resumed the conversation, and his words formed a cue which Harry was quick to follow.

"So you are a friend of Barutti, eh?" questioned Marmosa.

"I have known him a long while," replied Harry quietly.

"You know him very well?"

"Quite well."

"He told me that I could trust you in every way."

"Whatever Barutti may have said is true."

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"Good." Frank Marmosa's grin displayed a row of large, white teeth. He studied Harry carefully, then motioned toward the door with his thumb.

"Shut the door," he said.

Harry complied with the order.

"Barutti told you about me?" questioned Marmosa, in a low, confidential voice.

"He told me that you were a big man in Chicago," answered Harry.

The statement seemed to please Marmosa. He grinned and chuckled, and looked approvingly at Harry.

"You know what it means to be a big man in Chicago?" asked Marmosa.

Harry nodded.

"You know what makes big men in Chicago, eh?" continued Marmosa. "You know what is most important, eh?"

"I think I know."

"What is it, then."

"Getting in right and staying in right."

"Very good," chuckled Marmosa. "You understand. Barutti did well to send you here.

"Well, Vincent, I am in right; and I stay in right. When they say to me: 'Frank, you must give us a rake-off,' I smile, and I pay it. When some one else says: 'Frank, you must give us a rake-off,' I smile again.

"I pay to those who are big. They keep away those who are little. You understand? I am in right. You will be in right, too."

The big man stared steadily at Harry Vincent. The young man met his gaze. Finally, Marmosa grinned again, and extended his hand. Harry shook it, and with that action, he realized that he was entering a new career. He had blindly made a bargain with Frank Marmosa.

"You are all right, young fellow," said the big man assuringly. "You will work for me, eh? Good. Come along. I will show you something that will surprise you."

HE rose and opened the door. Harry followed him along the soft carpet of the balcony. Frank Marmosa pressed a hidden spot in the wall, behind a shielding pillar, and a partition slid noiselessly aside.

The two men entered a spacious room, evidently built over the kitchen of the restaurant. The place was a glittering den of gambling.

In the center stood two roulette wheels, along the sides were faro tables, while card tables in the corners invited the play of those who preferred poker.

There was a short mahogany bar in the far corner of the room. Its brass rail shone like gold, and behind it

stood a man in a white coat, polishing glasses.

"Come."

Marmosa led Harry around the room, and pointed out the roulette wheels and the faro tables as though he were directing a sight-seeing tour.

When they reached the bar, Marmosa smilingly invited Harry to have a drink. When the young man shook his head in refusal, Marmosa's grin broadened to his characteristic smile.

"That is good," said Marmosa solemnly. "The men I have here they all drink. It costs me money, but it is not the money that I mind.

"When they drink, they cannot watch. They are no longer wise. You are the man I want here. Barutti did well to get you."

He conducted Harry back to the office, and there, by the little desk, the proprietor of the gambling den explained the purpose for which he had required a new man.

"I have many people here in Chicago," he said, "but if they know nothing, they are no good; if they know too much, they are no good. I must keep in right with the big shots; but my business is my own.

"I must have a man who minds no business except mine; you understand, eh? He must learn to know those who come in, and who go out. He must watch this, and he must watch that; but he must not deal with any except me. You understand, eh?"

"Exactly," replied Harry.

"More than that," said Marmosa thoughtfully, "this man must seem as a diner in the restaurant, or as a player in the gambling room.

"I do not need a man with a gun. They are easy to get too easy to get. I have them, but they do not look well.

"I want a man who will act as a gentleman, who will watch, and who will not drink. He must be ready to give orders to the others. You are the man I need."

"I will be," interposed Harry, "after I have seen your place in operation. I must, of course, first know something about it."

"Ah!" interrupted Marmosa. "You will learn quickly. Very, very quickly. Money? I shall give you plenty.

"Barutti has told me all about you, over the phone. He says that you will work whenever I may need you; that you do not talk loud; and that you do not have the big, swelled head. All that is good. Very, very good."

The huge man stared from the window, and Harry followed his gaze. Below them was the bustle and confusion of a Chicago street. The whole situation seemed unreal to Harry Vincent.

Here, in this quiet cubby-hole of an office, one would never suspect that the entrance to a de luxe gambling den lay only a few feet away.

"I have a man who will help you," explained Marmosa. "His name is Joe le Blanc. He is a good man, but not

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the one I need. He is going away soon, to open a place of his own a road house outside of the city.

"He is in right; he has fixed it with the big shots. I am giving him the money to start the place. But he will stay here a while until you understand what you are to do."

Marmosa looked at his watch. Then he opened a drawer in the desk, and drew out a stack of letters. He extended his hand to Harry.

"Go away, now," said the big man, "and come back here at seven o'clock to-night. If you need money at any time, tell me. I am trusting you because I know Barutti.

"Stay at a hotel near here, so you will not have far to go."

HARRY VINCENT left the office and walked down the gently sloping stairs. The entire restaurant seemed different to him now.

Now he realized that the elaborate downstairs establishment was nothing more than a blind for the den upstairs. Perhaps Frank Marmosa was conducting a profitable restaurant; but that was not the business upon which he relied.

Harry registered at the Goliath Hotel, a single block from the restaurant.

Within an hour after his arrival in Chicago, Harry Vincent had stepped within the borderland of gangdom. He had obtained a position which would enable him to watch and to gain information without incurring the grave risks that threatened the average gangster. Yet he realized that even his position with Marmosa held danger in store, and he welcomed that danger.

For he knew that while he might appear to be working for Frank Marmosa, the gambling king, he would actually be working for another. He owed his real allegiance to that strange, mysterious person who was the talk of all New York the man they called The Shadow.

One dominating thought gripped Harry's mind. He was sure that he had divined the purpose of the work that lay ahead.

The Shadow had transferred activities from New York to Chicago, with one definite motive to track all those who had been responsible for the death of Claude Fellows!

Harry had heard of Chicago gangsters. Now he was to encounter them. They were different from the mobsters of New York.

They worked in compact gangs, Harry knew, and their foothold was greater, so far as the police was concerned.

If the newspapers spoke truly, gangsters ruled Chicago as kings.

All his old adventures with The Shadow recurred to Harry's mind, as he stood by the window, looking out over the vast city of Chicago, to the blue waterfalls of Lake Michigan.

He had done much to help The Shadow, and still that mysterious man amazed and bewildered him.

In and out of New York, The Shadow had struck the plots and counterplots of crafty criminals until his name

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had become a terror to those who fought against the law. Yet The Shadow had never been revealed. His personality was still a mystery.

Some believed him to be a detective; others claimed that he was a master mind that knew no law. Whichever might be true, it was certain that The Shadow had brought many crooks to justice, and that he was a criminologist of tremendous ability.

Yet here, in Chicago, Harry Vincent felt qualms. This was to be a new game.

It would not be a battle of wits for The Shadow, although wits would play their part. It would be a fight against tremendous odds; against groups of desperate men who ruled their realm with automatics, bombs, and machine guns.

Even The Shadow, with all his amazing power, was human. When the gangsters of Chicago were thwarted, they spoke with bullets.

Did The Shadow know the dangers that lay here? Did he realize the strength of the powerful organizations that defied the police, and openly ridiculed the law? Did he know the risk he would take if he came to Chicago?

For a few moments these questions passed in rapid succession through Harry's mind, and for the first time since his association with The Shadow, he felt the fear of impending disaster. Then he recalled the times when the amazing superman had met and conquered those who blocked his path.

Still standing by the window of his room, Harry Vincent smiled grimly, and his lips spoke these words:

"The Shadow knows!"

CHAPTER IV. GANGSTERS MEET

MARMOSA'S CAFE was a quiet place at seven o'clock in the evening. The restaurant was well filled with diners; waiters trod noiselessly across the carpeted floor; and the orchestra in the corner played soft music that did not disturb the pleasing atmosphere of the luxurious dining palace.

Harry Vincent found Frank Marmosa in the office when he arrived. The big man greeted him pleasantly, and suggested that he have dinner on the balcony, so that he could watch those who entered.

Harry took this as an indication that Marmosa wanted to test his ability as an observer, so he took the table which the proprietor pointed out, and ordered a sumptuous meal.

While he ate, Harry watched below.

He felt a certain admiration for Frank Marmosa, even though the man was engaged in an illegal enterprise. For Marmosa's Cafe was certainly one of the most elegant restaurants that Harry had ever patronized, and the food was in keeping with the surroundings.

It was evidently Marmosa's purpose to attract a high-class clientele, for the diners were fashionable persons, many of whom appeared to be of the elite.

There were comparatively few persons on the balcony, and Harry noticed that no one approached the hidden spot behind the corner pillar.

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It was after eight o'clock before Harry had completed his carefully chosen meal, and by that time, the crowd below had thinned out considerably. Marmosa had not returned, so Harry lighted a cigar, and puffed away in enjoyment, still watching from the balcony.

Half an hour later, he noticed that newcomers were entering the place, and he realized immediately that it was from these that the patrons of the gambling den would be gained. Marmosa had said nothing about the opening time of the gambling house, but Harry now conjectured that nine o'clock would be about the earliest.

A thin, sallow man entered the restaurant, and walked upstairs. Harry saw him disappear behind the pillar that obscured Marmosa's office.

The man did not return immediately, so Harry again looked from the balcony, until he became conscious that some one was approaching his table, and he turned quickly to encounter Frank Marmosa and the sallow man who had arrived a short while before.

"Meet Joe le Blanc," said Marmosa genially. "This is Harry Vincent, Joe."

The sallow man shook hands with Harry, and sat beside him at the table.

"Vincent is a friend of Barutti," explained Marmosa. "You know Barutti you've met him in New York."

Le Blanc nodded. Then Marmosa went away.

Harry studied Le Blanc, and recognized him as a silent type of man. The fellow had a sophisticated air that commanded instant attention.

"No one here yet," said Le Blanc tersely, after he had made a quick survey of the crowd below.

HARRY watched the man's eyes. Joe le Blanc had a faculty for looking everywhere, without moving his head. One observing him from below would not have realized that he had made a thorough inspection of the entire room beneath the balcony.

Four people entered the restaurant two men in evening clothes, and two handsomely dressed women.

"That's Glen Colliver," said Le Blanc, in an undertone. "Big advertising man. Don't know the fellow with him. Some guy from out of town, I guess.

"That blond dame's been here before. Never saw the brunette before. The whole bunch is O.K. because Colliver is with them. Remember that bird. He pays plenty here."

The party had scarcely seated itself before another group entered. Le Blanc recognized them immediately, and gave the information to Harry. Then came a few more persons who were identified by the sharp-eyed watcher.

Finally Colliver and his companions walked up the steps to the balcony. They disappeared behind the pillar that hid the entrance of the gambling den.

"They'll be looked over through the door," said Le Blanc. "Old Hawk-eye in there can tell any one that's been here once. Here comes another pair upstairs. They're O.K., too."

Nothing was said for a few minutes. Then Harry decided to question Joe le Blanc.

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"Don't we let them know who is coming?" he asked. "I thought we would have to tell the fellow inside "

"No, no," replied Le Blanc. "These people don't mean anything to us. We haven't begun to work yet. Wait a while, until some of the gunmen begin to come in. That's when we've got to keep a real look-out."

"Why?"

"Listen close, Vincent," said Joe le Blanc. "Marmosa tells me you don't know anything about this racket."

"That's all right. You've got to learn, and I'm here to tell you. There's going to be a pile of dough spent in that place to-night. You savvy that, don't you?"

"Of course."

"Well, who gets the dough?"

"Frank Marmosa."

"Sure, but he pays a lot of it out to several places. There's a lot of cuts, fixing the coppers, and everything else, but the real jack goes to the big shot."

"Who's the big shot?"

"Nick Savoli, of course. Don't tell me you haven't heard of him?"

HARRY had heard of Nick Savoli, the gangster whose fame had long since reached New York. He knew that Nick Savoli held the strings that governed the great majority of Chicago gangs.

"Nick will have his man here tonight," went on Le Blanc. "Ready for the collection, after the dough has been taken in."

"Does he ever come himself?"

"Who? Nick? I should say not! Sometimes he sends Mike Borrango, though. He's the big enforcement man for Savoli. Keeps things moving when Nick's out of town."

"But it's most likely to be Al Vacchi. He comes here right along, and he brings a couple of gorillas with him."

Le Blanc paused to lean against the rail of the balcony while he carefully inspected two men who had just entered. Then he added a further explanation.

"Here's the way it goes," he said. "Nick Savoli runs most everything in this town. He uses Mike Borrango as an enforcer. Al Vacchi is a fix-up man, who smoothes over troubles when they arise. That makes him a good man for collecting here, because he knows all of them, and keeps on good terms."

"Then there's a bunch of men who have their own gangs, and their own territories. Most of them are in the booze racket. Mike Varona, Casey O'Rourke, Bingo McGurk, and others."

"They keep in with the big shot. They know enough not to battle among themselves."

"But there's others like Mike Larrigan who have never come in line. Right now, there's trouble between

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Larrigan and Varona.

"It's guys like Larrigan's gunmen that we watch out for here.

"Take Hymie Schultz, for instance. He works with Larrigan, but he's independent, too. He wouldn't think anything of coming in and sticking up a swell joint like this.

"If it meant trouble between Larrigan and the big shot, Larrigan would claim that Hymie was working on his own. Savvy?

"Then, every now and then, some small fry crop up and make trouble. That's what we look out for. See "

He pointed to the door of the restaurant. Two men entered; both were dressed in tuxedos, but they looked out of place in that garb. They kept close together, and seemed to cast a disdainful look at the diners. The newcomers moved up the stairs toward the balcony.

"John Genara and Tony Anelmo," whispered Le Blanc. "They call them the Homicide Twins. Tough babies.

"They're working for Marmosa tonight. They protect the joint. They'll be inside the door, like they were gambling, but let any guy get tough well, there's nothing those fellows won't do."

The two men were at the top of the stairs. Genara glanced toward the table where Harry Vincent and Joe le Blanc were seated. Joe nodded his head in greeting, and Genara responded with an ugly scowl, which Le Blanc accepted as a response of friendship.

The two gunmen left the head of the stairs and went into the gambling den.

THEN came a general arrival of well-dressed persons who were evidently coming to play roulette.

"Look there!" Le Blanc's exclamation was a low one. "Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak. The little guy is Hymie he's the one I was telling you about."

"Do they mean trouble?"

Le Blanc shrugged his shoulders.

"No telling until they get in," he said. "We can't keep them out without causing trouble. But with Genara and Anelmo there, I don't think anything will happen.

"Just the same, it puts our friend Marmosa in a tough spot. The only connection he has with Nick Savoli is this: Marmosa pays cash to Savoli. He gets protection, all right, but the important part is that Marmosa has to pay, and Savoli doesn't have to protect. Get that?

"If anybody makes trouble for Marmosa, it's too bad for him. Savoli wouldn't like it, of course, but he has his own worries, without bothering about Marmosa."

Two men entered the restaurant while Le Blanc was speaking. Harry saw them as they came up the stairs to the balcony, and he recognized immediately that they were another pair of gangsters. Le Blanc noticed them as they approached.

"Here comes Eddie Heeny," he said. "Smooth-looking bird for a gunman. I don't know the other mug that's

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with him."

The arrivals came over to the table where Harry and Le Blanc were seated. Harry studied them closely.

The one designated as Heeny was scarcely of the gangster type, although he carried a determined air that made an instant impression. But the other man—the one whom Le Blanc did not name commanded Harry's close attention.

He was tall, and somewhat slender and he had an erect carriage that bespoke a powerful physique. His face was almost masklike in its expression.

When he fixed his eyes upon Harry, they seemed to carry a steady, boring gaze that was challenging and defiant. Harry could not take his eyes from the gangster's face.

For almost a full minute, no one spoke; then Le Blanc waved his hand toward Heeny.

"Hello, Ed," he said. "Thought you'd be here to-night. This is Harry Vincent. Fellow that's going to take my job, after I leave here. Who's your pal, Ed?"

The gangster grinned.

"Ever hear of Monk Thurman?" he questioned.

"You mean the fellow that used to be with the Four Points gang in New York?" returned Le Blanc.

"That's who I mean," replied Heeny. "You've heard of him, eh?"

"Sure thing. Never met him, though."

"Well, you're meeting him now. This is him."

Joe le Blanc uttered a low exclamation. Harry could tell by his expression that the name of "Monk" Thurman carried great weight with him.

Harry had heard the name, too. Monk Thurman was notorious in New York. He had been arrested for dozens of crimes, and had always established an alibi.

Le Blanc was looking at the New York gangster, and Harry followed suit. Monk Thurman was the type of man who would command attention. He seemed to take no interest in what Eddie Heeny had said. His attitude was one of complete indifference.

"Brought him along to-night," said Heeny. "He blew into town to-day.

"Did you read the New York papers, yesterday? They had a rumor that Monk had disappeared. Well, this is where he disappeared to. Chicago. Here he is!

"I used to know him back in New York. This is the one and only Monk Thurman."

LE BLANC did not question why the New York gunman had made his visit to Chicago. Questions of idle curiosity were not common among gangsters. Instead, he took the attitude that Heeny had accomplished something by bringing in this notorious master of the automatic.

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"Want Monk to see the place in here?" he asked.

"Good idea, Joe," replied Heeny. "It's time for you to go in, anyway. Take him along with you; but don't introduce him. Let him look the lay over. He'll be recognized soon enough."

"All right, Ed," replied Le Blanc. "Keep your eye out to-night. Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak are inside."

"No!" Heeny's exclamation was one of astonishment. "They inside alone?"

"Of course not," laughed Le Blanc. "The Homicide Twins are there, too. That evens things up, Ed, but I just thought I'd better tip you off."

"You hear that, Monk?" asked Heeny. "The Homicide Twins that's them Italians Genara and Anelmo. Couple of tough greaseballs, them fellows. Come over here a year ago. Pete Varona brought them in, and they've been on the job ever since. Working for the big shot now, ain't they, Joe?"

"They stand in right with Savoli," admitted Le Blanc. "Come along with us, Monk. We'll show you a gambling joint that would look neat in New York."

He left the table, motioning to Harry as he went. Monk Thurman followed, while Eddie Heeny took his place at the look-out position.

When they reached the wall behind the pillar, Le Blanc knocked twice, and a small peephole opened. The man behind recognized Le Blanc. The sliding panel moved aside, and the three men entered.

HARRY had not realized that so many people had entered the gambling den. There was a good-sized crowd there now, and the room was filled with tobacco smoke. There was a low buzz of conversation, but most of the persons present were intent on their gambling.

Two quiet croupiers were operating the roulette wheels, and stacks of bills of high denomination were on the tables. The place was a miniature Monte Carlo, and the size of the stakes was evidently pleasing to Frank Marmosa, for that gentleman was walking about with a broad, beaming smile.

The proprietor noted Le Blanc the moment that he entered, and cast a glance of interrogation in his direction. Harry caught the significance; Marmosa wondered who Monk Thurman might be. Le Blanc made an upward gesture with his thumb, and Marmosa nodded.

"That's the O.K.," whispered Le Blanc to Harry. "The boss wanted to know if Monk was all right."

Then Le Blanc turned to the New York gangster, and took him across the room to the bar, where several men were drinking. The New Yorker ordered a drink, but left the glass on the bar. He seemed too deeply intent on his surroundings to indulge in the questionable enjoyment of Marmosa's liquor.

Harry's eyes wandered everywhere. All seemed occupied, with the exception of four sinister figures who commended Harry's close attention.

Two of these were "Hymie" Schultz and "Four-gun" Spirak. Those gangsters were apart; one watching a roulette wheel, the other near the door beside a faro table.

The other two were the Homicide Twins, Genara and Anelmo. They stood together in a corner of the room.

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One was watching Schultz; the other had his eye on Spirak.

Harry realized that he was watching four of the toughest killers in Chicago; notorious gunmen who thought nothing of murder in cold blood.

They were evenly matched, but the Homicide Twins were on the defensive. Unless the opposition started something, they would not act to-night.

Looking toward the bar, Harry noticed that Le Blanc and Thurman were engaged in close conversation.

Joe le Blanc was not worrying about the presence of Schultz and Spirak. He knew that Genara and Anelmo had them covered. Hence he was quietly talking with Monk Thurman, who had not yet been recognized by any one there.

Thurman, like Le Blanc, was indifferent to the presence of the four Chicago killers.

Five gunmen had gathered, and the comparison was intriguing to Harry Vincent Schultz and Spirak, swaggering and leering; Genara and Anelmo, silent, and watchful.

But the most sinister figure of them all was Monk Thurman, the man who neither swaggered nor watched. His firm, immobile face betokened a calm determination that made him a more terrible personage than any of the Chicago gangsters.

As the minutes went by, Harry found that his gaze continually reverted to that man with the frozen face.

CHAPTER V. GUNS BARK

MIDNIGHT had passed, and the crowd had thinned. Many players had lost all their money, but those who remained were playing for tremendous stakes. Thousands and thousands of dollars were in view, stacked in piles of bills.

Harry moved alongside of Joe le Blanc, and nudged the man, to indicate the immense sums of money that formed the stakes. Le Blanc nodded.

"Big night," he said, in an undertone. "Marmosa's getting all he can. Savoli's man will be around to collect later on."

The Homicide Twins were still watching Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak, but the two unwelcome mobsters seemed quite indifferent to the money that was on display.

As for Monk Thurman, he seemed to be utterly oblivious to his surroundings. He was leaning with his back against the bar, his eyes half closed, as he listened to the chatter of Joe le Blanc, who had become voluble under the encouragement of many drinks.

Glen Colliver and his party were the principal players left. The advertising man tossed a thousand-dollar bill on number nine, and lost his bet. He shrugged his shoulders, and turned his pockets inside out with a laugh.

"That finishes us," he said. "Come along, folks. We'll play again some other night."

Sleek Frank Marmosa shook hands with Colliver as he left with his three companions. Then the proprietor returned, and glanced at the few players who remained, all of whom were men.

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Harry could divine his thoughts. The big money was ended with Colliver's exit. There would be no purpose in keeping on with the play.

Standing in the center of the room, Marmosa slapped his hands together as a signal that the play should end. The croupiers stopped the wheels and began to gather up the profits of the night.

Harry looked for Hymie Schultz, and saw the gangster shrug his shoulders. Four-Gun Spirak joined him, and the two men sauntered from the room, the old doorman opening the panel for them to leave.

"Hot shots, ha-ha!" laughed Joe le Blanc. "Guess they got cold feet when they saw the Homicide Twins watching them. Came in to look the place over.

"Well, they got an eyeful. Marmosa had a big night, just to make them enjoy their visit."

He was addressing his words to Monk Thurman, but the New York gangster apparently did not hear them. He had slouched against the bar, and was half asleep, his head resting on one hand.

Harry had not observed Thurman drinking during the evening; he could not account for the man's stupor.

The last players were walking toward; the door, under the guidance of Frank Marmosa, when three revolver shots were heard. They were outside of the gambling den; evidently they had been fired in the restaurant.

The effect upon those present was electric. Harry felt a sudden nervous excitement, and looked around the room, almost expecting another shot close at hand.

THE croupiers and Frank Marmosa had become as rigid as statues. They were listening, and wondering. The departing players were moving toward the wall, as though seeking a hiding place. The bartender and Joe le Blanc became suddenly still.

The only man who apparently did not hear the shots was Monk Thurman; the only ones who sprang to action were Genara and Anelmo, the sinister Homicide Twins.

The two gunmen rushed to the exit, pushed the doorman aside, and disappeared into the restaurant, leaving the panel open behind them. Those still in the gambling den remained motionless, expecting to hear some sound from without.

"Shut the door!" exclaimed Marmosa, addressing the doorman. The old attendant stood as though petrified, and the proprietor hurried forward to do the work himself.

Then he stepped suddenly backward, as two men plunged through the opening.

One darted into the center of the room, holding two automatics with which he covered the entire place. The other hesitated only an instant; just long enough to let the heavy panel slide back into place. Then he was with his companion, supporting him with two more gats.

The raiders were Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak. They had taken advantage of the departure of Genara and Anelmo. They had been out of sight behind the pillar when the Homicide Twins had dashed by. Now the field was theirs!

"Stick 'em up!"

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The command came from Spirak. It was scarcely necessary, for most of the men in the room had unconsciously obeyed the moment that they had seen the guns. Harry Vincent did not realize that his hands were above his head until he looked upward and saw them.

Hymie Schultz, laughing sarcastically, was advancing toward the roulette tables, where the helpless croupiers were standing.

He had pocketed one gun now, to free his left hand for the task of gathering up the money that still lay in view. But he had nothing to fear. Spirak was covering every one with his automatics, and he had two reserve revolvers in the inside of his coat.

"Stick 'em up!"

The command was repeated by Spirak, an instant after his first cry, while Schultz was still advancing toward the wheels.

Harry glanced to his right, and saw the object of Spirak's threat. It was Monk Thurman, still slouched against the bar, who had not heeded Spirak's command.

The New York gunman was still in his stupor. Evidently he had not been conscious of anything that had happened. Even now, he was still oblivious, and made no sign of response.

FOUR-GUN SPIRAK hesitated only a brief moment. Evidently he and Schultz had no desire to use ammunition in the gambling den, even though shots had been fired outside. But Spirak was going to take no chances, even with a man who seemed unconscious.

Le Blanc kicked Monk Thurman, but the New Yorker made no response. That was his last chance.

Spirak swung the muzzle of one automatic in the direction of the man who was slouching on the bar, and the killer pressed his finger against the trigger.

A shot rang out, but it did not come from the gat wielded by Four-gun Spirak.

It was Monk Thurman who fired. His left hand had been hanging behind him. He had swung it upward the instant that Spirak covered him. The bullet from his automatic struck the hand that held the gun pointed at Monk.

Spirak's revolver fell to the floor. With an oath, the Chicago mobster brought his other gun into play, but here again a shot interrupted him. A bullet crashed into his forearm, and his second revolver dropped from his nerveless fingers.

With two amazing shots, Monk Thurman had disarmed Four-gun Spirak, and had left him helpless, and unable to draw his two remaining weapons.

Hymie Schultz was prompt in action. He had been reaching for the money when the first shot was fired. He wheeled suddenly just as Thurman's second bullet found its mark. He pressed the trigger of his automatic, but as he did, Thurman's gun barked once more. Thurman's shot struck the revolver held by Hymie Schultz, and the weapon clattered against the leg of the nearest roulette table. Hymie's first shot crashed into the bar, grazing the arm of Joe le Blanc; and that was the only bullet that left his automatic.

Hymie Schultz gave a quick glance about him. He saw Four-gun Spirak staggering toward the door, and he

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made a rush in that direction. Marmosa fell upon him, and the croupiers joined in.

There was a melee at the door, as the Marmosa crowd struggled with the gangsters.

There was no opportunity for Monk Thurman to fire another shot, for he might have hit friends as well as enemies. Schultz and Spirak were being overpowered, and their capture seemed certain.

But Hymie was a redoubtable fighter. He freed his left hand and pushed aside the sliding panel. Then he managed to pull his second automatic from his pocket.

Marmosa seized Hymie's wrist, but the wiry little gangster broke away. He pushed Four-gun Spirak through the open doorway, and with a snarl of vengeance, clubbed one croupier with his revolver, and leveled his hand to fire into his opponents.

But that action opened a direct line that ran from Monk Thurman to the biceps of Hymie's left arm. The New York gunman did not neglect the opportunity. His shot found its mark.

Hymie's arm dropped, and a croupier yanked the automatic from his grasp. The little gunman leaped through the door and followed Spirak into the restaurant.

There was confusion for a moment; then Marmosa ordered a pursuit. He pulled a revolver from his pocket, and he and the croupier who had Hymie's gun ran after the fleeing gangster.

"Come on!" cried Joe le Blanc.

Harry followed him. They reached the balcony of the restaurant, to find the dead body of Eddie Heeny sprawled across the table in a pool of crimson blood.

"They got him," was Le Blanc's only comment. "Come on, Vincent!"

They joined Marmosa and the croupier downstairs. Two policemen entered the restaurant. They recognized the proprietor.

Schultz and Spirak had escaped!

MARMOSA was voluble in his explanations, and the policemen nodded their understanding. One of them called up headquarters.

The death of Eddie Heeny had made it a serious affair. Harry listened to Marmosa's words. The proprietor of the gambling den was telling a clever story.

"Two men came in here," he said. "They came to get Eddie Heeny, who was up there on the balcony. He shot them, but they killed him. We ran out here to get them, but they were gone."

"Who were they?" demanded one of the policemen.

Frank Marmosa shrugged his shoulders. Joe le Blanc duplicated the gesture. Harry and the croupier said nothing.

The men who had been gambling were coming down the stairs. They were not familiar with the affairs of gangland; they could not have told the names of the attackers had they been questioned. But Marmosa now

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had the situation under control. The guests were allowed to go.

Joe le Blanc drew Harry Vincent to a corner of the restaurant, and gave his explanation of the affair. The brief summary convinced Harry that Joe's theory was correct.

"There's another guy in this," whispered Le Blanc. "Some pal of Schultz and Spirak. He must have sneaked in here and waited downstairs. Then Schultz and Spirak came out to attract Heeny's attention.

"Heeny probably talked friendly to them, because they were out of the gambling joint. That gave their pal the chance to plug Heeny."

"But what about Genara and Anelmo?"

"That was all figured in the game. Schultz and Spirak got back behind the pillar while their pal was finishing Heeny. One shot did it.

"Anelmo and Genara came out and saw the guy running from the restaurant. They went after him. That gave Schultz and Spirak the chance to do their stuff."

The police were removing Heeny's body. Marmosa was talking to a headquarters man, and the proprietor's story seemed to be holding weight.

As the policemen left the place, Marmosa motioned to his three companions, and they went up the stairs, back toward the gambling room where the others still remained.

"Who was that bird?" questioned Marmosa, addressing Joe le Blanc. "The way he finished up Spirak and Schultz "

"Who was he?" Le Blanc laughed loudly. "Did you ever hear of Monk Thurman?"

"Monk Thurman from New York?"

"That's the guy!"

Marmosa paused to mop his brow with a silk handkerchief.

"Monk Thurman," he repeated, in wondering tones. "They say it was getting hot for him in New York. I didn't know he was here."

"Well, you know it now. Heeny brought him in. I didn't have a chance to tell you who he was."

"Wait until Savoli hears about this," said Marmosa. "I'm going to call up Mike Borrango; I want him to come around to collect to-night. This Monk Thurman is a man that he can use."

"And how!" exclaimed Le Blanc.

THEY entered the gambling room. The injured croupier was sitting in the corner; the bartender and the doorman had just finished binding his head.

"Where's Monk Thurman?" demanded Marmosa.

"Who?" asked the bartender.

"The fellow who was up here the guy that crippled Schultz and Spirak."

"Why, he's right over there, leaning against the bar "

The bartender paused, wondering.

"I saw him just a few minutes ago," he insisted. "Standing there, quietlike, saying nothing. I didn't see him go out of "

"He'd have to go downstairs," replied Marmosa.

"Say!" Joe le Blanc had an explanation. "I'll bet he went out with those other fellows the ones who were playing roulette."

"If he did, he's a wizard."

"That's what he did. It's the only way he could have done it."

Frank Marmosa made no reply. He was speechless. The others made no comment. They looked at each other in wonder, and in silent admiration of the amazing Monk Thurman.

To Harry Vincent, the event was a revelation.

There had been five gangsters in that room. Two, the Homicide Twins, had been outwitted. The others, Schultz and Spirak, had been conquered single-handed by a man who held one gun against their four.

Now this amazing gangster had gone, quietly and unobserved, leaving wonderment behind him.

Monk Thurman!

The man was a supergangster. Chicago had never known another like him; that was Le Blanc's strong statement.

But Harry Vincent was not comparing Monk Thurman with Chicago gangsters. He was comparing him with another person entirely. For Harry had seen another man who could act with such amazing promptness, and who had the ability to make mysterious departures which no one could fathom.

Monk Thurman was an incredible personage; his accomplishments seemed almost beyond human ability. Yet there was one other man as remarkable as Monk Thurman a man whom neither Le Blanc nor Marmosa had ever seen.

Until this night, Harry Vincent had believed that only one human being was capable of performing the wonders just displayed by Monk Thurman and that being was The Shadow!

CHAPTER VI. AT THE GRAY MILL

MARMOSA, Harry Vincent, and Joe le Blanc, were having lunch in a corner of the balcony the following noon. Monk Thurman's action of the day before was on the minds of all of them.

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Marmosa and Le Blanc were familiar with the havoc wrought by Chicago gunmen, and were forced to admit that this newcomer from New York had shown more finesse than any one they knew.

"Where can he be found?" questioned Marmosa. "Did he tell you where he was staying?"

Le Blanc shook his head.

"He didn't talk much," he said. "I never met him before. Heeny brought him in."

"Heeny's dead," Marmosa replied. "We can't learn from him but I want to know."

"We might learn by tracing Heeny. Some one introduced him to Heeny. We'll learn who it was."

"That's right. See what you can find out, Joe."

"Well, I won't have much time," Joe said. "I'm going out to the Gray Mill this afternoon."

"That's the name of his new road house," said Marmosa to Vincent. "You remember? The one I was telling you about, eh?"

Harry nodded.

"I've got to be out there by eight o'clock," said Le Blanc. "I won't be able to be here to-night, Marmosa."

"That's all right," said me big man. "Vincent can do the work this trip. I'm not going to open until late, and I'm going to be careful for a few days."

"Maybe Thurman will show up at the Gray Mill," said Le Blanc thoughtfully. "I was telling him about the place last night."

"I wouldn't talk too much about it, Joe," observed Marmosa.

"Yeah, you're right there," replied Le Blanc. "But Thurman is O.K. You ought to know that. He proved it by the way he helped you out."

"Maybe so, Joe. But you didn't know that when you were talking to him. That was before he brought out his gat."

"Well, Heeny brought him in. Any one that came with Heeny was O.K."

"All right. Let's forget it. That reminds me that I need another gorilla to take Heeny's place."

"I'll get you one this afternoon."

BIG Frank Marmosa leaned back in his chair, and gazed thoughtfully at the ceiling. He was evidently pondering upon something, and neither Vincent nor Le Blanc interrupted his meditation.

Finally the restaurant owner spoke the words that were in his mind.

"I'll tell you how it is, boys," he said. "I talked with Mike Borrango last night. I'd rather have talked to him than to the big boy, Savoli."

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"Borrango has a tough job enforcing. They don't all pay, like I do. He has to use a lot of pineapples."

"Bombs," explained Le Blanc, noticing the questioning expression on Vincent's face. "If a place doesn't come across with the dough, they toss pineapples in through the window. That's the time to duck."

"But pineapples don't work like they used to," said Marmosa. "Plenty of people are ready for them. What Borrango needs is a few more gorillas like Genara and Anelmo."

"Yeah?" questioned Le Blanc. "They weren't gorillas last night. They looked like a couple of monkeys. Running out the way they did, while Schultz and Spirak were still inside."

"That's just it," said Marmosa. "While they were bums on the job, Monk Thurman stepped in and did their trick alone. That's why Borrango is interested. He wants Monk Thurman to work for him."

"So that's why you want to see him?"

"You guessed it, Joe. I'm going to introduce him to Mike Borrango. He can use him."

"Maybe Thurman don't want to mix in things here."

"He can't get out of it now, Joe. There's two fellows now that are itching to put him on the spot."

"That's right. I guess Schultz and Spirak will be out to get him."

"I owe a lot to Monk Thurman," admitted Marmosa. "If he'd bumped off those two birds right in the gambling joint, it would have given me a lot to explain to the police. It was bad enough to have them get Heeny out in the restaurant."

"So you think the boys will be after Schultz and Spirak?" questioned Le Blanc. "Heeny's friends, I mean?"

"No, I don't. If they can find out who actually plugged Heeny, they'll get that bird. But Borrango told me not to expect anything regarding Schultz and Spirak.

"A place like mine is supposed to be fair game for any one that can stick it up. Any one that bumps off Schultz or Spirak will be in wrong with Larrigan.

"Right now, Al Vacchi is trying to smooth things with Larrigan. There's bad feeling between Larrigan and Varona, and the big boy doesn't like it. So Schultz and Spirak are safe.

"But there's nothing to stop them from putting Monk Thurman on the spot, if they can find him."

"I get you now," said Le Blanc. "You figure it will be for Thurman's benefit if he gets in with the big shot."

"Right!"

Joe le Blanc arose from the table.

"Well, I'll see what I can do about it," he said. "But I can't promise anything until to-morrow."

HE left the restaurant, while Marmosa was giving new instructions to Harry Vincent. Outside, Joe le Blanc crossed the street and walked leisurely to a garage, where he kept his car, a new coupe that was capable of

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great speed. He drove northward, beyond the city limits, and reached the Gray Mill.

The building was an old house that had been renovated. The work had just been completed; the furnishings were not yet entirely installed. Le Blanc drove his car into the garage, and went in through the back of the house.

He entered the front room of the road house, which was arranged for a dance floor. He crossed the spacious apartment and unlocked a door. Then he stepped into a fair-sized room which was furnished with a large table and several chairs.

The room had iron shutters. Le Blanc did not open them. He turned on a light, and sat in the corner.

"Monk Thurman," he said musingly. "What did I tell that guy last night? I can't seem to remember much what I was saying. I told him about this place. I remember that."

As a matter of fact, Joe le Blanc had given Monk Thurman a great deal of information. Encouraged by a few drinks, he had done his best to impress the New York mobster with his importance.

Joe le Blanc was not an important figure in gangdom; in fact, his influence was almost nil. But the new road house in which he was now seated carried a real attraction to those who wanted a meeting place outside the city limits.

In fact, Joe le Blanc had been assured that his place would be a rendezvous for certain mobsters, and he was expecting to hold his first party that night.

"Must have told Monk Thurman more than just that," said Le Blanc meditatively. "Guess I told him about some of the boys I knew. What they do, and how they do it. Well, I know a lot. I hope Monk was listening to everything I said."

There was a knock at the door. Le Blanc opened the portal.

"Everything is in, Mr. le Blanc," said a sour-looking, middle-aged man.

"Good work, Harper. Have you made all the arrangements for tonight?"

"Everything is ready, sir."

"All right. Wake me up when the gang comes."

LE BLANC sat in a large armchair and began to doze. Within a few minutes the sound of his snores could be heard throughout the room. In fact, they might have been audible through the slight crack beneath the iron shutters.

Darkness fell, and Joe le Blanc slept on. The iron shutters moved very slightly, and noiselessly. They opened a few inches, and a hand appeared through the window. It held a small instrument, and as the hand groped about, it discovered a radiator beside the window.

The hand deposited the instrument behind the radiator. A wire ran through the window, but the hand covered it by moving a few magazines that were on the window sill.

One of the magazines slipped as though by accident, and laid against the top of the radiator.

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There was a light burning in the room, but all this was unseen by Joe le Blanc, because he was asleep. Then the shutters were pressed close together noiselessly.

Half an hour later, Joe le Blanc was awakened by a knock at the door. It was Harper, announcing that the expected guests had arrived; Le Blanc stretched himself, turned on another light, and went to the door.

A group of gangsters entered, and shook hands with Le Blanc. They gathered about the table, and Harper brought in food and dishes. While they ate, the middle-aged attendant supplied them with liquor.

It was an auspicious preliminary party to the opening of the Gray Mill, so far as Joe le Blanc was concerned.

During the next two hours, he considered himself to be a big shot, at last. For the mobsmen who had honored him with their presence were notorious members of Nick Savoli's staff of gunmen, and they promised Le Blanc that they would make his road house a regular rendezvous.

The conversation drifted occasionally to affairs of gangdom, but for the most part it concerned horse racing, and other subjects of a sporting nature.

The only fault found with Le Blanc's party was that it was a stag affair. One of the visiting gunmen insisted that it would have been improved by the presence of some girls.

"Come around after the place is opened," said Le Blanc. "I'll have plenty of molls here. Bring some along with you, if you want, but you'll meet a lot of classy ones here at the Gray Mill."

About ten o'clock, the gangsters began to leave. Most of them had some special reason for being back in Chicago before midnight. Hence the party dwindled away until only one man remained with Joe le Blanc.

This one man was dark-faced, and wore a black mustache. He had a smooth appearance, and one might have mistaken him for a professional gambler rather than a gunman.

No one apparently suspected that this man had been waiting for the others to leave; nevertheless that was his purpose in staying. For as soon as the crowd was gone, the one remaining man drew a chair to the side of the table, and looked questioningly at Joe le Blanc.

CHAPTER VII. PLANS ARE MADE

"WELL, Steve," remarked Joe le Blanc, "how do you like the joint?"

"You asked us all that question," responded the stocky man with the black mustache. "That isn't why you tipped me off to stay after the others went. What's on your mind, Joe? Spill it!"

Joe le Blanc stared shrewdly at the man who had spoken so plainly. He had intended to lead up slowly to the idea that he had in mind; but now he decided that direct procedure was the best policy.

"Listen, Steve," he said, "you and I can do a lot for each other. Savvy?"

The other man laughed.

"I might be able to do a lot for you, Joe. It's a question how much you could do for me."

"I can do plenty, Steve."

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"What, for instance?"

"Well, I can tip you off to a bit of interesting information for a starter. Did you ever hear of Monk Thurman?"

The question produced another laugh from the stocky individual.

"Did I ever hear of Monk Thurman!" he exclaimed. "What's this, a game of 'Ask Me Another'? Next you'll be wanting to know if I ever heard of George Washington."

Joe le Blanc indulged in a grim smile.

"All right," he said. "Of course you've heard of Monk Thurman. But did you ever meet him?"

"Yes."

"How often?"

"Several times."

"Does he know you?"

"I don't think so."

"Good." Joe le Blanc's statement was emphatic. "Steve Cronin knows Monk Thurman. Monk Thurman doesn't know Steve Cronin."

"All right," replied the other man. "Monk Thurman doesn't know me. But Monk Thurman's in New York. How does that concern us?"

"Monk Thurman is in Chicago!" answered Le Blanc.

"What of it?" retorted Cronin. "He doesn't mean anything here. I'm in with the Chicago big shots. I wouldn't give a plugged nickel for all the gangs in New York."

"No?" questioned Le Blanc. "Well, Nick Savoli would give a lot of real dough just to have Monk Thurman on his pay roll. What do you think of that?"

CRONIN stared sharply at the other man. Joe le Blanc smiled. His words had created the impression that he had desired. He knew that Steve Cronin's interest was now aroused.

He waited quietly, anticipating an exclamation of surprise from Cronin, and he was not disappointed.

"Savoli wants Thurman?" cried Cronin. "What does the big shot know about Monk Thurman? How does that guy figure in Chicago?"

"Why, I heard that he was finding things pretty tough in New York that he was in wrong all around!"

"Well, he's in right here," retorted Joe le Blanc. "When I say that Nick Savoli wants him, I mean that Mike Borrango wants him, and that amounts to about the same thing."

This new statement did not please Steve Cronin. There was an anxious expression on the dark man's face, and

he looked at Le Blanc as though demanding further details.

"Here's the low-down, Steve," said the proprietor of the Gray Mill. "There was a fracas at Frank Marmosa's, last night."

"I heard about it," said Cronin. "Somebody plugged Eddie Heeny, while he was in the restaurant. They say that Schultz and Spirak were mixed up in it."

"But what has that got to do with Monk Thurman?"

"Just this." Joe le Blanc leaned across the table and spoke emphatically. "Heeny was killed in the restaurant. But the real blow-off was in the gambling joint. Schultz and Spirak tried to stick up the place."

"No!" There was incredulity in Cronin's voice. "Where were the Homicide Twins? I thought they protected Marmosa."

"Where were they? Outside, following a blind lead. Chasing the guy that plugged Heeny."

"Larrigan's men were in the joint, and they had us covered. But Monk Thurman was there, too. Listen, Steve, you missed the greatest gun play of your life."

"Monk crippled both those boys like they were a couple of Boy Scouts. He was laying against the bar like he was asleep, and he just put those two false alarms out of commission in about five seconds!"

"Monk Thurman did that? I can't believe it, Joe."

"Why not? He's a killer, isn't he?"

"Yes, but he doesn't work that way. He fights with a mob. Shoots at close range. This marksmanship stuff is news to me."

"I saw it, Steve."

"He's playing a new game then. But how does that tie him up with the big shot?"

Joe le Blanc laughed.

"Wake up, Steve," he said. "Marmosa pays coin to Savoli, doesn't he?"

"Of course."

"Well, he called up Mike Borrango last night, and told him all about the battle, when Mike came to collect the cut."

"Did he introduce Thurman to Borrango?"

"No. Monk was gone."

"Oh!" There was a note of relief in Cronin's interjection. "So Borrango hasn't got hold of Thurman, yet."

"Not yet, Steve. That's why I'm wising you up. Monk Thurman is a killer de luxe. He did a better job last

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night than Genara and Anelmo could have done together.

"He's the kind of a torpedo that both Savoli and Borrango can use.

STEVE CRONIN sat for a moment in careful thought. He reached to the table, poured himself a drink from a bottle, and then turned to Joe le Blanc.

"Thanks for the tip-off, Joe," he said. "I get your drift exactly. You know what I've been doing here. I came in as a stranger. I got with Savoli. I've moved up, right along. I'm one of his best men right now."

"That's right, Steve. I'm a friend of yours. I want to see you stay where you are or get further."

"O.K., Joe. Well, I'm getting farther. I'm going out on a real job to-morrow night. When I pull that one, I'll be worth plenty dough to Savoli!"

Le Blanc did not reply, but he raised his eyebrows in a questioning manner. Cronin observed him; and smiled slightly.

"Can't tell you what it is, Joe," he said. "I'm leaving Savoli's some time in the evening. The alibi is all fixed. I'll let you in on this much of it I'm taking Guisto's place."

"I get you, Steve. He got his the other night, didn't he?"

"Yeah "

"Say, you're with Machine-gun McGinnis, now, aren't you? I suppose he will be on to-morrow night's job."

Steve Cronin snapped his fingers.

"Enough said, Joe," was his reply. "Forget it, now. What concerns you is this: after to-morrow night, I'm going to mean something here in Chicago. I'll have the jump on the rest of the boys. I don't want any competition."

"Such as "

"Such as Monk Thurman. That's why I'm glad you tipped me off. I heard that Monk was through in New York. The West Side gang was out to get him. Well, he's made a mistake if he's come to Chicago."

"I don't know about that, Steve. Savoli wants him, that's a good start for him."

"Well, I hope Savoli don't find him. That gives me an idea, Joe. Suppose, before Savoli or Borrango find Monk Thurman, Schultz and Spirak get ahold of him. Where will Monk Thurman be then?"

"Out in a ditch, full of lead."

"Correct. Then he won't be any use to Savoli."

"I get you, Steve."

"Right, Joe. If you locate Monk, just pass the word along to Larrigan's gang. Then it will be curtains for this tough gorilla from New York."

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Joe le Blanc nodded his head as he looked shrewdly toward his companion. He knew that he could profit greatly by aligning himself with Nick Savoli's henchmen. He had chosen Steve Cronin as the first one to approach, chiefly because Cronin was advancing rapidly in the employ of the big shot.

STEVE CRONIN had come to Chicago a few months before. He was wanted in New York, and he kept away from the East. Under the protection of Nick Savoli, he had developed into a notorious gunman.

Cronin was famed for his nerve. He had displayed it often in the past, when working in his own interests. Now, as Savoli's man, he had reached a high place in Chicago gangdom. It was rumored that he was slated to become Nick Savoli's personal bodyguard.

To be of service to Steve Cronin was Joe le Blanc's aim. Every gangster in Chicago was known to Le Blanc. He was one of those characters who hedge the borderland of gangdom, and who are safe so long as they mind their own affairs.

Le Blanc had been cautious in his actions. He had emphasized his connection with Frank Marmosa, and he intended to run his road house on the same plan that Marmosa utilized with the restaurant. But he had nothing to lose, and much to gain, by cultivating a secret friendship with Steve Cronin.

Before concluding the conversation, he made this fact evident.

"Listen, Steve," he remarked, in a careful tone. "I've got to watch everything that I do. I'm not out to get into trouble. I'm going to run this place and be friends to everybody. But at the same time, if I can be of help to you "

"I've got the idea, Joe," interrupted Cronin. "Play with me, and you won't lose a thing. You tipped me off to some real news to-night. Keep on with that kind of work."

"But get me straight," insisted Le Blanc. "I'm no double-crosser, Steve. I'm friends to everybody but I'll work with you, and with nobody else."

Steve Cronin grinned. He realized that Le Blanc was speaking the truth, and he saw how the alliance could prove of great value to himself.

Cronin lacked much important knowledge about Chicago. In his period of service with Savoli, he had depended upon information given to him by the big shot, or by Borrango, the enforcer. But here was opportunity.

"I can do a lot, Steve," continued Le Blanc, anxious to impress Cronin with his own importance. "I can tip you off to where guys are, when you're looking for them. I can even get them out here but I can't do that too often. I've got to play safe, Steve "

"That's right, Joe. I won't expect too much of you. Play with me, that's all. And if you want to make a real start, find where Monk Thurman is, and see to it that Larrigan's men get the dope."

"Right, Steve."

Steve Cronin shoved his hand toward Joe le Blanc, and the other man responded. As they clasped hands, Cronin summarized their alliance.

"You for me, and me for you. That's the racket, Joe. Get it?"

"You for me," repeated Le Blanc, "and me for you."

Steve Cronin arose.

"Time to be getting in to town," he said. "Got your car here?"

"In the garage, Steve."

"Big car or a little one?"

"A coupe."

"Great. I don't like sedans. Sometimes you have a friend in the back seat of a big car and sometimes a friend isn't always a friend."

"That's the truth, Steve."

THE two men left the room. Harper came in as they entered, and removed the bottles. Then he turned out the lights.

Scarcely had the room become dark before the iron shutters opened as noiselessly as they had in the afternoon. An invisible hand came over the window sill, and removed the small instrument from behind the radiator.

Outside the road house, a still, shadowy form moved back across the lawn to a clump of bushes. That spot had been the receiving end of the dictograph connection, where the invisible listener had overheard the entire conversation that had passed between Joe le Blanc and Steve Cronin.

No one saw the black shape enter the bushes. It remained there. When Joe le Blanc drove his car from the garage, the headlights shone directly upon the shrubbery, but they revealed nothing. The coupe moved slowly, and as it passed beside the bushes, Joe le Blanc spoke.

"I told Monk Thurman to come out here," he said, "and I kind of expected him to—night. But now I'm glad he didn't show up "

Steve Cronin grunted a reply of approval as the car swung away from the shrubbery beside the drive.

As the red light on the rear of the automobile moved toward the highway, there was a sound that emerged from the silence of the bushes.

It was a sound that did not reach the ears of Le Blanc or Cronin, for they were then too far away, and the noise of the motor was throbbing in their ears.

Had they heard the sound, they would have been amazed Joe le Blanc because of the strangeness of the sound; Steve Cronin, because he had heard that sound in the past.

Le Blanc would not have understood it; Cronin would have understood it too well.

For the sound that emerged from those closely woven bushes was a laugh a strident laugh a sinister, mocking laugh, that increased with the tempo of a winter wind, and dwindled away to a nothingness that carried an uncanny echo.

It was a laugh that had struck terror into the hearts of brave men; a laugh that carried a meaning that none could grasp, yet that all could fear. It was a laugh that seemed like the mockery of the night itself.

It was the laugh of The Shadow!

CHAPTER VIII. SAVOLI GIVES ORDERS

AT eight o'clock the next evening, a man approached the Escadrille Apartments, just outside the Loop district of Chicago. On entering the pretentious building, he stopped in front of an open elevator, where the operator surveyed him in a casual manner.

"Hello, Steve," said the elevator man. "Step in. You're expected upstairs."

Steve Cronin entered the elevator. He did not give the floor number. The operator knew where he was going to the fourth floor. For the Escadrille Apartments were owned by Nick Savoli, and the king of Chicago gangland lived on the fourth floor.

The elevator operators were gunmen in disguise. They received full instructions when they went on duty. To the average person entering the Escadrille, they would have appeared to be ordinary elevator men.

But the man who operated the car in which Steve Cronin rode upstairs carried an automatic beneath his trim uniform, and had any strange gangster tried to go up to Savoli's apartment, he would have encountered unexpected resistance.

Nick Savoli did not occupy the entire building. The other tenants of the Escadrille were wealthy persons who knew very little about the man who lived on the fourth floor.

Every one used the elevator; the only stairs were those that led through fire tower. It was impossible to reach the fourth floor except by elevator, as the fire tower exits were barred from the inside.

Steve Cronin slouched against the side of the elevator as he rode upward. The operator cast an admiring glance in his direction. He envied Steve's position in gangland.

Cronin made frequent visits to the home of the big shot, and there were few gangsters to whom Nick Savoli granted that privilege.

The elevator stopped at the fourth floor. Steve Cronin stepped out, and stood before an iron grille. Beyond the ornamental device was a small antechamber.

The gangster pressed a push button. A stalwart Italian servant appeared. He recognized Cronin and unfastened the locked gate.

Cronin passed through the gate and entered a room on the right. Huge shelves of bookcases decorated the walls. The handsomely bound volumes showed no signs of having ever been removed from their resting places.

Cronin seated himself in a large leather chair. He took a cigarette from a stand, and lighted it. Leaning back comfortably, he puffed in an insolent manner, and threw out his chest with an air of self-satisfaction.

A DOOR opened at the far end of the library, and two men entered. Both were dressed in tuxedos. One was short, and heavy set. The other was tall, and slightly stoop-shouldered. The short man walked across the

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room, and approached Steve Cronin. The gangster waved his hand in greeting.

"Hello, Nick," he said.

The short man nodded. No smile appeared on his dark-visaged face a face that seemed rough despite the fact that it was smooth-shaven. This man sat in a chair near Cronin, and looked intently at the gangster.

Despite his feigned nonchalance, Steve Cronin was inwardly ill at ease, for he was now in the presence of Nick Savoli, the reputed overlord of gangdom.

The tall, dark, stoop-shouldered man who had accompanied Savoli took a standing position against a bookcase at the side of the room. He was none other than Mike Borrango, prime minister of gangland's emperor.

There were no formalities in this meeting. Steve Cronin, a gangster of recognized ability, had the privilege of greeting his chief as "Nick."

The king of the racketeers made no pretense of royal ceremony. He was a man who ridiculed sham, for his real power was greater than that of a monarch. His single word could bring swift death; his henchmen obeyed his commands without a murmur.

Steve Cronin knew that he had been summoned for a mission. He had already received an inkling of this from Mike Borrango, as he had intimated to Joe le Blanc.

He knew that there was a big job ahead, and he could already hear the rattle of a machine gun in his imagination.

Savoli did not speak at once. Instead, he lighted an expensive cigar.

"What's up, chief?" questioned Cronin, in a hoarse voice. He was anxious to end this tension.

Savoli did not reply. He still gazed at the gangster. Then he turned toward Borrango, and raised his eyebrows in a questioning manner.

Borrango stared at Cronin also, and made no sign in reply. Savoli evidently took this as a mark of approval.

"Steve," he said, "you have done some nice work. Some very nice work."

Cronin grinned at the compliment.

"Very nice work," resumed Savoli. "You think you can do more nice work?"

"Anything you want, Nick," replied Cronin gruffly. "Tell me what to do, and I'll do it."

"What do you think, Mike?" asked Savoli, turning to Borrango.

The tall Italian thereupon shrugged his shoulders.

"You need another man, Nick," he said, in a smooth, musical voice. "I think that Steve can speak for himself. You heard what he just said."

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CRONIN looked at Borrango, and gripped his hands together in simulation of a handshake. It was his method of thanking Borrango for the recommendation. He did not know that Savoli and Borrango had discussed this matter before he had arrived.

Right now they were creating an effect in Cronin's mind. They formed an admirable team of pretenders, Savoli and Borrango. The average mobster was always deceived by their actions.

Savoli, skeptical, and hard visaged, seemed difficult to convince. Borrango, smooth, and suave, could make the average man believe that black was white.

Borrango was called the enforcer, but it was seldom that he used brutal tactics. His method was to make compromises; to offer compliments; and to bring others to his way of thinking.

At this very moment, Steve Cronin believed that he stood "in right" with Mike Borrango. He held the impression that the enforcer was fixing everything for him, so that he might gain Nick Savoli's full favor.

As a matter of fact, Borrango was playing his usual game. With Mike Borrango, fallacies were more desirable than fact. He liked to lie and to create false impressions, for he was imaginative and ingenious, and neither of those qualities was necessary to tell plain truth.

"Very well." Savoli's comment came as a final statement. It seemed as though he had suddenly decided to choose Steve Cronin for to-night's mission. "I shall count on you, Steve. You explain to him, Mike."

The tall Italian leaned back against the bookcase.

"It is this way, Steve," he said, in his perfect, purring English. "We are putting a man on the spot to-night. Machine-gun McGinnis is doing the trick, and you are to be with him."

"O.K. with me," responded Cronin.

"It is important that you have an alibi," resumed Borrango. "We have arranged that, with Georgie Sommers. You know where his place is. Go there from here."

Steve Cronin nodded. He knew that Georgie Sommers was an alibi man, but he had never yet been sent to the man's place.

Sommers ran a small cigar store, where gangsters frequently dropped in to park their guns when they were entering the Loop. There were times when gunmen went without guns, yet wanted their automatics when they were in a hurry.

"Will McGinnis be there, too?" questioned Cronin.

"Do not worry about McGinnis," replied Borrango. "Just tell Sommers you want to play cards upstairs. He will know what you mean.

"He will show you out the back way. Cover your tracks from there on, until you get to Hallahan's garage. You will find a big touring car there. Get in it. Take orders from McGinnis."

"O.K., Mike."

"Afterward, go back to Sommers. He will introduce you to a young lady whom you may have met before. Go

to a night club with her. That will give you a double alibi."

"O.K. I go back into Sommers' place the same way he lets me out."

"Certainly."

SILENCE followed. Steve Cronin looked questioningly at both Savoli and Borrango. The king of gangsters was staring at him, as though still unconvinced that he had chosen the right man. The enforcer counteracted his chief's critical glance by a slight smile of approval.

"Anything else?" questioned Cronin.

Mike Borrango shook his head.

"Don't I know the name of the guy we're going to put on the spot?" asked Cronin.

"That is a natural question," replied Borrango softly. "Yet it may be best for you to wait until McGinnis tells you. He will do the principal work. You are helping him to-night."

Savoli made an interruption.

"I'll tell him, Mike," he said, as though bestowing a favor upon Cronin. "This is an important job. Best for him to know."

Borrango bowed his approval.

"You're going to get Morris Clarendon," said Savoli.

"What!" Steve Cronin's voice was incredulous. "You don't mean "

"That's just the man I do mean," replied Nick Savoli emphatically. "Morris Clarendon, the assistant district attorney."

Steve Cronin steadied himself with an effort.

The name of Morris Clarendon was known to every gangster in Chicago. Clarendon was a fearless prosecutor, one who had sent racketeers and bootleggers to jail despite the efforts of gangland's high-salaried lawyers.

"You are to get Morris Clarendon," said Borrango, as though echoing the words of his chief. "He has been a trouble-maker. It is time that he was put on the spot. So do not fail."

Steve Cronin nodded, and a gleam of satisfaction appeared in his eyes. Determination governed his features, for he realized that here was the opportunity he had long awaited.

Steve recalled that an important case was coming up within the next week, and that Clarendon had announced that he would send two prominent racketeers to jail. The assistant district attorney was keeping certain witnesses under cover. Gangland had not been able to reach them.

Now Cronin thought he understood. With Clarendon dead, the unknown witnesses would lose their protector. More than that, they would be terrified by the death of the man upon whom they relied. They would fear the

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iron hand of Nick Savoli, king of mobsters.

BUT Steve Cronin knew only half the story. Nick Savoli was no clumsy fool. When he used his methods, he always considered the future.

The racketeers who were up for trial had no connection with him. On the contrary, they were secretly identified with Larrigan, archenemy of King Savoli.

This killing was to accomplish two ends: first, to eliminate the one prosecutor who was a thorn to Nick Savoli; second, to make trouble for those gangsters who had interfered too often in Savoli's business.

Neither Savoli nor Borrango explained this. They wanted Steve Cronin to fear for his own safety; to thank them for the alibi which they had provided. So they remained as motionless and as expressionless as pieces of statuary, while they watched the emotions that Cronin betrayed.

They knew that he had been momentarily amazed by the boldness of his mission; but they had also anticipated that his pride in his own prowess would dominate his actions.

In this they were not disappointed. Steve Cronin arose from his chair, pushed his cigarette stump into the ash tray, and swaggered toward the door. There he stopped, extended his arms, and snapped his fingers.

"Morris Clarendon," he said, with a short laugh. "What does he mean? They're all alike to me. Guess they're all the same to McGinnis, too. Where are we going to knock him off?"

"McGinnis will tell you that," said Savoli.

"O.K.," answered Steve Cronin. "Is that all?"

"That's all," said Savoli.

Cronin waved his hand in farewell and left the room, rang for the elevator and went downstairs.

"Wait a minute, Steve," said the operator, as they reached the ground floor. "Stay right here a minute."

He went to the front door, and peered in both directions, along the street. Then he returned.

"What's up, kid?" questioned Cronin.

"Nothing, I guess," replied the operator. "Just wanted to make sure. A little while ago I went outside just after I took you up. Went to the front door to smoke a cigarette. Thought I saw a guy slide up to the edge of the building."

"What did he look like?"

"I couldn't see. I wasn't even sure it was a man. Looked like somebody slipping into the shadow alongside of the entrance. I went out to look around. Didn't see anybody. But I just wanted to be sure it wasn't any one watching you."

"All right, kid," said Cronin. "Guess you'd better lay off this stuff they call good liquor. Nobody's worrying about me. I'm not doing anything."

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He left the apartment house, and as he went out of the door, he glanced at the shadowy spot mentioned by the elevator operator. It was only a small dark place near the entrance, and Steve Cronin laughed as he saw it.

Had Steve Cronin been less intent in his consideration of machine guns, and his plans for the night, he might have looked behind him as he walked along the street. But even if he had looked behind him, he probably would have seen nothing.

For the form which moved from the spot of blackness beside the entrance to the Escadrille Apartments was scarcely more than a shadowy blot. It emerged before Cronin had gone more than thirty feet. It flitted across the entrance, then disappeared again.

The shadowy blot had the form of a man's silhouette, yet no person was visible against the wall. Then the moving blackness disappeared, and was lost in the night.

Still, it followed Steve Cronin, and always remained the same distance behind him. For every time the gangster passed beneath the bright lights of a street corner, the moving shadow became visible as it flitted swiftly after him.

CHAPTER IX. MESSENGERS OF DEATH

STEVE CRONIN followed a round-about path to the cigar store that was run by Georgie Sommers. The time had not yet arrived for his prospective alibi but he realized that it was advisable for him to utilize discretion during every stage of this night's venture. In fact, he probably would not have been summoned to Nick Savoli's apartment, but for the fact that he had been a frequent visitor there during the past few weeks.

The cigar store was located on a side street at the edge of the Loop. Cronin entered the place and was pleased to observe that it was virtually deserted. Georgie Sommers, a rotund man who looked like an ex-bartender, stood behind the counter in his shirt sleeves, and waved his hand in greeting when the gunman arrived.

"Hello, Georgie," said Steve Cronin. "Not many of the boys here to-night. Checking business getting slow?"

"Not a bit of it," replied Sommers. "They've all been here and gone."

"I'm kind of late, eh? Well, I'm not going anywhere for a while. How about a game of cards, Georgie? Anything doing?"

Sommers looked at Cronin rather skeptically. He had not been told whom to expect. He wanted to be sure that the gangster was the right man.

Sommers knew that Cronin was well established with both Savoli and Borrango. Nevertheless he believed in being careful.

"A game of cards, eh?" he questioned.

"You said it, Georgie," answered Cronin. "Any of the bunch upstairs now?"

The cigar-store owner shook his head. Then he seemed to gain a sudden thought.

"Say, Steve," he remarked, in a confidential tone. "I've got a girl friend who would like to meet you. She's coming over here in a little while. How about coming upstairs until she arrives? Maybe we can play cards and maybe "

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He paused and made the motion of lifting a glass to his lips. The action brought a grin to Cronin's face.

"Good stuff, Georgie?"

"The best there is, Steve. I don't peddle it. Just keep a little for my friends. Came over the border last week."

"O.K. with me, Georgie."

The cigar man opened the back door of the room and called upstairs. A young clerk came down, and Sommers ordered him to take charge of the shop.

Then he led Steve Cronin up the stairs, to a room where the blinds were drawn. He brought out a bottle and two glasses.

WHILE the two men were engaged in conversation, a slight incident occurred in the cigar store below.

A man staggered into the place and ordered a pack of cigarettes. He found fault with the brand that was given to him, and began an argument with the clerk.

The clerk went to the show case behind the counter to obtain the cigarettes required. When he turned around, he was surprised to see that the man had left. There was no one else in the store at the time.

The clerk decided that his customer had walked out. So he forgot all about the matter.

Had the clerk been watching the customer, he would have been surprised by the man's actions. For the stranger had not left the store.

The moment that the clerk had turned, he had moved noiselessly to the back of the store and had slipped through the door to the stairway.

Once behind the door, the man strode rapidly up the stairs. Yet he moved with catlike stealth. He paused outside the half-opened door of the room where Georgie Sommers and Steve Cronin were conversing. The cigar-store owner was giving instructions to the gangster.

"Walk across the hall, Steve," he was saying, "and go down the back stairs. You'll find a door leading out on the alley. Come in the same way. It has a trick lock. Pull out the knob before you turn it."

"All right, Georgie," replied Cronin.

"You'll find me here when you get back," added Sommers. "Don't lose any time. The sooner you're here, the better."

The gangster did not reply. He apparently decided that the sooner he started the better it would be. He opened the door of the room, and as he did so, the man in the hallway merged suddenly with the shadowy wall.

The door opened outward. There was a small space in back of it, and the man was lost in that narrow hiding place.

Steve Cronin found the back stairs, and groped his way down through the darkness. He stumbled once or twice, and made some noise despite his carefulness, for the stairs were rough and winding.

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The man who followed him made no noise. He moved silently, as though possessed of eyesight that could see through the darkness.

Steve Cronin opened the back door and closed it behind him. He had not gone more than thirty feet along the alley before the door again opened, just far enough to allow passage for the form of a tall, thin man.

Cronin happened to glance backward at that particular moment, yet he saw nothing. For the door had opened softly and slowly, and the man who had come through the opening was clad in a black cloak that made him invisible in the gloom of the alley.

TWENTY minutes later, Steve Cronin arrived at Hallahan's garage. He glanced up and down the street before he entered the building. Then he stepped through the doorway, and immediately spotted the touring car for which he was looking.

The automobile stood in an obscure corner. The gangster walked to it, unobserved, and climbed in the large back seat. He noted that the flap curtains were on the sides of the car. That was natural, for the night was cloudy, and rain was threatening.

A voice spoke from the darkness.

"That you, Cronin?"

"Right."

"Lay low then. I'm McGinnis. We've got a couple of minutes to wait for Brodie. He's driving us to night."

Steve Cronin recognized the name of Brodie. He realized that he was with two of the most stalwart workers in Nick Savoli's mob of killers.

Brodie was the man who had driven the car in which Savoli had escaped the gunfire of a rival gang chief a man who had been killed afterward as a reward for his attempt on Savoli's life. "Machine-gun" McGinnis was reputed to have fired the fatal shots that had brought down two of Savoli's enemies while they were walking along Michigan Boulevard.

"Here's Brodie now," whispered McGinnis.

Steve Cronin turned toward the door through which he had entered the rear seat, and thought he detected a motion of the curtains. Then he heard a noise on the other side, and looked to see Brodie entering the driver's seat. He could not distinguish the man's features in the darkness.

"Funny thing," said Cronin, half aloud. "I thought he was getting in back with us."

He looked around to make sure that he had not been deceived. A pile of robes lay on the other side of the back seat, and as Cronin reached in that direction, his hand encountered cold metal the barrel of a machine gun.

"Stay over on this side," warned McGinnis. "I've got the typewriter ready, there, under the blankets. Don't touch it until we need it."

"Ready?" asked Brodie.

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"Go ahead," replied McGinnis. "You know where we're going. Over by Birch's drug store."

The touring car rolled slowly from the garage, and as it reached the street, McGinnis drew Cronin to the floor beside him.

"Lay low," he whispered. "Make it look like the car was empty. We'll get the typewriter ready in a minute."

In gangland's parlance, the word typewriter meant machine gun; the instrument of death was so called because its rapid clicks resembled the noise of typewriter keys.

"We're working from this side," explained McGinnis. "This guy Clarendon is something of a dumb cluck, even though he thinks he's smart. He's going to be waiting on the corner for us."

"How was that fixed?" asked Cronin.

"I don't know," replied McGinnis. "But he fell for some line of hokum, or he wouldn't be there now. There's just a chance that we won't find him, but Borrango says that he'll be there, sure."

The automobile swung into a wide street. Far up ahead an electric sign displayed the name of Birch.

"That's the spot, up ahead," whispered McGinnis to Cronin, preparing the gun for action. "He ought to be outside right now."

As a matter of fact, Morris Clarendon was outside of Birch's drug store at that very moment. He had been waiting for more than fifteen minutes, and he intended to wait indefinitely. For the assistant prosecutor had arranged a meeting, at that place, with a man whom he believed would be an important material witness in a forthcoming trial.

Clarendon did not know that the person whom he expected would never keep the appointment. Gangsters had killed the man two nights before, and the victim's body had not yet been found.

Savoli's emissaries were thorough in their methods. They had learned of the rendezvous, and they knew that Clarendon had promised to wait until his man arrived. The drug store had been chosen as a meeting place because it was in a district unfrequented by gangsters.

The young attorney had no thought of impending danger. He paid no attention to the vehicles passing in the street. Standing in the full light of the corner, he was watching for the approach of the man he expected.

It was a freak of chance that warned Morris Clarendon of the doom which threatened him; and like so many of Fate's grim jokes, the warning was to come too late.

A gust of wind swept across the sidewalk, and carried a hat from a man's head. Clarendon saw the hat roll into the street. It was captured by its owner, and the man leaped back to the sidewalk to escape an approaching car.

Clarendon saw this, and the movement of the car immediately held his attention. For the automobile was a touring car with sideflaps; it was swinging toward the curb in an eccentric fashion; and its whole appearance and action betrayed its purpose.

Morris Clarendon recognized it as a death car, and in one brief instant he realized that he was the object of its threat.

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He looked for a place to dodge; but he was too late. The car was almost upon him, now.

He was standing twenty feet from the corner, against the wall of the building. There was no doorway near. Clarendon's knees could not respond to his desire to rush for safety.

All was futile. The car was at the curb, swinging slowly onward, and beneath the flap of the rear seat the young district attorney saw the projecting muzzle of the machine gun a blackened muzzle that looked like the mouthpiece of a telephone.

That muzzle meant death! Quick death, and sure death. There was no escaping it.

So, with grim determination, Morris Clarendon flattened his body against the wall, ready to receive the fatal bullets which would end his life.

CHAPTER X. THE SHADOW SPEAKS

THREE grim men were ready for business when the car swung up to the spot where Morris Clarendon was standing.

Brodie, at the wheel, had spotted the assistant prosecutor one hundred feet away, and had slackened the speed of the car so that the victim would be a perfect target for Machine-gun McGinnis and his unerring aim.

"Ready," was all he said, and Steve Cronin repeated the word to McGinnis.

There was no mistaking Morris Clarendon, and he was the only man in sight. Of all the jobs that Machine-gun McGinnis had performed for Nick Savoli, this one appeared by far the easiest.

The killer chuckled as he prepared to pull the trigger, and his mirth was echoed by Steve Cronin, ready at his side.

Both men were intent upon the lighted wall where the living target stood.

Morris Clarendon had given himself up for lost, and was facing death with true bravery. But to such mobsters as McGinnis and Cronin, his attitude brought nothing but ridicule.

This deed was business to them. They were about to earn new service stripes in the cause of Nick Savoli; and the simplicity of this execution made them laugh.

With their eyes peering from the curtains, these grim men gave no thought to the blackness that surrounded them in the back seat of the touring car.

As for Brodie, the chauffeur, his thoughts were completely away from the scene.

He had picked the route which he intended to follow. The work of execution belonged to the others. He was ready to swing down the street to safety, and he was oblivious to anything but his duties as driver.

Machine-gun McGinnis rested his finger on the trigger with a professional air. He was picking the exact moment to release the hail of steel-jacketed bullets that would seal the fate of Morris Clarendon.

But before his finger moved, he received the greatest surprise of his career. As if from nowhere, the end of a steel rod was pressed into the small of his back.

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Steve Cronin, close beside McGinnis, received the same token at that precise instant. Like McGinnis, he knew the feel of the muzzle of an automatic.

Then there came low-whispered words from the darkness of the back seat. A weird, uncanny voice spoke in sinister tones.

"If you fire, you die!"

There was no mistaking the terms. Machine-gun McGinnis, intrepid gangster that he was, felt his finger tremble. He instinctively removed it from the trigger of the weapon.

Steve Cronin was even more perturbed. He had heard that voice before. He slumped to the floor of the car, completely overcome by fear.

THE touring car rolled leisurely past the spot where Morris Clarendon awaited certain death. The machine gun remained inactive. Its black muzzle loomed ominously from the curtains, but that was all.

The car moved toward the corner. Then Brodie, amazed by the silence, turned his head.

Like the others, he heard a whispered command.

"Drive on," ordered the voice from the back seat.

Brodie hesitated for a moment. Then he realized that it was too late to change the situation, whatever might have occurred.

His duty was to make a get-away; the handling of the machine gun belonged to the men in the back seat. The chauffeur pressed the accelerator, and the car whirled rapidly down the broad street.

The automatic was withdrawn from the back of Machine-gun McGinnis. With a cry of anger, the gangster turned to seize the man who held it.

The handle of the revolver dealt him a stunning blow against the side of the head, and he sank beside the machine gun, limp and helpless. Then the muzzle of the automatic brought cold chills to the neck of Brodie the chauffeur.

"Slow down," ordered the whispered voice.

The chauffeur obeyed.

The revolver was gone, and at the same instant Steve Cronin realized that he, too, was freed from the ominous threat behind him. Yet neither man dared to move, and while they trembled, they heard the sound of a sinister, mocking voice—a voice that laughed amid the blackness of the car that had failed in its mission of destruction.

Brodie, still fearful, brought the car to a dead stop. Then his courage returned. He twisted his body, and flung himself over the back of the front seat, drawing an automatic.

Steve Cronin, reassured by Brodie's action, pulled a flashlight from his pocket, and illuminated the interior of the car.

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There was nothing there but a pile of robes. The men flung them aside, hurling them upon the inert form of Machine-gun McGinnis. Yet they revealed nothing.

Silently, invisibly, the mysterious man of the night had slipped from the car, and was gone.

Brodie leaped to the street. He fancied that he saw some one moving behind the car, and he leveled his automatic. Then he realized that the fancied form was nothing but a moving shadow, beneath a swinging sign.

He lowered his gun; then realized that the shadow was a living being a tall, thin shape, that suddenly showed itself in view.

He fired then, but he was too late. The man was gone, and from the distance came a long, ringing laugh.

BRODIE and Cronin lifted up McGinnis. The machine-gun operator opened his eyes and glowered at them beneath the glare of Cronin's flashlight.

"Did you get him?" he demanded.

"No," replied Brodie.

"Who was he?"

"I don't know."

Steve Cronin offered no explanation. He knew who the man was.

Once before he had met The Shadow. That had been the only time in his life that he had known fear before tonight. Now he was trembling in spite of himself, for once again he had been conquered by the mighty enemy of gangsters.

Brodie propped McGinnis against the back seat of the touring car, and motioned to Cronin to take care of him. Then he resumed his place at the wheel, and drove away, giving instructions and suggestions.

"You bungled this job," he growled. "but there's no use arguing about it now. The big shot will have plenty to say to-morrow.

"I'm going to drop you off, Cronin, just as I was told to do. I'll take care of McGinnis. A couple of mugs; that's all you are."

"What about yourself?" asked Cronin sarcastically.

"What about me?" growled the chauffeur. "I was looking after the work up here. It was your job in back. Why did you let that guy in?"

"Why did you let him out?"

Brodie was too angry to reply. He pulled into an alley, and brought the car to a stop.

"Hop out," he said to Cronin. "Look out for yourself from now on. You've got nothing to worry about, though."

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Steve Cronin clambered from the touring car. His legs were still weak, and he steadied himself against a lamppost. Brodie drove away immediately, leaving the thwarted gangster to his thoughts.

Cronin looked up and down the alley, as though afraid that the ominous man of the car was still present. Then he managed to regain control of himself, and he started in the direction of Sommers' cigar store.

He entered by the back door, and found his way to the room upstairs. There he discovered Georgie Sommers and the girl whom he had expected to meet.

"This is Mr. Cronin," said Sommers. "Steve, I want you to meet Kitty Boland."

Cronin managed to smile as he bowed. The girl was a handsome brunette, of a type that appealed to gangsters.

Cronin realized that he must pretend that nothing worried him, and he tried to forget the episode of the car. He sat down at the table with Sommers and the girl. He accepted the drink that was offered him.

An hour went by. Then Cronin, his braggadocio restored by the drinks that he had taken, suggested that he and Kitty Boland should go somewhere together. Sommers agreed that the idea was a good one.

"You've been here since nine o'clock, both of you," he said, mentioning the time at which Cronin had first appeared in the cigar store. "Why don't you go up to Marmosa's place, and try the roulette wheels?"

"That would be great," replied the girl.

"Those wheels are fixed," objected Cronin. "But we can go up there and watch the suckers drop their dough."

HE left the place with the girl, and they rode in a taxi to Marmosa's restaurant. Steve Cronin was familiar with the gambling den; as a man in favor with Nick Savoli, he gained immediate entrance.

Kitty Boland had never been there before. She expressed a lively interest in the establishment, but Cronin responded only with grunts. He ordered drinks at the bar. The memory of his thwarted enterprise still annoyed him.

Cronin glanced sullenly about him. His gaze was finally directed toward the door, and there he spied a young man dressed in a tuxedo. It was Harry Vincent.

A dim recollection occurred to Cronin's besotted mind. He stared at Harry as though he remembered him. Then he happened to see two men in another corner: John Genara and Tony Anelmo.

The sullenness of their expressions brought a feeling of comradeship to Steve Cronin. He knew the Homicide Twins by sight as well as by reputation. Leaving the bar he sidled across the room, and took his place beside them.

"Hello, John. Hello, Tony."

"Hello," grunted Anelmo. Genara made no response.

"What's doing to-night?"

"Nothing."

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Anelmo's reply showed a lack of desire for conversation. Nevertheless, Cronin persisted, even though his next remark brought him to dangerous ground.

"I hear there was a fracas here last night," he said.

"Perhaps you hear too much," put in Genara.

Cronin laughed, as he looked at the Sicilian killer.

"You think so?" he questioned. "Well, maybe I hear some things that may be useful to you."

"What, for instance?" asked Anelmo.

"I hear a lot of talk about a smart guy from New York," observed Cronin. "A fellow that thinks he's some gorilla. Calls himself Monk Thurman."

Both Genara and Anelmo expressed interest. Cronin had scored his first point.

Despite his drunken condition, he realized that the Homicide Twins were quite as interested as himself when it came to considering the progress of Monk Thurman in Chicago.

"I hear he tried to make you boys look cheap," said Cronin boldly.

"What's that to you?" broke in Anelmo.

"Plenty," said Steve Cronin. "He's after my job. Trying to get in right with the big shot."

There was a gleam of understanding in Tony Anelmo's eye. He smiled in an ugly manner.

Both he and Genara had no love for Monk Thurman after last night's proceedings. They would rather have seen Schultz and Spirak successful in their attempted holdup of Marmosa's, than have another gunman do their work as Thurman had done.

"Ha," said Anelmo softly. "So this man Monk is smart with you, too, eh? What has he done to you, Steve?"

"Nothing yet. He's just laying low. Ready to take my place if I slip a bit. I don't like guys like him. They're better off in New York, or "

He did not complete the sentence, but the suggestion was understood. Anelmo glanced at Genara, and the other Sicilian understood his companion's thought.

It would be a mistake to put Monk Thurman on the spot unless several persons were gunning for him. Steve Cronin's expression of enmity was a stepping-stone to the action that the Homicide Twins craved.

AS Cronin stepped away for a moment, Anelmo put his idea to Genara, in whispered words.

"Those other two," he said in Italian. "Schultz and Spirak. They might fix this man called Monk. Here is another who might do the same. What if you and I "

"Wait," replied Genara significantly.

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Cronin came back to where the two men were standing.

"Who's that fellow?" he asked, indicating Harry Vincent.

"New man here," replied Anelmo. "Name is Vincent. Takes place of Joe le Blanc."

"He looks like a guy I bumped off, once," remarked Cronin. "Whenever I bump off one, I like to bump off any that look like him."

Cronin was right in his recognition of Harry Vincent. He had encountered that young man once before, and had tried to murder him. It was only by a fortunate chance that Harry had escaped the death intended.

But now Cronin suddenly regretted his last statement. He sought a pretext to cover up the remark that he had just made to Genara and Anelmo, and he chose the first thought that came to mind.

"Last night the first time he was here?" he asked. "This new guy Vincent, I mean?"

Anelmo nodded.

"Huh," grunted Cronin. "He comes in the same night as Monk Thurman and those other two birds. Looks funny, don't it? Who's he working with Thurman or Larrigan's gang?"

The chance suggestion reached its mark. Anelmo looked at Genara, and the latter nodded. Cronin caught the exchange of signs.

"Good guy to watch," he said. "Keep your eyes on him, boys. Meanwhile, I'll be looking for Monk."

He half staggered across the room, and grasped Kitty Boland by the arm.

"Come on, kid," he said. "It's getting late. I'm taking you home."

At the door, Steve Cronin bumped against Harry Vincent. When Vincent turned, the gangster looked at him closely.

For an instant an expression of surprise came over Harry's features; but Cronin was too intoxicated to detect it. Then the gangster and the girl left the gambling den.

"Steve Cronin," murmured Harry. "Here in Chicago. He's a bad actor, that fellow, and I have a score to settle with him. I'm going to watch him if he comes around here often."

The thought of watching Steve Cronin remained in Harry's mind long after the gangster had left. In fact, it so dominated his thoughts that he paid no attention to Genara and Anelmo, who stood quietly in their inconspicuous corner.

Had Harry noticed them, he might have forgotten Steve Cronin for the time. For while he was thinking of watching Cronin, he himself was being watched by the Homicide Twins.

But none of them were watching the players gathered at the roulette wheels. They paid no attention whatever to a quiet, gray-haired gentleman who was playing large stakes and winning constantly, much to the annoyance of the croupier.

The man had seen Steve Cronin enter and leave; he had caught the glances exchanged between Genara and Anelmo; he had observed Harry Vincent's recognition of Steve Cronin.

Yet he remained silent, and did not speak. At times he laughed so softly that his mocking tones were heard by no one but himself.

CHAPTER XI. SAVOLI MAKES PLANS

STEVE CRONIN was in the Escadrille Apartments the following afternoon, making his report to the big shot.

Savoli was in his accustomed chair. Borrango assumed his usual position against the bookcase. They waited for Cronin to explain.

"Ran into some tough luck, last night," he said, in an apologetic tone. "Things didn't turn out the way we expected."

Nick Savoli did not make a comment, but Mike Borrango furnished the reply.

"McGinnis was here this morning," he said. "He tells us that some one slipped in the car with you. How did he get there?"

"How should I know?" retorted Steve Cronin. "McGinnis was running things. The car was empty when I got in. I didn't see any one climb aboard."

"No?" Savoli's voice caused the interruption. "Well, it looks like funny business to me. It never happened to McGinnis or Brodie before. They passed the buck to you. I'm tired of hearing this 'I-don't-know' stuff."

"Let me make this plain, Cronin," said Borrango smoothly. "Brodie only knows that some fellow got in back with you. McGinnis tells us that some one cracked him with a rod.

"It don't sound right. There's no gorilla that works that way. It couldn't have been a copper. Who was it?"

Steve Cronin realized that he was under partial suspicion. After all, it was up to him to make an explanation. He was the odd man on last night's expedition.

He had hesitated to give his own opinion, not because he doubted the existence of The Shadow, but because he was afraid that Savoli and Borrango would not believe him. But now he saw a chance to tell a convincing story.

He glanced back and forth from Savoli to Borrango before he spoke.

"I don't know how the man got in the car," he said slowly, "but I do know who he was and why he acted the way he did."

A slight trace of surprise flickered momentarily across the features of Nick Savoli. Then the mob master resumed his accustomed calm.

Mike Borrango stepped forward a few paces; then returned to the bookcase and adopted the attitude of indifference assumed by his chief.

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Steve Cronin moistened his lips. He realized that he had made an impression, and he intended to increase it.

"There's only one man who could have done what that fellow did," he said; "only one man who would have acted the way he did. I know because I met him once before. Maybe you have heard of him; maybe you haven't. But I know he is real because I have seen him."

The gangster paused, and continued his quick, alert glancing from Savoli to Borrango."

"Who is this man?" questioned the enforcer.

"I don't know what his real name is," replied Cronin. "But I know what they call him. That man in the car last night was The Shadow!"

"The Shadow?" questioned Savoli. "Who is he?"

Mike Borrango stroked his chin. He looked at Cronin intently. Then he nodded slowly as he turned to Savoli.

"I have heard of The Shadow," he said. "They talk about him in New York. No one knows who he is, or what he is. Cronin, here, says The Shadow is real. I have heard that he is just a fake a bluff. Yellow squealers use his name as an excuse."

THE tone adopted by the enforcer was different from his usual suavity. The real Mike Borrango had revealed himself. But he had done so with a purpose: namely, to arouse Steve Cronin to anger.

Borrango knew that gangsters spoke the truth when their tempers were heated, and he had made his artful insinuation to draw further statements from Cronin.

In this he was successful. Steve Cronin gripped the arms of his chair, and half rose. It was with difficulty that he restrained himself. For a moment, he was ready to leap at suave Mike Borrango.

"I'm a yellow squealer, am I?" he snarled. "You'll eat those words, Borrango! Bring on your tough gorillas I'll mop up all of them! But I can't fight a guy that I can't see a guy like The Shadow!"

Mike Borrango had gained his point. He lifted a restraining hand, and his voice again resumed its softness.

"I did not say that you were a squealer, Steve. I said only what I have heard that yellow squealers have used the name of The Shadow as an excuse. If you say that The Shadow is real, he must be real. What do you think, Nick?"

Nick Savoli was chewing the end of an unlighted cigar. He looked at Cronin half doubtfully; then he removed the perfecto from between his lips, and answered Borrango's question, although his remark was addressed to Cronin.

"Tell us more about The Shadow," he said.

This was the final encouragement that Steve Cronin needed. He sat back in his chair, calmly lighted a cigarette, and began to talk in a leisurely manner. He was careful to give conviction to his story, and he also sought to again gain the favor of Mike Borrango.

"I DON'T blame you fellows for doubting me," he said. "I didn't believe in The Shadow the first time I heard of him.

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"There was a guy named Croaker, in New York, who was scared of The Shadow. The gang bumped him off for double-crossing them, and the last words he said were, 'The Shadow!'"

"Then I met him, and I knew he was real.

"I was ready to pull a job in Harrisburg. I came into my hotel room, and I saw The Shadow. He spoke to me. He whispered. He could have plugged me then, but he don't work that way. He let me go.

"I've heard of him since. I was ready for him in New York, but I got the wrong guy. He's liable to be anywhere he's liable to be anybody."

"What do you mean by anybody?" asked Borrango.

"I mean that he can fix himself to look like anybody. When I was in New York, The Shadow was fixed up to look like a bird named Reds Larkin. We went out to get him. But we got the real Reds Larkin by mistake.

"I got away from New York, after that. Too many things happen when you try to cross The Shadow."

"He bumps them off, does he?" asked Borrango. "Funny he didn't put you on the spot last night."

"He never bumps off anybody," said Cronin, in a slow, awed voice. "The guys he wants to get just die sometimes they kill each other! They lay traps for him, and they fall into the traps themselves. Did you ever hear of Diamond Bert Farwell?"

Borrango nodded.

"Well," resumed Cronin, "it was The Shadow that got him. Bert was rigged up like a Chinaman. Called himself Wang Foo. The Shadow tipped off the dicks, and they nabbed Diamond Bert."

"Oh, he works with the police, eh?" laughed Borrango. "Well, that won't do him any good here in Chicago. We have the coppers fixed in this town."

"We have?" The question came from Nick Savoli. "Is Clarendon with us, Mike?"

"No," admitted Borrango.

"Think that over," commented Savoli. "We go out to get Clarendon. The Shadow spoils the game. Does that look good?"

"I'll get Clarendon for you," blurted Steve Cronin. "I don't want Machine-gun McGinnis to help me, either. I'll walk up to him and give him the rod, anywhere and any time. That's the way I work."

"It's not the way we work," replied Savoli firmly.

"No, no, Steve," added Borrango. "We strike once that's all. Clarendon is safe from now on. Lay off him. You had your chance last night."

STEVE CRONIN shrugged his shoulders. He was crude in his methods, despite his shrewdness. Yet he realized the wisdom of Savoli's methods.

The average killer would commit murder openly, and take his chances on a get-away. Savoli did not work in

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that manner. He covered up. He protected his gunmen.

Cronin realized that he was working for the big shot, and that he must play the game as he was told.

"You like to get them quick?"

The words came from Nick Savoli. He was studying Cronin narrowly, and the New York gangster detected an ominous tone in the big shot's words. Yet the question allowed only one reply.

"Sure," said Cronin boldly. "I like to go after my man and find him, wherever he is. I'll put anybody on the spot anywhere any time."

"Then get The Shadow."

Steve Cronin turned pale. He had not expected this instruction. He glanced from Savoli to Borrango, and he realized that he had placed himself in a predicament.

"Sure, I'll get The Shadow," he said weakly. "I'll get him if I can find him. But where am I going to find him? Maybe maybe "

"Maybe he'll find you first, eh?" quizzed Savoli.

"Maybe he will," admitted Cronin, in a feeble voice.

The two Italians looked at the gunman contemptuously. Then Nick Savoli became suddenly confidential. His words were intended to inspire new courage in the faltering spirit of Steve Cronin.

"You can get him, Steve," he said. "We'll fix it so as to help you. Marmosa needs a new man, don't he, Mike?"

Borrango nodded. He spoke a few quick words in Italian, and received a response from Savoli. It meant that Borrango understood, and that he was to explain the rest of the plan.

"You go see Marmosa," Borrango said, in smooth tones. "I will call him on the telephone before you get there. You will take the place of Eddie Heeny.

"There is a man there now a gorilla that Joe le Blanc sent to Marmosa. But he will not do.

"You work there, and in all your extra time, keep looking for The Shadow. When you have found him put him on the spot."

Steve Cronin nodded his agreement.

The arrangement was better than he had expected. He had anticipated complete dismissal from the service of Nick Savoli. Such dismissal would have ended his career as a Chicago gangster. For those who were barred by the big shot could not join forces with any other mob.

They were men who knew too much, and their association with a smaller faction invariably meant sudden death at the hands of Savoli's grim killers.

CRONIN had been demoted. That was certain. Yet a new courage had been instilled in him. As the outside

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man in Marmosa's place he would be safe from trouble, and he would have a chance to rise again.

Nevertheless, the task of putting The Shadow on the spot brought qualms to the gunman's troubled mind. He made a feeble effort to regain the good graces of his overlords.

"I'll work for Marmosa," he said, "but you may need me here, Nick. You said yesterday that I was doing nice work. I've been a good torpedo, haven't I? I admit I flopped last night, but that "

"We need perfect work, Steve," interrupted Mike Borrango. "One slip is one too many. If it was any one but you " He waved his hands to indicate that dismissal would have been the verdict.

"You get The Shadow," interposed Savoli. "Then we will forget last night."

Steve Cronin arose.

"Well," he said bitterly, "you fellows know best. I don't know where you're going to get a guy that will take Steve Cronin's place, though. Perhaps "

He caught himself. As he turned away he failed to see the knowing expression that appeared on the faces of both the other men.

"So long, Mike. So long, Nick." Cronin was hasty in making his farewell. "I'll be at Marmosa's to-night."

He left the apartment. When the door had closed behind Steve Cronin, Mike Borrango laughed, and Nick Savoli grinned.

"You know what he was thinking, Mike?" questioned the big shot, in Italian.

"Of course," responded the enforcer. "He knows who we're going to get in his place Monk Thurman."

"Has Al Vacchi got hold of Thurman, yet?"

"I think he has, by this time. He traced back to find out what Eddie Heeny was doing, the day before he was killed. I think he's located the man that introduced Monk Thurman to Heeny."

Both men were silent for a few moments. Savoli chewed on his cigar; Borrango still leaned against the bookcase.

"The Shadow," said Borrango softly. "What do you think of Cronin's story?"

"It's straight," commented Savoli. "That fellow Cronin has nerve, even though he does bluster."

"You are right. Yet he weakened when he talked about The Shadow. Why do you think The Shadow is here?"

"I do not know. We must learn more about him. We must prepare to meet him. We have dealt with the police. We can handle the mobs. But this Shadow what is he?"

The telephone bell rang in the corner. Mike Borrango answered it, and a trace of interest lightened his face. He began to speak in Italian, and Nick Savoli listened intently to the enforcer's words.

"It is you, Vacchi?" questioned Borrango. "What now? Good! Right away. We are waiting. Send him here at

once."

He laid down the telephone.

"Al Vacchi has located Monk Thurman," he said. "He is sending him up here right away. Perhaps " he became suddenly thoughtful.

"Perhaps?" questioned Savoli.

"Perhaps Thurman can tell us of The Shadow," said Borrango. "He comes from New York. We will question him."

"Good," agreed Savoli. "But we have other work for him to do first. We must test him."

Borrango nodded. Savoli arose from his chair and the two men left the library.

"Perhaps Monk Thurman can tell us," Borrango spoke in an undertone as he walked along. "Perhaps he knows who The Shadow is. Perhaps" he smiled as though the thought pleased him greatly "perhaps Monk Thurman is the one who can put The Shadow on the spot!"

CHAPTER XII. SAVOLI HAS VISITORS

HALF an hour after Steve Cronin's departure, a tall man entered the Escadrille Apartments. He walked directly to the elevator, and stepped inside.

The operator surveyed him curiously. The man was a stranger to him, and in all his contact with mobsters, the elevator operator had never seen a man like this one.

He stared at the masklike face, with the steely eyes, and wondered who this visitor might be.

"Fourth floor," the man announced.

The operator hesitated. He had been told that a visitor was coming to Savoli's, and had been ordered to bring him up. Yet there was something about the appearance of this unusual man that perplexed him.

"I said the fourth floor."

The voice was harsh and grating. It was a command. The operator closed the door, and the elevator sped upward.

Outside the iron grating, the newcomer waited. He did not ring the bell immediately. Instead, he studied the heavy barrier, from its spiked top to its reinforced bottom, and his eyes surveyed the strong lock that held the grating shut.

After a full minute, the man rang the bell. The attendant appeared on the other side.

"Monk Thurman," said the visitor.

The Italian opened the door to admit the New York gangster. He ushered Thurman into the library. The tall man took the same chair that Steve Cronin had occupied.

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He looked slowly and deliberately around the entire room. His eyes noted the shelves of untouched books. Then his gaze was turned toward the window, at an angle in front of him, and he stared out toward the lake, with eyes that seemed unseeing.

The door opened at the other end of the library, and Savoli entered with Borrango. Still the visitor did not turn his gaze in their direction.

They approached and took their usual places, Savoli in the large armchair, Borrango against the bookcase. They exchanged glances as they surveyed Monk Thurman. Finally the man with the masklike face seemed to become aware of their presence. He looked from one to the other.

"You are Monk Thurman?" questioned Borrango, as the gangster's eyes turned toward him.

"Yes," came the cold, rasping voice.

"I am Mike Borrango," said the enforcer. He waved his hand toward his chief. "This is Nick Savoli."

Monk Thurman slowly turned his head and stared at the king of all Chicago. Nick Savoli returned the gaze, and the two men looked at one another steadily.

Both were expressionless, but Savoli's hardened stare was more than matched by the unflinching features of Monk Thurman.

There was no further effort at introduction. Evidently Monk Thurman was awaiting an explanation from the others. This fact created a great impression upon both Savoli and Borrango.

Most gangsters were either awed or enthusiastic when they first entered the presence of the big fellow. They either wanted to shake hands with Savoli, or awaited some greeting from him. But Monk Thurman did neither. He did not even ask a question. He seemed to take it for granted that Savoli had something to say to him; otherwise he would not have come to this place.

IT was not Savoli's habit to speak first. So Borrango broke the ice with his suave voice.

Strangely enough, Monk Thurman did not look at the speaker. He still focused his gaze upon Nick Savoli, as though he understood that Borrango was merely the mouthpiece of the big shot.

"We have heard that you did good work at Marmosa's place," said Borrango. "I thought that you might like to meet Nick Savoli."

Monk Thurman turned his eyes toward Borrango, as if he did not understand the significance of the enforcer's words.

"At Marmosa's," repeated the enforcer. "The gambling joint. Two nights ago."

The New Yorker nodded as though he now understood.

"I remember now," he said. "They had some trouble, while I was there."

"Marmosa is a friend of ours," said Borrango smoothly. "He suggested that you might be interested in some work here in Chicago. He did not say why you were here."

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The enforcer paused, to give Monk a chance to state his business in Chicago. The New York gunman stared at Borrango, then condescended to make an explanation.

"A vacation," he said. "That's all."

"It's not a healthy spot for a vacation," observed Nick Savoli.

"No?" queried Monk Thurman. He raised his eyebrows as he spoke. "I have found it very healthy."

Savoli shrugged his shoulders. Borrango was about to speak, but his chief silenced him with a gesture, and a word in Italian.

"Look here, Monk." Savoli's words were direct. "We can use a good man right here. We know plenty about you. You did a nice job two nights ago. We can give you some better ones. But tell me this. Why did you let those two gorillas off so easily?"

"You mean why didn't I kill them?"

"Yes."

"Killing is my business. It was not business the other night."

Savoli looked at Borrango. The enforcer stroked his chin. He had received the cue to take over the conversation.

"We have some business for you," he said. "It will lead to more. What do you say to that?"

Monk Thurman looked at Nick Savoli, entirely ignoring Mike Borrango.

"One thousand dollars a week," said Savoli.

THE New Yorker retained his expressionless calm. Savoli had expected that the offer would meet with an instant acceptance; but in this he was mistaken. Thurman scarcely seemed to be giving it consideration.

"That's without any conditions," put in Borrango. "Do things your own way, just so long as you tip us off so we can fix the alibis."

"Will you take it?" demanded Savoli.

"Yes," said Monk Thurman, after a momentary pause.

"Good," responded Savoli. "Tell him what comes first, Mike. He'll be glad to hear it."

"We're working with you," said the enforcer. "We've got a good job for you as a starter. We want you to bump off those two trouble-makers, Schultz and Spirak the same two that you got rid of in Marmosa's place."

Monk Thurman was not looking at Borrango, and the enforcer became annoyed. He stepped forward to attract Monk's attention, to divert his gaze from the face of Nick Savoli.

Thurman turned his head, and looked behind Borrango, at the very spot where the enforcer had been before

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he stepped forward. Borrango hastily moved backward, and leaned against the bookcase again. He showed signs of nervousness, and Nick Savoli glared at him in disapproval.

Having gained Monk Thurman's attention, Borrango managed to assume some of his usual calm.

"Let me give you the low-down, Monk," he said, in a confidential tone. "We want peace here in Chicago. We want it if we have to kill to get it.

"There's a fellow named Larrigan who thinks he is a big shot. He's all right himself, but he has a bad crowd working for him. Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak will do anything to make trouble. With them out of the way, Larrigan will fall in line.

"You helped us out the other night. We've got to protect guys like Marmosa. We've got an excuse now to put Schultz and Spirak on the spot. You're the man to do it. Those two boys are sore at you. They're out to get you if you don't get them first."

"That's right," put in Savoli.

"So we're making you a fair proposition. Get them before they get you. We'll square it for you, and we'll pay you one grand a week while you're working on them."

"Where will I find Schultz and Spirak?" asked Monk Thurman calmly.

"They hang out on the South Side," said Borrango eagerly. "Larrigan owns a saloon there, and they're in and out all the time. But that's a tough spot to get them. Maybe one at a time would be the best way "

"Leave it to Monk," said Savoli.

The New York gangster arose.

"I'll take care of them," he said.

Mike Borrango quickly pulled a roll of bills from his pocket. He peeled off ten one-hundred-dollar notes and then stepped forward toward Monk Thurman. The gunman took the money in a careless manner, and thrust it in his trousers pocket.

Then he withdrew it, as an afterthought, and held it in his left hand while he reached in his coat pocket with his right. He brought out a huge roll of bills that was twice as large as the wad of money carried by Borrango.

He spread out the roll, and displayed a mass of notes of one-thousand-dollar denomination. He thrust the ten one-hundred-dollar bills into the center of the wad, and replaced the cash in his pocket.

"I'll get hold of Al Vacchi if I want anything else," he said to Nick Savoli.

The New York gangster did not even nod toward Mike Borrango. He turned on his heel and left the room, leaving two astounded men behind him.

Borrango's face showed amazement; but Savoli retained his semblance of calm.

"We gave him one grand," said Savoli, with a short laugh. "And he had more than a hundred grand on him."

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"He is the man we need," observed Borrango.

"Yes?" There was a trace of sarcasm in the big shot's voice. "You think so, Mike? He is the man we need to watch! That is what I think."

"Why?"

"Because he thinks he is too big. These men who bluster and talk like Steve Cronin they are useful because they are easy to control. But he "

Nick Savoli shook his head, and then smiled slightly. He was thinking carefully, scheming in the way that had brought him to his high position as the dominating force of gangdom. A plan had occurred to him, and he gave only an inkling of it to Mike Borrango.

"He will be useful to us, Mike," he said. "Useful while we need him, and then "

The big shot raised his forefinger and poked it into Borrango's side, in semblance of a gangster's handling of an automatic.

Then he turned and left the library, with the enforcer at his heels.

THE door to the fire escape was at the end of the elevator hall. It was a large door, covered with sheet metal. The door began to move slightly, as though some one was working on it, from the fire tower.

Then it opened outward, and a tall, slim, black-clad form slipped through the doorway. With long, noiseless strides, the unexpected visitor moved to the iron gate.

This man was inconspicuous in the dimly lighted hall. Hidden beneath his black cloak, his face concealed by the turned-down brim of a soft black hat, he seemed like some monstrous bat.

Only his fingers were in view; long, tapering fingers that held a sharp-pointed instrument. The formidable lock clicked beneath his hands. He opened the iron gate, and entered the antechamber, closing the grilled barrier behind him.

The library door was unlocked. The man in black entered the large room. He trod silently over the thick rug, and slipped into a chair.

He was the third man to occupy that seat. First, Steve Cronin had been there; then the famous Monk Thurman.

This third man was a more sinister figure than either of the others. He seemed to become lifeless as he sat there, almost as though expecting the entrance of Nick Savoli and Mike Borrango.

But neither of those personages put in their appearance. At that particular moment, they were in Savoli's denlike office, discussing a personality whom they had never seen The Shadow.

They had not yet asked Monk Thurman what he knew about The Shadow. In fact, they were speculating just where The Shadow might be; and the last place that they would have suspected was Savoli's own library!

The man in black seemed in no hurry to leave his chair in the silent room. Instead, he looked about him, and his gaze fell upon the spot so often chosen by Mike Borrango as a favorite standing place.

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Rising, the sable-clad man walked to the bookcase, and ran one white hand along the lowest row of leather-bound volumes.

He noticed one book that was the fraction of an inch farther out upon the shelf. He removed the volume and inserted his hand in the space it had left.

A moment later there was a slight click. The bookcase swung outward, revealing a small room, with a passageway beyond.

The man in black replaced the volume, entered the tiny room, and partially closed the bookcase behind him.

The passage led to a circular stairway. The man went down the dark spiral and reached a wall at the bottom. Here his tapering fingers showed white amid the gloom, as he sought for a hidden spring. At last the wall swung outward to his touch, and he stood in a small apartment on the third floor.

The place was furnished, but it showed no sign of occupancy. There were two spring locks on the door that led to the elevator hallway.

The man in black examined the locks, and soon satisfied himself that they were vulnerable. In fact, he opened the outer door of the apartment, and experimented with master keys that he drew from a pocket of the cloak.

This procedure finished, he closed the door again, and studied the movable wall of the apartment. After finding the secret catch that opened the wall on the apartment side, the mysterious man went up the spiral stairway, and a few seconds later again stood in Savoli's library, with the bookcase open behind him.

OF all the gangsters who made frequent visits to Nick Savoli's lair, not one had ever suspected the existence of this secret passageway. None had realized that Mike Borrango instinctively stood in front of the hidden exit. Yet the man who concealed his identity beneath the black cloak and hat had ferreted out the secret as though by telepathy.

Now he stood alone in the center of Savoli's library, and for the first time since his arrival, a sound escaped his lips. He laughed softly, yet even that murmuring tone was sinister in its mockery.

It was the same laugh that Steve Cronin had heard the night before: the laugh of The Shadow!

The motionless figure became suddenly active, as though keen ears had detected the sound of approaching footsteps. In a fraction of a second, the man in black passed through the secret opening, and closed the bookcase behind him. Mike Borrango entered the library just too late to observe what had happened.

CHAPTER XIII. MONK LOOKS FOR TROUBLE

MIRE LARRIGAN'S saloon on the South Side was not a good place for innocent bystanders. It was one of the most notorious booze joints in Chicago, run in open defiance of the law.

There was nothing subtle about Mike Larrigan. He was a hoodlum of the old school, a mob master who believed that it was cheaper and better to kill policemen than to pay them hush money.

At the same time, Larrigan, in his hostility toward Nick Savoli, had imitated some of the subtle methods of the big shot. He relied on political pull to protect the saloon which was his headquarters, and he appeared there frequently without fear that the law would annoy him.

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Gangsters came and went that is, those gangsters who stood in right with Mike Larrigan. The others kept away.

The elite of Mike Larrigan's crew were permitted in the upstairs rooms. The others inhabited the barroom below, looking for opportunities to be summoned into Larrigan's presence.

The big Irishman was a specialist in the beer-running racket. He supplied many of the South Side saloons, and had direct contact with several breweries.

His henchmen frequently hijacked booze trucks that carried the products of Nick Savoli, but none of these inroads had been directly traced to Larrigan as the source.

Hence, while there was no friendship between Larrigan and Savoli, open enmity had not been declared.

Savoli was in the business to make money, rather than to wage warfare. His organization was compact and firm, ruled by lieutenants and lesser chieftains.

Larrigan, on the contrary, was a loose organizer. Those closest to him obeyed his commands; others were almost beyond his reach.

Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak, as members of Larrigan's tribe, never entered into hijacking. But they had no qualms when it came to sticking up gambling joints that paid tribute to Savoli. They had raided Marmosa's place with calm assurance.

Schultz and Spirak had gradually begun to allow themselves greater privilege. They were skating dangerously close to thin ice.

In fact, they had already passed the deadline. The big shot had made his first effort to eliminate the two troublemakers when he had employed Monk Thurman to get them.

Savoli was a subtle worker. Monk Thurman was just the man he needed for this job. Only Savoli and Borrango knew that the New York gunman was actually in the big shot's employ.

Savoli wanted Thurman for later jobs; but if Monk should fail on his first task, the big shot would be no worse off. On the contrary, if Monk should succeed, the deaths of Schultz and Spirak could be easily explained to Larrigan.

SAVOLI awaited results with interest. He wondered if Monk would get busy the first night after he had received instructions.

He doubted that the New York gunman would be foolish enough to actually invade Larrigan's territory. In fact, he and Borrango had told Monk of Larrigan's saloon chiefly as a warning not to go there.

Nevertheless, Larrigan's saloon was the destination which Monk Thurman had chosen for that evening.

While Savoli and Borrango were in the big shot's luxurious apartment, drinking wine that had come from Canada, Monk Thurman was on his way to the Irishman's beer joint.

It was about nine o'clock when the redoubtable New Yorker sauntered into the barroom where the lesser lights of Larrigan's mob held forth.

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He appeared there as a stranger, and the crowd around the bar took immediate interest in the presence of this tall, stern-faced man whom they had not seen before. Monk ordered a glass of beer, sniffed it, and poured the liquid into a cuspidor.

"This the best you have in the place?" he demanded.

The bartender, himself a hardened hoodlum, glared at the stranger.

"Not good enough for you, eh?" he asked. "Who are you, anyway, coming in here? Want to tell me how to run the place?"

Several of Mike Larrigan's small-time mobsmen gathered closer to listen to the argument.

Monk Thurman was standing at the end of the bar, his back to the corner beside the door. He paid no attention to the threatening glances of the rowdies who gathered about him.

"I might be able to tell you something," he said to the bartender. "But there's no use talking to any one here in Chicago."

"Where do you come from, tough guy?" demanded the man behind the bar.

"New York," answered Thurman, in a boastful voice.

The bartender leaned his elbow on the bar, and studied the tall man, with a sarcastic expression on his face.

"There's a lot of funny guys come from New York," he observed. "Fellows that think they amount to something. They don't find it healthy here in Chicago. A lot of them die from lead poisoning."

"That doesn't worry me," responded Monk Thurman. "I'm inoculated."

"One New York gorilla got fresh a few nights ago," continued the bartender. "The boys are out looking for him, now. Maybe they've got him already. Did you ever hear of him? His name is Monk Thurman."

"I am Monk Thurman," said the tall man quietly.

A sudden silence fell over the crowd. The gangsters were too amazed to murmur their anger. The bartender remained motionless, his eyes wide open as he stared at the man.

"I am Monk Thurman," repeated the man with the masklike face, "and I think your beer is punk. But it's good enough for this mob of would-be gorillas."

THE two men nearest Monk leaped forward. Then they stopped, their hands above their heads, as they stared into the muzzles of two automatics. The New Yorker had drawn his guns with an almost imperceptible motion.

"Back up, all of you!" he commanded. "Stick them up all of you!"

Every gangster in the place moved to the wall. All held their hands above their heads, and listened sullenly to the words that followed.

"So the boys are looking for me, are they?" questioned Thurman, in a sarcastic voice. "What boys do you

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mean? Those two cripples that tried to hold up Marmosa's gambling joint? They haven't found me yet, so I'll help them out."

He pocketed one automatic, and brought out a card from his pocket. He tossed the piece of pasteboard to the bartender.

"I've got a little apartment," he said, "and there's the address. Send them around when they want to see me. I get in about three in the morning. They can find me after that."

He suddenly pressed the trigger of his automatic. One of the gangsters had tried to draw a rod. The bullet from Thurman's gun grazed the man's knuckles.

Then the tall New Yorker leisurely brought out his other automatic and backed against the door. He pushed it open, and slipped out into the night.

"Don't let him get away!" shouted the bartender.

Three men leaped to the door, drawing their guns as they advanced. They were sure that Monk Thurman would be fleeing down the street, and they were eager for the pursuit.

But as the first man crossed the threshold, there was a pistol shot outside. The gangster dropped with a bullet in his shoulder, and the two that followed him stopped suddenly.

"Go get him!" cried the bartender.

"Nothing doing," growled one of the mobsmen. "Leave him to Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak. They'll tail him until they get him."

A policeman poked his head into the saloon. He looked cautiously around. It was his duty to report any disturbance on Larrigan's premises, but experience had taught him that discretion was advisable.

"Any trouble, boys?" he asked pleasantly.

"Naw," replied the bartender. "Some smart gorilla just fired a couple shots and beat it. Don't know where he is now. Guess he's a mile away by this time."

The bartender's estimate of distance was exaggerated. At that particular moment, Monk Thurman was strolling leisurely along the street, less than a block away. He hailed a taxicab, and ordered the driver to take him to a large hotel in the Loop.

IT was several hours later when the New York gunman again appeared in a realm where gangsters presided. It was after midnight when he walked into Marmosa's Cafe, and strode up the steps to the gambling den. A man rose from a table at the top of the stairs. It was Steve Cronin, now on his new job.

"Where you going?" he demanded.

"In the gambling joint," responded Monk.

Cronin stared at the man closely.

"Aren't you Monk Thurman?" he asked.

"That's my name."

"I'm Steve Cronin. Maybe you heard of me in New York."

"Can't say that I have. What brought you out here?"

"The coppers were after me."

"Oh!" Monk Thurman's voice was contemptuous. "The coppers never get after the guys I run with. We go after the coppers. I'm out of your class, fellow."

He turned on his heel, and walked toward the entrance to the gambling den. Steve Cronin thrust his hand to his pocket and gripped the handle of an automatic. Then he thought better, and restrained himself.

Monk Thurman entered the gambling den unmolested. He saw Joe le Blanc and Harry Vincent in one corner, and nodded his head in greeting. Then he observed the Homicide Twins, and walked over to them.

"So you're the fellows that moved out the other night, eh?" he said. "Lucky for you I was around here. When you have any more trouble, just give me a call. You'll find me here."

He handed a card to Anelmo. The Sicilian glowered as he received it.

"Who's the tough guy you got outside?" questioned Monk. "Cronin? Is that his name? He was going to pull a gat on me.

"Well, that makes three of them out to get me. I hear that Schultz and Spirak are tailing me. Maybe I'll have to call on you two to help me out. Maybe not!"

HE turned away, apparently indifferent to the anger that appeared on the faces of the hot-blooded Sicilians. Then he spied Frank Marmosa, and shook hands with the proprietor of the gambling den.

"Smart guy, eh?" hissed Genara, to Anelmo.

The other man responded in Italian. The two carried on a low-voiced conversation.

"Do you remember what I said last night?" asked Anelmo.

"Yes, but I said to wait."

"We have waited long enough."

Monk Thurman's remarks had hit home. Genara and Anelmo were men who brooked no ridicule. The fact that Monk Thurman had openly declared to them that others were already trailing him was all they wanted to know.

They knew that Thurman's position with Marmosa rendered him invulnerable while in the gambling den. They realized that the New York gunman was already being sought by Nick Savoli, who wanted him as a killer.

"It may be too late to-morrow," observed Anelmo, as he watched Monk.

"I agree," replied Genara.

At two o'clock, Al Vacchi arrived at Marmosa's place, ready to collect the big fellow's share of the receipts. Vacchi was a short, bald-headed Italian, who greeted every one with a broad smile. The Homicide Twins watched him sullenly as he shook hands enthusiastically with Monk Thurman.

"There is no reason to be here longer," whispered Anelmo.

"Come," replied Genara.

The Sicilians left the gambling den, which was now protected by Al Vacchi and his bodyguard.

Steve Cronin was no longer at the head of the stairs. He had evidently left at the time Vacchi had arrived.

"Remember the days when we were banditti?" asked Anelmo.

Genara nodded. He and his companion had been the most notorious of all outlaws in Italy, prior to their importation to Chicago. Often had they lain together in ambush, awaiting the arrival of wealthy travelers.

"To-night," said Anelmo, "we shall lay another ambush!"

CHAPTER XIV. MONK TAKES CREDIT

SHORTLY after three o'clock, two men alighted from a taxicab some distance from the Loop. They stood together near the wall of a building, and one pointed out a four-story apartment house down the street.

"That's the place," he said. "It must be the back apartment."

"You've figured the lay, I guess, Hymie," his companion replied gruffly. "There's only one thing I'm worrying about. Maybe this guy is all set for us."

"Him? Not a bit of it. Anyway, there's two of us."

"Maybe he's got somebody with him."

"He hasn't any pals here in Chicago "

"He's a fast shooter, Hymie. Maybe he'll make trouble for us."

"He can't fire two ways at once. Listen, Spirak. Here's the way we'll get him. I know that old apartment house. I can pick the lock of the front door in one minute. The back is a cinch, too. If you can't get in the door, it's easy to smash in the window of the kitchenette."

"Which will we try?"

"I'll take the front, and you take the back. You sneak in, and if you see him, plug him. I'll go slow, but if I run into him, I'll give him the works. But come in fast if you hear shooting. It may be him, you know."

Four-gun Spirak nodded.

"It's all right if you say so," he said. "But I'd rather wait and take this gorilla for a ride. It would be a cinch

later on."

"Maybe," replied Hymie Schultz, "and maybe not. I figure it this way, Spirak. The quicker we get him, the better. There's no cops around this place, even though gorillas used to live in that apartment house. We can finish this mug and then clear out."

They separated as they arrived at the apartment house. But just before they parted, Schultz gave a last admonition to his companion.

"If he isn't in, we wait for him."

"O.K., Hymie. It will be soft for us then."

FOUR-GUN SPIRAK slowly crept up the steps that led to the back door of the second-floor apartment. He pulled a skeleton key from his pocket and inserted it in the keyhole of the door.

He stopped to listen. He had made more noise than he had anticipated. Yet he was quickly reassured. There was no sound from within. If Thurman was in the apartment, he was probably unaware of Spirak's approach.

Then the gangster remembered that he was to effect the earlier entry, prior to the arrival of Hymie Schultz from the front.

He opened the door, and edged in, holding his automatic in readiness. The slight opening of the door revealed a huddled form across the kitchenette a form that looked like a man.

Without waiting to close the door, Spirak raised his automatic, but he was a second too late. A burst of flame came from the opposite corner.

Four-gun Spirak fell, with three bullets in his body.

Hymie Schultz heard the shots from the front of the apartment, just as he had unlocked the front door. He burst into the place and ran into another man who rose to meet him.

Hymie pulled the trigger of his automatic just as his antagonist seized his wrist, and diverted the shots. The two went down in a heap.

They grappled in the darkness; then Schultz managed to bump his opponent behind the ear. Schultz's gun had fallen to the floor, and as he reached for it, another man leaped upon him.

Schultz went backward, holding his gun, and fired wildly, as an oath escaped his lips.

Those words spelled his doom. The sound of his voice betrayed him. His opponent had not been sure whether he was friend or foe. But now the muzzle of a revolver was pressed against the side of Hymie's head, and three shots entered his brain.

The man who had killed Hymie Schultz arose and calmly turned on the light in the apartment. The glare revealed the sinister form of John Genara.

It was Tony Anelmo who had been knocked out by Hymie Schultz, but the disabled Sicilian had now recovered.

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An exclamation of amazement escaped Genara's lips.

"Look!" he cried. "Hymie Schultz!"

Leaving his bewildered companion, he dashed to the kitchenette and turned on the light, to reveal the form of the other dead man. He recognized the face of Four-gun Spirak.

Genara hurried back to the front of the apartment and seized Anelmo by the arm.

"Come on," he said. "We've killed Schultz and Spirak!"

"Where is Monk Thurman?"

"I don't know. We've got to get out."

The Homicide Twins hurried to the street. Only a few minutes had transpired since the shooting. No one had yet arrived on the scene. Genara drew Anelmo into a side alley, and they moved along quietly but hastily.

"No one must know of this," insisted Genara. "That is, no one must know that we were mixed in it."

"We owed it to them," replied Anelmo.

"That's good enough. But we're in wrong with the big shot now, on account of that trouble at Marmosa's."

"Maybe he'll be glad to hear about this."

"What! After he's been trying to patch up with Larrigan? We'll be in wrong if this is hung on us. Let them think that Thurman did it. That may give us an excuse to get him later on, after Larrigan squawks to Savoli."

Anelmo nodded his agreement, and the two men continued to hurry from the vicinity of the apartment house where they had laid in ambush awaiting the return of Monk Thurman and whoever might be with him.

Both Genara and Anelmo had believed that they were fighting the New York gunman, for the entrance of Schultz and Spirak had been almost simultaneous.

NEITHER of the Sicilians had looked behind when they had hastened to the alley. Hence they did not see the man who stepped into view from behind a telegraph pole. This was none other than Monk Thurman.

He had observed the actions of Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak, and had been waiting to see what happened. He had also recognized the Sicilians. He had expected some one to flee from the apartment after the shooting.

Monk entered the apartment house immediately. He walked calmly upstairs, and entered his apartment. He discovered the bodies of Larrigan's men. He made some slight changes in their positions, then paced up and down the lighted apartment for a few minutes.

He heard the sound of footsteps coming up the stairs. He opened the door, and was met by two policemen. Each officer held a revolver.

"What's been going on here?" demanded one of the officers.

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He stopped suddenly as he saw the body of Hymie Schultz.

"Did you kill this man?" he questioned.

"If I did," replied Thurman quietly, "it was in self-defense, officer."

He was standing with his hands slightly raised. The second policeman gripped him by the arm. The gangster made no effort to escape.

"My name is Monk Thurman," he said quietly. "I come from New York. This man is a gunman who tried to kill me. You see what happened to him. Look down the hallway to the kitchen, and you will see what happened to his helper."

Both policemen instinctively turned in the direction indicated. The body of Four-gun Spirak lay in full view. It commanded momentary attention on the part of the policemen; and Monk Thurman took advantage of that opportunity.

With a quick twist he wrested himself free from the policeman who held him and sent the officer staggering against his companion. Then he was off down the stairs.

Revolver shots followed, but they were futile. The escaping gangster had reached the turn in the stairway. He continued downward, and bowled over two men who stood in his path.

Reaching the sidewalk, he saw a milk wagon standing there. One of the men whom he had encountered on the stairway was the driver.

Monk leaped into the wagon, and two men who were coming up the street were witnesses of an old-fashioned getaway. The fleeing gangster urged the horse forward at top speed.

He was out of revolver range when the policemen reached the street. The wagon whirled around a corner on two wheels; then the clatter of hoofs died away.

THE first edition of the afternoon newspapers carried sensational tidings of Chicago's latest gang murder. Two men who had long troubled the police had been eliminated from further activities. Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak were notorious characters. Their pictures adorned the front pages of the journals.

The name of Monk Thurman figured in the stories. Until now, the New Yorker had been an unknown quantity in Chicago, so far as the police and the public were concerned.

Now editors were sending wild telegrams to New York, in an effort to learn of Thurman's past career. No pictures of the Manhattan gangster were available. He had been a successful camera dodger.

There were no clues in the apartment. Evidently, Monk had used the place as a blind, for he had left nothing there. He had apparently escaped with the guns that he had used to kill his enemies. The bullets proved that different revolvers had been used against Schultz and Spirak.

Keen journalists sought to find a motive in the affray. Had Thurman been identified with any Chicago mob, the killing would have presaged a new gang war. As it was, the New Yorker appeared to be a free agent.

Both Genara and Anelmo read the accounts with interest, and felt real satisfaction in the fact that Thurman had arrived at the scene of the crime before the police.

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They realized that matters would be serious for them if they were known as the murderers. Larrigan had made statements to the press, and anything that might connect Nick Savoli with the killings would mean the beginning of gang war.

ONLY three men knew the truth of the affair at the apartment house. Genara and Anelmo intended to say nothing. Monk Thurman was evidently willing to take the blame.

For once, the grapevine telegraph of gangdom, that secret channel through which many facts became known to the underworld, was silent and inactive.

Every Chicago mobster, from the weakest hoodlum to the big shot himself, was completely fooled by the network of circumstantial evidence that pointed to Monk Thurman.

It was not surprising that Nick Savoli and Mike Borrango were deceived. Both had expected a battle between their new torpedo and Larrigan's allies. For once, the big shot grinned, as he gloated over the newspaper reports, and his prime minister also wore a smile of enjoyment.

"A good fellow, this Monk," observed Savoli, as he sat in the privacy of his den. "Two at one time. Quick. Right away. Leaves nothing behind him."

"They can't convict him if they do catch him," responded Borrango. "The only evidence they've got is that he was there."

"Right, Mike," replied the big shot. "But better than that Larrigan can't trace this back to us."

"What about Monk?"

"He will show up here. Later."

"We've got to be careful about that."

"Yes. Leave it to him. He understands."

WHAT had become of Monk Thurman?

That question still perplexed gangdom on the second day after Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak had been placed on the spot in the New Yorker's apartment.

The disappearance of a reputed killer was not an unusual event, so far as the police were concerned; but it was something new to the men of the underworld. The only fact that accounted for the evanishment of Monk was his lack of gang connections in Chicago.

Very few mobsmen knew him. Two of them Schultz and Spirak were dead. Two others Genara and Anelmo were laying low for reasons of their own. They still had hopes and intentions of putting Monk on the spot, but they were waiting to see what might develop.

The right man to get Monk Thurman was Mike Larrigan. It would be poor business for two of Savoli's killers to interfere too quickly.

Even Nick Savoli was somewhat puzzled by Monk's disappearance, yet he was also pleased.

CHAPTER XV. THE SHADOW HEARS

A NEW tenant moved into the Escadrille Apartments the morning after Schultz and Spirak had been killed. He was an advertising man from Boston, named Howard Blake.

Like all new tenants, he paid a large rental for his small furnished apartment. There were no cut prices at the Escadrille. Nick Savoli believed that the place should be kept exclusive.

The name of every new tenant was turned over to Mike Borrango, who checked up on the applicant. Borrango learned that Howard Blake was a wealthy man who intended to expand his business by opening an office in the Middle West.

Blake had chosen an apartment on the third floor. He was immediately listed by the men on duty downstairs.

None of those who lived in the apartment house realized the surveillance that existed. In fact, none of them knew that Nick Savoli lived there regularly.

It was understood that he owned the apartment house, and that he had the entire fourth floor; but he never appeared openly. He was generally supposed to be somewhere else.

Late in the afternoon of the second day following the killing of Schultz and Spirak, an unexpected visitor arrived at the Escadrille. This man was recognized immediately by the elevator operator, and the fellow whistled to himself, when he realized the consequences that might result from this visit.

For the man who entered the lobby was none other than Mike Larrigan, himself. There was no mistaking him. A huge, tall Irishman, whose freckled face bore a hardened, determined expression, and whose reddish hair showed beneath the slouch hat that he wore. That was Mike Larrigan.

Where he appeared, trouble brewed. Yet it was the first time that Larrigan had ever called upon Nick Savoli in the Escadrille Apartments. Intrepid though he was, the big Irishman had never dared to invade the camp of his avowed enemy.

But to-day it was different. Larrigan had been approached several times by Mike Borrango, who had met him as an emissary of peace. He had received telephone calls from Borrango. He had been assured that Savoli desired friendship.

Even after the raid that Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak had made upon Marmosa's gambling place, Borrango had called Larrigan and had repeated promises of good things for all if peace should be arranged.

In fact, the enforcer had gone so far as to offer his services in Larrigan's behalf if the Irishman should desire it.

"If there's anything that isn't just right," Borrango had said, "let me know about it. Come and see me. I'm your friend. Nick is your friend."

MIKE LARRIGAN was not subtle. Yet he could recognize those who were. There was something about Borrango's invitation that had placed him on the defensive.

He had an idea that a man could go into Savoli's apartment and not come out. He likened the entrance of the Escadrille to a one-way street that had no ending.

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He had expected some sudden attack from the Savoli gangsters. Now it had come. Mike Larrigan visualized purpose behind the murders of his two lieutenants, Schultz and Spirak.

At the same time he had decided to play a hunch.

Until now, Nick Savoli had had cause to want Mike Larrigan eliminated from the field of Chicago's gangland. But now conditions were reversed.

Larrigan had a grievance against the big shot, assuming of course that Savoli had ordered the deaths of Schultz and Spirak. The big Irishman had become suddenly shrewd. He was positive that Nick Savoli would not reveal his hidden hand by another outrage. It was the psychological time for Larrigan to pay a visit.

Not that Mike Larrigan understood psychology. He believed in hunches, that was all; and this time he was sure he had a hunch.

He had come to the Escadrille accompanied by several henchmen, who were even now scattered about the avenue outside. They were watching him go in; they were to wait for him to come out. So when Mike Larrigan entered the elevator, he calmly told the operator that his destination was the fourth floor.

The operator excused himself for a moment and went to a telephone in the lobby. He talked in an undertone. He waited for a reply. Larrigan glowered at him from the elevator. At last the operator hung up the receiver, and returned.

"It's all right," he said. "You can go up."

Larrigan became immediately suspicious; but now it was too late. The door of the elevator had closed, and they were speeding upward.

MIKE BORRANGO was a diplomat. He had the happy faculty of meeting other gangsters in the way they liked. He knew the fellowship that existed among the members of Larrigan's clan, and he adopted that method of greeting.

He hurried across the room in advance of Savoli, and shook hands warmly with the visitor. Perhaps there was a hidden method in his actions; if so, Larrigan did not suspect it.

Had the Irishman been carrying concealed deadly weapons, with thoughts of ending the checkered career of Nick Savoli, he would have had no opportunity to do so while engaged in shaking hands with Borrango.

Savoli approached while Borrango was still beside Larrigan. He, too, acted with a friendliness that impressed the independent gang leader. The big shot motioned his visitor to a chair, and before Larrigan realized it, he and Savoli were engaged in conversation, with Borrango, his back to the bookcase, beaming upon both of them.

"They kept you waiting downstairs?" questioned Savoli, as though concerned. "That is not right. I shall change that. I have told them to send up my friends, always. I am sorry, very sorry."

"That's all right, Nick," replied Larrigan gruffly. "You can't take chances, any more than I can. There's been times when things weren't right between us "

"That's all talk, Mike," interposed Borrango. "You haven't met Nick often enough that's all. He's a good friend of yours always has been."

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"Well, I wouldn't say "

Borrango again interrupted Larrigan's doubtful statement.

"You know how I feel, Mike," said the enforcer. "There's a lot of Italians who don't like Irishmen, and a lot of Irishmen who don't like Italians. But that doesn't go for us. You and Nick are big shots! Don't forget that!"

Larrigan looked at Savoli, and Nick nodded his agreement with the enforcer's words.

LARRIGAN was now at ease. Relieved from all tension, his mind suddenly reverted to the purpose of his visit. He had business to discuss, and now was the time to do it.

"Listen, Borrango," he said. "You say you're a friend of mine, don't you?"

The enforcer nodded.

"You're in with Nick, here," continued Larrigan. "He's a friend of mine, too. Is that right?"

Borrango's second nod was more emphatic, than the first.

"All right," declared Larrigan. He turned to Savoli. "I'm going to talk plain to you, Nick. Why were Schultz and Spirak bumped off? What do you know about it?"

The big shot shrugged his shoulders.

"I was very sorry to hear of that," he said. He looked to Borrango for corroboration, and the enforcer nodded. "Very sorry," added Savoli. "I have sent flowers many flowers. It is too bad. It is just the kind of thing I do not like to see."

"Flowers don't mean nothing, Nick," blurted Larrigan. "You sent flowers and a big wreath. They all do that. Sometimes the biggest wreath comes from the guy that did the bumping off."

"Now, I know who bumped off those two boys. It was Monk Thurman. But who was Monk working for?"

"Maybe he was working for himself," suggested Borrango.

"Maybe," replied Mike Larrigan doubtfully, "and maybe not. It don't look right to me, Borrango. That's why I came here.

"You said that if I had anything to squawk about, come to see you. I'm here, and I'm squawking!"

"There was trouble between Monk and those two boys," said Borrango smoothly. "Maybe they were after him and he got them instead."

"They were after him, all right," admitted Larrigan. "But he was laying for them, and he got them where he wanted them. All right.

"If he knew they were after him, why didn't he clear out back to New York, maybe? Why was he staying around here in Chicago, with guys trying to put him on the spot?"

"There's a lot of good torpedoes who are dumb, Mike," said Borrango, by way of explanation.

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"Listen" Larrigan was getting to the point of his argument "after that trouble down in Marmosa's, there was a lot of talk that you fellows were trying to get Monk Thurman to work for you.

"There was more than that. They say that Monk Thurman came here. They say he was working for you. That's what I want to find out. Was he working for you, or wasn't he?"

The question was put to Savoli. The big shot was indirect in his reply.

"I shall tell you, Larrigan," he said. "You want to know if I was after Schultz and Spirak. I answer you No! Why should I want them on the spot?"

"They tried to stick up Marmosa's," replied Larrigan.

"I know that," returned Savoli. "But that was not the first trouble they made for me. I have let many things pass. Why should one more trouble me? They did not stick up Marmosa's after all. Marmosa is not my man."

"He gives you a cut."

"Of course. But he must find his own protection."

Larrigan was on the point of being convinced by Savoli's argument. Borrango was ready to add persuasion. But before the Irishman could formulate a further reply, Savoli became suddenly direct in his statements.

"It is good for you," he said quietly, "that Schultz and Spirak were bumped off."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Larrigan.

"Were you master of your own mob?" questioned Savoli, with a slight shrug of his shoulders. "No, Larrigan, you were not. You had your gang; Schultz and Spirak had theirs. You often went by what they said. Their men were yours while you did what they wanted. Am I right?"

LARRIGAN'S freckled face became red. He was too angry to speak, but his wrath left him as suddenly as it had come. He stared at Savoli, and was met with a look that was firm, yet not unfriendly. Borrango broke the strain.

"Nick is a friend of yours, Mike," he insisted. "He is not trying to make you feel bad. You told him what you thought; he is telling you what he thinks. It is all between friends."

"Well," said Larrigan slowly, "you may be right, Nick. I never looked at it that way, but you may be right. Those two fellows were pals of mine, though. Don't forget that!"

"I have not forgotten it," said Savoli quietly. "Like you, I am sorry that they are dead. But friends of mine have died, too. We have ourselves to think about."

"You mean "

Savoli looked significantly at Borrango. The enforcer took his cue. Now was the time for him to make a proposal that would interest Mike Larrigan.

"Nick means this," said Borrango. "Before now, it would have been difficult for you to work with us, because Schultz and Spirak might not have liked it. But now we can work together."

GANGDOM'S DOOM

"Pete Varona might like to move away from the South Side," said Nick Savoli, in a thoughtful tone.

Larrigan caught the suggestion.

The South Side saloons and booze joints were divided in allegiance. Varona, as Savoli's underling, controlled more territory than did Larrigan. In fact, all of Larrigan's increase of business had been at the expense of Pete Varona.

It had been a battle between Larrigan's gunmen, who frequently shot up places that bought booze from Varona. In return, Pete's bombers had a habit of flinging pineapples into places that were supplied by Larrigan.

Until now, the Irishman had been making progress. One by one, booze peddlers had been showing preference for the liquor that came from Larrigan. But with Schultz and Spirak gone, the tide was sure to turn.

Larrigan was an Irishman who liked fights; yet he could yield to the lure of easy money. Savoli had spoken well. Already, visions of controlling the entire South Side were forming in Larrigan's mind. He would pay tribute to Savoli, to be sure, yet his own profits would be tremendous."

"That sounds good to me, Mike," commented Borrango. "What do you think about it?"

Larrigan's indecision suddenly left him. He thrust his hand toward Savoli.

"Shake on it," he said.

Nick grasped Mike's hand.

Larrigan rose; then stopped.

"There's just one thing, though," he said. "We've made a bargain, and I'll stick to it. But I want the man that got Schultz and Spirak. I don't care now whether he was working for you or not. I want him, and if I get him, I'll call it quits."

"Listen, Mike," said Savoli quietly. "This fellow they call Monk was not working for me. He came here, and I gave him credit for helping out in Marmosa's. He wanted to work for me, but I didn't need him."

"Can you get him to work for you?" questioned Larrigan eagerly.

"Perhaps," said Savoli thoughtfully.

"All right," replied Larrigan. "Get him, and let me have him."

"That might be done," said Savoli, turning to Borrango.

"I think it could," returned the enforcer, speaking to Larrigan. "But we will have to be careful. He might suspect something, now that you are with us. Give me time, Mike, and I can do it."

"All right," agreed Larrigan.

"One moment," Savoli spoke seriously. "We must not hurry this, Larrigan. It must not disturb our plans to work together.

GANGDOM'S DOOM

"I tell you what we will do. There are other men in Chicago who should be working for me. I can give them all territory not as good as yours, but territory that will please them. Suppose we call a meeting, two nights from now. Could you arrange it, Borrango?"

Nick looked significantly at the enforcer as he finished his short talk. Borrango was secretly elated. Savoli had cleverly turned the course of events into a great plan which he and the big shot had arranged.

"You mean, can I get them all to be there? Morgan, Salvis, Pietro –"

Savoli interrupted the listing.

"I mean all of them that count," he said. "Every man that has a mob. So we can work together from now on."

"I can do it," said Borrango, "if they know Larrigan is coming with us. He's bigger than any of them."

"I'll be with you," announced Larrigan. "But remember, I get Monk Thurman when you find him."

"That's right," said Savoli, again shaking hands with the Irishman. "We'll get Monk Thurman for you, after this goes through. Two nights from now, at the Goliath Hotel. Borrango will arrange it all."

WHEN Larrigan was gone, Borrango grinned at his chief. They had turned the Irishman's visit completely to their advantage.

To Nick Savoli, the one goal of gangdom was supreme rule. Through careful alliances and purposeful efforts, he had risen to control the most important factions of Chicago's underworld. The Larrigan outfit had been the one obstacle that had prevented him from completing his mighty empire.

Other gang leaders still opposed his rule, but they did so only because Larrigan was still independent. Now Larrigan had swung into line, and the others would follow.

If any still held out, Larrigan could fight them. The big Irishman loved to wipe out lesser gangsters. He would be useful to Savoli.

Both the big shot and his enforcer had discussed all this. The only change in their program related to Monk Thurman. He must be sacrificed to appease Larrigan. This was the only term of agreement that Savoli seemed to regret.

"This Monk is a good man. It is too bad for him to go."

"That sounds like Larrigan talking, Nick," returned Borrango. "That's why he never got where he should. Too much sentiment."

"It's not sentiment," replied the big shot. "I am thinking of Monk in terms of usefulness. Don't forget that he wiped out Schultz and Spirak. We could not have made this deal without that."

"That is true," said Borrango. "But we have to eliminate Monk to complete the deal. So let him serve you again by putting him on the spot."

"We will have to do it," agreed Savoli, "but we must wait a while, if possible. I have one more job for Monk Thurman "

"What is that?"

"This man they call The Shadow. We must find him. Monk may know who he is. Monk is the man to fix him."

"The Shadow?" Mike Borrango's voice was contemptuous. "Who is The Shadow? Steve Cronin spoke of him. But Steve is yellow."

"Machine-gun McGinnis is not yellow. Neither is Brodie. The Shadow made trouble for them, as well "

"Because he surprised them. That is all. What has become of him since then? He has done nothing. He is gone. He is one man, without a mob. What can he do?"

Savoli rose from his chair, and walked slowly from the room, with Borrango close beside him. At the door, the big shot spoke to his enforcer.

"You may be right," he said. "The Shadow whoever he may be has no power against us. Now that we know of him, he is afraid."

"Yet we will play the game safe. We will give this Monk a chance to kill The Shadow. If he succeeds, we may save him from Larrigan. If he fails let Larrigan have him."

"Let Larrigan have him anyway," said Borrango. "As for The Shadow he is probably miles away from Chicago by now."

The men left the library. The door slammed behind them. Then the bookcase moved. A tall, thin figure, clad in black, stepped into the vacant room.

Silent, sinister, and motionless, The Shadow seemed to be pondering over the words that he had heard.

After Larrigan's departure, the other men had talked in Italian; but it was apparent that the man who had been hidden behind the bookcase had understood their words. For now he spoke in a low, uncanny whisper that seemed to fill the room with sibilant echoes.

"Larrigan is lined up," were his words. "The others will follow. Monk Thurman will die. Nick Savoli will be supreme."

Scarcely had the man in black finished these sentences before a soft, whispered laugh escaped his lips. Like the words, the laugh reached every corner of the room.

It was creepy, and unreal, that laugh. Its taunting tones seemed to ridicule everything that Nick Savoli and Mike Borrango had accepted as certainty.

For The Shadow had heard. The Shadow knew.

CHAPTER XVI. THE PEACE DINNER

THE time had arrived for truce in gangdom. News of the dinner in the Goliath Hotel had reached the newspapers as well as the police. Jerry Kirklyn, the Chronicle reporter, discussed it with Barney Higgins the afternoon before it occurred.

GANGDOM'S DOOM

"What are you going to do about it, Barney?" he demanded. "What does Weaver say?"

"We're going to let them alone," replied the assistant detective commissioner.

"What! All those mobsters?" questioned Kirklyn.

"We've got nothing on them, Jerry," replied Higgins. "Of course, we'll have men outside the Goliath Hotel. If we see any gunmen that are wanted, we'll pick them up. But those fellows will stay away."

"How about Savoli and Borrango? How about Larrigan? Are you going to let them get away with this merger?"

"Call it a merger if you want, Jerry," laughed Higgins. "To us, it's just a meeting of men that might bear watching. Some of the gorillas that will be there are murderers, right enough; but they've all been acquitted.

"This dinner may mean a lot to us later on; but right now, there's no reason for us to stop it. It's a mistake to pick up any of these big gangsters without full provocation. Sooner or later we'll get them "

"Sooner or later they may get each other," interrupted Kirklyn. "That's the old police formula. Let them shoot each other. The trouble is, they increase faster than they drop off. If this peace racket works, they'll multiply more rapidly than ever."

"Perhaps so, Jerry. But we can't do anything to-night."

"What does Morris Clarendon think about it?" demanded Kirklyn.

"This isn't Clarendon's business," retorted Higgins. "He's a prosecutor. That's all."

"Speaking of Clarendon," said Kirklyn suddenly, "what's the real dope on that story that some torpedoes tried to get him one night?"

Barney Higgins snapped his fingers nervously.

"There's nothing in it, Jerry," he said.

"Clarendon seemed to think there was," persisted the reporter. "He was all set for an interview. Then he shut up like a clam. What did he do? Talk to Weaver?"

"Look here, Jerry," said Higgins. "If you want to work with me, you've got to play the game. When anything actually happens, I'll tell you all there is to know. But rumors are out.

"We have enough trouble getting these gangsters when they really pull something. We can't make arrests on the strength of things that never happen."

"All right, Barney," laughed Kirklyn. "I thought you might tell me something about it, at least."

THE detective commissioner looked about him to make sure that no one was within hearing distance. They were standing outside of headquarters. The street was deserted.

"Here's the dope, Jerry," said Higgins. "You can't use a word I say. If you do, I'll deny it.

GANGDOM'S DOOM

"Clarendon had an appointment with a stool pigeon who was going to turn State's witness. We found out later that the stool had been put on the spot before he had a chance to meet Clarendon.

"While Clarendon was waiting, a car pulled up, and he saw the muzzle of a machine gun poked out through the curtains. He thought he was going to get his. But the car moved on.

"He told us about it. Since then, he's been watching out."

"They were going to get him?"

"We don't know, Barney. Maybe they mistook Clarendon for some one else. More likely, they were after the stool pigeon who was due there. Perhaps they intended to give Clarendon the works, but got cold feet.

"We don't know. Clarendon was too surprised to get the number of the car. He was scared. I don't blame him. That's all there is to it; so forget it."

The reporter lighted a cigarette.

"Thanks, Barney," he said. "All that dope is good to know, in case I ever am allowed to use it. I think I'll be anklng up to the Goliath, to see what's doing on the outside."

Some of gangland's choicest battlers arrived at the hotel shortly after Jerry Kirklyn took his position there.

Every gang leader of prominence was slated to arrive. Their chief lieutenants and pet killers were also to be present. Only those who were in hiding, and those who were in jail, were not expected.

The dinner was being held in a large private dining room. Each arrival entered through an outside room. There each newcomer was greeted by three gangsters who seemed to be a receiving committee.

Their real purpose was to frisk the man they welcomed. No gats allowed was the rule of this peace meeting.

Barney Higgins and two plain-clothes men were in this outer room. They had been virtually invited there. They were a safeguard, for the receiving committee carried no weapons.

It was well understood that the detectives should not enter the dining room. If they insisted upon going in, the peace talk would be off.

Jerry Kirklyn managed to squeeze in and stay close to Barney Higgins.

MIKE LARRIGAN was an early arrival. The big Irishman nodded in a friendly manner to Barney Higgins; then went through the formality of a search.

Shortly after his entrance, Higgins nudged Kirklyn. Genara and Anelmo, the Homicide Twins, had put in their appearance. Both men were expressionless. They seemed to be a pair apart from all others. They were searched, and they went into the dining room.

The real event was the arrival of Nick Savoli. His appearance was heralded by Mike Borrango and Al Vacchi. Higgins suspected that the big shot would not be far behind his henchmen, and in this he was correct.

Savoli was accompanied by Steve Cronin. He had restored the New York gunman to temporary favor for this occasion. Cronin had been inactive for some time; he made an ideal bodyguard for this event.

GANGDOM'S DOOM

Savoli's former bodyguard was out of Chicago, and was wanted by the police.

Both Savoli and Cronin submitted to a search. No weapons were found upon them. But just as they were entering the dining room, Machine-gun McGinnis arrived with three other Savoli gorillas.

Two of these gangsters were found to be armed. They grinned as they left the hotel to park their weapons.

Barney Higgins looked significantly at Jerry Kirklyn. The reporter understood.

Nick Savoli had left nothing to chance. He knew that the search at the door, conducted by two of his men, and one of Larrigan's, would be thorough. But he had assumed no risks while en route to the Goliath Hotel.

The reporter was seized with a sudden inspiration. Now that Savoli had arrived, there was no use waiting in the outer room. He made his way to the kitchen, and looked for an opportunity to take the place of a waiter.

But here he was foiled. Two gangsters were there, one representing Savoli, and one representing Larrigan. The moment that he came under their observation, Kirklyn decided it would be best to leave.

THUS it happened that the elite of Chicago's underworld assembled undisturbed for the dinner that was to end in the burial of the hatchet.

All the would-be big shots were present, gathered in their little individual groups. Nick Savoli sat at a table at the end of the room, with Steve Cronin, Mike Borrango, and Al Vacchi beside him. His other henchmen were at nearby tables.

Larrigan, surrounded by the lesser lights of his mob, had a table at the side. There was gloom in his camp.

He and his fraternal gangsters missed the delightful presence of Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak. But no mention was made of the two departed lieutenants.

Such gang leaders as Joe Morgan, "Goofy" Salvis, and "Nails" Pietro held forth with their smaller companies of mobsters. These groups were expectant. They wondered what they had to gain.

They looked enviously at Pete Varona, "Spiker" Condi, "Texas" Carey, and other district rulers of the Savoli organization. These men obeyed every command of the big shot.

They knew that their territories were to be reapportioned, to give the newcomers a break. Yet they relied upon Nick to see that they did not lose through the impending changes.

Singularly enough, there were two men who sat alone, apart from all others. They formed a sinister pair that viewed the proceedings with an indifferent air.

They were none other than John Genara and Tony Anelmo. These individualistic gangsters were mercenaries who killed for cash, and who had no interest in territorial disputes.

They belonged to the Savoli organization, and were so highly touted that their presence was necessary. They had been summoned by Borrango as a master stroke of subtle diplomacy.

Like the sword of Damocles, their presence hung above the heads of those who dined with the big shot. Every gangster knew what the Homicide Twins could do. They served as a reminder that Savoli had men who could strike in the dark.

GANGDOM'S DOOM

The dinner was a pretentious affair. Elaborate courses were served. The best liquors in Savoli's warehouses had been surreptitiously introduced; so certain was the big shot that there would be no police interference.

No business was discussed while the waiters served the dinner. That was to be later, when the room was cleared. Yet some member of Larrigan's gang, inspired by an overindulgence in strong drink, made the mistake of mentioning the names of Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak.

"We'll get the guy that got them!"

The exclamation came from Larrigan's table.

The big Irishman grinned. Then he caught the eye of Mike Borrango. The enforcer made a warning gesture. Larrigan silenced the offender.

But the unwise statement had its effect upon many of those present. Steve Cronin, seated beside Nick Savoli, slipped his hand beneath the table. An automatic had been planted there, fully loaded, by a waiter in Savoli's employ.

THE lesser gang leaders buzzed in low conversation. It had been reported that Larrigan was to receive the scalp of the man who had killed his friends.

All believed that Monk Thurman was the killer. It had also been hinted that Monk might have had a companion; but that was doubtful.

Nevertheless, this open outcry seemed to prove that Larrigan had received the promise when he made terms with the big shot, and that he had lined up his mobsters by telling them the news.

The two men upon whom the shout seemed to make the least impression were Genara and Anelmo. The Homicide Twins made no sign that would have aroused the slightest suspicion.

But something occurred that impressed these silent, sinister men. As silence became restored, a low voice spoke. The words were in perfect Italian, and they reached the ears of the Sicilians.

"Who killed Schultz and Spirak?" asked the voice.

Genara looked at Anelmo, and his companion returned the gaze. For an instant, each supposed that the other had spoken. Inwardly startled, neither man gave visible sign of his surprise.

"Monk Thurman did not kill them," announced the same voice.

Genara looked about him, to see if any of the other diners had heard the words.

Those at the nearest table were engaged in conversation. They could not have heard the voice. Genara raised his eyebrows as he looked at Anelmo.

Both the Sicilians were searching in their gaze. They were sure that no one had spoken from the next table. The only person near them was a waiter, who had been placing dishes on a tray.

Now the man approached, and calmly cleared the plates from the table where the Homicide Twins were seated. He came under the close scrutiny of both men. Neither had seen him before.

GANGDOM'S DOOM

He was a man of middle age, who walked with a limp. His dull, expressionless face showed no signs of intelligence.

The waiter moved away unmolested. The Sicilians had not considered him for more than an instant. They still sought the source of the mysterious voice. The waiter picked up the tray and walked by the table.

Then came something stranger than the voice itself; a low, whispered laugh, that seemed to emanate from a spot above the table where the killers sat. It was a laugh such as neither Genara nor Anelmo had ever heard a laugh that reminded them of the sinister words that they had heard; a laugh that mocked their inability to discover its author.

ANELMO half rose from his chair. He stared at the figure of the departing waiter. The man was lame, and stoop-shouldered an innocent-appearing person in every respect.

Genara gripped his companion's arm.

"Sit down, Tony," he whispered in Italian. "We'll find out about this later."

"Suppose Savoli learns " There was no fear in Anelmo's voice. His words carried only grimness.

"Savoli will not learn," said Genara, in the same undertone. "Wait. We will talk later."

"You mean "

Genara released his grip on Anelmo's arm. Tony nodded very slightly. He understood.

He and Genara had talked much together, particularly in that corner of Marmosa's gambling den. Their words had been no more than veiled ideas. But they were schemers who understood each other.

They had a plan which now would be forced to its culmination. For some man who, they did not know knew the secret of their latest crime. With such men as Genara and Anelmo, a third person's knowledge meant danger.

The room became quiet. Waiters had cleared the tables and gone away. The big shot was about to talk business, and while he had the floor, all must listen.

But even as Nick Savoli spoke, Genara and Anelmo were not listening. The sinister Sicilians were thinking only of that mysterious voice which had reminded them of their crime.

Had they known the source of the words, which had been uttered with the skill of a practiced ventriloquist, they would have realized that they were encountering a personage as sinister as themselves.

The middle-aged waiter was merely a man playing a part. His limp, his stoop shoulders, and his stupid face were a disguise. For the laugh which had startled gangland's most formidable murderers was the laugh of The Shadow!

CHAPTER XVII. ENTER THE SHADOW

NICK SAVOLI did not plead when he urged the gangsters of Chicago to work together in a common cause. The big shot talked quietly but firmly, and he presented his arguments in a convincing tone. The presence of his powerful henchmen added weight to his discourse.

GANGDOM'S DOOM

"Mike Larrigan is working with me from now on," announced Savoli, "and this is the chance for the rest of you to fall in line. There's enough in it for all of us, if we stick together.

"We'll save the pineapples for the wise guys that think they are too big for us. We'll put the double-crossers on the spot. There will be plenty of work for good torpedoes, but they will have to work with us."

When Savoli had finished his discussion, Mike Borrango took the floor.

Addressing the gang leaders in turn, he laid out the territories that had been arranged. This required certain concessions on the part of Savoli lieutenants, yet no leader was required to give up too much.

Borrango, suave and efficient, pointed out the advantages that would accrue to all concerned. He invited comment, and he received it.

The crowning event of the evening was Mike Larrigan's oath of allegiance. The big Irishman announced his full intention of sticking with Nick Savoli. But he made it quite plain to all present that a certain personal grievance was to be satisfied.

Larrigan tried to make his statement subtle, but it was obvious to all that he expected to exact vengeance for the deaths of Schultz and Spirak.

"I'm with you, Nick," he said, "and any guy that's with you is with me. But there's a certain party maybe more than one that I'm going to get.

"I stick by my pals you know that. Just because I'm going with you don't give me a right to forget those that were with me. Is that right, Nick?"

The big shot nodded his approval.

"I don't care who it is," added Larrigan, "I'm out to get that one party or anybody that helped him in his dirty work. He's going on the spot just as sure as I'm lining up with Nick Savoli. That's all I've got to say."

The mob leader looked all about the room as he finished his threat, and the significance of his words was fully understood.

Larrigan's eye fell upon Genara and Anelmo, and the Homicide Twins returned his gaze coldly. There was antagonism in Larrigan's expression. His determined face showed that he would go to any limit to get the slayers of his former pals; but there was no sign of suspicion on his face when he looked at the two Sicilians.

THE conference came to an end after all important details had been smoothed out. There still remained a great deal of work for Mike Borrango. The groundwork was laid for Nick Savoli's invisible empire, the task that lay ahead was to set the mechanism in perfect motion.

There would be trouble ahead, but Borrango felt sure that all difficulties would be with the owners of speakeasies and gambling joints, or with lesser gunmen not with these leaders and their lieutenants.

The epoch-making meeting closed in harmony. There was handshaking all around. One by one the gangsters left, to go about their respective businesses.

Mike Larrigan appeared well satisfied when he left. By recognizing the power of Nick Savoli, he had firmly established himself as the greatest of all the independent gang leaders.

GANGDOM'S DOOM

The others were satisfied. Morgan, Pietro, and Salvis felt that their combined forces were as important to Savoli as was Larrigan's mob. They had seldom worked together in the past; now they felt a common interest.

Only a few gangsters remained. Anelmo and Genara still sat at their corner table, as though awaiting instructions from Savoli.

The big shot remained, together with his enforcer. A few waiters were allowed to enter, to clear up the tables.

Anelmo, still suspicious, looked for the stoop-shouldered man who had attracted his attention, but the waiter had evidently gone for the night.

With a motion toward Borrango, Nick Savoli left the dining room, and entered a door at one side. The enforcer spoke to Steve Cronin; then followed his chief.

Steve understood the action. He was to remain on guard while Savoli conferred with Borrango.

The departure of the big shot gave Anelmo and Genara a chance to fetch their guns. The Sicilians left the dining room. In a few minutes, Steve Cronin was virtually alone.

He slipped the automatic from beneath the table and dropped it in his pocket, taking care that none of the few remaining gangsters saw the action.

A waiter entered from the kitchen. He went into the room where Savoli and Borrango had gone. Cronin was suspicious for a moment; then the waiter reappeared, going into the room again with two bottles and glasses.

Steve was relieved. The big shot and the enforcer had simply ordered drinks.

Cronin decided to wait until the room was empty and there would be no danger from any remaining gangster. Then he would enter the private room to report that the coast was clear. So he lighted a cigar and leaned back in his chair, apparently indifferent, but actually keenly observant.

WITHIN the small private room, Savoli talked business with Borrango. He dropped the discussion each time the waiter entered; but when the man disappeared behind the screen that led to the outside dining room, the big shot immediately resumed his talk.

It had been only natural caution that had caused Savoli to cease talking while the waiter was present, for the man seemed dull-witted and harmless. But now the big shot talked with his enforcer, and they summarized the important events of the evening.

"This means a lot to us, Mike," said Savoli. "You'll have to follow it up."

"Leave that to me, Nick," replied Borrango. "I can take care of Larrigan. You will have to talk to him occasionally. As for the others – I can handle them alone."

He pointed out the individual weaknesses of each man. He showed how they could be played against Larrigan, and against each other. The persuasion in his voice was convincing, even to the hard-boiled big shot.

"You see what it means, Nick?" concluded Borrango. "You are the master. You are the power over every gang leader. Should any one make trouble, he can be put on the spot. His gang will be yours."

GANGDOM'S DOOM

"I am the enforcer. I can act. You can be out of town when a man is killed. Any examples which we are forced to make will impress the others."

Nick Savoli nodded approvingly.

"You are bigger than the law, Nick," continued Borrango with pride. "The cops mean nothing. You are the one big shot. The others do not count. There is no one person who can dare to fight you. There is no one whom you need fear."

"You are right, Mike."

"There is no one who can challenge you."

"I fear no one," said Savoli. "No one can challenge me. You are right."

A LOW laugh came from the corner of the room. Mike Borrango was startled. He turned quickly. Nick Savoli also turned toward the direction of the sound, but there was no excitement in the big shot's action.

A man was standing in the corner. A black cloak, with lining of crimson, enveloped him. He wore a large slouch hat, and the turned-down brim obscured his features.

The man's arms were folded in front of his body; his hands were covered with thin black gloves. He laughed again, softly, but mirthlessly.

The sinister tone of his laugh seemed taunting. It ridiculed the words of Nick Savoli. It brought a tremor of fear to Mike Borrango. Then the man spoke:

"You fear no one?" he asked, in a low, even voice, that carried the same uncanny tone as his laugh. "There is no one who can challenge you? Look at me, Nick Savoli!"

The big shot looked. He stared as though fascinated. Yet there was no fear in his eyes. Instead, his face became grim and determined almost brutal in its expression.

"Who are you?"

Savoli's question was a demand. He recognized the challenge of this man in black.

"I am The Shadow!"

The reply was emphatic. The last word was sibilant and impressive.

The three men formed a tableau, as the seconds ticked by Borrango, too alarmed to act; Savoli, unperturbed, yet indecisive; The Shadow, strange and sinister, master of the situation.

It was The Shadow who broke the silence. His words were firm and penetrating. There was no mistaking his message.

He pronounced a judgment against the man who believed himself greater than the law.

"Nick Savoli," said the sinister voice, "you have led a life of crime. While you were one of many, you were ordinary. Now you believe yourself supreme."

GANGDOM'S DOOM

"You are wrong. You are dangerous that is all. You are mistaken when you believe that you are supreme."

"Is this a warning?" asked Savoli, with a grim smile. "Or is it a threat?"

"It is a judgment," said The Shadow sternly. "In your crimes you have not respected the individual. You are responsible for the murder of one man against whom you had no grievance. For this crime you shall lose the power which you claim to possess."

There was no reply to The Shadow's words. They carried a hidden meaning which neither Savoli nor Borrango completely understood. Yet the big shot and his enforcer both realized that their accuser was a man of tremendous power.

"You were responsible for the crime," continued The Shadow, "although you did not actually commit it. Those who carried out your orders will pay the full penalty."

SILENCE followed. Impressive silence. Nick Savoli, despite his pretense of confidence, was inwardly apprehensive.

With all his precautions, he had been trapped here, by a man who possessed a purpose equal to his own. If The Shadow had a loaded automatic, both the big shot and his enforcer could be killed in an instant unarmed as they were.

Nick Savoli's gaze wavered for an instant; then it was fixed upon The Shadow again.

Nothing in Savoli's expression betrayed what he had seen. That brief glance had given him new hope and assurance. For Savoli had detected a motion beyond the screen that stood in front of the door, and his keen mind had responded immediately.

Some one had entered the room, in back of The Shadow. The door had been opened noiselessly.

Mike Borrango had not observed the action. Neither had The Shadow. Savoli alone saw it, and he was sure that he knew who was approaching.

Steve Cronin had been instructed to enter the private room when all the gangsters had gone.

"Is that all you have to say?" Savoli's voice was quiet, yet defiant. Its commanding tones seemed to hold the full attention of the man in black the very purpose which Savoli desired.

"That is all," replied The Shadow.

Steve Cronin appeared from behind the screen. He had drawn his automatic. He leveled the gun toward the sinister man in black.

The gangster was trembling. Even the presence of The Shadow frightened Steve Cronin; yet he had more than one score to settle with the dread of the underworld, and his determination was supporting him.

Nick Savoli realized the situation in an instant. If he placed full reliance in Steve Cronin, he would have The Shadow at his mercy.

Yet Savoli knew that Cronin was frightened. He also knew Mike Borrango might betray a changed expression that would warn the black-clad figure of the menace that lay behind him.

GANGDOM'S DOOM

Even as these thoughts moved through Savoli's quick mind, he saw The Shadow begin to turn, and knew his enemy was conscious of the danger.

"Shoot!" commanded Nick Savoli, in a firm, harsh voice.

Steve Cronin pressed the trigger of his automatic. The roar of the gun was deafening in the small room. The gangster was trembling but his aim was sure, for the muzzle of his automatic was scarcely more than three feet from the form of The Shadow.

Nick Savoli expected to see the black-clad man crumple and fall. Instead, The Shadow laughed!

A gasp came from Mike Borrango. Steve Cronin dropped his automatic, and staggered back.

"When you play fair," said The Shadow, addressing Nick Savoli, "you leave nothing to chance. A loaded automatic was smuggled in and placed beneath your table.

"If this man" he swept one arm toward Steve Cronin "had been able to examine the gun, he would have found the blank cartridges, which I substituted.

"One waiter was in your employ. Another waiter was myself."

The Shadow turned toward the screen; but at that instant the door burst open, and two men rushed into the room. They were Genara and Anelmo, the Homicide Twins. They carried automatics in their hands.

They had returned, armed, to escort Nick Savoli to his apartment. The shots had hustled them to the private room.

NICK SAVOLI leaped to his feet. Now he was to be master. His henchmen had seen him immediately upon their arrival.

Realizing that he was safe, they hesitated to fire at the strange man in black; until they received the word. They had never seen The Shadow they were not sure whether he was friend or foe.

"Get him!" cried Savoli.

But before the words had left the man's lips, The Shadow acted. The position in which he stood had been well chosen. The light switch was at his side.

As Savoli cried out, the man in black seemed to sink to the floor. One long arm shot to the wall, and the black-gloved hand pressed the switch.

The room was in darkness. Automatics exploded as the Homicide Twins shot at the spot where The Shadow had been.

Then came a loud, sinister laugh, from the center of the room. The two gunmen dashed in that direction. They were sure that The Shadow was retreating before them, toward the opposite corner, where he would be trapped. They fired as they went, and Savoli leaped to the switch. The room was flooded with light.

There stood Genara and Anelmo, facing a corner where no one was visible. Steve Cronin was still leaning against the screen. Mike Borrango was in his chair.

The Shadow was gone. In the darkness, his voice had been deceiving. Anelmo and Genara had followed the laugh, but they had been led in the wrong direction. Even now came a distant peal of mirth, from the outside dining room.

The Sicilian killers dashed in pursuit, but to no avail. The Shadow had gained a sufficient margin to escape them.

CHAPTER XVIII. MONK THURMAN RETURNS

THE next morning found Nick Savoli and Mike Borrango in close conference in the big shot's officelike den. The enforcer had been busy making the first arrangements that would merge the gangs of Chicago; until now he had not had the opportunity to talk with his chief regarding The Shadow. But now, with a temporary lull at hand, the commander of mobsters opened the discussion with his aid.

There was only one course; that was to get The Shadow. The mysterious man in black had been the first person who had ever dared to defy Nick Savoli face to face. That in itself was sufficient cause for a death warrant.

At the same time, both Savoli and Borrango were practical minded. They realized that The Shadow was no common adversary.

"Put him on the spot," was Savoli's terse command.

Mike Borrango nodded his agreement; at the same time he raised an important objection.

"Who will do it?" he asked.

"You have the men," replied Savoli.

"There are four," said Borrango, "Who are the best of all. Steve Cronin, Machine-gun McGinnis, and the other two Genara and Anelmo. You saw what happened last night. Three of them failed.

"We have one other man McGinnis. Yet he was in the car with Cronin that night when The Shadow prevented both of them from putting Clarendon on the spot. So we cannot rely upon McGinnis.

"You are right when you say that I have men. But I do not have the one man we need."

"Find him, then!"

"Who is he? He must be equal to any one of the four who have failed. He must be better than any of them. More than that, he must have the ability to discover this Shadow whoever he may be."

"Cronin has met The Shadow before."

"Yes; but he has no knowledge of the man's identity. He has never found The Shadow. It has always been The Shadow who has found him."

"Cronin appears to be afraid of The Shadow."

Borrango smiled sourly before he made his reply.

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"I was afraid, last night," he confessed. "You were not afraid, Nick. But I was afraid. Cronin was afraid, too."

"How about Genara and Anelmo?"

"They do not fear The Shadow. They are ready to find him. But you know the limits of their ability. They kill those who are found for them. We cannot count upon them to find The Shadow."

Nick Savoli was thoughtful; then he made a suggestion.

"This man Monk," he said quietly. "He comes from New York. He is better than any of them. Where is he now?"

THE telephone rang before Borrango could offer a reply. The enforcer answered it, and engaged in a terse conversation. Savoli left the room for the time; when he returned, he found Borrango looking gloomily from the window.

"Who was it?" demanded Savoli.

"Larrigan," replied Borrango. "He reminded me about Monk Thurman. I told him to wait a while. I said that we had not yet located Monk; that after we find him "

"Larrigan can wait, then!" exclaimed Savoli angrily. "We must find this man Monk. Through him we must find The Shadow. He is valuable to us. Larrigan can wait."

"Monk will be back," prophesied Borrango. "He does not know of your promise to Larrigan. He is still on our pay roll "

He paused to lift the receiver of a telephone that connected with the anteroom. A light had flashed, signifying that a visitor was outside. Borrango uttered an exclamation of surprise when he heard the voice of the attendant.

"Send him in!" he said. Then he turned to Savoli. "It is Monk Thurman now!"

The big shot arose and led the way into the library. There was Monk Thurman, calmly seated in the big chair, quietly awaiting an interview.

His face was as masklike and as expressionless as before. He surveyed Savoli and Borrango without uttering a word. The big shot sat opposite Thurman; the enforcer took his customary place before the bookcase.

"You have done well, Monk," commended Borrango, in opening the conversation. "We had not expected action so soon. We have been wondering where you have been."

The gangster seemed indifferent to the words of approval. In fact, he seemed to ignore them entirely. He looked coldly toward Borrango; then turned his attention to Nick Savoli.

"I hear there was a peace meeting last night," he said.

"There was," replied the big shot.

"Larrigan is now a friend of yours."

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"He is."

"How does that affect me?"

"Listen, Monk." Mike Borrango interjected himself into the discussion. "You can forget about Larrigan. He's sore because Schultz and Spirak were bumped off; but we expected that. We wanted them out of the way so we could line up Larrigan."

"We'll fix it so you won't have to worry about Larrigan. What we want to know about now is where you have been "

"Where I have been?" Monk Thurman laughed in a rasping tone. "I've been worrying about Larrigan, that's what. I heard that Larrigan squawked to you. So I laid low. Here I am now, and I want to know just where I stand."

"You stand high, Monk," said Borrango earnestly. "In fact, we were just talking about you, Nick and I. There's another job for you to do."

Borrango reached in his pocket and pulled out a roll of bills. He counted off a thousand dollars, and handed it to the New York gunman.

Thurman accepted the money without an expression of thanks. As on the previous occasion, he added the bills to his own fat roll.

"What's my next job?" he asked abruptly.

Borrango looked quizzically at Savoli. The big shot nodded, and the enforcer spoke.

"Did you ever hear of The Shadow?" he questioned.

A look of startled amazement flickered over Monk Thurman's face. It was the first time that either Savoli or Borrango had seen an emotion registered upon those chiseled features.

In an instant the expression was gone. Monk Thurman did not speak. Instead, he simply nodded.

"What is he?" asked Savoli, in a hard voice.

"The Shadow?" Monk laughed in his rasping, mirthless manner. "He is one who makes trouble."

"How does he make trouble?"

"He finds out the plans of the big shots. He spoils them. They say that those who meet The Shadow never forget it."

"Have you ever met him?"

"No. But if I do " The gangster made a motion of drawing an automatic.

"I would like to meet The Shadow," he added, with an ugly sneer.

"You will have a chance to meet him," said Savoli quietly.

"Me?" Monk snorted disgustedly. "Not me. I'm not going back to New York. That isn't in our bargain. I work here in Chicago."

"The Shadow is here in Chicago."

Monk Thurman stared steadily at Nick Savoli, as though he doubted the statement that the big shot had made. He slowly seemed to realize that Savoli was serious. He looked at Borrango, and noted the soberness of the enforcer's face.

"What's up?" he demanded.

"The Shadow is here in Chicago," said Borrango. "He tried to act smart last night. We should have nabbed him, but he got away. We are going to put him on the spot. It is up to you!"

MONK THURMAN did not respond to this decisive statement. He seemed to ponder on Borrango's words. A full minute went by; then Savoli ended the silence.

"Tell us about The Shadow," he said.

"Nobody knows much about him," replied Monk Thurman. "They don't know what he is, nor why he works the way he does. But when anybody tries to battle with him, they get the worst of it. Sometimes they get bumped off. Sometimes the cops get them."

"He works for the police?"

"No. He's not a dick. He's more like a crook. Works at night, and plays a lone hand. He has men who tip him off to what's going on. Sometimes they get into trouble, but The Shadow always pulls them out of it.

"They say The Shadow is the fellow who got Bert Farley. There was a smart guy in New York called Isaac Coffran. Smart as they made them; but that old duck cleared out all of a sudden, and they claim The Shadow was in back of it.

"Then there was Birdie Crull. He was bumped off by a secret-service man, and they say The Shadow was mixed up in that."

"Yet you say he is not with the police?"

"Not a bit of it. He dodges the cops himself, sometimes. He may be a crook for all I know, because he seems to have all the money he wants. Yet they've never hung anything on him.

"All they've got is one fact that he likes to make trouble for any one that's pulling something on the cops. Nobody knows The Shadow's game. Whenever they see him, he's wearing a black cloak and a black hat."

"The way he was last night!" blurted Borrango. The enforcer became silent when Nick Savoli made a gesture. The big shot was intensely interested in Monk's description.

"He shows up at a radio station, every Thursday night," continued the gangster. "They're all set there to keep anybody from finding out who he is.

"Some crook got in there once, disguised like an electrician, but he didn't learn a thing. Some guys say that The Shadow don't always go to the broadcasting station. They claim there's a telephone hook-up over long

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distance, so he can broadcast from anywhere. But nobody has ever got the whole dope on it.

"He's a tough guy The Shadow."

"Would you know him if you saw him?" Savoli asked.

"Me know The Shadow? Of course I would. Say let any gazebo come around me wearing a black cloak and a pulled-down hat. He'll get his, quick, I tell you! If The Shadow is here in Chicago, I'm out to find him!"

"He is here. But say nothing."

Monk Thurman nodded his acquiescence. Then he suddenly looked about the room.

The action was most expressive. It showed, more graphically than words, what Monk Thurman thought of The Shadow's reputation. Here, in Nick Savoli's headquarters, he seemed to suspect the presence of the man in black.

"You say he has made trouble in New York," observed Nick Savoli. "But Chicago is not New York. We do not fear The Shadow here.

"I have two men who do not fear him Anelmo and Genara. They are on the watch for him. You will be the third. It will mean ten grand if you get him."

The offer of ten thousand dollars seemed to arouse Monk Thurman's interest. For once, the New Yorker appeared eager. But he quickly regained his accustomed calmness.

"Why is The Shadow here?" questioned Savoli.

Monk Thurman looked puzzled.

"How should I know?" he asked.

"You know something about The Shadow," replied Nick Savoli. "I shall tell you what he said last night. He told me that I was responsible for the death of a man against whom I had no grievance. "

"That is the way The Shadow works," responded Monk. "He acts that way."

"So I now understand. Yet" Savoli laughed slightly "there are many whose deaths I have caused."

"The Shadow knows," said Monk impressively. "Some time not long ago you must have caused the death of some friend of his "

Mike Borrango stepped forward.

"I have it, Nick!" he exclaimed. "Do you remember that fellow that McGinnis put on the spot? Prescott? Society bootlegger?"

"He lived here in Chicago," objected Savoli.

"Yes," said Borrango, "but there was a man with him some man from New York an insurance broker "

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Savoli looked quizzically at Monk Thurman.

"That is right," he said. "Do you think the man could have been a friend of The Shadow?"

The New York gangster shrugged his shoulders.

"That may be it," he said. "I'll tell you something about The Shadow. He has his men, and he sticks by them. There's not many of them, but he keeps them working.

"Perhaps this insurance man was one of his agents. If he was well, it's no wonder The Shadow is here in Chicago."

NICK SAVOLI arose from his chair. He waved his hand toward Borrango, who was about to say something. Evidently the big shot decided that this matter had been discussed enough.

He stepped close to Monk Thurman, and gave his final instructions.

"You are a good man, Monk," he said. "You will get this fellow they call The Shadow. You will get him quick. Understand?"

The gangster nodded.

"All right. Go. Let me know what happens."

When Monk Thurman had departed, Nick Savoli turned to his enforcer.

"Make sure that no wires are tapped. Have Genara and Anelmo stay at Marmosa's headquarters, and tell them to keep looking for The Shadow.

"Monk has told us that The Shadow has his men. Perhaps we can find one of them. If so "

Mike Borrango nodded soberly. He realized that this was an additional task for him to perform. The formation of the new districts was great in itself; yet he knew that Nick Savoli would not be satisfied until The Shadow had been put on the spot.

"I shall have Cronin watch," said Borrango cunningly. "He has met The Shadow before. Perhaps he can see some one that may give him a clue.

"I shall keep him at Marmosa's, also. He will not do as your bodyguard, but he will be valuable in this new work."

The enforcer grinned. He still had an unpleasant memory of the man in black. But to-day, in the security of Nick Savoli's apartment, The Shadow seemed weak and powerless.

Borrango was thinking of the dangerous gangsters who had fallen through their opposition to the big shot. They had been men who shot to kill; not masqueraders who wore black cloaks and kept their faces hidden.

CHAPTER XIX. VINCENT RECEIVES A MESSAGE

EVENTS had moved slowly at Frank Marmosa's place since that exciting night when Monk Thurman had appeared there. Harry Vincent was now accustomed to the routine of the gambling den, and he performed his

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duties with a precision that brought the commendation of Frank Marmosa.

Yet Harry had as yet divined no purpose in his work. He knew that he had been installed in this place through the action of The Shadow; but so far he had received no instructions from his mysterious chief.

In times gone by, Harry had looked to Claude Fellows for contact. He knew little of The Shadow's organization beyond the insurance broker. Now he realized that he must either receive orders directly from The Shadow, or through some other agent.

So far, Harry knew of nothing which had been accomplished. He had not heard of the episode in the death car, the night that the gangsters had failed in their efforts to murder Morris Clarendon.

He had no idea that only the night before, The Shadow had met Nick Savoli face to face.

Living at the Goliath Hotel, Harry had heard of the peace dinner, but he had not been in the building when it had taken place.

He read the papers avidly, and found the reports meager and the suppositions great. The morning following, Harry had checked out of the Goliath Hotel. He did this, not because it was a spot chosen by gangsters, but because he found more suitable quarters at a smaller hotel, as close to Marmosa's Cafe.

Harry had been unable to notify The Shadow that he was staying at the Goliath, so there was apparently no reason why he should not change his abode.

There was only one thing which Harry Vincent disliked; that was the continued presence of Steve Cronin. The gangster was usually stationed outside of the gambling den; hence Harry seldom came in contact with him.

He avoided Cronin as much as possible. They had met once before it seemed a long time ago, now and there was danger that Steve Cronin might recognize him.

Hence to Harry, Steve Cronin was more of a menace than were John Genara and Tony Anelmo.

The Homicide Twins had no knowledge of Harry's identity. They simply regarded him as the inside man in Marmosa's joint.

TO-NIGHT, while seated at the table on the balcony, Harry saw Steve Cronin enter. It was Cronin's duty to occupy that table; so Harry calmly rose, and made his departure before the gunman arrived.

He went into the gambling room, where Genara and Anelmo were already present. There the bartender raised a beckoning finger.

"Letter for you, Harry," he said. "Marmosa told me to give it to you."

Harry received the envelope. He realized then that he had made a mistake. He had forgotten to leave a forwarding address at the Goliath Hotel.

The clerk knew he was employed at Marmosa's Cafe. Hence the letter – simply an envelope which had been left at the desk was here. Fortunately, it had not been opened.

Harry took it from the bartender and thrust it carelessly into his pocket.

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He found an opportunity to leave the gambling den, and went to the balcony. Steve Cronin had temporarily left his post.

Harry opened the envelope, and withdrew the letter. It was inscribed in a simple code, consisting of a few letter substitutions. Harry could read the letter instantly.

"Watch Genara and Anelmo," said the note. "Report any move they may make."

There was no signature. Simply a telephone number, which Harry immediately committed to memory.

The note came either from The Shadow, or from some unknown agent of that mysterious man. As Harry sat at a table on the balcony, inscribing the telephone number in his mind, he glanced once more at the note.

The writing had faded away completely. He now held a blank sheet of paper in his hand. That was the way with messages that had The Shadow as their source. They faded into nothingness as soon as they had been read, thanks to a secret preparation of disappearing ink.

Harry returned to the gambling room. Before he reached the door, he crumpled the note into a ball, and tossed it in the corner. No danger of any one reading it.

He kept the envelope in his pocket, intending to tear it up later. Yet it meant nothing, for it carried only his name.

But as the sliding panel closed behind the form of Harry Vincent, a man arose from an obscure corner of the balcony. It was Steve Cronin.

He had seen Harry read the letter. He was anxious to know what the note said. He picked up the crumpled ball of paper and studied it intently. When he observed that it was blank, his forehead wrinkled in a frown.

He lighted a match, and ran it under the paper; for he suspected an invisible ink, and knew that heat might bring it out. This was to no avail.

The gangster went back to his table at the head of the stairs, and again looked at the blank paper.

SUDDENLY a light dawned upon the puzzled gangster. A sharp exclamation escaped his lips. The message revealed nothing, but that very fact gave him a clue.

Steve Cronin had suspected that Harry Vincent was not an ordinary watcher in a gambling joint. Now he knew it! He had seen Harry read the message. That fact was significant.

"He's no ordinary dub," observed Cronin softly, "and neither is the guy that sent this letter. Who would write stuff that would go away, quick, like this? I know who would do it The Shadow!"

He whistled as he looked toward the entrance to the gambling den. Until this moment, Steve Cronin had suspected no connection between Harry Vincent and The Shadow.

Now he recalled that his previous meeting with Harry had preceded an encounter with The Shadow. The two episodes were links with the past.

"I remember meetin' this guy," said Cronin, half aloud, "and I remember meeting The Shadow. Maybe they're working together!"

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"If they are well, it's worth a chance. Watch this guy, and maybe The Shadow will show up!"

He entered a telephone booth on the balcony, and called Mike Borrango. He immediately told the enforcer what he suspected, and what he intended to do. Borrango expressed approval.

Steve went back to the table and waited there a while. He saw Genara and Anelmo come from the gambling room.

Scarcely had the Homicide Twins left the restaurant, before Harry Vincent appeared. He walked past Steve Cronin without a word, and the gangster feigned indifference. From the corner of his eye, he saw Harry enter the telephone booth, and make a call.

When the young man had returned to the gambling room, Steve, himself, made use of the booth. He sent another call to Borrango.

"It's Cronin, again," he said, when he heard the voice of the enforcer.

"What is it, Steve?" questioned Borrango.

"This fellow called Vincent. He just made a phone call."

"Who to?"

"I don't know."

"What about?"

"I don't know."

"What do you know?" Borrango's voice sounded impatiently. "Why call me, if you know nothing?"

Steve realized he must tell Borrango something of importance, and in his quick quest for a theory, he struck upon a plausible one.

"Vincent came out here just after Genara and Anelmo left," said Steve. "He was watching them. I think he was giving some one a tip-off that they had gone."

"What do you think that means?"

"Maybe The Shadow is watching Genara and Anelmo."

"If he is " The enforcer's voice broke off suddenly. Then he resumed, giving definite instructions.

"You watch this fellow Vincent, Steve."

After his talk with Steve Cronin, Mike Borrango reported what he had learned to Nick Savoli. The big shot listened carefully. He weighed Borrango's words; then looked at the enforcer, as though questioning what he intended to do. That was Savoli's way. He let Borrango speak his piece; then decided.

"Cronin may be wrong on this," said the enforcer, "but I think he has found something. I'm going to call Frank Marmosa, and learn all he knows."

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AFTER a conversation by telephone with Marmosa, Mike Borrango was elated. He hung up the receiver and turned to his chief.

"Vincent is from New York," he announced. "Borrango got him through a fellow named Barutti a man who runs an Italian restaurant there.

"Vincent came to town just before this trouble started. He isn't a gangster. He's just the type man that would be used by this gentleman crook called The Shadow."

Nick Savoli nodded.

"Perhaps," suggested Borrango, "he may be The Shadow. The fellow has to stay somewhere "

"We can check on that easily enough," answered Savoli. "Marmosa can tell us where Vincent has been during the past few nights. But I do not think he is The Shadow."

"He appears to be watching Genara and Anelmo."

"Yes. He's watching them for The Shadow. He is so open in his methods that he can suspect nothing. Very well. We will deal with him to-morrow night," said Savoli.

"You mean "

"Let Genara and Anelmo take him."

"I shall speak to them to-morrow," said Borrango. "But how about our other man Monk Thurman?"

Savoli shook his head.

"Let him work in his own way," he said. "He would not work well with Genara and Anelmo. If Monk comes here, hold him in readiness. That is all."

"And Steve Cronin?"

"Leave him out of it. He has done his share. Tell our two Sicilians to do a neat job. Fix it with Marmosa, so Vincent will suspect nothing."

"Right," agreed the enforcer.

"But remember this," added the big shot, "Genara and Anelmo must not act too quickly. Let them report here by telephone after they have captured their man."

"I understand," said Mike Borrango.

The enforcer's words concluded the discussion.

After Borrango had departed, Nick Savoli indulged in a grim smile. He plucked his chewed cigar from his mouth, and threw it from the half-opened window.

"To-morrow night," he muttered, in a satisfied tone. "To-morrow night, we will strike."

The big shot seemed sure that his henchmen would be capable of swinging a powerful counterstroke against that mysterious being who called himself The Shadow.

CHAPTER XX. SAVOLI STRIKES

ON the following evening, Harry Vincent was unusually alert as he entered Marmosa's place. He realized that affairs were coming to a head.

His work was cut out for him. Harry had his instructions to watch the two Sicilians, the Homicide Twins. This infamous pair, drawing pay from Nick Savoli, were equal to a hundred hoodlums in the big shot's opinion.

Genara and Anelmo came in early. As usual, they took their post in a quiet corner, appearing quite indifferent to those about them.

There were few players that night; the usual gathering of regulars. Yet there was one man who commanded Harry's attention.

Somber, gray-haired, neatly dressed, he somehow seemed to be out of his element. Yet there was nothing conspicuous about him unless it was the intentness with which he followed the path of the small white ball waltzing around the roulette wheel. Harry noticed that the stranger lost steadily.

Every now and then, the gray-haired man quit the table. He walked about the room, as though to change his luck. Always, however, he came to a halt near the corner where Anelmo and Genara were standing.

The Homicide Twins spoke to each other in low-pitched Italian. Evidently they saw nothing marked in the stranger's occasional nearness, for they continued their conversation. The gray-haired man was obviously an American; the chances were he couldn't understand Italian, anyhow.

Harry idly wondered as he saw the stranger return to battle with the spinning wheel. Then his speculations were cut short. The Homicide Twins were casually making for the door.

Harry discreetly waited a few moments, then followed. On the balcony he saw the twins earnestly talking to Steve Cronin.

As Harry approached the trio, Anelmo and Genara nodded as one man, and sauntered off toward the street door.

"Where is Mr. Marmosa?" Harry asked Cronin.

"He's not in the office," Cronin replied. "I was just there. Why do you want him? What's up?"

"Nothing special," said Harry. "Just want to check up on a new player. Guess he's O.K., but I want to make sure."

This, of course, was just a pretext. What Harry really wanted was to keep an eye on the Sicilians, and to report to The Shadow from an outside telephone. He had a hunch it was no longer safe to use the booth in Marmosa's place.

"Stay here, then," said Cronin. "Maybe I can find him."

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A FEW minutes later, Cronin returned with the proprietor.

"What's the matter, Vincent?" inquired Marmosa. Cronin went into the gambling room.

"Just wanted to check up," said Harry. "There's a gray-headed fellow inside. Not quite sure of him. I think I saw him once before "

"The guy who lays a few bets, then quits, and exercises between innings?"

Harry nodded, grinning.

"He's O.K.," said Marmosa. "He's been in a couple times. Colliver, the advertising man, introduced him. Don't worry about him."

Harry put on a look of relief. "Well, if he's all right, everything's all right," he advanced. "Guess I can step out for a few minutes, then. I wanted to change my room over at the hotel. O.K.?"

"Sure thing, Vincent," said Marmosa. "But come into the office first. You can do something for me while you're out."

The proprietor led the way. Within the small room, he drew an envelope from the desk drawer.

"Take this to the bootblack shop down the alley," Marmosa directed. "First alley down the street; halfway up the block on the right. Be sure you give it to the boss. Just ask for Angelo."

Harry took the envelope, thrusting it into his pocket, and left. He would drop off the envelope first, then cut through the alley to his hotel.

Probably the envelope held hush money for some cop. Harry understood that Marmosa paid various police officers for protection.

The bootblack's was not hard to find. It was the only lighted place along the length of the dark, sinister alley. Moreover, it was more brightly illuminated than is usual for bootblack parlors.

A stubby, swarthy man came to the door, and admitted that he was Angelo. His bright, piercing eyes took in Harry's features.

Feeling a strange uneasiness, Harry delivered the envelope and left hurriedly.

BEFORE he had gone a dozen strides, two men abruptly emerged from the darkness. Harry was about to shout, but felt the muzzle of a revolver digging into his side.

"Keep moving!" The command came in a harsh tone, tinged with an Italian accent. Harry shuddered. The two words had been sufficient for him to recognize the voice of John Genara.

On the other side of Harry, the second man pressed closely. That would be Anelmo.

Harry Vincent was in the company of the Homicide Twins!

He decided there was nothing to do at the moment except to obey the killers. Moving at a brisk gait, the captors and their prisoner reached the end of the alley.

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A few passers-by chanced to be on the opposite side of the street, but Harry was not so impatient for death as to risk crying out. He had no alternative save to play the game of the Homicide Twins.

A large sedan parked beside the curb. Roughly, Harry was shoved into its front seat.

Anelmo took the wheel beside the prisoner. Genara ducked into the back seat, with his automatic at the ready.

As they drove along busy thoroughfares, Harry Vincent endured that mental anguish that has gripped many gangsters. He was being taken for a ride; a one-way ride, from which there could be no turning back.

He knew now why other spotted men had gone to meet death without an outcry. The steadily leveled automatic from behind was a sure silencer. As long as the road lay ahead, there was still a slim sliver of hope. A false move, and all hope would be blotted out instantly.

Somehow, Harry's true connection with The Shadow had been discovered. Yet it seemed incredible that the Homicide Twins would act without first consulting Frank Marmosa.

In thinking this, Harry failed to realize the true state of affairs. Had he seen Marmosa at that very minute, he would have been enlightened.

The proprietor of the gambling den had taken over the duties of Harry Vincent. He himself was watching the patrons of his establishment. Steve Cronin was on the inside, in place of the Homicide Twins.

Marmosa had neglected to tell Harry that his mission to the bootblack shop was planned to spring a trap.

And now Frank Marmosa had forgotten Harry Vincent. It often paid to forget people in Chicago. The one hope that Harry held that Marmosa would wonder about his absence was a false one.

For while Harry pondered on that very matter, Frank Marmosa was smiling as he ushered one of his patrons to the door. It was the gray-haired man, who had lost so heavily.

THE sedan rolled into a squalid district. Harry had no idea whatever as to the location. He was only partly familiar with Chicago, and he had lost all sense of direction.

Anelmo guided the sedan down a side street, and pulled up before a dark building. Genara stepped from the back seat.

A few moments later, he pushed Harry Vincent out onto the sidewalk. Thereupon Harry was guided through a gate in a ramshackle board fence.

Anelmo produced a key and opened a door in the side of the house. Harry was shoved down a short flight of stairs. Another door was opened, and Anelmo switched on an electric light.

Harry looked about him. He found himself in a small stone-walled cell, hidden beneath the house. He realized that with the locking of the lone door, the place would become a soundproof vault.

It was a spot well chosen for murder. Here, locked away from the outside world, there would be no sign of the crime.

Harry shuddered as he looked at the businesslike automatic displayed by John Genara. He wondered why the Sicilian did not shoot him quickly, and end the mental agony.

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Then the truth began to dawn. When gangsters put their victims on the spot, they either left the body in the car or dumped it out.

Yet Harry had been brought to this solitary place. Why? Because his captors must want information!

Thoughts of torture gripped Harry Vincent. Scarcely had his mind turned to this channel before his fears were realized.

There was a heavy chair in the corner. Anelmo propelled Harry thereto. Then he took a rope and bound Harry's arms in back of him. He thrust a rod of iron through the rope. Harry knew what would happen next.

The first act of torture began. While Genara covered Harry with the revolver, Anelmo twisted the iron rod. A pang of pain shot between Harry's shoulders.

"Stop!" he cried.

The turning ceased. Harry stared wildly into the dark visage of the Sicilian who stood before him. John Genara neither spoke nor smiled.

He seemed to wait Harry's words. When the young man did not speak, Tony Anelmo seemed to catch an invisible signal from Genara. There was another twist of the iron rod.

THE pain was excruciating. Harry gasped. These men were inquisitors, but possessed a terrible grimness. They took it for granted that Harry knew what they wanted to know. They placed the burden upon him. Until he talked, they would not stop.

The first words that Harry would utter would be a starting point, They would form an admission that he could give the information they required.

"Why are you doing this?" cried Harry.

The twisting continued slowly.

"What do you want to know?"

The twisting became unbearable.

"Stop! I shall tell you!"

The words escaped Harry's lips almost involuntarily. Evidently Anelmo realized that a point had been gained. He did not turn the iron bar an inch farther. Yet Harry knew that he must speak, or the torture would begin again.

"Tell me what you want to know," he said.

"The Shadow," said Genara. "Who is he?"

"I do not know."

Again that twisting of the iron rod. Harry's lips twitched, and he bent his head in pain.

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"I do not know," he repeated. "I would tell you, if I knew. I have met him. I have worked for him" his words became slow and painful under the terrific strain "but I do not know who he is!"

Anelmo stopped the torture. Harry's chin rested against his chest. The words had been virtually squeezed from him by the terrific pressure that Anelmo had induced.

Men spoke the truth beneath that torture. Genara and Anelmo had each been witness of the fact on more than one occasion. They knew now that Harry Vincent was telling all he knew.

"Where is The Shadow?" demanded Genara.

"Here, in Chicago," admitted Harry.

"Where in Chicago?"

"I do not know."

Anelmo was ready to turn the iron rod; but Genara stopped him with a quick gesture. He saw an opportunity to press a question. He leaned forward and spoke harshly, close to Harry Vincent's ear.

"Did you telephone him last night?"

"No," gasped Harry.

"Who did you telephone last night?"

"I called my hotel," gasped Harry. "About changing my room."

It was the same excuse he had made to Frank Marmosa. But it wouldn't do this time.

The twisting began anew, and while Anelmo operated the iron rod that wrenched at Harry's shoulder sockets, Genara still leaned forward, ready to catch any word that might be uttered.

Harry was overcome by the pain. His senses began to leave him. That proved to be his temporary salvation. Genara spoke to Anelmo, in Italian.

"Stop," he said. "He is fainting. I don't think we can make him tell."

"Shall we kill him then?"

"No. Not until I have telephoned Borrango."

GENARA walked from the room, leaving by the door which he had entered. But instead of going to the outer door, he went up another flight of stairs, and entered a room on the first floor of the building.

The place had been a store. Now it was closed. The windows were barred; the door was nailed shut. The entrance to the cellar was a massive door which Genara unlocked.

There was a telephone in the dark room, and it had never been disconnected. Genara lifted the receiver and dialed a number by the ray of a tiny flashlight.

He heard the ring at the other end. Then came the voice of Mike Borrango.

Genara spoke in Italian, and told his story briefly. When he had concluded, Borrango told him to wait a few moments for instructions.

Meanwhile, Harry Vincent was regaining consciousness. For a moment he did not realize where he was. Then the pressure of the ropes that bound his arms brought him to full understanding of the grim reality that threatened him.

CHAPTER XXI. MONK THURMAN SUGGESTS

MIKE BORRANGO had a purpose in telling John Genara to wait for a few minutes. The enforcer wanted to repeat the Sicilian's story to Nick Savoli.

Borrango knew well where Genara and Anelmo had taken Harry Vincent, and he was sure that they would be free from disturbance. He had ordered Genara and Anelmo to bolt the door.

Should any one attempt to effect an entry, they could kill their victim before a rescue could be accomplished.

Nevertheless, Borrango was terse in his statements to the big shot. When he had summarized what had taken place, the enforcer waited Savoli's comment. It was quickly forthcoming.

"They have not learned where The Shadow is?" quizzed Savoli.

"They have not."

"Tell them to torture him some more."

"They have already ended his endurance."

"Then kill him. No wait." Savoli's final order came just as Borrango was about to order the murder. "There may be some way of making him talk. Let me think."

A light showed on the apartment telephone. Nick Savoli observed it. He lifted the receiver and spoke to the attendant.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Bring him in at once. Here in my den."

Nick Savoli gazed shrewdly at Mike Borrango, and a smile flickered upon the lips of the man who ruled Chicago's gangland.

"It is Monk," he said quietly. "He is the very man we should see."

Borrango spoke in Italian to Genara. He told the Sicilian to be patient. He had hardly finished his words before Monk Thurman was ushered into the den.

The New York gangster gazed about him in surprise. He had never before been admitted to this inner sanctuary. He noted the thoughtful expression of Nick Savoli; he observed the telephone receiver in the hand of Mike Borrango; yet he did not seem to understand the situation.

"What's happened?" he questioned.

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"We have captured a man who works for The Shadow," explained Borrango. "We are trying to make him confess."

"Where is he?" Monk looked about the room.

"Not here," interposed Savoli impatiently. "Genara and Anelmo have taken him for a ride. They are holding him for instructions."

"Who is he?" questioned Monk.

"His name is Harry Vincent," said Borrango.

Monk Thurman shrugged his shoulders. Evidently the name meant nothing to him.

"What has he told you?" he questioned.

"Nothing," said Savoli. "That is the trouble. The torture will not work. The man has reached his limit."

THE gangster sat in a chair. He seemed indifferent to the situation. Nick Savoli appeared impatient.

"What shall we do with him?" he questioned. "What do you suggest?"

"That's hard to say," replied Monk. "I haven't seen the man. I should think that Anelmo and Genara could make him talk."

"They can't do it," replied Savoli.

"I shall tell them to try again," replied Borrango smoothly. "Then, if they fail, they can dispose of him. We will accomplish that much, at least."

"All right," agreed Savoli.

Borrango turned to the telephone. He was about to give the order for the Homicide Twins to settle their score with Harry Vincent. But a sudden word stopped him.

"Wait!" The exclamation came from Monk Thurman.

Both Savoli and Borrango looked at the New York gangster. Monk Thurman was leaning forward in his chair, staring straight ahead, as though visualizing the entire situation.

"You must not kill this man," he declared. "Do not kill him until he tells all he knows. It would be a great mistake."

"The man will not talk," objected Borrango impatiently.

"He must be made to talk," insisted Monk. "Genara and Anelmo do not know how to make him talk. I could make him talk."

"How?" asked Borrango.

"I have my methods," replied the New York gangster. "More than that, I know something of The Shadow. I

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can ask this man questions that will lead him on. Tell me where he is. I will go there "

"No." The objection came from Nick Savoli. It was emphatic. He stared at Monk Thurman as one would consider an upstart. Under that powerful glance, many an intrepid gangster had quailed but not Monk Thurman!

"This is not your job," declared Savoli emphatically. "This man has been taken by Genara and Anelmo. They will see it through. If he will not confess, they will put him on the spot."

"It's not my job?" Monk Thurman's voice was cold.

"It is not your job." There was finality in Savoli's tone.

"What is my job?" demanded Monk.

"Your job is to get The Shadow." There was no reply from the New Yorker. Savoli turned quietly to Borrango. "Order them to go ahead," he said.

AS Borrango turned to obey, Monk Thurman reached forward and plucked the telephone from the enforcer's hand. Borrango leaped at him with a cry of rage; then stopped short, as he saw the expression of determination that appeared in Thurman's eyes.

Nick Savoli half rose from his chair. He was ready to crush this reckless gangster who had so daringly prevented his order. But he, too, met Thurman's gaze, and the big shot held himself momentarily while he listened to the gangster's next words.

"Before you give the order," announced Monk Thurman in his even, steady voice, "I must tell you one thing. You say that my job is to get The Shadow. The moment that Genara and Anelmo kill this man they have captured, I give up my job!"

He bowed slightly as he returned the telephone to Mike Borrango.

"You will excuse my hastiness," he said. "I thought that you would like to know my decision before it was too late."

"Shall I tell them to go ahead?" questioned Borrango, with both anger and impatience in his voice. His query was addressed to Nick Savoli.

"No," The big shot was looking at Monk Thurman. "Wait until I understand what this is all about."

Borrango spoke into the telephone. He urged Genara to be patient. Meanwhile Nick Savoli glared at the gangster who sat before him.

"If I tell them to go ahead," said Savoli, "what will you do?"

"I shall leave Chicago."

"Why?"

"Because I understand The Shadow and his methods. This man that you have captured is our only link with The Shadow. Once the man is dead, there will be no second opportunity."

Savoli nodded thoughtfully.

"You are right," he said. "We must find out what the man knows. Can you find it out?"

"Yes." There was calm assurance in Monk Thurman's reply.

"Tell Genara and Anelmo to wait," commanded Savoli, addressing his enforcer. "Tell them that Monk will be there. Tell them to admit him when he gives the secret signal. He is to take charge."

Borrango quickly repeated the new instructions. Monk Thurman leaned back placidly in his chair. He had delivered his ultimatum, and the big shot had heeded it.

Savoli showed no antagonism because of the gangster's action. Instead, he seemed convinced that Monk's plan had merit. Nevertheless, he became critical the moment that Borrango hung up the telephone.

"Suppose the man will not talk?" he questioned, again.

"He will talk," said Thurman.

"You think so. But if you fail to make him talk "

"If I fail, there is another course to take. We must not kill this prisoner."

"Why?" There was surprise in Savoli's voice.

"Living," said Monk, "the man will serve us well. The Shadow may learn that we have him. The Shadow will try to rescue him. Then The Shadow will be revealed "

The gangster did not complete the sentence. Nick Savoli rose with a triumphant expression on his face.

"You have it, Monk!" he exclaimed. "What did I say, Mike? This man Monk is a good man! He is wise! He is right! Why did you not say that before, Monk?"

Savoli broke into a flow of Italian, as he volubly pointed out the merits of the plan to Mike Borrango. The enforcer smiled and nodded. All ill feeling was forgotten.

"I was about to say it," declared Monk Thurman, "but I didn't have a chance. I had to stop you from bumping off the guy, didn't I?"

"Well, you're holding him. I'm due there. If I can make him talk, you'll hear from me right away. If I can't well, we can take that up later. Where do I go, Mike?"

BORRANGO scrawled a series of directions on an envelope, and gave the paper to Monk. The New Yorker read the notations carefully, and nodded.

"I've got a car outside," he said. "I'll be there in twenty minutes. What is the signal?"

"One quick rap," said Borrango, "then two slow ones. When you hear two quick raps, give two slow ones. They will let you in when they hear that."

"Correct." Monk Thurman repeated the directions, as though to make sure of them. He rose from his chair,

and left the den.

"He is a smart man, this Monk," declared Savoli.

"He has the right idea," said Borrango enthusiastically. "Maybe he will not be able to make this fellow Vincent talk; but his plan to hold him is a good one. He is very smart. Very smart."

"Yes but" there was a hidden thought in the big shot's voice "let us hope that he succeeds for his own good."

"It means five grand for him."

"Five grand. But if he fails "

"If he fails?" echoed Borrango.

"If he fails," repeated Nick Savoli, "Larrigan will be happy."

The meaning of Nick Savoli's final statement was clear to Mike Borrango.

Monk Thurman had gained his point. Should he succeed in making Harry Vincent talk, he would be too valuable a man to sacrifice. Monk Thurman, successful, would be the one man to combat the menace of The Shadow.

But Monk Thurman, unsuccessful, would be just another gangster a man whose death would cement the new alliance between Nick Savoli and his former antagonist, Mike Larrigan.

Monk Thurman and The Shadow. Somehow, Borrango felt that a fierce conflict was impending between those two men of Manhattan, who had made new history in Chicago's underworld.

Death to The Shadow would mean safety for Monk Thurman!

CHAPTER XXII. THE SHADOW STRIKES AGAIN

WHEN John Genara returned to the room where Tony Anelmo guarded Harry Vincent, the prisoner had regained full consciousness. The arrival of the second persecutor caused him to anticipate a new series of tortures.

But Genara had something to talk about before that work commenced. He spoke to Anelmo in Italian, and the other man responded with surprised questions.

One name entered their conversation. They repeated "Monk Thurman" time and again.

Harry could not grasp the connection. He had seen Monk Thurman in action; he had witnessed the power of the New York mobster. Then he recalled that Monk Thurman was the reputed killer of Hymie Schultz and Four-gun Spirak.

Could it be that Monk Thurman was coming here, to aid the two Sicilians?

Nevertheless, the Homicide Twins were not yet willing to abandon their efforts. Their long discussion concluded, they turned their attention to Harry.

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Anelmo began the twisting of the iron bar, and Harry again experienced that extreme torture that had previously unnerved him. But now he was obdurate. He maintained complete silence despite the agony. He chewed his lips; then gasped, and let his head fall forward as he groaned.

The ruse worked. Both his captors thought that he had again weakened beneath the strain, and they stopped the torture to let him regain strength.

Harry was too wise to extend his period of rest too long. He knew that an overindulgence in that practice would give the game away. Yet why was he waiting at all? He had no hope of rescue.

The Shadow had no inkling of his distress. When Monk Thurman would arrive, some new and more drastic punishment would follow.

Harry showed some signs of life, and Anelmo began the torture again. This time he worked more slowly. At first it was agonizing; then Harry managed to brace himself against it. But at length Anelmo gave the iron rod a peculiar twist, and gained an unexpected result.

Harry screamed despite himself. Genara spoke rapidly. Anelmo tried the new twist with the same result. Harry could stand no more. He was about to give up all his efforts to conceal The Shadow's secret phone number, when he saw Genara raise a warning hand. The Sicilian was listening.

Silence pervaded the room. Genara opened the inner door, and went out into the dark passageway.

Harry could hear the sound now. A quick rap; then two slow raps. He could barely see Genara in the darkness. The Sicilian rapped twice in response. His raps were quick. Then came two slow taps from the other side.

Genara fumbled with the bolts that held the heavy door. Then he turned the key in the lock. The door opened outward; but no one entered. At least, neither Harry Vincent nor Tony Anelmo could see any one enter.

They stared at John Genara. The Sicilian killer seemed to be backing away from the door. He came into the light of the room. His hands were raised above his shoulders.

Then a gasp of gladness came from Harry Vincent. As Genara turned sidewise, in response to some inaudible command, another figure came in view—the black-clad form of The Shadow!

THE sinister man of the darkness held two automatics. One was pressed against Genara's ribs. The other was pointed past Harry Vincent. It covered Anelmo, who was standing beside the torture chair, and as a hissing command came from The Shadow, the second Sicilian raised his hands in obedience.

The Shadow laughed softly. The sibilant sound filled the room, and the stone walls seemed to laugh in return.

As the uncanny laughter died away, The Shadow spoke, and his words were weird and ominous.

"Against the wall," he hissed. The automatic moved in his hand. Anelmo backed against the wall, and Genara was lined up beside him. The Shadow dropped one gun beneath his cloak.

Still covering the Sicilians with the single automatic, he reached forward with his free hand, and with a quick, swift movement, pulled away the iron rod that held the twisted rope behind Harry's back. Then a knife came into view, and The Shadow cut the binding ties.

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Harry arose, free. But weakness overcame him. He collapsed. The Shadow's hand plucked him before he toppled to the stone floor.

Harry dropped into the torture chair, and lay there, limp and exhausted.

When he regained consciousness, he was amazed by what he saw. Genara and Anelmo were seated against the wall, each bound with ropes.

How The Shadow had accomplished it, Harry did not know. He imagined that the man in the black cloak had commanded one of the Homicide Twins to bind his companion.

But now The Shadow was speaking. He was addressing the helpless men who lay against the wall, and his words carried a note of warning.

"This is twice that we have met," he said. "So beware!"

The sinister voice made Harry shudder in spite of the fact that The Shadow was his friend.

"You were waiting for another man. You will find him outside unless he finds you here first. He rapped, and you answered. But while you unbarred the door, I came from the darkness and overpowered him.

"He was sent here by Nick Savoli. You will take your instructions from him. Perhaps he will ask you what has happened to your prisoner. You will not know. You will never learn.

"I leave you now; and remember: I know your secret. I know who killed Larrigan's men.

"One week from to-day, Nick Savoli will know, also. For I shall tell him!"

The Shadow stood like an accusing specter from the other world. The two killers quailed as they heard his dread words.

THE SHADOW approached the chair where Harry Vincent sat, and raised the young man's head. He drew a vial from his cloak, and placed the small bottle against Harry's lips.

The pungent liquid was unlike anything that Harry had ever tasted. It seemed to revive him, and give him sudden strength. His step was almost firm as The Shadow guided him to the door.

They went up the steps together, into total darkness. Harry could not see the strange figure that walked beside him. Only the firm, steadying grip enabled him to know that The Shadow was still there.

A coupe was parked by the curb, behind the sedan; but The Shadow ignored the smaller vehicle. He helped Harry into the front seat of the sedan, and gave him the key, which he had evidently taken from the helpless Anelmo. Then The Shadow placed a slip of paper in Harry's hand. The sheet was folded.

"Drive straight ahead," came the whispered voice, "until you reach the boulevard. Then follow the instructions that are on the paper."

As Harry slipped the sedan into gear, he glanced backward. The door had closed; there was no sign of The Shadow. The man of darkness had vanished into the thick night.

Harry Vincent gripped the wheel, and piloted the powerful automobile along the narrow street. He wondered

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what the instructions would be; but more than that, he wondered what mission The Shadow had chosen.

BACK in the underground room, the Sicilians struggled to free themselves from their bonds. It seemed a hopeless task. The Shadow had tied them quickly, but well. Anelmo nearly managed to free one hand; then he could get no further.

At that moment, assistance arrived. A man stumbled into the room. He was still partially bound with ropes. His face and hands were covered with mud. In one fist he held an automatic, and he blinked his eyes as he came into the light.

Anelmo recognized Monk Thurman.

"Where is he?" demanded the gangster, in his rasping voice. "Where is he?"

"Who?" questioned Anelmo.

"The man you captured."

"He is gone."

"What? You let him go?"

"The Shadow took him."

An exclamation of disgust came from Monk Thurman. He freed himself from the ropes that still bound him, and glared contemptuously at the helpless Sicilians.

"You let him get you?" he cried. "Two of you? Here in the light?"

"He got you, didn't he?" retorted Genara.

"He hit me from behind, in the dark. If you had opened the door more quickly, I would have been safe. But he knocked me cold while you were fooling with those bolts."

The gangster drew a knife from his pocket. He cut the bonds that bound the other men, and Anelmo and Genara rose.

"He drove away in my car," declared Monk. "He came back and tied me up, just as I was coming to my senses. I didn't have a chance to fight him. I heard him drive away, after that."

"Well, you botched things up," said Genara accusingly.

"I botched things up?" retorted Thurman. "You fellows were to blame. Why couldn't you make that guy talk?"

Anelmo shrugged his shoulders, and Genara made a similar gesture. They had nothing more to say.

They were antagonistic toward Monk Thurman, but they knew it would not be wise to continue the argument. They left the underground room with the New York gangster. When they reached the street, Monk uttered an exclamation of surprise.

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"So they pinched your buggy!" he said. "Well, you have to ride back with me. Funny they didn't take both of them. I guess you crippled that fellow Vincent so he wasn't able to drive a car. Well, come along."

IT was a silent trio that drove back toward the Loop. Monk Thurman turned into a street that led to the Escadrille Apartments. He stopped in front of Savoli's residence, and motioned toward the door.

"Go on in," he said. "Tell the big boy all about it."

Genara and Anelmo alighted from the coupe.

"What about you?" demanded Genara. "He sent you. Are you coming in with us?"

"Tell him I'll be there to-morrow. I'm going to be busy to-night. I'm out to get The Shadow!"

"Yeah? What if you don't find him?"

"I'll come in to-morrow anyway. I'm giving you fellows a break. Tell your story first. I'll spill mine later."

The Sicilians talked as they stood on the curb, after Monk Thurman had driven away. They muttered low words in Italian, and their conversation took on an unusual tone.

One fact had impressed them more than any other. That was the warning given by The Shadow.

"One week from to-night " said Anelmo.

"One week," repeated Genara. "But before then "

CHAPTER XXIII. LARRIGAN IS SATISFIED

MONK THURMAN did not appear at Nick Savoli's apartment the next morning. Instead, he telephoned, and spoke to Mike Borrango.

The enforcer demanded to know where the gangster was. Monk replied evasively, saying that he had a new clew that might enable him to trail The Shadow. He added that he would call at the apartment at four o'clock in the afternoon.

Nick Savoli was not pleased when he received the information. He had held a hectic conference with Genara and Anelmo the night before; the Homicide Twins had blamed Monk Thurman for everything that had happened.

Savoli was only partially convinced that the fault was Thurman's; at the same time he felt that much of the responsibility belonged to Monk.

At one o'clock another visitor arrived, and the announcement of his presence caused questioning looks between the big shot and his enforcer.

Mike Larrigan was outside, anxious to see both Savoli and Borrango.

"You know what he wants?" asked Savoli.

"He wants to know where Monk Thurman is," responded the enforcer. "What will we tell him?"

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"Tell him we'll get Thurman for him!" Savoli snapped out impatiently. "Monk slipped on the job. We'll make him pay for it!"

Mike Larrigan was ushered into the library. The attendant opened the door for him.

At that moment, a strange thing happened. While the attendant was turned toward the door the direction in which Larrigan also faced a form appeared at the gate that blocked the way from the elevators. The attendant had not yet locked the gate.

Silently, the new arrival slipped into the anteroom.

This man was dressed in black. Those who had seen The Shadow would have recognized him immediately. Yet his actions were more amazing than ever before.

With catlike stealth, The Shadow glided across the room to the corner nearest the door. There he slipped behind a table which bore a large flower pot, and in an instant, his presence was undetectable.

His form seemed like some motionless shadow against the wall. Only a close observer would have noted that the mass of blackness was a solid object.

With Larrigan in the library, the attendant returned to lock the iron gate. While he was busy with that action, the mass of blackness moved from behind the table. It went to the door of the library. The Shadow opened the door and entered the large, gloomy room.

The attendant did not hear the click of the door. Perhaps the noise he made in locking the gate drowned out the slight sound; but it was more probable that the noise made by The Shadow was negligible. For Larrigan, seated in the chair that visitors usually took, heard nothing.

THE SHADOW moved across the room, behind the gang leader's back. The mysterious man made no noise whatever. He reached the bookcase, still out of Larrigan's vision. There he stood, still as a painting, until he was sure that the Irishman was not observing. Then, slowly and carefully, he opened the swinging bookcase.

The Shadow waited. The man in black knew that a sudden motion would attract Larrigan's attention.

The door at the other side of the room opened. Larrigan arose expectantly; and The Shadow glided like a living phantom through the opening of the bookcase. The swinging portal closed behind him just as Savoli and Borrango entered the library.

Neither of the Italians saw it close.

Nick Savoli took his accustomed chair; Borrango covered the bookcase as was his habit. They exchanged greetings with Larrigan, and the Irishman talked business immediately.

"You know why I'm here, Nick," he said to Savoli. "It's about this fellow, Monk Thurman!"

"What about him?" Savoli's voice was challenging.

"I want him," answered Larrigan. "You've had time to find him. They say he's been here."

"Who says so?"

"Different people!"

"Different people?" sneered Savoli. "What do they know about it? Ask Borrango. Wait I'll ask him. Has Monk Thurman been here?"

"I believe he is coming here," replied Borrango smoothly.

"When?" came Larrigan's eager question.

"To-day, perhaps."

"And when he comes "

"When he comes here, you get him," announced Savoli.

A gleam of satisfaction appeared on Larrigan's freckled face. Then Nick Savoli spoke emphatically.

"No killings around here," he said. "We'll put Monk Thurman on the spot, where you can get him. But keep your hoodlums away."

"Right," responded Larrigan warmly. "There's one man going to get Monk Thurman. I'm that man."

"I'll tell you how it will be done," suggested Borrango, in a pleasant voice. "We have discussed this, Nick and I.

"Monk Thurman wants to work for us. So we will tell him that he has a job to do to-night, and that Machine-gun McGinnis will meet him. We will send him to some good spot, and tell him that McGinnis is to meet him there."

"When will this be?"

"To-night," said Savoli.

"To-night," repeated Borrango, "if Thurman comes here as we expect, this afternoon."

"When will I know for sure?"

Borrango was thoughtful. He calculated the time element very carefully. He made allowance for a late arrival of Monk Thurman. Then he made his decision.

"Let me call you at six o'clock," he said.

"All right," agreed Larrigan.

"I'll tell you then exactly where Thurman will be."

"How about McGinnis?"

Borrango looked at Savoli. The big shot took the floor.

"You'd better take McGinnis on this job, Larrigan," he said. "When Borrango calls you at six o'clock, he will

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tell you where to pick up McGinnis.

"You can ride there in your buggy, and switch to that old touring car McGinnis travels around in. Thurman will be expecting McGinnis, and when he sees the old boat, he won't suspect any trouble."

"Great," said Larrigan. "You're a good fellow, Nick. Then I can step out and plug Monk Thurman, and "

"And McGinnis will be covering him from the car," interposed Savoli. "It will be a set-up for you, Larrigan."

THE Irishman departed in high spirits. He carried a final admonition from Savoli that no hoodlums should hang about the Escadrille Apartments during the afternoon.

Larrigan readily agreed to this course. He had no desire for a daylight shooting in the heart of Chicago. He had visions of Monk Thurman lying dead on a lonely spot far out of town.

Savoli and Borrango did not leave the library immediately after the gang leader's departure. Instead, they discussed the subject of The Shadow.

"You'd better make sure that those torpedoes are on the job below here," said Savoli. "If we lay back a while, this fellow they call The Shadow will either clear out or try to spring one on us."

Borrango turned toward the bookcase, and reached up to open the secret portal that led to the hidden passage. Savoli stopped him with a quick gesture.

"Not through there!" he exclaimed. "Suppose they are on the job downstairs? They don't know that we have the connecting passage!"

Borrango nodded. He went toward the anteroom, and Nick Savoli retired to his den.

When the room was deserted, the bookcase opened, and The Shadow glided forth. He stood like a black monster in the center of the room. He had heard everything that had been said. Now he laughed softly.

With quick stride, he reached the door to the anteroom, waited until all was clear, and then disappeared through the door of the fire escape.

IT was precisely four o'clock when Monk Thurman appeared at Nick Savoli's apartment. The New York gangster had lost none of his bravado. When Savoli and Borrango met him in the library, they were amazed at the man's self-confidence.

"What about last night?" questioned the big shot.

"Last night?" Monk's voice was defiant. "I suppose those two gorillas of yours have been cooking up a phony story. They could have fixed everything if they had used any sense!"

"You didn't make out well when you met The Shadow."

"Perhaps not; but that was only the first time. I'm still out to get him, and I will get him."

"Have you any idea where he has gone?" questioned Borrango.

"No," returned the gunman, "but I'm going to find out."

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"Well," said Borrango, in his smooth, persuasive voice, "we've got another job for you in the meantime, Monk. You did good work before; and you'll get another crack at The Shadow.

"To-night, we're going to put a couple of double-crossers on the spot, and you're the man we need to help out with the job."

Monk Thurman appeared to be interested in Borrango's statement. The enforcer followed up his words.

"We've been looking for a new man to work with McGinnis," said Borrango. "You know McGinnis, don't you? Machine-gun McGinnis?"

"He's taking out the typewriter tonight, and he's going to bump off a bunch of hoodlums at a road house out past Cicero. He needs an old hand to help him. That's your job for to-night, Monk."

"Suits me," said Thurman.

"It would not be wise for you to meet him in town." Borrango was speaking earnestly. "So he will pick you up at Casey's old saloon in Cicero. The place is closed now.

"You be there at exactly one o'clock. McGinnis will come along in an old touring car, with flaps on the sides. Go with him. He'll give you the lay."

"This means a lot to you, Monk," said Savoli. "If we can ever get a crack at The Shadow with the machine gun, it will be curtains for him. This trip with McGinnis will do you good."

"I'll be there," promised Thurman.

"You'd better be," said Borrango, with a friendly laugh. "There's one grand in the job, if you do it right. Do you want the cash now, or to-morrow?"

"To-morrow will be soon enough," replied Monk. "You'd better have that five grand ready for me, too. I'm going to get The Shadow! Don't forget it!"

"Listen, Monk," said Savoli, suddenly. "What do you think that bird is after?"

"Who? The Shadow?"

"Yes."

"Looks to me like he's trying to chisel. Out to make trouble for you."

"He's not getting very far."

"He can't get very far." Monk spoke contemptuously. "He can't touch you, can he? You're too well organized for him. The Shadow has brains, but he doesn't use them.

"What if he managed to plug you? That wouldn't change Chicago, would it? But he doesn't work that way. That's where he's soft. He could have put me on the spot last night, but he didn't do it. So he's going on the spot when I get him."

The New York gangster arose and started for the door. He turned to make a final statement.

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"Forget about those hoodlums," he said. "They're as good as wiped out now. McGinnis and I will do a clean job."

WHEN Monk had left, Nick Savoli went from the apartment. His huge, bullet-proof car was awaiting him. Mike Borrango remained in the apartment.

Despite Monk Thurman's assurance that The Shadow was not a menace, the enforcer spared no precautions. There were two men in the apartment below. He stationed an additional gangster in the anteroom, to take the place of the regular attendant.

Shortly before six o'clock, Howard Blake, the advertising man, entered his apartment on the third floor of the Escadrille. He had apparently returned from a busy afternoon's work. He turned on the radio, and sat reading the newspaper.

There was a buzz on the radio, as though static had interfered. Howard Blake listened intently. There was another buzz shorter than the first. The sound was repeated.

Howard Blake had pulled a pad and pencil from his pocket. He marked down a series of numbers, one for each buzz that had occurred. Then he went to the telephone and looked at the dial.

The sounds that he had heard were disturbances created by the use of a dial telephone located in the same apartment house.

The advertising man had gauged the sounds accurately. From the dial of the telephone, he figured the name of the exchange and the number of the telephone which had been called.

Then he consulted a special directory; one which was listed by numbers instead of names. In a few minutes, he had located the address of the number which had been called.

Sitting in his own apartment, Howard Blake had learned the telephone number and the address of Mike Larrigan's hideout! For the disturbance on the radio had been caused when Mike Borrango had put in his call to the gang leader.

Howard Blake smiled as he left his apartment. Reaching the street, he called a taxi and rode to Marmosa's Cafe. There he obtained a table on the balcony.

After he gave the order, he went to a pay station in the corner of the balcony. He drew out the slip of paper which bore his notations, and called the number.

It was Mike Larrigan who answered. But the voice that spoke to him was not the voice of Howard Blake. It was the voice of Nick Savoli's enforcer.

Howard Blake, speaking over the telephone, gave a perfect impersonation of Mike Borrango!

"That you Larrigan?" questioned the smooth, soft voice. "This is Mike Borrango. I have made a change in the plans for to-night."

"What!" came Larrigan's exclamation. "Won't Thurman be there?"

"He will be there," said the voice of Borrango, "but the time will be changed. You must leave an hour later, to meet McGinnis."

"I get you. I'll leave here at one instead of twelve, then."

"That's all right. You're starting from where you are now?"

"Yes. I've got my car outside."

"Very good," concluded the man who spoke like Borrango. "It will work out fine. But do not leave until one o'clock. It would be bad for you to get there before McGinnis."

HOWARD BLAKE left the telephone booth. He ate his dinner leisurely, and smoked a cigar after his dessert.

The advertising man had paid his bill, when two dark-faced individuals appeared upon the balcony. They were Genara and Anelmo. The Sicilians went down the stairs toward the street. Blake rose and followed them.

The men called a taxi. Blake heard the address that they gave. It was the Gray Mill.

Howard Blake stood by the front of Marmosa's Cafe as the taxi rolled away. A short while later, he called another taxi, and ordered the driver to take him to the Gray Mill.

Thus two taxis were on their way to Joe le Blanc's road house in the country. One contained Genara and Anelmo; the other held a man who evidently was much interested in the affairs of the Homicide Twins.

CHAPTER XXIV. THE PLOT AGAINST SAVOLI

Two hours later, John Genara and Tony Anelmo were seated in the private room of Joe le Blanc's road house. The two killers seemed to be awaiting the arrival of another man. It was not long before he appeared.

The newcomer was Nails Pietro, one of the toughest of Chicago's lesser gang leaders.

The Homicide Twins rose to meet him. They were well away from the window, and they did not observe what happened there.

As on that day when Joe le Blanc had talked to Steve Cronin, a hand appeared at the window, but only for an instant. Something slipped behind the radiator. It was a tiny instrument, and it disappeared immediately.

The wire attached to it was inconspicuous in the shadows at the side of the room.

The three men took their places at the table. Anelmo rose to make an inspection tour. He made sure that the doors were locked. He closed the half-opened window, and the thin wire was pressed beneath the sash. Then he returned to the table.

The three men began to talk in Italian. They were sure that they were not being heard.

Anelmo had not noticed the wire at the window, where the dictograph was picking up all that was said.

Nor had he tapped the paneling on the wall behind the table. Had he done so, he would have made a discovery.

For after the entrance of Nails Pietro, Joe le Blanc had disappeared from the large dining room of the Gray Mill. The proprietor of the road house had entered a closet that led to a spot behind the panel. He was

listening there.

Le Blanc did not speak Italian fluently, hence the first few minutes of the conference did not give him a clew to the intentions of the speakers. He simply knew that Genara and Anelmo were trying to convince Pietro that some scheme was good.

The subject under discussion was the fate of the Unione Italiane, a powerful organization that existed in Chicago. The makers of illicit whisky, known as "alky cookers," were controlled by the Unione, which had no present leader. The most recent incumbent of the presidential chair, Rocco Ricardo, had been put on the spot a few months before.

"You will control the Unione!" exclaimed Anelmo, to Pietro.

Genara placed his fingers to his lips.

"Not so loud," he said. "Some one may hear."

Nails Pietro shifted in his chair. He was a shrewd, fat-faced Italian, who bore a worried look.

"That is good," said Pietro. "But there are two men who are in my way. Pete Varona and Al Vacchi. What of them?"

Genara snapped his fingers derisively.

"Who are they?" he questioned. "You have your men. Vacchi and Varona meet to-night.

"Remember how Ricardo went out? While friends were calling to see him? How about Vacchi and Varona? Are you not a friend of theirs? It will be easy for you, to-night."

"That part is all right," replied Nails Pietro uneasily, "but that doesn't include Nick Savoli. What about him? Where will I be?"

THE mention of Nick Savoli's name caused Joe le Blanc to listen more intently. So far, he had been unable to follow the thread of the talk. Now the words that followed were direct, and he began to understand.

"Savoli?" questioned Anelmo. "Leave that to us. Genara and I will see him to-night. That will be the end of Nick Savoli. There will be two big shots after this. Genara will be one. Anelmo will be the other."

Genara nodded emphatically.

"But Borrango?" questioned Pietro.

"Who is Borrango?" asked Anelmo. "He does what he is told to do by Savoli. Where will he be without Savoli? He will work for the next big shot, that is all.

"Mike Borrango is wise. He will take orders from us."

Nails Pietro studied the other men craftily. He knew that they meant what they said. He did not know why the Homicide Twins were planning treachery against their chief, but he saw that their plan had tremendous possibilities. Still, he hesitated.

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"What about Larrigan?" Pietro questioned.

Anelmo looked at Genara. The latter nodded. Anelmo bent close to Pietro's ear, and whispered words that were inaudible to Le Blanc.

"Larrigan will always make trouble," he said, in a confidential voice. "It is because of Larrigan that Savoli must die. When we are the big shots, Larrigan will be out."

Before Anelmo could continue, Nails Pietro nodded. Anelmo caught a sign from Genara and said nothing more. He had been on the point of telling Pietro about the Schultz and Spirak affair.

"Larrigan is no good," declared Pietro, loud enough for Joe le Blanc to catch the words. "You are right. It will be trouble for me if Larrigan becomes strong, as Savoli will make him. There has been trouble already. Italians and Irishmen do not work together. Why not put Larrigan on the spot?"

"Larrigan on the spot?" Anelmo questioned indignantly. "What about his mob? Savoli wants them. They would go after you after us after whoever bumped off Larrigan, and Savoli would let them go. There is only one thing to do!"

"Put Savoli on the spot," declared Genara grimly.

He extended his hand across the table. Anelmo shook it. Then they both shook hands with Nails Pietro.

"We have work to do to-night," declared Anelmo. "None of us must fail. We will finish Nick Savoli. Rely on us. As for you, Pietro "

"I understand," replied the gang leader firmly.

The emphasis of his words convinced the Sicilians. They knew that Nails Pietro would not fail in his part of the bargain. He had much to gain by the elimination of Pete Varona and Al Vacchi.

The disputed leadership of the Unione Italiane would be ended. It was an office granted on the theory that might made right. Each candidate killed his opponents. Those who held office lived in fear of death; yet each new man felt sure that he could beat the game.

"I must get them, or " Nails Pietro nodded without completing the sentence.

Genara and Anelmo knew his thoughts. He was looking at the matter from the viewpoints of Mike Varona and Al Vacchi. Those men would soon tire of waiting for a settlement of the office. Together they would first kill Pietro; then battle between themselves, unless Savoli intervened.

NAILS PIETRO was considering something else. In Chicago, those who plotted against the big shot assumed a tremendous risk.

Anelmo and Genara had revealed themselves to Pietro. If he did not agree to go with them, they would have but one course: to kill him, before he would have a chance to tell what he knew. The presidency of the Unione Italiane was more attractive to Nails Pietro than death.

The gang leader looked at his companions. He displayed an evil grin. He stood up, and once more shook hands with the Sicilians.

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"To-night!" he said. "To-night. I am leaving now. Remember "

"Leave Savoli to us," declared Anelmo.

The three men left the room. A few minutes later they were gone from the Gray Mill Pietro in his car, with a bodyguard; Anelmo and Genara in a taxicab.

Joe le Blanc entered the vacant room. He stood as though in a daze, trying to piece together the words that he had heard.

"The Homicide Twins are going to put Savoli on the spot!" he muttered. "To-night, eh? We'll see about that!"

He laughed nervously as he left the room. Joe le Blanc realized that he had found an opportunity. Through Steve Cronin, he could reach the big shot.

He hurried to a telephone, and called Frank Marmosa's restaurant. When Steve Cronin was summoned to the phone, Le Blanc lost no time in pouring out his story.

Meanwhile a hand came through the window of the empty room where the conference had been held. The instrument was removed from behind the radiator. A soft, whispered laugh followed. Then the man outside was gone.

A few minutes later a taxicab rolled away from Joe le Blanc's road house.

WHEN Anelmo and Genara arrived at the Escadrille Apartments, they had cooked up an excuse for their visit.

Like Monk Thurman, they had a grudge against The Shadow. They knew that Nick Savoli would be interested in any new report on that sinister personage. So they were ready with their story of a chance encounter on the highway, with the imaginary flight and escape of The Shadow.

Genara and Anelmo used taxicabs on many of their ventures. It would have been easy for a man in a powerful car to get away from them.

The Homicide Twins were ushered into Savoli's apartment. They did not sit down when they reached the library; instead, they remained standing, awaiting the arrival of Savoli and Borrango.

The big shot and his enforcer came in, Borrango walking in front. The killers had expected this. Their plan was laid out.

"Well?" questioned Savoli, as he sat in his big chair.

Borrango also looked intently at the visitors as he leaned against the bookcase.

"We have seen The Shadow once more," said Anelmo, stepping forward toward Savoli. Genara, moving slightly, edged in Borrango's direction.

Nick Savoli rested his chin on his left hand, and slipped his right hand into the pocket of his smoking jacket. It was a characteristic pose of the big shot; it meant that he was keenly interested.

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"He came by us, in another car," said Anelmo. He made a gesture with his left hand, as though to describe the scene. "Before we could stop, he "

With a rapid movement, Tony Anelmo whipped out an automatic with his right hand. The action required but a fraction of a second. Yet it was the last deed that the Sicilian ever performed.

Neither he nor his companion, Genara, were quick on the draw. They were sinister killers who came upon men in the dark. They lacked the speed of other notorious gunmen. Anelmo did not live long to regret his laxity in this phase of gunmanship.

Before he could cover Nick Savoli, the big shot fired, using an automatic that was hidden in the large pocket of his jacket. The bullets found their mark. Tony Anelmo sprawled upon the floor without a word.

John Genara had acted with his comrade. He was facing Mike Borrango. It was his job to cover the enforcer; then swing on Savoli, the instant that he was sure Mike Borrango was incapable of action.

The Homicide Twins wanted Borrango as their man; but Genara was ready to kill the enforcer if he appeared dangerous. He had expected Mike Borrango to throw up his hands, which were hanging idly at his sides.

But Genara never learned exactly how Mike Borrango responded. For other shots were fired, a split second after those discharged by Nick Savoli.

The volley came from an opening in the bookcase; the shots, fired from close range, found their target in Genara's head. He joined his companion, Anelmo, on the floor.

NICK SAVOLI did not arise as Steve Cronin emerged from the hiding place where Borrango had put him before the arrival of the Homicide Twins. The big shot gazed thoughtfully at the bodies.

He regretted the loss of Anelmo and Genara, not because of friendship, but because they had been capable killers. The first law of the underworld was death to traitors. The Homicide Twins had attempted a double cross. They had received their just reward.

"We could use Monk Thurman, now," observed Borrango philosophically.

"Too late," replied Savoli.

"Yes," said Borrango. "It is after twelve o'clock. Larrigan is already " He paused, because of the presence of Steve Cronin.

"Joe le Blanc was right," observed Cronin.

"Yes," said Borrango. "But where's the other guy Nails Pietro? They were talking to him, weren't they?"

"Forget Pietro!" said Savoli briskly. "He was probably going to help them in a get-away. Let's get rid of 'em."

Another episode had been added to the annals of gangland's killings. Two more gentlemen of the rod had gone their way. To Nick Savoli and Mike Borrango, it was just one more instance of a futile attempt to double-cross the big shot.

CHAPTER XXV. LARRIGAN SWEARS VENGEANCE

MIKE LARRIGAN was ready for action. In the security of his hide-out, he impatiently awaited the hour of one.

A good fellow, Nick, thought Larrigan, as he prepared to leave his hideout. The big shot left nothing to chance.

Monk Thurman would be waiting on the spot. More than that, Larrigan, in the car manned by Machine-gun McGinnis, would approach his enemy in the guise of a friend.

It was a good idea to have McGinnis along. Larrigan knew the machine-gun master, and he realized that the presence of McGinnis in the car would spell certain doom for Monk Thurman.

Everything was properly planned. Larrigan climbed into his big sedan, and started out for Cicero. Larrigan did not know just where Monk would be; McGinnis would be informed as to that detail. But at one o'clock, the slayer of Larrigan's lieutenants would embark upon a voyage into the unknown realm of departed gangsters.

Larrigan drove leisurely along a wide street; then turned into a less traveled thoroughfare. He was watching the road ahead; hence he was completely surprised when he felt the muzzle of an automatic between his shoulders.

"Keep on!" said a rasping voice.

It was Monk Thurman!

Larrigan growled in astonishment. Nevertheless, he continued to drive ahead. He cursed himself for his foolishness. He had brought no one with him; that was bad enough. But he had been guilty of a greater error; he had failed to look in the rear seat.

The car had been locked all evening. Somehow, Monk Thurman had entered and yet left no evidence.

"You didn't expect to meet me so soon, did you?" jeered Thurman, from the back seat. "Well, here I am, and we're going for a ride. How do you like that, Larrigan?"

The Irishman did not reply. He was scheming to wreck the car; but he saw no opportunity. He well knew the ability of Monk Thurman. One false move, and Mike Larrigan would be no more. So he drove grimly ahead, even though he was sure that death lay at the end of this journey.

"You like to get them in the dark, don't you?" continued Monk. "That's the way Schultz and Spirak worked. Don't give a man a chance. Good idea it all depends on the man."

He laughed hoarsely. The New York gangster was enjoying the ride. Larrigan fumed at his helplessness.

THE car rolled on in silence. They were outside the city limits, bound for the country, where lonely roads were many, and chances of safety were few. Monk Thurman directed Larrigan.

"Turn left here," he said. "There's a nice spot down this road. Just a little way farther, Larrigan. Time will seem a lot shorter after you get there."

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They rode on for a few miles. Then the man in the back seat gave a sharp command, and Larrigan halted the car at the side of the road.

"Get out," said Monk.

Larrigan obeyed. He stood with his hands above his head, while his captor felt his pockets and removed his two automatics.

"Spirak had four of these," taunted Thurman. "They didn't do him much good though, did they?"

He pushed Larrigan forward to a small tree. He commanded the Irishman to turn around. Larrigan obeyed. He stood there, awaiting the shots that would send him to eternity.

But Monk Thurman made no move. A distant clock struck two. Larrigan expected it to be the hour of his death.

Then Monk Thurman spoke slowly and distinctly, as though to impress every word on Larrigan's mind.

"You're yellow, Larrigan," he said. "Yellow, like all of your tribe, and the rest of these Chicago mobsters.

"You want a man to stand on the spot, while you shoot him. Just like you're standing now. That was the way you were going to get me.

"Well, it's the other way around. What do you mean to Nick Savoli, compared to me? You're just as dumb as you are yellow. You didn't even wise up when Borrango called you the second time, telling you to wait an hour.

"You can thank me for that, Larrigan. I'm kind hearted. I didn't want to see you go on the spot too soon. Things are more quiet, early in the morning. But I want to tell you something, Larrigan.

"I'm not afraid of a yellow guy, no matter how big he is. That means you. I could have put Schultz and Spirak on the spot, that night in Marmosa's Cafe. But I only crippled them. I wasn't afraid of them, was I? They got theirs later, didn't they?

"I wasn't afraid of your whole gang of hoodlums, that night I crashed into your saloon, was I? You're waiting for me to put you on the spot, right now. Well, I'm not going to do it.

"Nick Savoli turned you over to me, and Mike Borrango helped out. I've got you where they want you, and I'm going to let you go. That's how much I'm afraid of you, and your mob. It's a long walk back to town. I hope you enjoy it."

Monk Thurman moved away from the astonished Larrigan. The gang leader was too amazed to move. He stood gaping in silence, as Monk drove away in the big sedan.

Then Larrigan swore beneath his breath. His mind was bewildered. He believed that he had been double-crossed by Savoli and Borrango; but more than that, he had gone through a most incredible experience.

For the first time in the history of gangdom, a gunman had put his victim on the spot and let him live!

THERE was no gratitude in Mike Larrigan's heart as he began the long journey back to the city. His spirit

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was filled with hatred for Monk Thurman.

He was resolved, more than ever before, to get the man whom he held responsible for the deaths of his most important lieutenants. Yet even greater than his hatred for Monk Thurman was his desire for vengeance upon Nick Savoli and Mike Borrango!

"I'll get those grease-balls!" he muttered, as he strode along the lonely road. "They'll find out what I can do!"

He thought of Monk Thurman, laughing, gloating, as he rode along in Larrigan's sedan. The gang leader was filled with rage.

He hastened his footsteps, hoping to shorten the time of his return. He was resolved that Monk Thurman would be dead before another day had passed; and he was determined to overthrow the underworld empire that Nick Savoli claimed.

It was nearly daylight when the disgruntled gang leader rattled into Chicago in a milk wagon which he had commandeered.

He arrived at his saloon, too exhausted for immediate effort. Yet he called his henchmen long enough to give them instructions and to send out hunting parties for Monk Thurman.

The detested Savoli could wait; he would hear from Mike Larrigan soon enough!

By evening, the gang leader had recovered from the effects of his ride and the long walk home. Then his mind was occupied with new events that had already crowded their way into huge headlines in the evening papers.

There was no mention there of the disgrace which had befallen Mike Larrigan. Instead the journals told of new gangland killings.

Pete Varona, and Al Vacchi, Savoli lieutenants, and claimants for the presidency of the Unione Italiana, had been put on the spot.

They had been murdered during a party in Varona's apartment. Their bodies had been discovered shortly after the shots had been fired. Both men were dead when the police arrived. The assassins had escaped – nothing unusual in Chicago.

These reports had been in the morning newspapers, but the full story had been left for the evening journals. The later papers had amplified the news of the underworld with even more sensational findings.

On a lonely road, near the Indiana border, the police had discovered the bodies of those notorious killers, John Genara and Tony Anelmo!

Four Savoli henchmen in a single night! What was in back of this?

The newspapers hinted that the Sicilians had been put on the spot for attempting a double cross; but they made no connection with the Varona–Vacchi murder, which seemed obviously the work of rival gangsters.

MIKE LARRIGAN grinned grimly as he read the reports. This was good news to him.

Varona and Vacchi had been able lieutenants of the big shot; Genara and Anelmo had been Savoli's most

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formidable killers. There could be only one immediate result: a weakening of the Savoli forces.

This was opportunity.

That night, three of Larrigan's hoodlums acting under orders, entered a road house and shot down two of Savoli's gunmen. The news was phoned immediately to the big shot and his enforcer.

Borrango called up Larrigan. He heard nothing but curses in reply.

Then Machine-gun McGinnis brought in the news that Larrigan had not kept the rendezvous that would have led to the death of Monk Thurman.

McGinnis had gone on alone, but to no avail.

What had become of Monk? That was a question that perplexed both Savoli and Borrango.

They had but one cause for rejoicing; that was the fact that Larrigan had struck crudely, and had made no attempt at subtle effort. They knew now that he was their enemy, even though they did not know why.

Before the reports of the road-house shooting had been printed in the morning newspapers, the Savoli organization was in motion.

Its many industries gambling, bootlegging, and other activities must go on. But with it all, gunmen were set to work, to meet the onslaughts of Larrigan's mob.

There were other dangers, too. The murders of Varona and Vacchi were traced to Nails Pietro and his gang. They, like Larrigan and his crew, were to be the objects of Savoli's vengeance.

Even without the four men who had been so important to him, Nick Savoli was confident. Yet he was anxious to trace Monk Thurman.

The New York gangster would be most useful now. That was not all; even in this mad whirl of approaching warfare, the big shot had not forgotten a sinister figure in black a man whose hand had entered into the grim game.

Nick Savoli was on guard against The Shadow!

CHAPTER XXVI. GANG WAR

THE next week proved to be the most tumultuous period that had ever rocked Chicago's underworld. Mobsters were at work.

Larrigan's hoodlums were shooting down all the stray Savoli gangsters that they could find. At first, the tide was turned against the big shot. His forces seemed to waver before the open attacks of Larrigan's mob.

Then Nails Pietro gained courage, and his killers did their work.

The police theory seemed to be turning into fact. Let the gangsters kill each other. It might prove true, at last. Yet the killing seemed one-sided. Savoli's men were falling like the leaves of autumn.

The police were forced to action. This open warfare was too desperate. Squads of policemen entered the

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struggle, and unwittingly served Nick Savoli a good turn. For they killed a few of Larrigan's mobsters.

Then came the turn of the tide. The big shot had been waiting. His gorillas fought back, but more efficiently than Larrigan's men, and the mobs of independent leaders who thought that Savoli's end was near.

The master of the old regime planned his executions, and they had a terrifying effect upon the enemy.

The prime job was the killing of Mike Larrigan. The wild gang leader had adopted every precaution within his power; yet he was following the old plan that the best defense was a powerful offense. He was wary, was Mike Larrigan. Yet his end came when he least expected it.

As he was riding along a busy street, his car was riddled with machine-gun bullets. The barrage came from the ground floor of a partly completed building. The roar of the gun was drowned by a multitude of riveters, who worked on, unconscious that they were a party to the killing.

Before Larrigan's mobsmen or the police who were near by had grasped the situation, Machine-gun McGinnis quietly packed up his typewriter, and left the premises.

Thus came the end of a fierce six-day fight.

Without their chief, Larrigan's hoodlums scattered. The lesser mobs slipped into retirement. There was no one else to carry on.

Nick Savoli grinned when Machine-gun McGinnis came to report, with Brodie, the chauffeur.

The big shot had had a hectic week. His bullet-proof car had been plastered with gunfire. It had rolled away just in time to escape the explosion of a pineapple. A squad of automobiles had peppered the front of the Escadrille Apartments, but to no avail.

Now, at last, there was to be relief.

EXCEPT for the one futile attack by the passing automobiles, life had been comparatively quiet at the Escadrille. There were more gangsters than usual, and they were constantly on watch. But they had proven a protection rather than an attraction to lure rival mobs.

Everything had swung to Nick Savoli's advantage, even though his ranks were depleted, and his organization had suffered. It was true that his peace plans had gone to naught. But his supremacy was on the verge of greater establishment.

From the smoking ruins of the underworld, he could gain the opportunity to set up a new and more powerful kingdom.

Yet events were in a critical stage. Any unexpected incident might cause a complete crash. Nick Savoli realized this, and so did Mike Borrango. They knew the insecurity of their position. Between combats with rival mobs and conflicts with the police, the big shot's system had been taxed to the breaking point. But for the death of Larrigan, the emperor would have lost his throne.

Now he had the opportunity to regain it. All rivals had been driven to cover all the enemies had been forced away, except one The Shadow. But that formidable opponent had not even appeared during the conflict.

Borrango had mentioned The Shadow to Nick Savoli. The enforcer was sure that the man of mystery had left

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Chicago when the guns had begun to bark. But Savoli was not so sure.

He, himself, was subtle. He had waited until the others had shot their bolt. Perhaps The Shadow was waiting, too; waiting until the opposing forces had gone their limit.

If so, that time had come now!

Still came the other question. Where was Monk Thurman?

Had he been killed by Larrigan's men, during the first part of the fight? What was his attitude now, toward Savoli?

He had not kept the appointment which would have meant his death. Did he know the truth?

Neither Savoli nor Borrango had heard the story of Mike Larrigan's ride, and the walk which had followed it. Larrigan had kept that secret to himself.

Perhaps Thurman had left town. If he was still in Chicago, he might be an enemy, rather than a friend.

It was possible that he had aligned himself with one of the rival mobs; yet that seemed unlikely. For none of Savoli's men had encountered Monk Thurman during the week of strife.

THERE was too much going on to watch minor events around the Escadrille Apartments. Some of the tenants had been having decorating work done. One apartment on the third floor occupied by a man named Howard Blake was undergoing a complete renovation.

On this particular afternoon when Nick Savoli and Mike Borrango were planning their great campaign of reconstruction, several workmen had gone into Blake's apartment, carrying their tools, and painting equipment.

The stalwarts of the Savoli mob were due to assemble. Machine-gun McGinnis and Brodie were already there. Two lieutenants Spiker Condi and Texas Carey were announced.

Steve Cronin, who had been acting as Savoli's bodyguard, and who had done heavy work during the fighting days, was the last to put in an appearance.

The group gathered in the library. Mike Borrango left for a few minutes. He visited the third floor, to make sure that two gunmen were in the apartment below, that served as the secret means of exit from Savoli's place.

The enforcer noticed a man in the hallway operating a vacuum cleaner that was attached to a plug in the wall. He was glad to see such evidence of peaceful activity, here in the Escadrille.

But Mike Borrango would have been surprised had he remained there. The man in the hallway moved the vacuum to the entrance of Howard Blake's apartment. There another man joined him. They removed the cleaner from the hose; in its place they put a strange machine. A lever was turned, and a hissing sound followed.

The two gunmen in the third-floor apartment that was directly beneath Nick Savoli's library were unaware what had taken place outside. It was their duty to challenge any one who might enter their apartment. They were watching for human beings; not for more subtle, invisible invaders. While they talked together, one was

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surprised to see the other gasp, and sink to the floor.

The remaining man was astonished for the moment. Then he bent to aid his companion. He, too, gasped, and fell unconscious.

Meanwhile, Mike Borrango had joined the others in Nick Savoli's library. The big shot took charge of the meeting. He outlined what had been accomplished, and what was to be done.

Other mobs worked in haphazard fashion. Savoli's organization was compact. Every event of consequence was reported to headquarters.

Savoli announced a reapportionment of territories; some to be governed by commanders of larger districts, until new appointees could be named.

This was a big day for such henchmen as Machine-gun McGinnis, Brodie, and Steve Cronin. They were advanced to lieutenantcies, as a reward for their recent endeavors.

ALL were intent upon the plans; so intent, in fact, that a new arrival entered the room unannounced. The first sign of his presence was his voice.

Nick Savoli looked up. For once the big shot expressed surprise. Monk Thurman stood before him. The man seemed friendly. Borrango took charge.

"Hello, Monk!" Savoli exclaimed. "Where have you been? We have been looking for you?"

"I've been out of town," responded Monk. "Larrigan's mob was after me that's why I didn't have a chance to go with McGinnis that night. I hopped out in a hurry. I just came back. Hear you've been having some big times while I've been gone."

"We needed you," said Savoli.

"Yeah? Perhaps you can use me now."

"We can."

"All right. Suppose you give me the South Side, or some other place to handle for you. I'll show you what can be done in this town."

Nick Savoli eyed the gangster narrowly.

"If you had been here this past week," he said, "you might have done something to get what you want."

The other Savoli henchmen were surly as they looked at Monk Thurman. They resented the tone in which the New Yorker had spoken.

"So I don't deserve a share, eh?" questioned Monk.

"No," replied Savoli.

"You owe me plenty," retorted Monk, with a harsh laugh. "Plenty! Get that?"

"For what?"

"For double-crossing me with Larrigan!"

As Monk Thurman shot forth this accusation, Nick Savoli slipped his hand toward his jacket pocket. But he was too late. He was dealing now with Monk Thurman not with Anelmo or Genara.

Before the astonished gangsters could realize what had occurred, Monk had produced two businesslike automatics. The guns appeared in his hands as if by magic. He drew them in a fraction of a split-second, and both of the guns were leveled toward Nick Savoli.

"Move your hand one inch," threatened Thurman, "and you get all that is in these!"

Nick Savoli's fingers trembled on the verge of his jacket pocket.

Monk Thurman stepped backward a few paces. His sharp, keen eyes were alert as they turned in different directions. He observed every gangster who was before him, and each man knew that a single motion would mean death.

"Double-crossers," said Monk. "You, Savoli. You, Borrango. You, McGinnis. The three of you. Your game didn't work, did it?"

He centered his gaze on Machine-gun McGinnis, who was seated beside Brodie, the chauffeur.

"You, at least, made up for it," he said. "You mowed down Larrigan, didn't you?"

"Sure I did," retorted McGinnis proudly.

"You've mowed down a lot of people, haven't you?"

"Sure."

McGinnis was defiant. He wondered what Thurman's game might be, and he was stalling for time.

"Remember one you killed outside of police headquarters? A New Yorker? Do you remember his name?"

McGinnis smiled sourly at Thurman's question.

"Sure I remember his name" he said. "I read the papers. His name was Claude Fellows "

Monk Thurman smiled reassuringly.

"You killed Claude Fellows?"

"Sure, I killed Claude Fellows."

"Who was with you?"

"Brodie, here."

"You remember it?" Monk asked the chauffeur.

"Sure thing," replied Brodie.

"You saw McGinnis kill Claude Fellows?"

"I did."

Nick Savoli had been looking at McGinnis, urging the machine–gunman to answer the questions. Any stall for time would help. There was sure to be a break in favor of the big shot and his henchmen, for they outnumbered Monk Thurman seven to one.

"That's all I wanted to know," said Monk. He started at Nick Savoli. "Now I have something to tell you. I didn't bump off Hymie Schultz and Four–gun Spirak."

"You didn't "

"I didn't kill them. Anelmo and Genara did the job!"

There was the silence of amazement at this revelation.

"One week ago," said Monk, "I told Anelmo and Genara that I knew who killed Larrigan's men. I told them that I would tell you to–night. It is nearly evening now. I am telling you a few hours in advance."

A sudden dawn of understanding seemed to come over Nick Savoli. The big shot opened his mouth in astonishment. He was about to speak; for a moment words failed him.

"You you told them," he repeated. "You told Anelmo and Genara that you knew. You Monk Thurman "

"Monk Thurman is dead," responded the one with the masklike face. "He was dead before I came to Chicago. He was put on the spot in New York. I am not Monk Thurman."

"You are " Savoli stopped.

For from those straight masklike lips came a mocking laugh a blood–chilling laugh a laugh which Savoli had heard before. It was the laugh of The Shadow!

THE gangsters were like frozen images. To Nick Savoli and Mike Borrango, this strange turn of affairs seemed beyond belief. Then, gradually their brains functioned; their recollections returned.

They realized the stunning truth; that no one had ever seen Monk Thurman and The Shadow at one and the same time. They realized that this amazing man had gained their confidence and had thwarted them at every move.

The crucial moment had arrived in the career of Nick Savoli! The fate of his underworld empire hung by a thread!

There was only one course to save it; to overpower that terrible man who held the big shot and his six henchmen beneath the muzzles of his automatics!

It was Steve Cronin who acted. He was nearest to The Shadow. The gaze of the man with the masklike face had shifted. With a sudden impulse, Cronin leaped forward, and as he hurled himself against his enemy, he pulled a revolver from his pocket.

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The Shadow laughed. He stood motionless, his automatics still holding the others at bay. It was as though he felt himself protected by an invisible power.

In that brief moment, Nick Savoli and the other gangsters wondered at the calmness of the pretended Monk Thurman.

A cry of triumph came from Steve Cronin's lips as he swung the automatic upward. But his shout died as a revolver shot echoed from the side of the room, and a spurt of flame came from the bookcase.

Steve Cronin fell dead, his outstretched arms extended futilely toward The Shadow.

The bookcase swung open, and six men poured into the room. They were just in time; for at the sound of the shot, other gangsters had recklessly swung into action.

There was a quick, short struggle. Texas Carey fell, the victim of a shot fired by Barney Higgins, the detective commissioner. The others were overpowered.

With Higgins were three detectives; the other two men were Morris Clarendon and Harry Vincent. They quickly captured the gangsters.

Nick Savoli, the big shot, offered no resistance. He did not even get up.

When the struggle was over, Barney Higgins turned to the spot where The Shadow had been standing. A cry of amazement came from his lips.

Silently, swiftly, the man disguised as Monk Thurman had disappeared. His work had been accomplished. He had left the gangsters in the hands of the police.

The confession of Machine-gun McGinnis, actual slayer of Claude Fellows, had been recorded by those who stood behind the bookcase. Now the murderer had been captured.

Then, from the anteroom, the door of which stood slightly opened, came a peal of startling laughter. It was a long, weird laugh, that carried a sinister note of gloom to Nick Savoli and his henchmen. It was The Shadow's laugh of triumph!

CHAPTER XXVII. MOB RULE ENDS

THE newspapers told of the events which had led to the apprehension of Nick Savoli and his lieutenants.

One week before, Harry Vincent had appeared at the home of Morris Clarendon. He had told how he had been captured by the Homicide Twins, Anelmo and Genara, and how he had been rescued by a man who had overpowered his torturers.

From that time on, the prosecuting attorney had been plentifully informed of what was going on in Chicago's underworld. Letters and telephone calls had been received, which had proven of tremendous value in assembling evidence against Nick Savoli as well as lesser gangsters.

During the mob war which had swept Chicago, the mysterious informant had been active. His advice had enabled the police to take their part in the strife, and to lessen the damage wrought by the fighting gangsters.

But the final touch had been the tip upon which the police had made their final action. On the day that Savoli

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had planned the death of Mike Larrigan, a letter had been received by Morris Clarendon which had outlined a complete plan for the invasion of Savoli's headquarters.

The district attorney had gone with Harry Vincent and the detectives. Dressed as workmen, they had entered the apartment of Howard Blake, who was out of town, presumably because of the alterations being made in his apartment. There they had discovered the gas machine, and the hallway plug that had been cleverly altered into an opening that entered the apartment where the gunmen were on guard.

Acting upon a perfect schedule that The Shadow had arranged for them, the agents of the law had overpowered the guarding gangsters.

Clarendon and Higgins had led the way through the secret passage which was revealed to them in diagrams and had overheard Savoli's conference with his underlings.

They had been waiting, Higgins with his automatic ready, when Monk Thurman had made his entry. The assistant commissioner had been prepared to shoot the first man who made a move.

Steve Cronin had been the victim. Once too often had he sought to thwart The Shadow.

The Shadow had been everywhere during the battles in Chicago. He had traveled in numerous disguises; he had been on the building when Larrigan was killed. He had taken photographs that were useful to the district attorney's office.

But his important connection with evidence assembled never reached the public. He was known simply as Mr. X, the man who had tipped off the police.

The chief credit for the work that had ended in the spectacular raid belonged to Morris Clarendon and Barney Higgins.

The Shadow had submerged his identity. He had come to Chicago unknown; he had left without any one discovering who he actually was. By his amazing skill, he had caused rebellion in the Savoli ranks and had pitted one gang against another, until the vast organization of the underworld had crumbled.

Jerry Kirklyn found wonderful material for his newspaper. The data supplied by Barney Higgins reached the front pages of the Chicago dailies, and brought new and more amazing revelations that exposed the machinations of Savoli and his lieutenants.

BACK home, Vincent followed the accounts of doings in Chicago long after the day when he had participated in the raid that had ended the regime of Nick Savoli.

The trial of Machine-gun McGinnis had resulted in a complete victory for the State. The man who had murdered Claude Fellows received the death penalty.

Dozens of gangsters were being sent to the penitentiary for long-term imprisonments. Nick Savoli and Mike Borrango, indicted on many counts, had jumped their bail.

The big shot's power was gone; his organized machine had been shattered to atoms.

The city election was the latest news that Harry read. It had resulted in a clean sweep for the reform forces.

Instead of being dominated by gangsters and hoodlums, the polls had been orderly and under police

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protection.

The crushing hand of gangdom had been lifted from the metropolis of the Middle West, and the only remnants of the mobs which had formerly run riot were small groups of lesser gangsters who could make no progress against the police force.

All this, Harry knew, had been accomplished through the dynamic efforts of one man a master mind who knew the ways of criminals, and who conquered them in combat.

The credit for the mighty upheaval belonged to that mysterious person who could elude the public eye as cleverly as he had slipped from the grasp of Nick Savoli and the other mobsmen.

The Shadow had cleaned up Chicago!

THE END