

THE GREEN HOODS

Maxwell Grant

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THE GREEN HOODS

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CHAPTER I. THE MESSAGE IN GREEN

MANHATTAN'S lights formed a galaxy of glitter as Kent Allard, famous aviator, viewed them from his hotel window. Often, early of an evening, he sat there, his blue eyes fixed upon the sparkling brilliance that represented New York.

Tonight, as on other nights, Allard's thin, hawklike face was inscrutable. He was as impassive as an Aztec god of stone surveying a vast realm below its pedestal.

There were men who regarded Allard as the equivalent of an Aztec god. They were the two Indians who were his trusted servants. Members of the lost Xinca tribe, they had come with Allard from Guatemala, after he had lived there, presumably, for ten years, following a plane wreck. Here, in the isolation of this magnificent hotel suite, they were ready at his instant bidding.

As like as a pair of twins, the short-built Indians stood stony-faced. They knew the meaning of their master's fixed gaze.

Kent Allard was The Shadow!

Scourge of the underworld. The Shadow chose night as his domain. Cloaked in blackness, he moved

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everywhere anywhere to strike down evildoers who plotted crime. Crooks knew him as a being whose burning eyes shone from beneath the brim of a slouch hat; whose gloved fists gripped a pair of massive automatics.

Many had met The Shadow, often to their own disaster. None had ever pierced the mystery that shrouded his real identity. Tonight, however, mystery confronted The Shadow himself.

Keen eyes turned from the window, to an envelope that stretched between long-fingered hands. That envelope was addressed to Kent Allard. He had opened it previously; again, he drew forth the contents.

A disk of green jade slid to Allard's palm. The object was thin, the size of a half dollar. The only mark upon it was the number 13, carved in the center of one side.

With the disk was a message; it had been typed through carbon paper. The color of the print was green. It read:

To one interested in matters of crime, we offer opportunity to become a link in an extending chain. As a member of the Green Hoods, you can accomplish much of value. We meet beneath the Landham Theater, at 8:30 tonight; none admitted later than 9 o'clock. The enclosed amulet will identify you by number. Wear the hood and robe that you find in your locker.

The note was unsigned; beneath it, in underscored letters, was typed:

Tonight's survey is vitally important. Come.

This was The Shadow's first knowledge of an organization that called itself the Green Hoods. One that apparently numbered twelve members, since his amulet the green-jade disk bore the number 13. The message, though, did not specify whether the Green Hoods met for good or evil.

Allard was considering a deeper significance to the message.

It might be a mere hoax, sent to him as a prank. Contrasted with that trivial possibility was the chance that the message carried an insidious design. It might mean that some shrewd criminal had guessed The Shadow's real identity, and was using this as bait to trap him.

Those extreme possibilities seemed unlikely; there were points against each theory. The Shadow saw a middle answer; its soundness increased, the more he considered it.

The message was neither hoax nor snare. The Green Hoods, through some individual member, had picked Kent Allard as a candidate for their organization without suspecting that he was The Shadow.

Upon Allard's thin lips appeared the faintest of smiles. He remembered something that had occurred last night; an incident that could be the forerunner to this message, which had arrived only an hour ago.

THE Xincas saw their master arise; he went to a small, secluded dressing room in the far corner. There, before a mirror, he began a most remarkable operation.

From a make-up kit, Allard produced substances with which he remolded the contour of his face. A puttyish application reduced the sharpness of his nose. Pressing upward from the chin, fingers widened cheeks and pressed in wax that changed features in their new position.

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Touches of temporary dye not only changed the color of eyebrows, but altered their apparent shape. Deft dabs, here and there, completed the transformation.

Though the new visage still had a hawkish effect, it could not be recognized as Allard's. In place of a natural gauntness, it had a masklike appearance; yet, withal, it was natural. The Shadow had done more than merely drop the guise of Kent Allard. He had adopted another actual identity.

The Shadow had become the image of Lamont Cranston, a well-known New York millionaire, whose identity he used, at times.

When their master arose from the mirror, the Xincas were waiting. They did not even observe the new face that The Shadow wore. All that mattered to them was a rare jewel, a girasol, that shone from The Shadow's finger. That iridescent fire opal was the symbol that its wearer was their master.

One servant held a black cloak, the other a slouch hat. The Shadow donned those garments. With his left thumb, he turned the ring so that the fire opal was inward. With his right hand, he pocketed the green-jade amulet that was tonight's token.

One of the Xincas had opened the door to the hallway; he was motioning that the way was clear. The Shadow slid black gloves upon his hands; mere seconds later, he had blended with the darkness of a fire-tower.

A taxicab was waiting in an obscure spot beside the hotel. The Shadow boarded it silently, invisibly. A whispered order to the driver and the cab was on its way.

The taxi halted one block from the exclusive Cobalt Club, where Cranston was a member. Leaving the black garments in a drawerlike space beneath the rear seat, The Shadow alighted. With the strolling gait of Cranston, he continued to the club on foot.

Sight of a big official car brought a slight smile to his lips. The Shadow knew that he would find the man he wanted in the club.

That man was Ralph Weston, New York's police commissioner. Cranston met him in the club foyer; as they shook hands, the millionaire expressed regret that he had not been there on the previous evening.

"YOU missed something, Cranston," declared Weston. "Kent Allard was here you know, the chap who lived among the Xincas Indians and he gave an excellent informal talk regarding their tribal customs."

"Odd that it interested you, commissioner," remarked The Shadow, in a leisurely tone that went with Cranston's guise. "I supposed that you concentrated solely upon the study of crime."

"That was just it!" Weston was brisk, in his enthusiasm. "I asked Allard some questions regarding crime among primitive races. His answers were concise, but thorough."

"They interested others than yourself?"

Weston nodded. He declaimed at length upon a chat that he had resumed with other persons, after Allard's departure. One man, Weston remembered, had hoped to meet Allard again. The commissioner had given him Allard's address.

"I don't suppose that Allard will mind it if he calls," remarked Weston. "Maybe you know the fellow, Cranston. He's an earnest sort; his name is Robert Leng."

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The Shadow remembered the man, but did not tell that to Weston. Instead, he shook his head negatively. Weston described Leng as a quiet, bespectacled man of middle age, who was something of an expert on photography. He had made a study of black light; its aid to photography in darkness.

"Leng was around here this evening," mentioned Weston. "I could have pointed him out to you, a short while ago. I think that I saw him leave, just about half past eight."

The foyer clock showed twenty minutes of nine. Commissioner Weston was disappointed when his friend Cranston suddenly remembered another engagement, and decided that he must be on his way.

Once outside the club, Cranston's leisurely style ended. A big limousine was parked across the street; it was Cranston's, and the doorman would have whistled for it, had he seen the millionaire. But the supposed Cranston was away before the doorman spied him.

The Shadow calculated that ten minutes would bring him to the Landham Theater. He figured that after he was back in the cab, with the driver hitting a good speed. Lost time had been worth while. The Shadow had linked past with future. He had strengthened his theory, regarding the message that invited him to join the Green Hoods.

With it, The Shadow knew the probable identity of one member: Robert Leng.

THE Landham was an old, disused playhouse; its location was on an obscure side street. To reclaim the minutes that he had lost, The Shadow donned his black garb during the ride. He was set, with one hand on the door handle, when the cab rolled to a stop near the theater.

This cab was The Shadow's own. Moe Shrevnitz, its driver, was following orders in perfect style. He didn't stop in front of the empty theater; he pulled into a deserted hack stand just beyond it, so that any chance observer would suppose that he had a vacant cab and was looking for a fare.

That move produced a sudden surprise one that caught Moe off guard. Before the cabby could signal the news to The Shadow, a new passenger bobbed into view.

She came from a sheltered corner of the theater a girl whose face showed beauty, despite its troubled paleness. Her dress was dark; so was the cape that she wore. That was why Moe did not see her, until her hand was on the handle of the very door that The Shadow was about to open.

Staring, Moe saw dark-brown eyes beneath a wave of even darker hair. He spied serious lips below a well-formed nose; heard them speak quickly, firmly, as the girl gave an address. She didn't wait to ask if the cab was empty.

Moe had only time to cross his fingers, in hope that the girl wouldn't spot the cab's occupant. Moe's good luck wish was unnecessary. By the time the girl was opening the door on the curb side of the cab, the opposite door was easing shut.

The Shadow had made one of his speedy departures. Low, beside the step on the street side of the cab, he came up beside the driver's seat. Moe heard The Shadow's whisper, telling him that The Shadow had caught the address also. Following that, came the terse order:

"Report later!"

The cab whipped away. The Shadow sidestepped into the space that it had left. A quick glide across the

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sidewalk brought him to the shelter that the girl had left. There, The Shadow lingered briefly in darkness, watching the cab as it wheeled around a corner.

Even before he reached the meeting room of the Green Hoods, The Shadow had met with a mysterious event. The sudden appearance of the brunette, plus her quick departure, showed some connection with the unknown organization that had chosen The Shadow as its thirteenth member.

That episode might mean coming danger. It keyed The Shadow to the adventure that lay ahead. A low laugh whispered in the darkness; it predicted that The Shadow intended measures that would counteract any coming menace.

Rarely did The Shadow's methods fail. Tonight, he was moving into an uncharted zone, but he was fully equipped for the foray. That, ordinarily, would be enough for whatever might befall. Tonight, it was not sufficient.

The meeting of the Green Hoods was to provide The Shadow with a surprise far more startling than the sudden appearance of the mysterious girl who had traveled away in The Shadow's own cab.

As for the girl herself, she was to play a vital part in one of the strangest campaigns that The Shadow had ever waged against crime.

CHAPTER II. DEATH IN THE LIGHT

IT was pitch-black in the alleyway beside the old theater; the space was silent and deserted. That was as it should be, since the Green Hoods presumably came here singly.

A new member, picking his way for the first time, would probably be expected to use a flashlight. If the game was on the up and up, old members would give him right of way, if they saw the gleam.

The Shadow wasn't chancing that the game was on the level. He used a flashlight, but handled it so expertly that its glitter was entirely concealed. Keeping close to the wall, he held the tiny electric torch in the folds of his cloak. When he flicked the light, it was muffled; its glowing bulb almost touched the wall beside him.

With swift probe, The Shadow found a battered doorway that looked like an old stage entrance. He eased through, used the light along the floor, to discover a spiral stairway that led downward. Once at the bottom of those steps, The Shadow needed his light no longer.

A dull glow greeted him. He was in a windowless basement room that had several passages leading from it. In each passage, The Shadow could see the outlines of squatty lockers. He noted that one row began with the number 1; another with 7; while the number 13 was painted dimly on the first locker in a third passage.

The Shadow reached the gloom beyond the locker. Reaching back, he tried the locker door. It swung open; inside was hanging a green robe, with a cowl-like hood that folded back from it.

So far, The Shadow was positive that he had been unobserved. He had several minutes more before the dead line of nine o'clock, when members, old or new, would no longer be admitted to the conclave of the Green Hoods.

The Shadow had a prompt use for those minutes. He wanted to learn the location of the meeting room; if possible, peer into it, before he would be forced to don the green of Member 13.

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There had been nothing in the message regarding the exact location of the meeting room. The Shadow assumed that his own passage would lead there. He followed the gloomy path between stone walls, came to a turn where the light from the entry ended.

Ahead, The Shadow saw a crack of light that indicated a doorway. Guided by it, he reached the inner end of the passage. The door had no knob; it gave a slight sideways yield to The Shadow's touch. He recognized it as a sliding panel, and acted accordingly.

Imperceptibly, The Shadow inched the barrier to one side, so that he could peer beyond. One eye to the space, he became an unseen observer to the very meeting that he had been invited to attend.

THE Green Hoods were in conference, ranged about a circular table that stood in the exact center of a square-walled room.

Except for height, they were all alike; they resembled a group of night riders, clad in green. Drawn hoods came below their chins. Almond-shaped eye-slits and narrow mouth spaces gave no glimpse of the faces that lay behind them.

A single table lamp lighted the scene; it was impossible, therefore, for The Shadow to ascertain if twelve members had already assembled.

One Green Hood stood near the lamp, his costumed form clearly visible, like those of the few nearest him; but those farther around the circular table were clustered irregularly, with some members in the background.

From what he could see of the nearer walls, The Shadow judged that there were several paneled entrances, which allowed the members various avenues of arrival.

Looking upward, The Shadow noted the ceiling. Though dim, it appeared solid. It had a chandelier with six frosted bulbs. Evidently those lights were not used, because they would throw too much glow upon the meeting.

The member near the lamp had raised his right hand; it was clad in a loose-fitting glove that formed an extension of the robe's sleeve. The others remained silent as the man with the raised hand voiced in a forced, sepulchral tone:

"Member 1 has word!"

Down to the table level descended the raised hand. Its fist opened to show a jade amulet, visible in the lamp glow because its hue was a lighter shade than the dark-green glove that held it.

A few of the Green Hoods craned forward to observe the amulet's identifying number, but the others took the procedure as a mere formality. They seemed more interested in hearing what Member 1 had to say.

The Shadow, too, was intrigued. He decided that he would play the part of an unseen spectator, rather than appear as Member 13.

"I have spoken often of my experiments," stated Member 1, his voice a low roll from his throat. "At our last meeting, I declared that I had completed them; that the Truth Inducer was no longer an idea, but an established fact."

"I promised then to bring the chemical formulas to this meeting, together with the plans for the required

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mechanism. I have brought them, from my own private laboratory, for distribution among you."

Thrusting a hand beneath the robe, Member 1 put away the jade amulet. He drew a long roll of paper from the robe; as he placed it on the table, the roll separated into single sheets. Member 1 began to sort them on the table, while his eager companions watched.

Evidently, all knew the theory of the Truth Inducer and had been expecting its detailed formulas and plans. The Shadow saw some of the Green Hoods stretch out their hands, while others turned to buzz among themselves.

Drawing his hood tight with one hand, to keep his voice muffled, Member 1 rumbled for the others to be patient. He had the manner of an instructor addressing a group of pupils. Extended hands withdrew. There was a shift of Green Hoods in the background.

Then, the stroke came.

THE man who delivered it had chosen the most timely instant. He was a Green Hood somewhere in the far background, unnoticed by the others, obscured from The Shadow.

There was audible proof of the sudden action he performed. It was the click of a light switch at the far wall.

That sound was useless as a warning. The result it produced was instantaneous.

Every light in the ceiling chandelier delivered a blinding glare. All six were flash bulbs, their frosting a mere surface to cover the material that they contained. For a split-second, the room was filled with a brilliance that had the burn of lightning. Eyes did not have to face it directly to be totally dazzled.

There were hoarse cries from the Green Hoods; a wild shuffle as they staggered blindly for the wall panels. The Shadow could hear those shrieks and shuffles, but the scene itself was gone from his view.

Like the Green Hoods in the meeting room, their prospective Member 13 had taken the effect of that terrific flash.

Instinctively, The Shadow wheeled back along the passage. Despite its darkness, he was gripped by the sensation of vivid light, that formed a tormenting sheet when he thrust his cloaked arm across his eyes.

In those moments, The Shadow was as helpless as the Green Hoods themselves; but, despite his predicament, he was realizing that he possessed an advantage that others did not have. Streaks of light tortured him whether he opened or closed his eyes; but those after-effects were oddly one-sided.

They seemed like shafts that barbed toward the left side of his face, and they gave The Shadow the clue to his own condition.

The Shadow had been peering through the narrow space beside the panel with his left eye only. His right eye, against the wall edge, had been shut almost tight. There was darkness blurring in among the stabs of light. His right eye had not taken the fierce dazzle.

Clamping his left hand over the eye on that side, The Shadow still suffered from the after-impressions; but his right eye sensed darkness more definitely. He couldn't see the crack of the panel, but that was because it showed too dimly.

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Groping toward the meeting room, The Shadow guided himself by the sounds of groaning voices, that were punctuated with excited gasps.

An obstruction halted The Shadow's advance. It was the panel; he had blundered against it. Probing quickly with his fingers, he found the open space, pressed his right eye against it. From his cloak, his right hand drew an automatic.

The Shadow opened his right eye.

SEVERAL seconds had passed. It took a few more before The Shadow's eye could focus itself to the scene. First, there was the shifting blur of many green-clad figures some flaying, others offering helping hands, while a few were huddled near the walls.

In their plight, members seemed varied in opinion. Some regarded all as foemen; others accepted them as friends. The rest were too concerned with their own plight to care about their companions.

The blur cleared as two Green Hoods shifted away from The Shadow's panel, to sag separately, as they groped along the wall.

Directly ahead, The Shadow saw the table clearly. The rolled papers were gone, but a man remained there. He was Member 1; his position was too close to the table lamp for him to be any one else.

Like the others, Member 1 had taken the full effect of the flashing bulbs; but that, alone, did not account for all that had happened to him.

Where others had retained their hoods, his was gone. In its place, The Shadow saw a large face, with ruddy beard; above it, thick, shaggy hair that matched the whiskers. There was a stare in the eyes of the bearded man. Those eyes were glassy; they bulged from their sockets, straight toward the ceiling.

The stare, its direction neither could have been caused by the burst of light. The Shadow's gazing eye looked lower, toward the green-robed body that was hunched, breast upward, half across the table.

There was a glitter that showed from the center of a darkish splotch, where red blood dyed the green cloth of the robe. A few moments later, The Shadow identified the sparkling object.

It was the jewel-studded handle of a long, thin-bladed knife that had been thrust straight to the heart of the green-robed man who called himself Member 1.

The leader of the Green Hoods had paid the penalty for his overzeal, in offering his newly invented Truth Inducer to his fellow members. All had been willing to share the knowledge regarding that device, except a single member.

That lone person, a traitor in the midst of the group, wanted it for himself. He had snatched the entire set of formulas and plans; to preserve them for his sole use, he had disposed of the person who created them.

The vivid blast of light had served as cover for a murder. One victim of the blinding flare had been singled out for death. The kill had been accomplished in the midst of a group helpless to prevent the doom that the victim, himself, had been unable to escape.

Not only had the Green Hoods failed to spot the murderer or his deed. The nefarious stroke had been driven home before the light-blinded eye of The Shadow!

CHAPTER III. MEMBER 13

GROPING men in green had reached panels along the wall, though none had arrived at The Shadow's passage. It was plain that once they gained outlet, the Green Hoods would stampede. If any waited longer, they would eventually join the rush, once they saw the murdered form of Member 1.

His eye attracted by the motion along the walls, The Shadow saw panels sliding under pressing hands. It struck him instantly that those were the first exits to open. With that thought came a more important conclusion.

The murderer, himself a member of the Green Hoods, was still in the square-walled meeting room!

Whatever the motives of the Green Hoods, death had been dealt among them through an act of treachery. The killer was a criminal who deserved full vengeance. The Shadow's task was to single the murderer from the rest of the green-hooded band.

The killer had certainly avoided the dazzle of the lights. He had placed the bulbs beforehand; had pressed the light switch to produce the flash. He had needed only to keep his eyes tight shut. Proof that he had done so was apparent from the quick skill with which he had dealt the knife thrust.

Quickly, The Shadow looked for a Green Hood who was showing no signs of temporary blindness. Such a man would be the murderer. Oddly, no such member appeared among the rest.

A crafty game was being played by the killer. Not knowing of The Shadow's presence, the murderer was calmly biding his time, letting others grope their way ahead of him. He was playing it safe, in case any of the other Green Hoods happened to catch a fleeting glimpse of him.

Within a half minute, the assassin would be gone, along with a blundering throng. There was only one way in which The Shadow could force the issue; that was to make the killer reveal himself. It could be done, and The Shadow knew the system.

With his left hand, The Shadow slid back the panel, sprang into the squarish room. As he came, he loomed his automatic for the largest cluster of Green Hoods. From The Shadow's lips came a shivering laugh that brooked of accusation.

It was a challenge to the murderer. The chilling tone seemed to carry the announcement that The Shadow had picked the man he wanted.

Member 13 had joined the meeting of the Green Hoods. Only one man –the killer could see him; but the others heard the sinister mirth. They took it as the menace that they all expected.

The result was a double effect.

ONE Green Hood whipped about from a far panel; he yanked an old-fashioned pistol into view. The others forgot the exit; they sidled along the walls, crouching, with hands shielding their eyes, trying vainly to spy the intruder who had issued the laugh.

The Shadow had not only found the murderous member of the green-clad band; he had cleared a path for battle with that killer.

In turn, the Green Hood recognized The Shadow as an outside menace, more formidable than any of the usual

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members present. He was versed in ways of crime, that killer, for he promptly identified The Shadow as the being who was dreaded by all the underworld. That was why the Green Hood handled his gun with whippet speed, hoping to beat The Shadow to the shot.

That effort failed. The Shadow's automatic thundered its echoes through the cramped space of the meeting room while the murderer was still trying to tug the trigger of his ancient shooting iron.

As always, when there was room for it, The Shadow faded as he fired. His fisted gun was like the fulcrum of a lever: constant in its aim, while his tall shape shifted. That measure was seemingly unnecessary on this occasion, for The Shadow's shot, directed for the killer's gun arm, was far in advance of the Green Hood's action.

Oddly, the green-clad murderer did not falter.

Instead, he blasted bullets toward The Shadow. Those fading tactics were useful after all. Slugs were whining past The Shadow's ears, while he stabbed shots in return.

Not one of four bullets clipped the murderer.

The Shadow's accuracy had left him, even at this close range. The reason was the aftermath of that blinding light. Though his right eye had its usual vision, The Shadow had lost proper sense of distance and perspective from the strain that his left optic had suffered.

Green Hoods, flattened on the floor, their heads buried, ostrich-fashion, in their arms, were clear of the barrage. That didn't help The Shadow. If this cross fire kept up, he not the murderer –would be the one to fall.

So far, The Shadow's shifting tactics, plus the belated aim of the killer, were the saving factors. Once The Shadow reached the side wall, that would be ended. The Green Hood was waiting, half through his open panel, ready to drop The Shadow when the latter was forced to reverse his course.

The Shadow took a sudden, desperate measure.

Ending his fade, he lunged straight for the lingering killer; driving in, he aimed as he came. With amazing, lengthy strides, he cut, down the distance. His finger was ready on its gun trigger, to begin a new duel at such close range that the shot could not fail.

The Green Hood had a momentary opportunity to insert a sure shot of his own. He took it; but it didn't have the certainty that he expected. The Shadow's sudden movement had brought a spontaneous backward spring from the killer. He was recoiling as he fired. His gun was pointed a trifle high; the quick snap he gave the trigger jolted it still higher.

Two shots rang out together.

The Shadow's bullet zipped the edge of the half-shut panel, was deflected away from the green figure just beyond. The slug from the old-fashioned revolving pistol took a slice from the slouch hat brim just above The Shadow's ear.

NEITHER shot had sufficed. The murderer was in flight. The Shadow was whipping aside the panel, to take up the pursuit.

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The chase led through a twisty, stone-walled burrow. The cellar of the old theater was more honeycombed than The Shadow had originally supposed. At every turn, the killer was just far enough ahead to be out of range. At last, he clattered up a spiral stairway on the far side of the building.

That was his one chance to drop flight and take up battle. The murderer didn't take it. When The Shadow reached the head of the staircase, a door was swinging shut to mark the Green Hood's departure into the outside air.

His hand on the staircase rail, The Shadow was ready for a long lunge, to cover the distance to the door. A slight motion halted him. He dropped back, letting his body slide down the steps. The door swung open; the glare of flashlights spotted The Shadow. With the beams came shouts; new guns began to rip.

The Green Hood had kept a gun crew waiting outside. He had given them the order to finish The Shadow.

If the thugs had withheld their inrush, they might have bagged The Shadow. Overzeal defeated them. He was sliding away, downward, when their revolvers barked.

Before they could drop their aim, The Shadow was below the level of the top step. His hand withdrew a fresh automatic. Jutting upward, that gun talked from the very floor.

Rowdies withered. Flashlights shattered, were flung aside. As sprawling figures writhed grotesquely toward The Shadow, others of the gun crew dived out through the door. Mockery followed them. The Shadow's taunting laugh promised another welcoming barrage if they returned.

All that came back were the sounds of a hurried scurrying through an alleyway.

It was too late to follow the killer. The gun crew had at least blocked off The Shadow from his trail. The Shadow made another choice; one that he had dropped only because there had been a chance for pursuit.

Swinging down the spiral staircase, he followed a passage back to the meeting room.

On the way, he passed stumbling members of the Green Hoods, but he avoided them in the gloom. When he reached the meeting room, he saw a few others, the last who were leaving by different exits.

They were regaining their vision; The Shadow could tell that by the improvement of his own left eye. They were welcome to leave if they wanted. The Shadow had other business.

He stopped beside the outsprawled body of Member I.

THE SHADOW had never seen that bearded face before tonight. He wanted to know the dead man's identity. Guns cloaked, The Shadow opened the front of the victim's blood-dyed robe. He saw a dark suit underneath. An inside pocket bulged with a large wallet.

In the wallet, The Shadow found identification cards, one with the dead man's photograph. The man's name was Smedley Breer; a card gave him the title of professor. That was a link; The Shadow had heard of Professor Breer.

Recognized as an inventor, Breer had attained only spotty success, because he seldom carried ideas to their completion. He had gained a fortune, however, through the development of a tear gas that was very effective, but milder in its after-results than those gases commonly used. Breer had retired after that; little had been heard regarding him since.

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There were scrawled papers in the wallet, obviously in Breer's own writing. They were of little importance; but there was one loose sheet that fell to the table. The Shadow opened it. The folded paper was a telephone memorandum with the name of the Hotel Triton printed at its head.

It was stamped with today's date. It was a memo addressed to Professor Smedley Breer. Its terse message read:

Call HYacinth 6-9234 at 8:30 p. m. sharp.

From the folded slip fell a tiny bit of red paper. The Shadow examined it. The paper was a cigar band, of a sort that he had never seen before. Instead of a name, it bore a monogram, composed of the initials "TMS".

On the back of the cigar band was a scrawling, but finely marked, notation in Breer's own handwriting. It evidently referred to the cigar band, for the words stated:

Must investigate this.

Folding the cigar band in the telephone memo, The Shadow took those two items as his only trophies. Once he had put them away, he began to place all other objects into the professor's wallet, to stow the latter in Breer's pocket.

The one pause came when The Shadow held the card that bore Breer's photograph. There was one item on that card that The Shadow required; that was the address where the professor lived.

The Shadow noted it; silently, swiftly, he returned the wallet to the dead man's pocket and took the nearest exit that led from the deserted room.

To a man, the Green Hoods had vanished when The Shadow reached the alleyway by which he had first entered.

If sounds of gunfire had attracted the police, they were coming to the opposite side of the building, where The Shadow had dispersed the thugs. The alleyway on that other side led to a different street.

This thoroughfare was silent. The Shadow could see the tail-lights of Moe's cab twinkling from the obscure parking space. The cabby had returned from his trip, to await The Shadow.

That fact brought a whispered laugh from hidden lips. The mirth was significant, for it linked with something that The Shadow had just learned.

The address named on the card in Breer's wallet was the very one that the mysterious brunette had given when she had departed as a passenger in The Shadow's cab!

CHAPTER IV. MURDERER'S GOAL

PROFESSOR BREER'S residence was an old-fashioned house in a row of melancholy houses that lined an almost-forgotten side street. As The Shadow viewed it from the cab window, he found the house to be the very sort that he expected.

It was brick, but faced with a shabby brownstone front. The basement was just below the street level, fronted by a rusted iron fence. The place looked as forgotten as the street itself; an excellent location for an inventor to conduct experiments in seclusion.

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The Shadow ordered Moe to circle the block. From the rear street, the cloaked observer was given a chance view that suited him. Between two rear buildings, he saw the back and side of Breer's second floor. Its windows were heavily shuttered.

That marked the location of the laboratory where the professor kept the device called the Truth Inducer.

The cab was nearing the front again. It slackened at The Shadow's command. Away from the fringe of a street lamp, a black shape alighted, blended itself with the darkness near the picket fence.

An iron gate moved in ghostlike fashion. Its rusted hinges failed to groan under the expert pressure. Passing through, The Shadow reached a doorway to the basement, almost beneath the high brownstone steps that led up to the main door of the house.

Under The Shadow's persuasion, the lower door yielded. Soon, a flashlight was blinking its way through the dingy rooms of the empty basement. From there, The Shadow followed a steep flight of steps up to the first floor. He picked the lock of another door, made his way into a narrow hall.

One noteworthy feature of Breer's home was its total darkness. In a sense, that was odd; for Moe had brought a passenger here, not long before. The cabby had reported that the girl had turned on lights after entering the house.

There was the possibility that the girl had gone out again; but it was also likely that she had retired, even though the hour was fairly early. In the latter event, she would not yet be asleep. Should she be as worried as when The Shadow had previously seen her, she would be in the right mood to hear any noise made by a prowler.

The Shadow preserved a total silence as he moved about the first floor. He passed through a small dining room, furnished in antique style; after that, he entered a stuffy parlor with furniture that dated back to the nineteenth century.

The dining room had windows at the back; the parlor, at the front. The side walls of both rooms banked against the house next door. When he reached the hallway again, The Shadow observed side windows. They indicated a small courtyard on that side of the house.

There were stairs to the second floor. The Shadow ascended them, keeping his flashlight blinking close to the carpeted steps. On the second floor, he found doorways along the hall. All were closed; so was the door of the rear room at the end.

Reaching that objective, The Shadow expected to find the door locked. Instead, it opened almost at his touch.

THE SHADOW entered a paneled room reminiscent of the meeting place where he had watched the Green Hoods.

Correctly, The Shadow concluded that Professor Breer, as Member 1, had designed the meeting room of the Green Hoods. He had arranged the paneled walls in the same fashion as this room in his own house. It followed that this room, like the meeting place, had a secret opening in the wall.

Glimmering his flashlight toward the wall on the courtyard side, The Shadow saw a single, shuttered window.

From outside, he had observed two windows in that same wall; two more at the rear. This room, equipped

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like an office, was only half a room. The rest of it lay behind the back panel. In all probability, the space beyond was Breer's private laboratory.

Carefully, The Shadow began to probe the panels, searching for the secret opening. The center one was solid. Breer, crafty in method, had evidently placed the sliding door near a corner of the back wall.

The Shadow moved to the left. His fingers, tapping with nearly soundless thuds, could sense the hollow effect of the panel. This was where the opening lay.

To find the catch, was the next step. The Shadow was moving his gloved fingers upward, when he became conscious of a slight puff of air. It seemed to come along the wall; but that was a mere caprice of the breeze. The last glimmer of the flashlight showed the rear wall solid, the side window tightly shuttered.

The air current could have come from one place only. Someone had opened the very door by which The Shadow had entered from the hall.

Instantly, The Shadow thought of Breer's murderer.

There was a chance that the killer had recognized the bearded dead man, after pulling away Breer's green hood. That had seemed plausible, but somewhat remote. Certainly, The Shadow had given the assassin no time to look for Breer's identification cards.

In any event, The Shadow had made a speedy trip to these premises and should have arrived first, if this happened to be the killer's destination. Therefore, the silent swing of the door, noticeable only by the wave of air, was indication that the murderer could have recognized Breer and come here also.

Had the new entrant caught the last blink of The Shadow's light? That was a question that needed a prompt answer not by words, but by a move.

Stealthily, The Shadow shifted away from his corner. Neatly avoiding a table and two chairs that he remembered, he regained the front wall, beside the door. There was a light switch on the other side; a reach across it, The Shadow could flood the little office with a glow.

The door, The Shadow noted, was closed. If the other person had actually entered, he had shifted away with a stealth that rivaled The Shadow's own. Perhaps the lurker had also picked the light switch as an objective.

To check on that, The Shadow started an inward circuit. He intended to pass close beside a desk against the blank wall of the room, then approach the light switch from the reverse direction. Brief seconds were all that The Shadow required for that neat move.

The needed time was denied him.

Half finished with his maneuver, The Shadow was facing in the door's direction when lights suddenly filled the room. He was caught in the open, bathed in the glow of three floor lamps. The nearest was beside the desk, almost at The Shadow's elbow.

No click of the switch; no person at the door itself. Before The Shadow could spot the person who had tricked him, a firm contralto voice ordered him to raise his hands.

The voice came from behind the desk. The Shadow hesitated only momentarily, then let his half-drawn .45 slip back beneath his cloak. He turned toward the desk, raising his hands to his shoulders. He was face to face

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with the brunette who had boarded the cab outside the Landham Theater.

THE girl was dressed as The Shadow had first seen her, except for the cape. The collar of her dress was low, her neck showed smooth, with the whiteness of ivory. Her face, too, had that pallor; but, gradually, color returned.

The steadiness of the girl's brown eyes, the firmness of her lips, proved that she was confident that she controlled the situation. She had reason for that surety. In her steady hand the girl held a .32 revolver, its muzzle aimed squarely for The Shadow's heart.

Her gaze unflinching, the girl moved from behind the desk, never changing her line of aim. She placed herself between The Shadow and the outer door. Then, in modulated tone:

"You are The Shadow?"

The Shadow gave no reply. The girl could see his burning eyes; she took their gaze as an admission of his identity.

"Professor Breer has spoken of you," declared the girl. "I do not believe that he regards you as an enemy. It is best, however, that I hold you here until he returns. I am his secretary; my name is Evelyn Rayle."

The girl did not know of Breer's murder. Mentally, The Shadow debated whether it would be wise to inform her of that event. While he was considering the possible consequences of such a statement, the girl added:

"While we wait, you can tell me of your purpose here."

Again, The Shadow maintained silence. There was a sparkle of anger in Evelyn's eyes.

"At least," snapped the girl, "you can inform me how you entered; what you have done while you have been here!"

The Shadow's eyes roved the room. He saw how Evelyn had so suddenly produced the lights. The girl had plugged in a floor socket beside the desk; its triple connection went to all three lamps. The Shadow's gaze came back to Evelyn. The girl's hand was tightening on its gun.

Evelyn was tense again; therefore, dangerous.

"I shall answer your question," spoke The Shadow in a deep tone, a pitch above a whisper. "I entered the front door of the basement. I came directly here. I have been in this room" his eyes went to a clock on Breer's desk "precisely four minutes.

"In that time" The Shadow's tone carried a trace of ironic mirth – "I have done no more than acquaint myself with these surroundings. As to my purpose here "

The Shadow paused. He was about to tell Evelyn that he was a friend; if necessary, he was willing to throw back his hat and cloak collar, to reveal himself in his pretended guise of Cranston. But the flash of Evelyn's eyes ended that. So did the thrust that she gave the revolver. Urged by sudden antagonism, the girl wanted that weapon closer to The Shadow's heart.

"You have lied!" Evelyn's tone was cold, biting. "That proves that you are an enemy. Something has happened to Professor Breer, and you are responsible!"

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"You have not deceived me. I heard you enter fully ten minutes ago –and you came by the back door, instead of the basement. You have been in this room longer than you stated. You may have learned much more than you are supposed to know.

"Unless you tell everything, I shall take prompt action. What that may be, circumstances will tell. I am loyal to Professor Breer. I hold you responsible for his safety!"

EVELYN'S words were dramatic; they carried a real menace. The girl meant what she said; but to The Shadow, her final words were almost a blank. An earlier statement of hers had swung his thoughts to another channel.

Evelyn Rayle had heard someone enter this house ten minutes ago, by the back door. That meant that another intruder had preceded The Shadow.

Someone not stealthy enough to have reached here unheard, as The Shadow had. But a person crafty enough to have solved the secret of the hidden paneling, particularly because he, like The Shadow, had also been at the meeting of the Green Hoods.

That intruder was Breer's murderer. He had recognized the dead professor. He had made a speedy trip here, rapid enough to reach the goal before The Shadow. The murderer's own lack of stealth should have placed him in a predicament, since Evelyn had overheard him. Instead, it had been a stroke of luck for the killer.

The girl was threatening her real ally, The Shadow. Meanwhile, her actual enemy Breer's murderer was beyond the rear wall, in sole possession of the dead professor's laboratory.

A murderer had reached his goal. The Shadow, here to trap that killer, was powerless to move!

CHAPTER V. BALKED BATTLE

TRUTH couldn't help The Shadow's dilemma. The facts that he had already admitted had produced his present predicament. If he told Evelyn that another intruder had entered before him, the girl would not believe it. If he retraced the story, he would strike a snag the moment that he mentioned Breer's death.

If The Shadow related episodes from the beginning, Evelyn might listen. She would doubt the coincidences, however, as he came to them. The fact that he had been chosen as Member 13; that he had looked into the meeting unobserved, were like a build-up to some fantastic tale.

That narrative, too, would lead to the account of Breer's death. The same obstacle was present.

Whatever The Shadow said, no matter how sincerely he stated his own case, precious minutes would be lost. At any moment, the murderer might come from that inner room. Opening the panel, he would see the glow of the office. From the laboratory, he could deliver new death, to both The Shadow and Evelyn.

It was that prospect that forced The Shadow's course.

He could stall Evelyn; but the upshot would be another duel with the Green Hood who had murdered Breer. When that test came, The Shadow would have to whip out an automatic, to shoot for the opened panel.

If Evelyn knew of the Green Hoods and The Shadow believed that she did the girl would be doubly convinced that The Shadow was her enemy, for she would take the green-clad murderer as a friend.

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The Shadow would have two sharpshooters to contend against, not one. Moreover, he wouldn't fire shots at Evelyn, even if he could have the chance. The girl's ignorance of the true conditions did not make her an enemy.

It was better to make a gunless thrust; to deal with Evelyn, even at risk of his own life. After all, the chances would be less against The Shadow.

Still, they were bad.

This plight was the sort that had taxed The Shadow most severely in the past. He preferred to face a horde of crooks, to one person who was governed by erroneous belief of a righteous cause. Nerve, stamina, inspiration all went with justice. The Shadow knew that well, for it was what he represented.

Crooks could quail, as the green-hooded murderer had tonight, under sudden pressure from a just fighter. Evelyn Rayle would not falter in a pinch. She thought herself right, The Shadow wrong.

No ordinary ruse could distract Evelyn's attention. Boldly, the Shadow decided on something that might help in part.

THE SHADOW spoke; his tone had changed entirely. It was the calm, deliberate speech of Cranston.

"Probably you recognize my voice" The Shadow's gaze eased as he talked "for you have heard it over the telephone, when I talked with Professor Breer."

Evelyn showed interest. As Breer's secretary, she had actually spoken to persons who had financed the professor's past inventions. She had never heard Cranston's tone before, but its mildness made her think she might have.

"You may even have seen me" The Shadow was hazarding much on the next statement "on the evening when I dined with Professor Breer. I think that you were leaving, just when I arrived outside the Hotel Triton." There was a slight fade of the suspicion in Evelyn's eyes. The Shadow's surmise was correct; Professor Breer had dined often at the Triton. The Shadow had based that assumption on the memorandum that he had taken from Breer's body.

Evelyn was peering closely, trying to see the features beneath the hat brim. With an easy upward motion of his hands, The Shadow forced the slouch hat back, let his cloak collar drop. Evelyn saw Cranston's features; their calmness impressed her, even though she did not recognize the masklike face.

It was the moment for a speedy move.

The Shadow tilted his head toward the lamp beside the desk, that Evelyn might see his face more clearly. His hands were easing downward lazily. His shoulders edged away, drawing his body almost from the path of Evelyn's gun.

Then, before the girl's finger could snap the gun trigger. The Shadow gave a lunge for the desk itself. His left hand hit the edge, just as Evelyn fired. That first bullet was inches wide of The Shadow's right shoulder.

There was another shot coming. Evelyn took a quick step, half backward, half sideward, to reach a new position. She jabbed her revolver straight toward the desk. The gun tongued again, but The Shadow wasn't where it aimed.

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He had taken a rebound from the desk a long, low, sprawly move, below the level of Evelyn's quick fire. His lunge wasn't for the outer door; it was toward the rear wall. Evelyn saw his streaky, flinging dive; she whirled, to shoot again.

There was more to that fading lunge than Evelyn expected. Turning his sprawl into a slide, The Shadow hooked the girl's ankles with one projecting foot. That speedy leg swing flipped her from the floor, just as she was giving the trigger its third pull. The shot went high; the bullet embedded itself in the rear wall, almost at the ceiling.

Three quick shots in as many seconds. One second more, The Shadow was snatching the revolver from Evelyn's loosened fist. He was whipping out an automatic with his other hand; not to hold Evelyn at bay, but to meet an adversary whom he expected at an instant's notice.

Evelyn's shots were an alarm that the murderer beyond the secret panel must have surely heard.

THE SHADOW had not forgotten the girl. He didn't want her in the fray. To prevent the chance that she would enter, or get mixed in, the coming battle, The Shadow took a long spring clear across the office. He shouldered the wall beyond the corner where he had tapped the panel. A dozen feet away from Evelyn, The Shadow swung about.

With his twist, his ears heard the opening slither of the panel. As his gun came around. The Shadow's eyes saw the very man he expected: the green-hooded murderer, on the threshold of Breer's lighted laboratory.

The killer had yanked the panel open before The Shadow had a true aim; but in his turn, the Green Hood was at loss. He had heard the shots; he was looking for their source. He did not see The Shadow until the black-cloaked fighter spied him.

If the Green Hood had depended on any gun his antique pistol or a modern revolver he would have lost the duel. The chances were equal at that moment; and The Shadow had previously demonstrated his superior speed. The best that the killer could have done was to wound The Shadow.

It happened that the Green Hood had another sort of weapon; one that could cover a much larger field than The Shadow's automatic. He was holding a light cylinder, which had a lever at the side, a nozzle in the end. He did not have to aim it; his shift away from The Shadow did the trick.

As his left hand gripped the cylinder, the Green Hood snapped the lever with his right. The puff of vapor from the nozzle was a wide-ranged blast that reached The Shadow's face. Pungent fumes filled the room. Under that spray, The Shadow sagged, his gun unfired.

A stagger to the wall; The Shadow rallied. But the effects of the gas made the whole scene nightmarish. He was pumping bullets from his automatic. The Green Hood was ignoring them. The gas had the odor of ether; but it was a different type of anesthetic.

It had The Shadow reeling, groggy. He thought he was aiming at his opponent; but he wasn't. His bullets plowed the ceiling and the floor, but not the wall.

The Green Hood was snatching up a bulging valise. Evelyn recognized that bag, as she did the spray gun. She knew from the robed man's manner that he was not Professor Breer. Evelyn gave an agonized shriek: a recognition of her error.

The Shadow understood it, despite his staggery condition. With a side sweep, he flung Evelyn's revolver

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across the room.

That toss was meant for the girl; but The Shadow's throw was as bad as his aim. The gun hit beyond the desk; Evelyn had to scramble after it. By the time she had the weapon, the Green Hood was out through the hall, carrying the vaporizing cylinder and the valise.

Evelyn followed. The Shadow reeled after her. He didn't reach the top of the stairs until the girl had hurried to the bottom, firing after the Green Hood as she ran. From above, the whole scene whirling before his eyes, The Shadow saw Evelyn aim point-blank. She pulled the trigger, but the revolver was empty.

IN from the rear hall sprang a trio of thugs. They had guns; they were aiming to kill. Only The Shadow's action prevented it.

He jabbed his last shots down the stairs; the bullets went into the steps, but they made the crooks look upward. Seeing The Shadow, the gunmen opened fire.

Amid the whirl, The Shadow saw the Green Hood turn the cylindrical spray toward Evelyn. There was a puff of vapor; the girl collapsed. The murderer gathered her up, to drag her away helpless.

The Shadow was staggering back along the upper hall. He had been lucky to escape the hasty shots that the thugs had sent in his direction. He was shoving away his emptied automatic, striving to produce a fresh weapon that he couldn't seem to find.

He was hoping, through sheer nerve, to overcome the persistent grogginess that had seized him. He found the gun, tried to steady himself in the hallway.

The mobsters were at the head of the stairs. The Shadow shifted; his shoulder struck the door of a room that must have been Evelyn's. The door was ajar; it gave as The Shadow reeled. The cloaked battler pitched across the floor, to land beside an opened window.

Whether he had regained a temporary grip upon himself, or merely had good luck with his aim, The Shadow at least found the direction of the doorway when thugs arrived there. His wangling finger sent jerky shots.

One hoodlum howled as he took a flesh wound; the others heard the challenging laugh that The Shadow quavered. Though its tone was oddly off pitch, it carried a defiance that crooks knew.

The gunners fled. The Shadow rose beside the window, deceived by his own efforts. He thought he had recuperated; that he could rescue Evelyn. Instead, he toppled backward. His body doubled through the open window. He plunged outward.

WITH one hand, The Shadow clawed for a hold. He hooked the top of a ground-floor window frame, tightened his fingers in a maddened clutch that slipped a moment later.

That grab broke The Shadow's fall. He was uninjured when he sprawled onto the stony courtyard. The motionless state that took possession of him was due to the gas treatment that the Green Hood had applied.

Sheer exertion had kept The Shadow on the move; but he had collapsed at last. Thugs had followed the path that the Green Hood had taken through the rear of Breer's house. The professor's murderer was clear, with Evelyn Rayle his prisoner.

Strange silence lulled around the old house. From distant blocks came sirens. Gunfire had been reported;

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police were heading for the place where The Shadow's battle had been barked. The Shadow did not hear those far-off wails. He was lying in a state of total oblivion.

Police cars were entering the front street when flashlights glimmered suddenly in the stone space where The Shadow lay. Hurriedly, two men gathered up the cloaked fighter, carried him to the rear street where a taxi waited, its lights dimmed.

Moe Shrevnitz was the driver of that cab. He had spotted the approach of the Green Hood's thugs. Moe had put in a quick call to Burbank, the contact man who could reach The Shadow's active agents. Those aids had arrived before the law.

Crime held a temporary triumph; but The Shadow's cause could be renewed. Soon, the cloaked avenger would resume his efforts to pierce the mystery that still enshrouded the affairs of the Green Hoods.

One member of that band Breer's murderer and Evelyn's captor – would hear from The Shadow later.

CHAPTER VI. NEWS FOR THE SHADOW

IT was noon the next day when The Shadow awakened. With his return to consciousness, he sensed the comfort of quiet surroundings. That was sufficient to lull him into another drowse, that lasted intermittently for nearly two hours.

The sound that roused him finally was the opening of a door. Rising upon one elbow, The Shadow stared, half blankly, at a serious-faced man who had the manner of a physician. It was not until the entrant smiled that The Shadow recognized him.

The man was Doctor Rupert Sayre, who had long been The Shadow's emergency physician. Sayre knew The Shadow as Lamont Cranston; hence, his smile was the one that he usually gave his most important patients. It broke the clouds that still had The Shadow befuddled.

Slowly, The Shadow recognized his surroundings as part of Sayre's suite of offices. With an effort, he traced back to the events that had brought him to the place. Once that chain was begun, last night's episodes stood out with vivid reality.

This was one of the rare occasions when Doctor Sayre could read changes of expression on Cranston's face. He recognized that his patient had fully recovered from his dazed condition, which Sayre had correctly diagnosed as the effects of gas. Raising a window shade, the physician produced some newspapers, with the comment:

"These will interest you, Mr. Cranston."

They did interest The Shadow.

There, in bold type, were facts that concerned the Green Hoods. The society was revealed as a group of amateur criminologists, whose purpose had been to help the law by exchanging new inventions in crime detection among themselves.

Professor Smedley Breer was revealed as founder of the organization. That news had come from members of the Green Hoods. Since last night, the scattered members of the band had been flocking to the law.

As yet, their names had not been made public. That meant little to The Shadow for the present. He was

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looking for mention of a person who did not belong to the Green Hoods.

He found the name he wanted. An expression of relief registered itself on his usually immobile face.

An early edition of one of the evening newspapers had a last-minute story stating that Evelyn Rayle had been found. Police had been looking for the girl who served as secretary to Professor Breer. She had been discovered at a small hotel, in a dazed condition. So far, she had been unable to make a statement regarding her whereabouts the night before.

Sayre saw a sudden steadiness come over Cranston. A slight smile came to the placid lips. Then, the quiet statement:

"Summon a cab, doctor."

Sayre began a protest. Cranston was obdurate. His insistence finally convinced Sayre that he was well enough to leave. The doctor went to the outside office to call the cab.

As soon as Sayre was gone, The Shadow busied himself before a mirror. He stripped off the Cranston disguise, wiped away all traces of make-up. He was again Kent Allard, when he walked out through the little passage beside Sayre's office.

The physician saw him pass and hurried after him. He was too late to overtake his departing patient. The cab had arrived out front; all that Sayre saw were head and shoulders that he took for Cranston's, when The Shadow stepped aboard the cab.

Less than half an hour later, Kent Allard was conducted into the office of Police Commissioner Weston.

THERE was an expectant smile on Weston's face when he advanced to shake hands. Allard saw the reason immediately. Seated beside the commissioner's desk was a frail, bespectacled man whose face was pale and troubled.

That visitor was Robert Leng, picked by The Shadow as the man who had sent him the invitation to join the Green Hoods.

With Leng was another visitor, a middle-aged man of about average height. He was less nervous than Leng, but that was logical, for he was of stronger mold. Allard observed a square-chinned face, characterized by mild, grayish eyes, and lips that had a weary but friendly smile.

This visitor looked intelligent; he had a natural dignity, that gained added effectiveness from his gray-streaked hair. Commissioner Weston introduced the man as Lionel Atherland.

The name was known to The Shadow. Atherland had gained a reputation as a lecturer on social conditions. He had made a survey of conditions that existed in State penitentiaries. His discourses on that subject were thorough, so far as they went. But Atherland had merely attempted to educate the general public on crime conditions.

The police commissioner came abruptly to the subject that The Shadow expected.

"I've been hoping to hear from you, Allard," said Weston. "Leng tells me that he sent you an invitation to join the Green Hoods as Member 13. Did you receive it?"

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"I did." Coolly, Allard drew the paper from his pocket. "This came with it."

He added the jade amulet. Then, "Unfortunately or should I say fortunately? I am seldom in New York at night. Two evenings ago, commissioner, I was at the Cobalt Club. You may remember that I told you that I had postponed an intended airplane flight "

"In order to be there!" broke in Weston. "That's so, Allard. So you took the flight last night. That explains why you didn't get the letter until today!"

No smile showed on Allard's thin lips. He had simply let Weston form his own conclusion. Inwardly, The Shadow was pleased, for two reasons. First, that in his guise of Allard he was always mentioning proposed night flights. Second, that his Xınca servants never knew anything about their master's affairs, no matter who questioned them.

Both Leng and Atherland had taken the explanation without question. To keep it established, Allard smoothly changed the subject, by remarking to Weston:

"Tell me about the Green Hoods. The matter intrigues me, commissioner."

WESTON gave the details, Professor Breer was the organizer. As Member 1, he had invited in a friend to be Member 2. Breer had done that without disclosing his identity; and he had given Member 2 the sole privilege of introducing Member 3. The chain had continued in that fashion.

"We have traced to Member 8," asserted the commissioner, "but there we have struck a snag. Member 8 states that he invited a man named Junius Purling to become Member 9. It is a certainty that Purling became a member; but he has not presented himself. Nor have we been able to locate him."

Allard's eyebrows raised. Weston explained that Purling was the traveling representative of a safe manufacturer. He had been asked to join the Green Hoods because of his knowledge of strong-boxes. Not long ago, Purling had moved to a new apartment; but no one seemed to know the address.

"Inspector Cardona is checking on the case," declared Weston, in a confident tone. "I believe that he will have traces of Junius Purling within the next few hours."

Allard's eyes turned toward Leng. He made the move purposely, for Weston's benefit. The commissioner caught what was in his friend's mind.

"Since Leng was Member 12," nodded Weston, "you are wondering how we learned of him after the chain broke at Number 9. The answer is a simple one, Allard. Leng presented himself voluntarily. He told us that he was Member 12, but he didn't know who had invited him into the organization "

"Until I also presented myself." The interruption came from Lionel Atherland. "I was Member 11."

"You see," said Weston to Allard, "we are tracing backward as well as forward."

An approving nod came from Allard, followed by the question:

"And Member 10?"

"We haven't found Member 10," admitted Weston. "He was the man who sent an invitation to Atherland." Weston reached for a sheet of paper. "Here it is, because Atherland kept it. But he has no idea who sent it."

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The invitation was in green carbon, like the one that Leng had later sent to Allard. It had been typed on an old-fashioned machine, for the lettering was blocky and irregular. That, however, was a very slender clue even for The Shadow.

"We must find Junius Purling," insisted Weston. "Since he is Member 9, he can lead us to Member 10. Those two are vital links: Purling and his unknown friend. Some one in the Green Hoods" Weston wagged a finger "played traitor last night. He committed murder with this weapon!"

DRAMATICALLY, Weston brought a jewel-handled knife from his desk drawer, laid it on the woodwork in front of Allard's eyes. For the second time, The Shadow was viewing the gem-studded blade that had been responsible for death.

This time, however, the whole knife was in view. Its long, thin blade showed it to be a stiletto; though the stones in the handle were merely semiprecious gems, the workmanship of the silver setting was excellent.

The Shadow recognized that the knife had value as a curio. He was judging its age, when Weston supplied more information.

"A Borgia stiletto," stated the commissioner. "Probably stolen from some collection. Here is another odd thing, Allard." Weston fished in the desk drawer, to find a bullet that he held in his palm. "Some of these were found in the meeting room. Have you ever seen a bullet like this?"

The Shadow had, but did not say so. He remarked, after thoughtful inspection, that the bullet appeared to be of unusual caliber.

"It should be," affirmed Weston. "It was fired from a Baby Paterson—a revolving pistol, invented nearly one hundred years ago. It is .28 caliber; like this stiletto, a gun of that sort is a curio."

The telephone bell rang just as Weston's statement ended. The commissioner answered the call; when he had finished, he told the visitors:

"It's about that girl, Evelyn Rayle, who worked for Professor Breer. She's out of her coma, but she can't remember anything. I wanted to quiz her as soon as possible, but" the commissioner shook his head "the physician thinks she should rest at least three hours longer. Maybe Cardona will have a tracer on Purling by that time. Then we can go up to the girl's hotel and talk to her."

Kent Allard had risen. He remarked quietly that he would leave his green-carbon note with the commissioner. Weston seemed annoyed by Allard's departure.

"I had more to tell you, Allard! About the Truth Inducer invented by Professor Breer! Can't you wait a short while longer?"

"Sorry, commissioner," replied Allard. "I have an appointment. In a few hours, though, I shall be back at my apartment."

"Very well. Call me after you return there."

IN a taxicab, Kent Allard performed a move that would have intrigued Commissioner Weston, as well as Robert Leng and Lionel Atherland. From a pocket, he brought the cigar band with its initials "TMS"; also the telephone memo from the Hotel Triton.

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Those clues The Shadow's own had some connection with the odd weapons that a murderous Green Hood had used at last night's meeting. The links to the Borgia stiletto and the Baby Paterson pistol were factors that The Shadow intended to learn.

He also wanted facts concerning Professor Smedley Breer and the dead inventor's Truth Inducer. But, like the facts of last night's murder, The Shadow intended to obtain them firsthand.

That was why he had left Weston's office. Allard's appointment was one that he had arranged on a moment's notice. He intended to keep it –not as himself, but as The Shadow.

Within the next few hours, The Shadow would visit Evelyn Rayle. There, in guise of black, he could restore the girl's latent memory of last night's events. Like The Shadow, Evelyn had suffered from the potent gas. The Shadow's own experience showed that one link with the past would produce full recollections.

The Shadow, himself, was the link that would make Evelyn remember last night's events, along with others that had occurred before.

CHAPTER VII. DEATH'S TRAIL

THE gloom of the hotel room lulled Evelyn Rayle. Propped in a big chair, she gazed idly toward the shaded window. From past the edges of the window blind came odd flickers that had taken her a long while to understand.

Dimly, Evelyn realized that daylight had faded; that the changing light must be due to an electric sign somewhere outside the hotel. Her eyes were not to blame for the changing light. She could see a glow from a hallway transom, and it remained constant.

Outside the hallway door was the perpetual beat of footsteps, that ceased only when the patroller paused to listen. The pacing didn't bother Evelyn. She realized that she was being guarded. But why, she could not understand.

Time was drifting pleasantly. The past, like the future, seemed very far away, and blank.

The window shade stirred. Evelyn did not notice it. Her eyelids were almost closed; their long, dark lashes showed in the light from the shut glass transom. There was another eye, though, that was wide open, burning in its gaze.

That eye peered past the edge of the window shade, from outside. It was peering into this room as it had looked into the meeting of the Green Hoods, last night.

The shade rose slowly, smoothly; its crinkle was too slight for Evelyn to hear. Blackness blotted out the flickering of the electric sign. Behind that blackness, a hidden hand lowered the shade.

There was motion in the room; it stopped beside a telephone in the corner. A shape gradually arose, came into the transom light.

In the glow was shown cloaked shoulders, a slouch hat above them. There was a glimmer that reflected the glint of eyes. A gloved hand stretched forward, rested upon Evelyn's arm.

A weary sigh escaped the girl. She moved her lips, then opened her eyes. In a moment, she was staring wide.

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Before her stood a being of the past, a personage whose mere presence brought back a deluge of thoughts. From one focal point her previous meeting with The Shadow Evelyn received two chains of recollections.

Her impressions were running back to earlier events, before The Shadow had arrived at Breer's old house. They were jumping on beyond that time, to her experiences after the lone Green Hood had bobbed from Breer's laboratory to take her prisoner.

"Professor Breer is dead," spoke The Shadow, in a solemn whisper. "His death must be avenged!"

Evelyn nodded. This time, she knew The Shadow as a friend.

"State all that you know," resumed The Shadow, "regarding Breer, his Truth Inducer; the Green Hoods "

THERE was something almost hypnotic in The Shadow's gaze. Evelyn kept her own eyes fixed on his. Her lips formed statements that were brief, but explicit.

"Professor Breer organized the Green Hoods," she told The Shadow. "Its purpose was good. He trusted all the members; but revealed no names to me, not even that of Member 2. He did not tell me the total number of the members.

"The same with the Truth Inducer. He told me its purpose and what it could do. But he gave no formulas, no plans. Those were to be divulged to the Green Hoods, once the apparatus worked. It did work finally, when he tested it with me."

Evelyn was reaching far into the past. She paused to connect her story. The Shadow's whisper ordered her to describe the tests that Professor Breer had performed. Soon afterward, Evelyn was giving full account.

The girl had scarcely spoken a dozen words before The Shadow understood the momentous importance of the Truth Inducer; why a superman of crime had murdered Breer to obtain sole control of it.

As Evelyn described it, Breer had taken her into the laboratory. There, with the vaporizing spray, he had filled the room lightly with an etherlike gas. That done, he had placed a small portable machine between himself and Evelyn. He had attached a clamp to Evelyn's wrist, another to his own.

All during the test, Breer had kept close watch upon a dial at the top of the machine.

"He asked me questions," stated Evelyn, "and I replied. The gas made me willing to talk as I am at present for it was mild. Professor Breer governed his questions by the hand on the dial. When it steadied, I seemed to answer his questions without effort; and my replies were always truthful."

In that brief account, Evelyn divulged the value of the Truth Inducer. As practical as many of the so-called "lie detector" devices, it had an advantage that they all lacked. The results from an apparatus like the Truth Inducer were the sort that could stand the test of a court trial.

A questioner witnesses as well could inhale the same gas as the person tested. Owned by the law, the Truth Inducer could be a threat that would shake the world of crime!

Instead, Breer's invention had been acquired by a master crook. With it, the supercriminal could protect those who served him. He could force confessions from crooks who tried to double-cross him.

By seizing rival criminals, he could make them reveal their secrets of intended crimes, or disclose their

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knowledge of where they had buried the swag from their own crooked jobs.

The Green Hood who had played his hand last night had already demonstrated his strong criminal ability. With the Truth Inducer as his property, that crafty crook had the prospect of creating an organization of his own.

That group would work for evil, instead of good; and its organizer would stand supreme!

THERE was silence while The Shadow considered the insidious developments that the future offered. Evelyn broke the pause. She had remembered more about Professor Breer.

"Last night," the girl low-toned, "I went to a corner near the Landham Theater to watch for Professor Breer. He always insisted that I be there by quarter past eight, on meeting nights, in case he needed to talk to me.

"I was a few minutes late last night. By half past eight, Professor Breer had not arrived. I worried over that; by quarter of nine, I decided that the professor might have met with trouble. I went to the theater itself.

"It was five minutes later when Professor Breer did arrive. He stepped from a cab; as he came through the darkness, I spoke to him. He told me to go back to the house and wait for him, but he gave no explanation for his delay. I took the next cab that I saw."

Evelyn was telling The Shadow much more than she realized. Her own statements proved her absolute truthfulness. The Shadow had the very explanation that Evelyn lacked: the reason for Breer's delay.

The professor had stayed at the Hotel Triton until half past eight in order to call HYacinth 6-9234; after that, it had taken him about twenty minutes to reach the Landham Theater.

Evelyn's statement about taking a cab checked with The Shadow's own observation; her story, too, proved why she had been so alert after she had returned to the house.

The Shadow's next words were a prompting suggestion, rather than a question:

"That gas the Green Hood used last night "

"Was the professor's special gas," added Evelyn. "He always warned that it would be overpowering, if used in sudden quantity. The Green Hood used the gas to put you out of combat; then, to overpower and capture me."

"And afterward "

"I must have breathed very little of the vapor" Evelyn's gaze showed recollection "because I was half awake when I was carried from a car. I remember the clank of an iron gate, then a passage between two buildings, for there was light showing from above.

"The cement must have been broken, for I heard a stumble and a crunch. After that, my carriers used a flashlight. I saw a concrete wall on one side, brick on the other. Then there was a door; after it, darkness, when I was carried down a flight of stone steps."

Evelyn paused, to picture the next details.

"We went through a dim corridor. There were doors on each side six altogether, I believe and some were open. I saw rooms that looked like cells. A door at the end a square room with no windows "

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Again, the girl's voice halted; she shuddered at memory of some ordeal. Then, in a low pitch that enabled her to steady her tone, Evelyn declared:

"The murderer was there, alone, still wearing his green hood. His men placed me in a chair; he dismissed them. I cannot remember their faces, except as I saw them at the professor's house. The Green Hood seemed to dominate my impressions afterward.

"He attached the wrist clamps; he watched the dial, as he questioned me. He asked me much about Professor Breer. I answered truthfully, though I did not want to do so. I could tell him nothing about the formulas or the apparatus, for those were the professor's own secrets.

"When he had finished, the Green Hood called his men. As I turned about, one of them shoved the vaporizer in my direction. There was another overdose of gas; it came so suddenly that I had no time to escape it. When I awoke, I was here."

From Evelyn's story, The Shadow knew that the girl had been more fortunate than she realized. Her ignorance was the reason why the Green Hood had released her. Luckily, too, the Green Hood had not guessed that Evelyn was awake enough to observe the entrance into the underground stronghold.

While Evelyn waited, The Shadow spoke.

"Tell your story to the police," he ordered, "but avoid mention of two details. First, my presence at Breer's house, except as a vague event. You can state that you thought someone was in the little office. You fired your revolver; then turned on the lights. You witnessed a struggle between the Green Hood and someone "

Evelyn was nodding. She understood.

"As for the Green Hood's stronghold," added The Shadow, "you can describe its interior, from the dim passage onward. Mention open doors; then the square room where the Green Hood awaited you "

The Shadow interrupted himself. There was a buzz from the corner. It was the telephone bell, that The Shadow had muffled with one of his gloves. The Shadow did not speak as he lifted the receiver. The click was sufficient signal for the man at the other end.

"Hello! Headquarters speaking..." The voice was actually that of Burbank, The Shadow's contact man. "A message for the police commissioner, if he is there... Inspector Cardona has located Junius Purling, Member 9 of the Green Hoods.

"Purling is dead. Murdered in his apartment, C 3, at the Lakeview Apartments. Inspector Cardona is waiting there. The telephone number is..."

The Shadow was hanging up the receiver. He plucked his glove from the telephone bell. Stepping into the transom light, he raised his ungloved left hand. Evelyn saw the strange reflections of The Shadow's girasol.

"Remember my instructions," whispered The Shadow. "You will hear from me again. This token" he turned his hand so that the fire opal gave a vivid sparkle "is my symbol of identity."

There was a swish into darkness. Evelyn caught a vague crinkle of the window curtain, the slight thud of the closing sash beyond it. The Shadow was gone.

ALONG the ground below, a black shape glided through gloom. As it shifted away, a whispered laugh

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throbbed from invisible lips. That tone was The Shadow's, but its significance did not concern the talk that he had held with Evelyn.

The Shadow was considering Burbank's call; the mystery that it produced, by bringing a new trail of death. But in the murder of Junius Purling was a rift that promised much. The Shadow had caught final words from Burbank, just before the receiver settled on its hook.

Those words were a statement of Purling's telephone number. It was HYacinth 6-9234, the very number on the hotel memorandum that The Shadow had taken from the pocket of Professor Smedley Breer!

Between the dead members 1 and 9 there lay a definite link; that connection was the murderer who had slain both. This time, the law had been the first to locate death's trail; but The Shadow would soon be on the scene.

With him, the cloaked investigator was carrying an important clue that belonged to himself alone.

CHAPTER VIII. CLUES OF GOLD

WHEN The Shadow arrived at Purling's apartment, he was again Kent Allard. Moreover, he was expected there. Commissioner Weston had called Allard's hotel suite, leaving word for him to come.

Allard was not the only outsider invited. There were five others, all members of the Green Hoods. Weston had decided that such amateur crime investigators might prove useful. Lionel Atherland was one; like others, the lecturer looked awed when he viewed Purling's body.

The dead salesman lay on a blood-dyed carpet in a corner of the apartment living room. A gaping wound showed in his shirt front. Purling had been shot; the bullet had not quite reached his heart, but he had not long survived the death shot.

That was evident from the ugliness of the wound. The bullet had entered at an angle; deflected by a rib, it had burrowed sideways, producing an effect like a dum dum bullet.

Inspector Joe Cardona was in charge. A stocky-built man, swarthy and pokerfaced, Cardona looked the ace investigator that he was. He had completed his report on the case; he was summing the details when Allard entered.

"The surgeon's examination places the time of death at eight o'clock last night," stated Cardona. "He doubts that Purling could have lived more than five minutes after the shot was fired. Therefore, the murderer slew Purling, and went to the meeting afterward. There, he murdered Professor Breer."

In placing Purling's murder upon the Green Hood who had killed Breer, Cardona produced an item of evidence. It was an odd-size cartridge that had been found near Purling's body.

"Caliber .28," declared Cardona. "Identical with ejected cartridges found at the Landham Theater. The killer used the same gun there."

Weston inserted the comment that the weapon might be traced through police permits issued to gun users. Cardona shook his head.

"That Baby Paterson is a curio," declared the inspector. "It belongs in a museum, like the Borgia stiletto. My hunch, commissioner, is that both came from the same collection."

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Weston usually had an aversion to Cardona's hunches. This one, however, had enough logic to satisfy the commissioner. Cardona proceeded with other details.

"Purling evidently guessed something about the murderer," assured the ace. "He tried to write something; but only got as far as one word. That word was 'We' and he couldn't even scrawl it. He had to print it."

Cardona pointed to a blood-smeared sheet of paper that lay on the table. There, in shaky lines, were the letters W E. Just to the right of the letters, Allard observed a sharp dot. Cardona was already explaining it. The inspector plucked up a pencil that lay near the paper.

"The point broke under too much pressure," said Cardona. "Purling never had a chance to start the next word. Maybe he had strength enough to write; but he couldn't take time out to sharpen the pencil, or look for another one."

CAREFULLY, Cardona took hold of a corner of the paper. With his other hand, he pointed to an opened drawer of the table, where the observers saw a medley of odd trinkets, including copper and silver coins of little value.

"Purling may have fished there for a pencil," declared the inspector. "Anyway, he didn't get one. But he found this!"

Cardona whisked away the paper that bore the word "We". Beneath it lay a gold object that looked like a coin, except for its unusual thickness.

"It's a medallion," stated Cardona, lifting the disk. "A French one; the head on it shows Louis Sixteenth. Somehow, this medal has a connection with the murderer. Otherwise, Purling wouldn't have dragged it from the drawer, to hide it under the note."

That golden clue intrigued all present, including The Shadow. But it did not mark the limit of Cardona's discoveries. Stooping above Purling's body, the ace inspector dipped his fingers into the murdered man's breast pocket. From there, Cardona drew forth a gold watch chain.

"There was something on the end of this," announced Joe. "Probably a locket, that's what it would most likely be. Another clue, like the medallion."

"The murderer may have broken it loose and taken it along, only I don't think so. It's more likely that Purling snapped it off and tried to leave it somewhere, because the killer could have taken chain and all."

"My idea is that Purling broke the thing after he'd flopped to the floor and was dying there. But the locket isn't on him, and it isn't in the open drawer. He couldn't have reached up that high to drop it, anyway."

Listeners were thoughtful, particularly Kent Allard. Through The Shadow's brain were flashing other impressions. He was noting the number on Purling's telephone. As Burbank had stated, it was the Hyacinth number that someone had told Professor Breer to call.

Possibly Purling had called the Hotel Triton to leave that message. That was the sort of assumption that Cardona would make, had he known of the call. To The Shadow, however, the answer was that the murderer had called the Triton.

Assuming that were so, how did it fit with the penciled note, the Louis medallion, the chain from which something had been broken?

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Those were pieces of a puzzle that could only be fitted after more of the pattern was complete. Most important, so it seemed, would be the finding of the object that belonged on the end of the chain. Cardona was referring to it again; he still used the term "locket" to describe the object.

"If we find the locket," asserted the ace, "we'll know it's the right one. Look at the way this chain was broken. See the slant to it; the little prong pointing up? Nobody could false that. When we find a locket that fits, we'll have our clue."

ALL that sounded excellent to Commissioner Weston. His brusque manner, however, showed that he was not satisfied. In demanding tone, Weston asked Cardona:

"Where does this lead us, inspector?"

Cardona showed a grim grin. He had the answer.

"We know that Junius Purling was Member 9 of the Green Hoods," announced Cardona. "That made him the person who proposed Member 10, the only one we haven't heard from. With Purling dead "

Cardona had no time to finish. Commissioner Weston was snapping a completion of the statement, so excitedly that there was no use for Cardona to continue.

"With Purling dead, there is no lead to Member 10!" ejaculated Weston. "He has hidden his tracks, which makes him the one man that we must find! Member 10 is the murderer among the Green Hoods! By Jove, Cardona! You have struck it!"

Weston's enthusiasm spread like an epidemic. The members of the Green Hoods who were present all joined in congratulating Cardona. One, alone, was less demonstrative than the rest; but that attracted no notice, for he had not been an actual member of the Green Hoods.

That lone figure was Kent Allard.

The Shadow had anticipated Cardona's reply, even before Weston had asked the question. The logic was obvious.

Whoever had murdered Professor Breer had found it necessary to close his trail. To do so, he had to eliminate some link in the chain of Green Hoods. There was another factor, too, that Weston had not mentioned.

With the discovery of Purling's body, every member of the Green Hoods stood accounted for, except that unknown Member 10. The law had already heard from Lionel Atherland and Robert Leng, who were Members 11 and 12.

Joe Cardona's grin had become a pleased one; with good reason. He hadn't been forced to proclaim his present idea a hunch. Commissioner Weston had snapped it outright. There was no smile, however, on the lips of Kent Allard.

To The Shadow, the obvious frequently had a lack of certainty. He was trying to pierce deeper into the cloud that surrounded the purposes of the unknown Member 10.

Weston, meanwhile, was pounding members of the Green Hoods with questions. He wanted to know if any could give a clue to the tenth man's identity. Negative headshakes came as responses. None had known much about Junius Purling; not even Member 8, who had proposed him. One man, however, finally gave an

opinion.

It was Lionel Atherland who spoke. "I never heard of Junius Purling before today," said Atherland, as he pushed his fingers through his gray-streaked hair. "It is apparent, though, that Member 10 –introduced by Purling must have known me."

"That's right," agreed Cardona. "You were Member 11."

"I have wondered often," continued Atherland, "who Member 10 might be. I am still at loss, in endeavoring to place him."

"Have you checked among your friends?"

"The man might be any one of a great number. I have met many crime students during the course of my lecture tours. Today has produced the only clue. Whoever Member 10 may be, this man" Atherland indicated Purling's body "must have known him."

There was a quick snap of Cardona's fingers.

"There's our answer!" affirmed the ace. "I'll have a list of everybody that Purling knew, by this time tomorrow night. I can't get it sooner, commissioner" Cardona had noted disapproval from Weston –"because Purling had a lot of out-of-town customers. But in twenty-four hours, I'll have a batch of names for Mr. Atherland to look over."

"And let us hope," added Atherland, "that among these names, I shall find the culprit who was mutually acquainted with Purling and myself."

WESTON was highly pleased with that prospect. When the group filed from the room, the commissioner had forgotten all about the missing "locket" from the end of Purling's watch chain. So had the others, for the moment with the exception of Kent Allard.

Last of the group to pause by Purling's body, Allard's eyes roved the floor. Under the edge of a large rug, The Shadow saw the faint trace of a bulge. Stepping to the window, he lighted a cigarette in Allard's deliberate style.

Giving a shielded side glance, his keen eyes spied a glimmer of gold from beneath the rug edge.

Making a comment to Commissioner Weston, Allard tossed his extinguished match to the floor. Weston saw the careless action, spoke in reprimanding tone:

"I wouldn't do that, Allard. We must have nothing to clutter up actual clues. Even a match might confuse matters."

"Sorry, commissioner." Observed by Weston alone, Allard picked up the match. "I think that is all I dropped. There are no ashes on the rug."

As his thumb pressed the rug edge, two of Allard's fingers went deftly beneath. They paused for an instant after Weston turned away. Seen by no one, those fingers brought out the glittering object. A moment later, it was in Allard's vest pocket.

From the feel of the object, The Shadow knew that it could not be a locket. But it was the object that had been

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broken from Purling's watch chain. The Shadow learned that, as he rode away, alone, in his cab.

The trophy was a coin a ten-dollar gold piece that had been made into a watch charm. The tail side of the coin had been scraped; engraved upon it were initials. Oddly, though, they were not Purling's own.

The initials on the gold piece formed a three-letter monogram, composed of the letters "TMS".

That monogram, in turn, was identical with the one that The Shadow had found on the cigar band that he had taken from the wallet of Professor Smedley Breer!

CHAPTER IX. AHEAD OF THE LAW

JOE CARDONA kept his promise of twenty-four-hour service. On the next evening, an envelope was delivered to the apartment of Commissioner Weston. It contained lists of persons with whom Junius Purling had been acquainted.

News of that delivery reached The Shadow not long afterward.

The Shadow was in his sanctum a black-walled room where blue light glowed upon the surface of a polished table. On the ebony woodwork lay a paper describing certain objects.

Those were the Borgia stiletto; bullets from the Baby Paterson pistol; the paper with the penciled letters W E; and the gold medallion that bore the head of King Louis XVI.

These clues belonged to the police. The Shadow had sought more facts concerning them, but, as yet, had gotten no result. Neither, for that matter, had the law.

The Shadow's own clues also lay in view.

One was the phone memo from the Hotel Triton. Careful inquiry had proven that the call there was made at seven-thirty, while Professor Breer had been at dinner. The memo had been sent in to the prospective victim of a green-hooded murderer.

The other clues were the cigar band, with its cryptic monogram "TMS"; and the gold coin that bore the same emblem.

One linked with Breer; the other with Purling. The Shadow had twisted those initials about; he had checked through many of his private crime files, but had not found the name of any man who might be their owner.

There was a report on The Shadow's table from a newspaper reporter named Clyde Burke. Clyde happened to be one of The Shadow's agents. His report gave details of an interview between Joe Cardona and Evelyn Rayle.

The girl had answered the inspector's questions, precisely as The Shadow had ordered. Her story satisfied Cardona. Evelyn had gone back to the old house where Professor Breer had formerly resided. Like others, she was to await the results of the hunt that the law was making for Green Hood Member 10.

Into that sanctum scene came the glow of a tiny bulb upon the wall. It was a signal from Burbank. Picking up earphones, The Shadow received the report of the envelope that Cardona had sent to Weston.

Immediately afterward, The Shadow left his sanctum.

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COMMISSIONER RALPH WESTON had a little office in his apartment. He was seated at his desk mulling over Cardona's lists, when a caller was announced. The commissioner was rather surprised to learn that the visitor was Kent Allard. Nevertheless, he ordered that his friend be shown in.

Entering, Allard explained the reason for his chance call. He was planning a sea hop to Bermuda, but would be willing to postpone it, if the commissioner preferred to have him stay in New York.

"You might wait a few days, Allard," suggested Weston. "I think that we are going to trace Member 10. If we do, it would help us to have all persons present even those who are only remotely connected with the Green Hoods, as you were."

To emphasize his point, Weston showed Allard the lists, with the comment:

"I expect Cardona here within an hour. Lionel Atherland will also arrive here. Perhaps, from this list" Weston flourished one paper – "we may find the very man we want. One that Atherland knows."

Allard took the list. His eyes scanned it idly, while Weston explained that names upon it were those of persons who had not been located by telephone calls or personal visits. The list had been culled from larger groups of names; cut down to its present size, it enumerated about fifteen persons, with their addresses.

Though Weston didn't guess it, Allard's glance was more than casual. Keen eyes were analyzing every name. Those eyes paused at the very bottom of the list. There, The Shadow read the name and address:

Louis Wenz, 17 A, Marlborough Place.

Returning the list to the commissioner, Allard reached for his hat. Weston exclaimed in surprise:

"You're leaving, Allard? Why, I thought you would like to be here to meet Cardona and Atherland."

"I must make arrangements to postpone the Bermuda flight," returned Allard, dryly. "If I encounter no complications" he was glancing at his watch "I shall be back within an hour."

Immediately after leaving Weston's, The Shadow entered his waiting cab. In Allard's tone, he ordered the driver to take him to Marlborough Place.

FROM that list at Weston's, The Shadow had linked a clue.

There was much of mystery surrounding the deaths of Smedley Breer and Junius Purling. Even the weapons used to slay them were bizarre. Quite as curious were the various items that stood as clues; such as the cigar band and the initialed coin.

One clue, however, had given The Shadow food for deductive thought. That was the unfinished note that had been found on Purling's table. In itself, unattached with other leads, that clue presented an oddity.

Given only a few minutes to live, Junius Purling could hardly have begun a detailed message. The word "We" indicated the beginning of a sentence, and that was an illogical effort. Moreover, the pencil point had broken when Purling pressed it against a spot just to the right of the letter E.

From his observation of the clue, The Shadow had reasoned that the letters W E might mark the beginning of a longer word, not the complete pronoun that they represented.

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The police believed that Purling had been murdered by Member 10 of the Green Hoods, a man whose identity was known to Purling alone.

What, then, would be more likely than an attempt by Purling, in his death throes, to reveal the name that would eventually be wanted?

In the list at Weston's, The Shadow had seen a name that began with the letters W E; a name so short that, even in the spasms of death, a man might try to inscribe it. That name was Wenz.

As a result, The Shadow was traveling ahead of the law, to investigate the affairs of Louis Wenz, the one man that tangible evidence had produced as a possible Member 10.

MARLBOROUGH PLACE was a restricted residential zone in a secluded district of Manhattan. The Shadow's cab slowed when it reached a side street that fringed a small park.

Directly opposite was an archway, not wide enough for vehicles. Inside was a widespread flagstone courtyard, surrounded by the houses that formed Marlborough Place.

Before the cab could stop, the door was open. A black-clad figure swung clear; a whispered voice ordered the cab ahead. The vehicle had not rolled from sight when The Shadow, fully cloaked, began his glide across the street.

The Shadow passed through the dim archway. Inside the courtyard, he was forced to a circuitous route; for, at intervals, old-fashioned lamps threw their rays upon the flagstones.

On every side, the houses were fashioned like rows; each was two stories high, with its own front door. Above some of those entrances were other lamps that shone. Those caused The Shadow to continue roundabout tactics.

At times, he kept to the shelter of bushes planted near the center of the court. Choosing other opportunities, he edged into the gloom of house fronts.

All the while, he was noting numbers above the doorways. Pausing at the tiny portico of a darkened house, The Shadow saw the number 17 A painted on a glass transom above the door.

This was Wenz's house, and it looked deserted. The only sign of recent approach lay in the oozy mud just below the front-door bell. Recent rain had caused that stain on the flagstone; a guarded beam from The Shadow's tiny flashlight showed the deep mark of a square-toed shoe, thrice repeated.

That looked like Cardona's trademark. The Shadow could picture the ace inspector stopping here during the afternoon. Probably Cardona had rung the doorbell several times, then gone, after adding Louis Wenz to the list of Purling's questionable acquaintances.

The door of the house was heavy, and apparently strongly bolted, for The Shadow tried it. The Old English windows were also formidable; The Shadow recalled that their strength had been one of the selling points of these houses. The strips that separated the tiny windowpanes were of metal, not wood.

Homes in Marlborough Place were regarded as burglar-proof. That meant that the rear windows would be quite as difficult of attack as the front ones. A down movement of The Shadow's light showed a cellar grating that looked as though it could be forced. That offered a bad sequel, however, in case there should be a strong door at the top of the cellar stairs. There was one other possible avenue of entry that afforded possibilities.

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That was the roof.

PICKING an inset portion of the wall, where Wenz's house joined the next, The Shadow began an upward course through darkness. Rough stones gave him a fair hold; but the most helpful feature was his sideways pressure. The nichelike space was cramped; at times, The Shadow actually elbowed his way toward the roof.

Coming across the edge, The Shadow flattened. The city's glow made the roof visible, despite the blocking hulks of skyscrapers that lined the park beyond Marlborough Place.

Creeping forward, The Shadow was low enough to be partly obscured by a small parapet. He was like a streak of living darkness edging in from outer space. No eyes could have been close enough to observe his progress.

From the moment that he had come over the edge, The Shadow had sighted a goal. It was a trapdoor near the rear edge of the roof, in the shelter of another low parapet. It took The Shadow only a few minutes to reach the opening. Once there, he began silent work with a portable jimmy.

There was an oddity about this trapdoor. It opened in the center. To work on it, The Shadow had to flatten squarely upon it.

From its construction, the trap appeared to hinge upward, in two sections; but to operate either half, it would be necessary first to release the center catch.

With twisting pressure, The Shadow wedged the halves of the flat door until they were the fraction of an inch apart. Pausing, he looked along the roofs, noted the bulges of other traps.

None seemed as large as this one. Ordinarily, that would have demanded investigation; tonight, time was too limited to study such differences.

More important, The Shadow decided, was what might be below. He flicked the flashlight through the space beneath him. He saw the gleam of a metal catch; shifting the flashlight, he spied the dim floor of a space that seemed to be a second-story closet. Pocketing the light, The Shadow worked with the jimmy.

The catch clicked loose so suddenly, that it spurred the warnings that were already flashing to The Shadow's mind.

With a quick whip, The Shadow tried to fling himself clear of the trapdoor; but he couldn't make the safety of the roof. With the release of the catch, hinges screeched their response.

Those hinges operated downward, not upward. The sections of the trap flopped inward with The Shadow's weight. Thanks to his quick sideways flip, The Shadow had a chance for a decent landing on the floor below.

In one instant, The Shadow was gone from the roof; in the next, he had hit the second floor, with the sections of the trap springing shut above his head. In that same instant, the floor splintered like matchwood, sending The Shadow through.

The flooring was a sham; a mere veneer, ready to smash when a man's weight struck it. So was the bottom of the ground-floor closet, when The Shadow hit there. His plunge didn't stop until he reached the cellar, where he took a hard jolt against solid stone.

In taking the trail ahead of the law, The Shadow had come to an unwanted goal. Dropped to an underground

pit, he lay slumped and silent in the very spot that enemies had chosen for his finish!

CHAPTER X. FLARE OF DOOM

SHUDDERING echoes followed The Shadow's crash. The shaft through which he had fallen seemed to cough its hollow sigh of satisfaction at delivering a victim to the pit below.

After those short seconds came long minutes of absolute silence, without a stir from the wall where The Shadow lay. At last, whispery murmurs broke the spell.

The Shadow was not alone in Wenz's cellar. Lurking watchers had heard his plunge. Confabbing among themselves, they were delegating one of their number to approach and make certain of the result.

A man crept forward. A flashlight glinted suddenly upon The Shadow's form. It did not show the face beneath the slouch hat; that was buried beneath a cloaked arm that stretched awry across The Shadow's chest. What the light did show, was the face of the man who carried it.

He was an apish thug, whose ugly eyes peered from beneath a cap visor. His leathery lips showed a jeery smile above the collar of a turtleneck sweater. Shifting the flashlight to his left hand, the thug pulled a knife from beneath his sweater.

Ready for a thrust beneath The Shadow's arm, the apish killer shot a look into the darkness over his shoulder. He whispered to his waiting pals:

"It's The Shadow, all right! I'm giving him the shiv, just in case he ain't already croaked!"

Twisting about, the intended killer tilted the flashlight to the position he wanted; poised his blade for the promised stroke. But it wasn't his hand that responded to his next urge. His lips and eyes acted instead.

A grimace accompanied the knifer's bulgy gaze.

The thug was clamped so he could not move. Up from the floor had come a pair of hands, circling to avoid the flashlight's glow. Viselike, they had plucked the assassin's wrists. His fingers, loosening under torturing pressure, were letting both knife and flashlight go.

Through the riveted thug's brain drilled the reality of something that he couldn't understand.

The Shadow was still alive; not only that, he had his strength. The three-story plunge, calculated at least to stun him, had not produced a visible effect upon the black-clad victim!

No wonder the thug couldn't understand it. The trap had been placed by a supercrook who ruled men of crime; a green-hooded murderer who had put henchmen on tonight's job. The thug was gripped by the thought that The Shadow must have some immunity to neck-breaking falls.

That guess was wrong. The master crook was to blame. In designing those thin-wooded floors, the master criminal had expected them to cleave like tissue. They had broken completely, two in a row; but each had absorbed its share of the shock. Those momentary jerks in The Shadow's fall had been lifesavers.

His plunge had actually been three drops; not one. Each was a matter of eight feet, insufficient to cripple The Shadow, particularly since he had instinctively fought to break the successive plunges. Only the last stage of the drop, with its stony finish, had given The Shadow a jar; and he had rallied from that shock.

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So well had The Shadow recuperated, that the present odds were in his favor. The thug's knife no longer gave the fellow the edge. His chance to use it ended when it clattered to the floor. A second later, the flashlight took a similar crash. Hitting on its glass end, it was extinguished.

There was a scuffling sound from the wall; gasps, followed by long panting breaths. Those tokens of a brief struggle were heard by the thug's pals near the door of the cellar room.

They were two, those other watchers. One snarled an oath as he pressed the button of his flashlight. The other hit his hand aside, to stop the glow.

"Lay off the glim!" was the hoarse whisper. "What's the sense giving The Shadow something to shoot at? Leave it to me I'll get him!"

The pair shifted apart in the darkness. There was silence from The Shadow's wall. Then, with a quick skill, the crook who had spoken performed an unusual move.

In the darkness, he brought out a railroad flare. He ripped the cap from it, reversed it and struck it hard against the end of the long tube.

There was a flash of red light; with it, the thug hurled the flare for the wall. He flung it spiked end first, the red blaze trailing after it.

There was wooden boarding against that wall. The spike hit it full force, burrowed deep. Fixed there, it spread its vivid light, showing the floor and the gaping hole in the ceiling above. There, turned half about, trying to rise against the wall, the two crooks saw the figure of The Shadow.

They themselves were beyond the range of the red flare. They didn't bother about their pal; where he was, didn't matter. They wanted to get The Shadow before he turned their way. Two guns spoke in quick staccato. Crooks snarled their glee as the black-cloaked form slipped downward and collapsed.

Three seconds later, they were above the prone shape, the smoke from their revolvers mingling with the cloudy fumes of the red flare. In that crimson light, their faces had the gloat of demons. One whipped away the cloak; it came loose from the shoulders beneath it. The other snatched the slouch hat. An apish face looked up at them with glassy gaze. It was white, that visage, but the red light made it seem as ruddy as theirs. Despite its tinge, they recognized the face. The man that they had loaded with bullets was their pal who had failed so badly with his knife.

THOSE staring mobsters didn't have to be told the details of The Shadow's deceptive move; how he had half choked their comrade, then left him entangled in the cloak, with the slouch hat planted on his head.

The Shadow, himself, made the sinister announcement that proved him alive and active.

His tone was a sibilant laugh from the very door that the mobsters had left. Though cloakless, The Shadow was completely in darkness, while his enemies were trapped in their own red glare!

If that pair had seen The Shadow when his mockery reverberated, they could have preserved their own useless lives. Though they were killers, The Shadow would have preferred to capture them, rather than deliver doom. The crooks would have known what was due, if they had seen The Shadow's drawn automatics. Those big guns had them covered.

Instead of surrender, the pair went berserk. Perhaps the lurid glow inspired them; possibly each took nerve

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from the other. Whatever the cause, they charged for the doorway, tugging gun triggers as they came.

The door was clamped. The mobsters had fixed it that way. The Shadow had to shift along a stonewalled side of the room, answering with gun jabs of his own. Those tongues from his automatics angled in toward the wide spurts of the attackers' revolvers.

Thugs sprawled, clipped by burning slugs. Wounds couldn't stop that berserk pair. They aimed for the flashes of The Shadow's guns. Only his quick fade back toward the red flare kept him ahead of their fire.

Forced to that extremity, The Shadow had to drive his shots hard home, as the half-sagged killers took final aim in his direction.

There were no more bullets from the revolvers. The would-be killers spread side by side upon the floor, downed by The Shadow's necessary shots.

The flare that still burned from the wall had brought doom to the thugs who had tried to use it for their own advantage.

RECOVERING his bullet-riddled cloak, The Shadow donned it. Planting his slouch hat on his head, he gripped the boarding of the rear wall, pulled himself up to the shattered ceiling.

Once above that level, he found a slight foothold, worked on the door of the ground-floor closet.

It opened. The glow from the flare below gave The Shadow a view of a stairway. Closing the closet door, he moved through absolute darkness. His goal was the second floor; there, he might find the person that he actually wanted: Louis Wenz.

The trap that had caught The Shadow was in Wenz's own home. The Shadow knew that the man who had planted it had guessed wrong as to its merits. That man, hearing shots below, would have supposed The Shadow dead. Therefore, The Shadow held a new advantage by his present stealth.

He reached the second floor. Without using his flashlight, he groped through darkness, listening for any sounds. There were none; rooms were totally empty.

At last, The Shadow arrived at the door of the only room he had not searched. It was at the back of the second floor; the door was closed.

Noiselessly, The Shadow opened that door. Edging through, he closed it behind him. He groped about the room until he came to the rear wall, where he knew that the broken shaft passed beyond the closet door.

There, The Shadow encountered something on the floor. It gave, like a man's body; but it was heavy. The Shadow pressed the button of his flashlight. It failed; the bulb was broken.

Reaching up, The Shadow felt the knob of the closet door; there was a key there also. Inspired by a quick idea, he unlocked the door and opened it.

Up through the shaft came the fading gleam of the ten-minute flare. Its ruddy reflection stretched ghostly across the floor. It revealed the figure of a man in a dressing gown, whose attire marked him as the owner of this house.

Again that glow was a flare of doom. The eerie light showed a peaked face. Drawn lips, goggly eyes were

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stiffened in death. A knife was projecting from the victim's breast, but it was no Borgia stiletto. Its wavy blade, partly visible, showed it to be another type of weapon a Malay creese.

A clotted blot told that death had been delivered long before. That splotch looked colorless; for the hue of blood was lost in the crimson light.

The Shadow's whispered laugh was grim, mirthless. It told that his trail of just vengeance was postponed. The Shadow had found Louis Wenz, Member 10 of the Green Hoods, whom the law suspected as a double killer.

But instead of uncovering a murderer, The Shadow had disclosed another victim of the master assassin who still remained unknown!

CHAPTER XI. THE QUARTER HOUR

WHEN the last tinge of red glare faded like a dying sunset, a new light came to Wenz's death room. The Shadow had found a small desk lamp in the corner. Its bulb threw a direct glow upon the body.

From all appearances, Wenz had been dead for some forty–eight hours. That fitted with The Shadow's immediate theory: that Wenz had died like Purling. Instead of merely eliminating Member 9, a murderer had disposed of Member 10 as well.

That was not a surprise to The Shadow. It only showed that the whole case had graduated from the simple to the complex.

Until the present, The Shadow had been willing to accept the simple setup; the theory that one member of the Green Hoods namely, Wenz –had murdered another Purling to cover his tracks when it came to the major stroke of crime. That stroke had been the murder of Professor Smedley Breer, to acquire the old inventor's Truth Inducer.

Scaled to the complex, the game showed the master hand of an evil craftsman who looked far beyond such primitive methods. Someone, conversant with the organization of Green Hoods, had secretly delved into the affairs of that society.

That master crook had eliminated two human links in the chain –Purling and Wenz blaming the death of one upon the other. That meant that he could be any one; perhaps an absolute outsider. Obviously, he had some purpose in killing off two of the Green Hoods, in addition to Breer.

What that purpose was, might be as difficult to answer as the finding of the actual murderer.

One thing was evident to The Shadow. Neither Purling nor Wenz had been at the meeting of the Green Hoods, two nights ago. The Shadow had not had time to note the actual number present at that meeting. No one could tell if two members had been missing, with one replaced by a nonmember who had attired himself in green; that was, no one but the murderer himself.

Intuitively, The Shadow found himself thinking of the letters in the mysterious monogram. Those initials, "TMS", had bobbed up with the deaths of Breer and Purling.

Would there be a trace of them here, in the room where Wenz lay dead? This was the chance for The Shadow's advance probe before the law arrived. The cellar shots had not been heard outside; but The Shadow could foresee a quest here, after Atherland went over Cardona's list of Purling's friends.

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For his present search, The Shadow allotted fifteen minutes. After that, it would be time to return to Weston's.

ON Wenz's desk was an old-fashioned typewriter. The Shadow studied it, tested some of the keys. The machine was badly out of line; it would be easy to identify any work done on it.

In the desk drawer, The Shadow found some papers that Wenz had typed. They had to do with the subject of handwriting. With them were letterheads that pronounced Wenz to be an expert in graphology. Doubtless, that was the reason why Wenz had been chosen by Purling to join a society of crime detectors.

If handwriting could show peculiarities of temperament, so could typing. The Shadow had often recognized that fact; the pages that Wenz had typed proved it.

Wenz liked embellishments. He used asterisks (***) instead of dashes (). His old machine had a key with an exclamation point (!) and he had employed it frequently. That was useful with the ancient typewriter. If Wenz had combined an apostrophe (') with a period (.) beneath it, the two would have been out of line.

After his survey of Wenz's typing style, The Shadow continued his search of the desk drawers. He found some sheets of carbon paper, green in color. All were new; but there were some old ones, crumpled in a wastebasket. As The Shadow stooped for them, he observed something else.

Poked above the inner end of a desk drawer was a sheet of thick writing paper, that had almost dropped from sight. The Shadow brought it out. The paper bore a handwritten scrawl:

Study of handwriting strikes me as useless. The conclusions that you formed in my case were very unsatisfactory, as well as erroneous.

T. S.

A low laugh came from The Shadow's lips. This looked like the very clue he wanted. It went with the cigar band and the gold coin. Both of those had borne the monogram "TMS". If T.S., whoever he was, had a middle name that began with M, he could be the unknown owner of the monogram.

Assuming that it was T.M.S. he wanted, The Shadow began a search elsewhere in the room. On a mantel above a gas-log fireplace, he saw the end of a blocky wooden box. It was a card index, almost hidden behind a squatty clock.

Opening the box, The Shadow found cards that bore the names of various persons whose handwriting had been analyzed by Wenz.

Under the letter "S," he found Tobias Sherrred, whose address was listed as the Middleton Apartments.

On the card was a date of a month ago. Wenz had typed it; there was a check mark after it. That was probably when Wenz had analyzed Sherrred's penmanship.

The Shadow replaced the card index where he had found it. He put the T.S. note back behind the desk drawer. These were clues for Cardona to find.

In the cases of the telephone memo, the cigar band, the monogrammed coin, The Shadow would have left those clues with the bodies of Breer and Purling, had he had time to examine them on those occasions. Because of forced pressure, The Shadow had kept those bits of evidence. This time, it was unnecessary.

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Ten minutes of The Shadow's fifteen had passed. He leaned toward the wastebasket. Suddenly, his cloaked figure became immobile. An instant later, his hand plucked swiftly, turned off the desk lamp.

His keen ears had heard a sound: the opening of the door that formed the entrance from the hallway.

Someone had entered the house; perhaps that person had spotted the glow of light beneath the door of this second-floor room. If so, The Shadow could be due for another battle.

TURNING speedily in the darkness, The Shadow looked toward the door itself.

There was a slight beam of light that entered the hallway from a front window of the house. It was sufficient for The Shadow's eyes. In that luminous trickle, he saw that the menace was real.

The door of the room had opened a single inch. An intruder must have heard the click of the lamp switch and guessed the lamp's location. The dim light showed the subdued glitter of a revolver muzzle aimed straight for the spot where The Shadow stood!

Death had become a visible threat. The next moments were terrifically tense, but in them, The Shadow performed a rapid analysis of his dangerous situation.

Another man in his position might have come to one disastrous conclusion; namely, that the person in the hall had spied through before the light was extinguished. The natural move, therefore, would be to make a scramble away from the desk.

The Shadow figured otherwise.

If an enemy had spied him, that revolver would already be cutting loose. Therefore, The Shadow knew that he had not been seen. The lamp's click was all that had betrayed his position. Having heard it, the intruder was awaiting another sound as further giveaway.

Slow motion, not speed, was The Shadow's lone course to self-preservation.

Gradually, The Shadow eased from his position. His soundless tactics were accomplishing their wanted result of removing him from the danger zone; but they were not enough. He was planning to reach the door, to deal at close quarters with the intruder.

That would not work with this slow progress. The gunner would suspect The Shadow's shift before the goal was reached, if the period of silence persisted too long. That was why The Shadow paused, after circling halfway to the door.

Deftly, he scaled his useless flashlight through the darkness. The lightless torch made a vague thud on the rug, bounded onward to strike the bare floor with a sliding blow. It wound up with a metallic clink. The Shadow had slithered it to the proper target: the wastebasket beside the desk.

The sound was deceptive enough to make it seem an accident. The person at the door supposed that there was a human form still close to the desk. Presumably, a shifting foot had bumped the wastebasket.

Looking toward the door, The Shadow saw a forward nudge of the leveled revolver.

He didn't give the intruder time to speak a challenge or open fire. With a long, silent lunge, The Shadow caught the doorknob with one hand. His side twist whipped the door wide. The upward shove of his other fist

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fastened it upon the intruder's gun wrist.

The revolver dropped as the struggle began. The Shadow was met by the furious efforts of a game, wiry battler. But with it came two tokens that he recognized. First, the feel of the wrist that he gripped; second, the deep gasp from his adversary's lips. Those changed The Shadow's tactics.

Clamping one arm beneath his opponent's chin, he released his wrist hold. Fingers clawed for The Shadow's hand; all that they gripped was the black glove that covered it. The glove peeled away.

The Shadow caught the plucking fingers. He shoved his bared left hand into the light; with his right, he turned the other fighter's chin, so that eyes saw the glow of the girasol, apparent even in that dimness.

There was a choking gasp from grateful lips. The struggle ended. Guiding his opponent across the room, The Shadow turned on the desk lamp. Its light revealed the person who had so nearly trapped The Shadow without knowing who he was.

The intruder from the dark was one who had made the same mistake before. The Shadow's keen eyes were gazing upon the pale face of Evelyn Rayle.

CHAPTER XII. THE CARBON CLUE

THE girl shuddered when she saw Wenz's body. Despite her trust in The Shadow, there was a momentary flicker of doubt upon her face, emphasized by the tightening of her lips. The circumstances looked bad—finding The Shadow the lone occupant of a room where a man lay stabbed by a wavy-bladed creese.

The flicker changed. Evelyn was realizing that her own presence needed explanation. The Shadow, investigating here, could easily assume that she was a murderess, returned to the scene of a crime.

For a moment, Evelyn was shaky. A soft-whispered laugh dispelled her worry. The Shadow had read the emotions on Evelyn's face. He knew that she would have a sound explanation for her arrival.

There was approval in The Shadow's tone. It made Evelyn remember the reason why she had come. From a fold of her dark-brown dress, the girl produced an envelope.

It was addressed to Professor Smedley Breer. Evelyn had opened the envelope and read the note within it. This was The Shadow's turn to do the same.

Like the envelope, the note was typed in green carbon. From the blockiness of the type, The Shadow knew at once that it had been done on Wenz's machine. The style, too, had Wenz's characteristics.

The note was brief, but pointed:

DEAR PROFESSOR:

I am a Member of the Green Hoods *** Number 10 *** and I must give you warning!

I have spoken unwisely, to an outsider that I thought was a friend. He is shrewd *** he has studied all that I have told him *** he has traced back among our Members.

He says that you are the inventor of the Truth Inducer! I believe *** indeed, I am sure *** that he was testing me when he told me.

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I dare not come to the meeting tonight. You must also stay away. Beware! You may be betrayed!

LOUIS WENZ.

While The Shadow was studying the note, Evelyn spoke in a low contralto. "It must have been delivered two nights ago," declared the girl. "Instead of mailing it, Wenz put it in the old mailbox that we no longer use. I thought I heard the doorbell ring tonight; but I must have imagined it, for no one was on the steps. But I looked in the mailbox, on the chance that some one had left a message."

"You found this alone?" inquired The Shadow.

"No. There were also some handbills that boys must have left during the past few days. A blotter from a tailoring concern was one. There were three others, all from a grocery store. One was dated today; another, yesterday; the third was from the day before."

EVELYN paused. Her eyes were meditative.

"They stuff that mailbox often," she recalled. "About once a week, I empty it. Often, during the day, I have noticed boys delivering circulars. Probably one came along tonight with the last of those grocery advertisements."

"You kept those that you found tonight "

"Yes. They are on the professor's on the desk that Professor Breer used."

The Shadow made no other comment. Evelyn became anxious.

"I shouldn't have come here," she admitted. "But the message made me realize that Louis Wenz might not be the murderer that the police want. I thought that if I talked to him "

There was an understanding whisper from The Shadow. Evelyn watched him reach into the wastebasket, bring out the sheets of discarded carbon paper. The Shadow had not forgotten that his time was limited.

Some of those carbon sheets were little used. One was almost fresh. The Shadow held it to the light, carbon side toward him, so that the marks of the letters would be plain. It proved to be the sheet used in transcribing the message brought by Evelyn. The Shadow read the reversed words.

There was an oddity, though, to that carbon sheet.

The message was double spaced. Between its lines, crowding them, were other words, almost the same as those in the message. Apparently, the note had been started two or three times, then finally completed.

Sentences were sprinkled with dashes and exclamation points. Those punctuation marks, particularly the irregular ones, made it something of a task to trace the final message from the incomplete ones.

The transcription was clear enough, however, to satisfy The Shadow; particularly since it bore indelible proof that it had been done on Wenz's machine.

Folding the carbon sheet, The Shadow placed it beneath his cloak. This was one clue that he intended to keep safe until the law arrived. Any chance visitor might mull among the old carbon papers; but there was little likelihood that the "T.S." note would be discovered at the back of the desk drawer, except after extensive

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search.

The Shadow returned the message that bore Wenz's typed signature. He placed it in its envelope, as he gave it to Evelyn.

"Go back to the house," ordered The Shadow. "Wait until you receive a telephone call, that you will recognize by its import. You will be told to find this message over again, along with the handbills. Then you will be free to call the police commissioner."

Evelyn nodded. She understood The Shadow's purpose. By that time, the law would be here at Wenz's. Evelyn would be clear of criticism. No one would suspect that she had paid this unwise visit before the law's discovery of Wenz's body.

THE SHADOW had closed the door of the faked closet; hence, Evelyn did not guess how he had entered. She was explaining her own mode of entry. She had come to the back door to avoid observation, and had found it unlocked.

The girl did not grasp the significance of The Shadow's musing laugh. For once, he had been outguessed on a trivial detail by a shrewd master crook. That adversary had correctly pictured the route that The Shadow would follow if he came to Wenz's.

In trying the front door, ignoring the cellar grating by which thugs had entered below, climbing to the roof and tackling the skylight when he found it, The Shadow had done all that the superfoe expected. He had not gone as far as the unlocked back door.

This was but one evidence of the master criminal's craft. The Shadow anticipated more in the future. This whole trail was tinged with strategy. The Shadow had met with it in seeking Louis Wenz. He would find other complications when he met with Tobias Sherred, the man whose middle initial should be "M".

Like the law, The Shadow was up against a supercrook who knew how to cloud the issue. Clues were plenty, but any one might be either false or true. To differentiate between those types of evidence would be the greatest problem on this trail of crime.

Evelyn had a flashlight with her. The Shadow used it to guide the girl down the stairs, out through the unlocked back door. Then came a weird experience. Evelyn found herself moving along the street with The Shadow invisible beside her.

If spies of crime had still been about, they would have sworn that Evelyn Rayle had come and gone alone. In fact, when Evelyn had turned the corner, she found that she was alone.

There was a cab coming down the avenue; Evelyn recalled that The Shadow had whispered for her to hail it. But by the time the girl had waved her arm, she was conscious of a void beside her. When the cab pulled to the curb, its lights shone directly upon Evelyn.

Stepping to the cab door, she looked along the sidewalk. There wasn't a sign of a black-clad figure; not even a fleeting trace of gliding blackness. Knowing which way the cab would swing, The Shadow had made his departure in the opposite direction. He had halted Evelyn at a blackened stretch of this avenue, where traffic was light. He had headed across the street when Evelyn waved. From the opposite side, The Shadow watched the girl ride away.

AFTER that, The Shadow continued his own course. He zigzagged across the street, passed the front of

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Marlborough Place, to blend with the darkened stretches of the park that lay opposite. On the other side of that grassy square, The Shadow entered his own cab, which was waiting at an isolated spot.

More time had gone than The Shadow had intended. During his study of the death room, he had split an hour into four parts. A quarter for the trip from Weston's; another quarter covered his entry into Wenz's house, with the battle in the cellar.

He had allowed a quarter hour for investigation, reserving the fourth quarter for his return to the commissioner's apartment. Evelyn's advent had forced The Shadow to extend the third period by fully five minutes. But the cab was making up for it, by a whirlwind return trip along its former route.

As the taxi wheeled into Weston's block, The Shadow saw a cab pulling away from the entrance to the apartment house. His black garb packed away beneath the seat of his own cab, The Shadow indulged in a whispered laugh that was confined to his own limited surroundings.

Joe Cardona usually came by subway when he visited the police commissioner. Therefore, the departing cab had brought Lionel Atherland. The Shadow would be present to watch the steps by which the law gained its own trail to Louis Wenz.

The Shadow's cab halted in front of the apartment house. From its interior stepped Kent Allard, the faintest of smiles upon his thin, firm lips. In his pocket was one item that he had kept from his black cloak.

That was the folded carbon paper that The Shadow had brought from the room where Louis Wenz lay dead.

CHAPTER XIII. THE LAW'S TURN

LIONEL ATHERLAND had just begun to study Cardona's special list when Kent Allard was ushered into Weston's office. From behind his desk, the commissioner motioned Allard to be seated. That done, Weston again fixed his gaze upon Atherland, who was seated opposite him.

There was another person present. Joe Cardona was at the side of Weston's desk, watching Atherland hopefully. Lighting a cigarette, Kent Allard became the third witness to the procedure; but his manner made him seem a disinterested party.

Atherland shook his head when he had finished the list of specially chosen names. For once, Cardona's poker-face showed disappointment. Atherland looked at other lists ones that Cardona didn't consider important.

"There are names that I recognize," declared Atherland, slowly, "but they don't seem likely persons. Have you checked on all these people, inspector?"

"All except the ones on the final list," returned Cardona. "I've checked on them, too, but haven't located them. I didn't go at it heavy, you understand. Just found out that they weren't at home, or in town."

"I understand."

Atherland picked up the final list again. He stroked his squarish chin, while his grayish eyes concentrated on the selected names. Half aloud, he spoke:

"Junius Purling knew all these men. Purling was Member 9. Therefore, one of these could be Member 10, who murdered Purling. Member 10, who brought me into the Green Hoods as Member 11 "

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Atherland's musing tone ended. In louder voice, he added:

"Your logic is good, inspector. Since you haven't located these men, one should be the murderer. Rather, one might be the murderer. But I know none of them."

Atherland's eyes had reached the bottom of the list. They stopped there. There was an interval; Atherland looked up suddenly and snapped his fingers.

"That medallion on Purling's desk!" he exclaimed. "It was a Louis medallion, wasn't it?"

A nod from Cardona. Atherland pointed to the list.

"Here's a man whose first name is Louis. Maybe that's what Purling meant!"

Struck by another idea, Atherland picked up the telephone. He put in a call to an agent who had represented him on lecture tours. While Atherland was thus engaged, Cardona studied the name of Louis Wenz.

"The medal could mean Louis," muttered Cardona. "But what about the last name? Purling would have had to write it "

A light dawned suddenly. Allard's keen eyes noted that Cardona was catching the right clue.

"That's what Purling was trying to write!" expressed the ace inspector. "That 'WE' wasn't a word. It was the start of "

Cardona was interrupted by Atherland. The square-jawed man was becoming excited over the telephone. He slammed down the receiver.

"Louis Wenz!" exclaimed Atherland. "He's the man! My agent remembered him a handwriting expert who furnished me with some lecture material. But it came in through my agent. The size of it is that Wenz knew me, but I didn't know him. That's why he would have picked me as a suitable member for the Green Hoods."

THE group set out for Wenz's house. Remembering the locked front door, Cardona suggested that they try the back on this occasion. They found it unlocked.

That pleased the inspector. It gave the law a good reason to enter without a search warrant. An unlocked door of a darkened house in Marlborough Place was sufficient cause for a police officer to claim that he was looking for suspected burglars.

Cardona went upstairs first. His sudden call was one that The Shadow expected. It told that the inspector had discovered the body of Louis Wenz. From that moment, the problem of Wenz's death became a routine homicide case until Cardona happened to open the closet door.

That produced another startling find. Detectives had already been summoned to handle various details. Cardona sent them down the shaft. When they came up with news of dead thugs below, Cardona was literally swamped with duties.

Commissioner Weston suggested that the others wait on the lower floor. While Lionel Atherland sat smoking a cigar in the downstairs living room, Kent Allard went out for a stroll. That was when he made a telephone call to Evelyn Rayle, using the tone of The Shadow.

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Later, Allard was on hand to hear Cardona's summary of crime. In many details, the ace inspector's conclusions fitted with The Shadow's own.

"The surgeon's report shows that death occurred two days ago," stated Cardona. "Wenz was probably murdered about the time that Purling was. Somebody broke into that chain of Green Hoods, and here's the proof of it."

Cardona produced the message that Evelyn had shown to The Shadow. She had phoned Weston's apartment and the call had been transferred here, to Wenz's. Cardona had sent for the typed note.

"It was done on Wenz's typewriter," declared Cardona. "That's plain enough. What's more, Wenz typed it himself. You can tell that by the crazy way he punctuated it the same as in these articles he wrote on the subject of graphology."

Changing his subject temporarily, Cardona gestured to the opened closet door.

"Wenz may have fixed that trap for his own protection," asserted the inspector, "or else it was put here afterward. Anyway, the murderer used it to snag somebody."

By "somebody", Cardona meant The Shadow, although he didn't say so. Detectives had found the door in the cellar well-jammed, but not locked. It looked as if the fighter who had battled the hoodlums had later made his way out through the cellar grating.

"Those gorillas were killers," added Cardona, "and they got what was coming to them. The only bad angle" Joe was grim as he mentioned it "is that the Green Hood has probably got a lot more like them."

In speaking of the Green Hood, Cardona meant the triple murderer. As an organization, the original Green Hoods were defunct. Their garb, formerly the mark of loyalty to the law, had become a badge of evil; the mask of a master murderer.

"HERE are the only clues that count," declared Cardona, pointing to the desk. "First, this knife." He picked up the rugged Malay creese that had been taken from Wenz's body. "It's a curio, like that Borgia stiletto and the Baby Paterson that we haven't found yet.

"Some collector had those weapons once; the same as the King Louis medallion. You were wrong on that, Mr. Atherland." Cardona turned to the lecturer. "At least, I think you were. My hunch is that Purling knew who the murderer really was. He pulled out the Louis medallion to show it belonged to the guy. In trying to write 'Wenz', he was giving another clue.

"Don't forget, there was a locket or something of the sort—snagged off the end of Purling's watch chain. So the man we're looking for is a collector, who gave those things to Purling. Somebody who Purling knew, just like Wenz did. I've got an idea that his name is Tobias Sherred."

From his pocket, Cardona brought one of the larger lists of Purling's acquaintances that The Shadow had not scanned. Running his finger down the line of names, Cardona came to the one he wanted.

"Tobias M. Sherred." repeated Cardona, not noting the sparkle that came to Allard's eyes at mention of the initial "M." "Not many people have heard of him; but he's worth a lot of dough. I checked on him, when I listed him today.

"He's gone in for all sorts of hobbies, Sherred has. He drops them, though, so he doesn't rate high in any of

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them. But Purling knew him, and so did Wenz. Whoever went through the desk drawers here wasn't smart enough to see the note that slipped down in back of the desk drawer."

From the desk, Cardona picked up the scrawl that was signed with the initials "T.S."

"He missed this, too." Cardona lifted the little card index. "It was on the mantel, behind the clock. It's got Sherred listed in it, with his right address: the Middleton Apartments.

"Suppose we go up and talk to Sherred." Cardona turned to Weston. "Maybe if we ask him what he knows about the Truth Inducer, he'll say that collecting freak inventions is his hobby. And maybe he won't!"

Cardona's sarcasm was significant. It meant that he had labeled Tobias Sherred as a likely murderer whose real hobby was crime. Moreover, he felt that the sooner Sherred was investigated, the better.

Weston concurred with that unspoken opinion. He asked if there were any other clues; when Cardona shook his head, the commissioner decided to start at once for Sherred's apartment.

LIONEL ATHERLAND had a question. He wanted to make sure that his invitation to join the Green Hoods had actually come from Louis Wenz. It had; Cardona proved it by producing the paper in question. Its type was identical with the blocky letters of Wenz's machine.

Kent Allard had a question also, but it was unnecessary to ask it. The Shadow's interest concerned the wastebasket; whether or not Cardona had considered used carbon sheets as items of consequence. It was obvious that the inspector had not.

Those discarded carbons were as good as forgotten. Therefore, The Shadow decided to retain the one that he had reclaimed.

Like Atherland, The Shadow accepted Weston's invitation to go along to Sherred's apartment. The commissioner felt that the visit should not look too much like an official call. He indicated that the presence of two ordinary citizens would counterbalance himself and Cardona.

They waited long enough for Cardona to classify the exhibits; some he intended to carry with him, while others like Wenz's typewriter –were to go to headquarters. That done, the four set out in the commissioner's official car.

Though Allard's expression was disinterested, he felt a keen relish for the coming expedition. It fitted definitely with The Shadow's plans, this visit to Tobias Sherred.

The clues that pointed to Sherred were definite, though slender and fragmentary. The Shadow was not willing to share Cardona's hunches on the merit of present evidence. He, though, more than Cardona, had reasons to want an interview with Tobias Sherred.

Those reasons were The Shadow's own clues: the cigar band from Breer's wallet; the engraved coin from Purling's watch chain; the initialed note in Wenz's desk, which had eventually been found by Cardona. Thus, The Shadow had three links to Tobias Sherred, in contrast to the one that Cardona had acquired.

Intent though he was, The Shadow would not forget his guise of Kent Allard. His part was to remain placid, his features immobile. Yet all the while, The Shadow would be the keenest of the four observers who were soon to witness Sherred's reactions.

However roundabout the trail might be, it would bring The Shadow closer to the ruthless murderer who had acquired sole use to the insidious title The Green Hood.

CHAPTER XIV. THE HALTED TRAIL

THE Middleton Apartments were old-fashioned, and by no means pretentious. It seemed odd, at first, that a wealthy man like Tobias Sherred would live there; but the reason for his choice of residence was explained when the visitors reached his apartment.

Sherred's establishment took up the entire tenth floor. It was actually eight apartment converted into one. That meant a heavy rental, even at the Middleton.

An elderly servant conducted the party through a succession of long corridors, the floors thick with valuable Oriental rugs. They reached a large reception room as lavishly carpeted as the halls. The walls, too, were hung with expensive rugs; a high-priced collection in themselves.

There, the old servant met a dapper Japanese valet, told him that callers were here to see Mr. Sherred. The Jap left to summon his master.

After a few minutes, ponderous footsteps and a low, rumbly voice announced Sherred's arrival. The man himself stepped in through a doorway. Bulky of build, he surveyed his visitors with sharp gaze. There was antagonism in the glare of eyes that peered from beneath bristly brows, a bluff look on the man's wide, paunchy face.

In booming voice, Sherred demanded to know the reason for the visit. Commissioner Weston countered that by introducing the other visitors.

Some of Sherred's challenge faded when he found that Allard and Atherland were not representatives of the law. He had heard of Allard and said so, while he was shaking hands. At the same time, The Shadow felt the power of Sherred's grip; observed the close scrutiny that the big man gave him.

There was nothing, though, in the impassive attitude of Kent Allard that could have turned Sherred's thoughts to new suspicion. Allard's gaze, though casual, enabled him to form his own impressions of Sherred.

The big-browed man was much shrewder than his surface showed. The Shadow was convinced that the law would find trouble in pumping much from Tobias Sherred.

It was Joe Cardona who put the reason for the visit, while Sherred was passing a box of cigars.

"We're looking for information about a man named Junius Purling," stated Cardona. "We understand that he was a friend of yours, Mr. Sherred."

"Purling?" Sherred boomed the name, then shook his head. "Never heard of him!"

"He was murdered, two nights ago."

"Murdered?" Big brows bristled. "All the more reason why I probably did not know him. My acquaintances" Sherred's deep tone was biting—"are not in the habit of getting themselves killed!"

Cardona considered the situation, then remarked as a matter of information:

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"Purling represented a safe manufacturer. Our records show that he installed a wall safe here. We know, also, that he paid other visits to this apartment."

SHERRED'S expression changed. It showed a recollection, while his fingers slowly drew the band from his cigar. Others were doing the same with their cigars, and Allard's eyes, almost absentminded, were noting his own.

That cigar band bore the identical monogram that had been on the band in Breer's wallet.

His eyes changing direction, The Shadow watched as Sherred spoke. "There was such a man," rumbled Sherred. "But I did not remember his name. Calvin" this was to the old servant, who stood with the valet, inside the door "do you remember the man who installed the wall safe here, and later paid visits to see if it was satisfactory?"

"I do, sir."

"Can you recall his name?"

"It was Purling, sir. Junius Purling."

"That settles it." Sherred smiled broadly, gave a shrug as he turned to Cardona. "I did know Junius Purling. I had merely forgotten it."

There was triumph in Cardona's grim expression. He heard Weston's undertone: "Ask him about Wenz" but Cardona had other ideas first. Joe questioned:

"You collect coins, Mr. Sherred?"

"Yes," rumbled Sherred. "I am a numismatist."

"There are medallions in your collection?"

Sherred shook his head.

"No longer," he replied. "I disposed of them. Ishi" he turned to the Jap "unlock the door of the numismatics room. This way, gentlemen."

Soon they were in a room where glass-topped boxes showed lines of rare coins set in a velvet backing. There was a wood-topped table in the corner.

Observed by all, Cardona drew Sherred there. Before the big man's eyes, Cardona produced the Louis medallion and clattered it to the table.

"Did you own one of these, Mr. Sherred?"

Sherred's eyes went rigid. Mechanically, he placed his cigar between his lips, picked up the medallion and examined it.

"I did have such a medallion," he admitted. "But I disposed of it, along with others."

"Is this the one?" quizzed Cardona.

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"I could not say," returned Sherred. "Who gave you this medal, inspector?"

"It was found in Purling's room," informed Cardona. "I understand, Mr. Sherred, that these medals are quite rare. No coin dealer in New York knows where another could be acquired."

For a moment, Sherred's look wasn't pleasant. It changed when he issued a deep-throated laugh.

"Because there is no demand for medallions," he declared. "Bah! I could pick up a dozen of these, through foreign dealers. This never came from my collection!"

"Nor the locket that Purling wore on his watch chain?"

Cardona thought that he had slipped home a startling thrust. He was wrong. Sherred gave an incredulous look, then delivered a guffaw.

"A locket?" His amusement increased. "I never collected such trinkets, inspector! Look" he opened the table drawer "here is the list of my medallions. Learn for yourself what items I once owned."

The Louis medallion was on the list, but there was no mention of a locket. Cardona passed the list to Weston, who shoved it to the others. As the commissioner checked each item, The Shadow looked for one he expected, and saw it.

The list of sold items included a monogrammed ten-dollar gold piece.

Noting Sherred, The Shadow speculated on what the man's reaction would have been had Cardona mentioned a gold piece instead of a locket. That opportunity was past; but other developments were due. Cardona was asking Sherred if he knew Louis Wenz.

That started another headshake, which ended abruptly when Sherred rumbled:

"You mean the crank who studied handwriting?"

"That's the man," returned Cardona. "I believe you sent him this note."

With that, Cardona produced the paper that was signed with the initials "T.S."

"I sent it," admitted Sherred. "But I cannot see why it has importance. As I said, Wenz is a crank! If he gave you this "

"He didn't give it to us."

"I don't quite follow you, inspector."

"Perhaps you will, Mr. Sherred, when I tell you that we found Wenz murdered like Purling and that the two knew each other!"

ANOTHER of Cardona's shots home failed to register as he expected. Sherred took the news of Wenz's death in rather disinterested fashion. With a shrug, he suggested that they go back to the reception room.

"Wait a moment, Mr. Sherred." Cardona was becoming blunt. "I've got another question. Do you collect antique weapons?"

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"I do. I have an excellent collection."

"Could we see them?"

"Certainly. Ishi, conduct us to the weapon room."

The Jap started to say something. Sherred rumbled angrily. Obediently, Ishi led the way out through the hall. He unlocked a door, stepped into a room and turned on a light. Sherred, in the hallway, bowed his visitors into the room.

There was a surprise when they entered. There wasn't a sign of any sort of weapon in the room. Instead, the walls were lined with swinging frames displaying mounted sets of postage stamps.

"Why did you bring us here, Ishi?" demanded Sherred, angrily. "This is the philatelic room!"

"One time, sir, it was the room with weapons."

"But they aren't here any longer "

"Maybe you remember, sir" Ishi was bowing as he spoke "but you have sold weapons, long time ago."

Sherred showed bewilderment, then leaned against the doorway and gave a long laugh at his own expense.

"So I did!" he exclaimed. "Three years ago, I parceled away the whole lot. I remember what a time that chap Radcorn had, appraising those curios. He had to make a certified list describing every item, to satisfy the purchasers."

Mention of a list was Cardona's meat. He asked Sherred where it was. Sherred replied that he did not have a copy. He had left that entirely to Radcorn, his secretary at the time.

"Don't ask me what the items were," Sherred told Cardona. "I forget a hobby as soon as I drop it."

"Maybe there's one item you'd remember," insisted Cardona. "That was a Borgia stiletto with a jeweled handle."

"Jewels? I collect them. I have a gem room "

"We're talking about a stiletto, Mr. Sherred. You don't remember it?"

Sherred shook his head, as if a memory feat would overtax him.

"What about guns?" demanded Cardona. "Did you have a baby Paterson revolving pistol with loading lever? Caliber .28?"

"I had hundreds of guns," retorted Sherred. "All antiques. How could I remember the one you mention? that is, assuming that it was in my collection."

"Get back to knives then. I want to know if you owned a Malay creese "

Sherred interrupted Cardona with a basso objection.

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"I've had enough of this folly, inspector!" boomed the bushy-browed collector. "Get to the point! What is this all about?"

BLUNTLY, Cardona told him. He specified that three murders had been done with the weapons mentioned. When Joe added that the case concerned the Green Hoods, Sherred showed understanding; but even that disappointed Cardona. Sherred promptly claimed that his only knowledge of the organization had been gleaned from recent newspaper accounts.

"You were looking for Member 10, I understand," said Sherred, at last. "From what you tell me, you found him tonight. When you discovered Louis Wenz, you merely landed a dead murderer instead of a live one.

"Since he was the one Green Hood you wanted, it is obvious that he stabbed Breer with the stiletto that you mention. Also that he murdered Purling with the antique pistol. As for Wenz, he was hounded so closely that he obviously committed suicide."

The final remark roused Cardona's sarcasm.

"You've got something Mr. Sherred," voiced Joe. "That's a swell theory a man committing suicide by stabbing himself with a Malay creese! Only, you've forgotten something. He'd have needed a helper for that little job. I suppose you'd class the guy that knifed Wenz as an accessory to a suicide."

Cardona's eyes were hardened; they were fixed steadily on Sherred, all the while the inspector spoke. Suppressed rage showed on Sherred's lips, then changed to a bitter smile.

"Come!" snapped Sherred. "I have something to show all of you!"

This time, it was Sherred who led the way, through a new array of corridors. Only Allard recognized where that course would end. His thin lips had the semblance of a smile when Sherred opened a door and gestured the callers through.

They stepped into another corridor. From behind them, Sherred spoke testily, as they turned to face him.

"Solve your own riddles!" jabbed the big-voiced collector. "Should you need to visit me again, commissioner, or you, inspector, I would suggest that you telephone and arrange an appointment in advance. You will always find me here. Good-night!"

A bulky hand slammed the door. The callers heard the clatter of a bolt. Weston looked around; so did Cardona. For the first time, they realized where they were. Tobias Sherred had ushered them out through the side door of his apartment.

Stormily, Cardona started to hammer at the door. He stopped when Weston commented:

"We must wait, Cardona. We shall need more evidence before we can handle Tobias Sherred."

For once, Commissioner Weston had spoken an opinion with which The Shadow agreed. There was still a trail to follow, another clue to find, before either The Shadow or the law could demand a showdown.

CHAPTER XV. THE FOURTH STUDIO

JOE CARDONA did not visit Tobias Sherred the next day, but he did the nearest thing to it. He called Sherred by telephone five times. Commissioner Weston had granted Cardona that permission.

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With Sherred, lay the reason for the five calls. The irate collector was friendly enough to open conversation every time he heard Cardona's voice; but as soon as he answered a few questions, he became savage and slammed down the receiver.

Cardona had to call up again and again, to resume the quiz where he had dropped it. In this piecemeal fashion, the ace inspector finally gathered all the answers that he wanted. Those went into a report sheet that lay on Cardona's desk. Soon afterward, the full details reached The Shadow.

The data were acquired through Fritz, the headquarters janitor, who always mopped up Cardona's office after five o'clock. On this day, however; the office was mopped twice; once when Cardona was absent, again when he was there.

It wasn't Fritz who did the second job. It was The Shadow. Clad in overalls, shambling about with a dull look on his made-up face, The Shadow produced a perfect impersonation of the real Fritz.

The Shadow was cloaked in black when he arrived in his sanctum later. There, beneath the blue light, he transcribed the questions that Cardona had put to Sherred, with the answers that the wealthy hobbyist had given.

Sherred accounted for his actions on the night of the triple murder. He had gone out at seven o'clock to dine alone at a little restaurant. He remembered the name of the place, which was quite a feat on his part, as it was his habit to dine at many different restaurants.

After dinner, Sherred had gone back to his apartment; he had left there at about quarter of nine, to attend a weekly directors' meeting at a downtown bank. The meeting had been scheduled for nine-thirty. Sherred claimed that he had arrived there early.

Checking on the statements, Cardona had called the restaurant that Sherred named. No one was willing to swear that Sherred had been there that night between the hours of seven and eight.

In his report, Cardona summed it that Sherred could have visited both Wenz and Purling, prior to half past eight on the night that they had died; also, that Sherred could have been at the meeting of the Green Hoods when Breer was murdered.

Since the professor's house was on the way downtown, there would have also been time for Sherred to stop there a while, before continuing to the bank directors' meeting.

Therefore, Sherred could have been the Green Hood who had engaged in murderous crime; a pretender, posing as a member of the organization. Wenz's warning note to Breer had spoken of an insidious outsider, and Sherred fitted that description.

Classing Sherred as the green-hooded murderer was a step; proving him such was another. It was a long skip between those steps; too long a hop for Joe Cardona.

The ace inspector had seen a way to bridge the gap. He had tried to make Sherred cough up a few answers on another subject. Cardona's questions concerned a man who had been mentioned by Sherred; the former secretary, whose name was Radcorn.

Sherred knew nothing about Radcorn; at least, so he said. The fellow's first name was Holton; he had left Sherred's employ for reasons of his own. Cardona, however, would not be satisfied until he found Radcorn. He was already taking steps to locate the fellow. So was The Shadow.

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ON the sanctum table lay reports from searching agents. They gave details regarding several Radcorns. One name particularly interested The Shadow. It was that of Arthur Radcorn.

The man had written several articles on travel. In one of his early efforts a mere squib, written three years ago he had used the name Arthur H. Radcorn. If that "H." stood for Holton, he could be the man who might furnish evidence.

The Shadow had already observed the importance of a middle initial, in the case of Tobias M. Sherred.

Tracing Radcorn was a problem in itself; but The Shadow had worked it through Clyde Burke. The newspaper reporter knew many writers.

Through a chain of inquiries, he learned that Radcorn had made trips to Mexico with an artist friend; that Radcorn, when in New York, frequently lived at the artist's studio.

The Shadow had the studio's location. It was on the top floor of an old apartment house in a secluded neighborhood; the fourth in line from the north side of the building. Adjoining the old apartment house was a newer one, two stories higher.

On The Shadow's table lay a plan of the studio building. It presented problems of its own. Reaching the building directly from the street was difficult, for there were empty houses across the way that offered excellent spots of ambush.

The roof was a possible route of entry, despite its narrow ledge. The difficulty there was that a skylight had to be used; once inside, an intruder could be easily trapped. The studios had high ceilings; it would be a long drop through.

Moreover, the roof itself offered places where lurkers could be in wait. Remembering his previous experiences with thugs who served the Green Hood, The Shadow decided upon deceptive tactics. Not only did he want a chance to search Radcorn's place before the law did; he preferred to have it look as though his quest had failed. That meant a two-person job. Only one of The Shadow's agents was light enough in build, wiry enough in action, to handle his part of the task. That agent was "Hawkeye," who spotted crooks in the underworld.

Tonight, as on other nights, Hawkeye was busy trying to locate the place where the Green Hood had taken Evelyn Rayle to quiz her with the Truth Inducer.

A laugh whispered from The Shadow's lips. He saw a way to keep Hawkeye on the job. He had thought of a substitute, who possessed the needed qualifications, including grit.

The Shadow contacted Burbank, held a brief conversation across the wire that connected with the sanctum. Late reports came in from agents. Those received, The Shadow extinguished the sanctum light. A swish betokened his departure.

IN the quiet atmosphere of Breer's old house, Evelyn Rayle was spending a dreary evening. She was still living there, at the law's order, with a plainclothes man on duty outside the house.

Joe Cardona had an idea that the murderous Green Hood might make another trip to Breer's, although no evidence pointed to it. Cardona simply went on the theory that any bet was worth while.

Evelyn was reading a magazine. The lamp threw a glow across her shoulder, to form a large circle on the

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floor. Beyond that, the fringes of the room blended with gloom. The door was no more than a whitish outline.

Unseen by Evelyn, that door moved inward.

There was something eerie in the motion. There was no sound; no token of a living presence. The door itself might have been a pallid ghost, for it swung slowly back to its original position and closed tightly without a click of the knob.

A sudden tenseness gripped Evelyn. The girl stared toward the door; she couldn't see it. Gloom seemed to cloud it; then the upper portion of the door frame appeared as a blurred line. The sight was fantastic, especially when more of the door came into view.

It was as if some one had stretched an invisible hand to peel away a curtain of airy blackness!

Dropping the magazine, Evelyn gripped the chair arm. Still staring at the door, she came half to her feet. At that moment, there was a stir close beside her; but Evelyn didn't hear it. She was too intent in her gaze, wondering why she could at last see all the door but no sign of the cause that had obscured it.

A form rose beside the chair. Into the lamplight came a long-fingered hand. It rested upon Evelyn's sleeve, clamped there with a touch that was firm, but not heavy.

From Evelyn's lips came a gasp, as her eyes went downward. A deep sparkle met her stare. She saw a glimmering jewel that shone with purplish hue. From its depths came fiery bursts, that changed the hue to a deep crimson tint.

The Shadow's girasol!

Recognition of that symbol turned Evelyn's gasp into a relieved sigh. The girl's head raised. Her eyes met those of The Shadow. She saw orbs that reflected the light with as strange a burn as that of the fire opal.

Lips spoke. They were hidden by the folds of an upraised cloak collar; but Evelyn knew that tone. Sinister, a terror to men of crime, the voice of The Shadow carried confidence to those who stood for justice.

Each word implanted itself upon Evelyn. Her own eyes sparkled. The Shadow was bringing her an opportunity to aid in finding the Green Hood's trail. If all went well, The Shadow would be ready for his final moves against a master murderer.

Evelyn's nod was eager in its response. She was willing to aid; prepared to obey every command.

THE SHADOW stepped toward the window. Evelyn followed; the sash was open when she reached there, although she had not heard it being raised. The Shadow's hand helped her across the sill. Clad in her dark suit, Evelyn was well-blended with the outside gloom.

A whispered word The Shadow's gloved hand gripped Evelyn's wrist. She, in turn, took a similar clasp upon The Shadow's arm. Locked tightly, Evelyn let herself swing outward, using her free hand to guide along the house wall.

That trip downward was incredible. It did not stop at the limit of The Shadow's arm reach. He, too, was over the window ledge, letting his own body downward, while his free hand gripped a hold.

Though his method seemed effortless, Evelyn recognized the strength that it represented. By a mere finger

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clutch, The Shadow was supporting both his own weight and the girl's.

Another low-toned order. Evelyn pressed outward from the wall, released her own grip. That was the signal. The Shadow's gloved fingers relaxed. Easily, Evelyn dropped the remaining distance to the courtyard, landing lightly.

Soon, The Shadow was beside her. He guided the girl to the rear street, where they boarded a parked cab. There was a trip of a dozen blocks; the taxi halted behind an apartment house. Picking a path with a tiny flashlight, The Shadow took Evelyn through a basement doorway, into a service elevator.

When they reached the top, there was a metal stairway to the roof. The Shadow's light went out before they met the night air. Once on the roof, he warned for silence in a whisper that Evelyn barely heard.

Crouched against a parapet, The Shadow turned Evelyn's chin, so she could gaze to the next roof, two floors below this level. There, raised slightly above a ledge, was a sloped surface that showed a line of skylights; some with a glow, others dark oblongs of glass.

Evelyn's eyes were squarely toward the fourth. It was darkened, but plainly seen in reflected glow from the city. The Shadow had already mentioned what that skylight meant. It was the entrance to the fourth studio; the one that was often occupied by a man named Radcorn.

The search of that studio was to be Evelyn's task. In a whisper almost as low as The Shadow's, the girl repeated her readiness to continue to the goal.

CHAPTER XVI. THE GREEN MENACE

THE first test proved Evelyn's mettle. To reach the lower roof, The Shadow had to let her down from the parapet, as he had done from the window of Breer's house. The value of the rehearsal was evident to Evelyn as soon as she was over the edge. If she hadn't had proof of The Shadow's ability, her nerve might have vanished.

There was an eight-foot gap between the higher building and the one that adjoined it!

The Shadow had cut some of that space, for he was hanging from the cornice, with Evelyn swaying below him.

Smooth muscles produced a pendulum motion; with every swing, Evelyn came closer to the other roof.

Seconds seemed interminable; Evelyn wondered if The Shadow's strength could continue. Uncertainly, she began to loose her fingers from the arm above her.

The Shadow's whisper brought her new confidence.

"Wait until you are sure."

A few more swings, Evelyn gave the signal. The Shadow kept his grip for another swing in the darkness. Timed to perfection, his hand let Evelyn's wrist go free.

The girl felt the outward impetus of that drop. It swung her through the air over the intervening space. It was a six-foot sweep with a safe landing past the edge of the farther roof.

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With both hands, The Shadow gave an inward swing that took his body beneath the cornice. A long reverse snap, and he catapulted himself outward and backward.

Evelyn caught a fleeting flash of his descending shape as it precipitated toward her. Half flung about, The Shadow caught the very roof edge as he landed beside the girl.

It was some distance to the skylights. They crossed a flat space, where chimneys loomed like scarecrow sentinels. The Shadow edged Evelyn beneath a string of radio aerials. They went under a squatty water tower supported by three metal legs.

To Evelyn, that hulk seemed a monstrous creature ready to scoop them in its maw.

That fantasy ended. They were on the ledge, crouched low in the darkness. The Shadow worked Evelyn past a lighted skylight. The others were less troublesome; the trip seemed serene when they reached the slanted window that covered the fourth studio.

The Shadow jimmied the glass barrier in silent style. He flicked a flashlight into the space below, saw the dusty floor of the studio. The descent looked safe for Evelyn. Again, The Shadow's strong arm swung the girl into space. But this drop was a simple one.

Evelyn took The Shadow's flashlight with her. Once satisfied that all was clear, she blinked a signal. The skylight lowered above her. Evelyn heard it latch in place.

The girl knew The Shadow's reason for that precaution. Its value was proven, a few minutes later. From his position on the ledge, The Shadow heard the sneaky tread of rubber-soled shoes coming along from the opposite direction. He pulled himself up the sloped roof, flattened there in inconspicuous position.

Halted beside the skylight of Radcorn's studio, the soft-shoed prowler made an inspection of the catch. Satisfied that no one had entered, the guard made a return journey to the other end of the ledge.

Thanks to his plan of accompanying Evelyn, The Shadow had covered the act of entry.

THE watcher on the roof hadn't caught the glimmer of Evelyn's flashlight, for the girl was using it guardedly, as The Shadow had instructed her.

Keeping the light muffled, Evelyn covered the entire studio but found nothing of value. The place looked as though it had been deserted for months.

There was a door at the front. The Shadow had told Evelyn that it led into a little hallway forming an entrance to the studio. Extinguishing the flashlight, Evelyn started to open that door. She made the move cautiously, which was fortunate.

The door was only open a crack when Evelyn caught the blink of another flashlight. She heard the rustle of papers.

Some one was in that entry, apparently engaged in a search of his own! Evelyn sneaked back to the skylight.

As she watched the dull glow above it, she saw a stretch of darkness glide across. That was an intermittent signal promised by The Shadow. A blink of her light, he would open the skylight again.

Louder crinkles from the entry made Evelyn wait. She sensed that the other person's search was finished. It

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would be better to let him start away, for The Shadow wanted secrecy.

A thud of the outer door told Evelyn that the little hallway was vacated. Eagerly, the girl headed to the spot. Her flashlight showed that the entry had a tiny closet, with no door. In it, Evelyn spied a fair-size cardboard box scrawled with the name "Radcorn". It contained an odd assortment of letters and old papers.

Though the search seemed useless. Evelyn made it. The mixed papers weren't many. It wouldn't take long to go through them. As it happened, Evelyn took only half a minute; for she didn't have to complete the search.

Almost immediately, she came upon a manila envelope with the name "Sherred" typed in a corner. Along with a few letters that were within it, Evelyn found a list that bore a notary's seal. The date, the items given, proved this to be the very document she wanted.

Evelyn had found the certified list of Sherred's collection of antique weapons!

Tucking the precious paper in a fold of her dress, Evelyn started back toward the skylight. She was as eager to leave as she had been to come. She didn't know or care why the previous searcher had interrupted his own task; she merely wanted to be gone before he returned.

Evelyn didn't realize a mistake that she had made. In the studio itself, she had been cautious with the flashlight. She had not been so careful in the hallway.

The outer door had a wide crack beneath it; that was something she had noticed, but had not thought about. Evelyn remembered it, five seconds later.

As she blinked for The Shadow, she heard another thump of the outer door. She put away the flashlight, made a quick turn toward the little hallway.

The inner door swung open; a hand pressed a light switch. Lamps came on; they weren't bright, but their glow was sufficient for Evelyn to recognize the foe who had returned.

Framed in the open doorway stood the Green Hood!

SOMEHOW, Evelyn recognized the insidious eyes that peered through the slitted mask. There was enough ugliness in them to identify this intruder as the same murderer who had once captured her. His forced voice grated on her ears, as harshly as it had before.

"Again you have mixed in my affairs" the Green Hood emphasized those words with a gesture of his gun "and this time, you will pay the penalty! Try to escape, if you can. It will be no use!

"You came through the skylight." The murderer's comment was a sneer. "Very well, return by it. This time, you will not cross the roof unnoticed. My watchers will hear my signal. Their bullets will riddle you. Unless" the Green Hood gave a vicious laugh "unless I should prefer to drop you first!"

Evelyn was staring at the killer's gun. It was the antique pistol that he always carried. Seeing the girl's gaze, the Green Hood forgot the skylight. He drew closer.

"Yes" his hiss was muffled by the hood over his head "this gun is best. It means more bullets for the police to study. New mystery, to find you dead in this place "

This time, it was the Green Hood's mistake that brought an interruption. Just as Evelyn had forgotten the

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outer door, so did the murderer ignore the skylight. Before his finger could press the trigger of the old revolving pistol, the skylight whipped upward.

In from the darkness, a gloved fist shoved an automatic. Challenging lips uttered a shivery defy that the Green Hood had heard before. He sped a look upward, then made a break for the door, diving as he went. Caught completely off guard, the Green Hood wasn't risking battle with The Shadow.

The space of one short second held the fate of the murderer. In that interval, The Shadow stabbed one shot for the killer's back. By all rights and averages, that should have brought the master crook's doom. Luck, alone, made the Green Hood the exception to the almost certain rule.

Because of Evelyn, The Shadow shifted aim. The girl was too close to the path of fire. That, coupled with the killer's chance side-twist, enabled the Green Hood to reach the safety of the little hallway.

The murderer turned; once he was outside the studio, he hoped for a shot at Evelyn. He took too much time about it. The Shadow was swinging down from the skylight.

Evelyn heard his quick command, caught the outstretched arm. The Green Hood saw the girl hoisted to safety.

Savagely, the murderer fired; but belatedly. Again, The Shadow swung inward as the killer paused. A .45 tongued; but the Green Hood hadn't waited. He was clattering down the stairway of the apartment house.

ON the roof ledge, Evelyn gave quick warning to The Shadow. The men the Green Hood had mentioned were on hand. They fired as they came along the ledge, but their shots were too hasty.

The Shadow swung up to meet the spurts of revolvers. His automatic answered. One thug took a clipping shot, made a long sprawl over the edge, shrieking as he went. Another slumped; clawed vainly for a hold. Before anyone could reach him, he took a slow-motion slide over the same roof edge.

The others four of them were on the run for distant chimneys. Evelyn saw one flatten like a puppet; another did the same, a moment later. Each mobster's flounder was timed to a spurt from The Shadow's gun.

Even with thugs scattered and fightless, departure by the high roof was no longer wise. The Shadow swung Evelyn down into the studio, then followed.

As they headed for the stairs, the quick-witted girl remembered the list that she had found in Radcorn's papers. She thrust the precious paper into The Shadow's hand.

There was excitement when they reached the street. The Green Hood was on the curb by the next corner, ready to jump into an automobile. He was firing at two policemen who had spotted him. Taking instant aim, The Shadow fired.

The range was too long for such a hurried shot, but the bullet came within an inch of the murderer's ear. He heard it whistle past; he saw The Shadow. Leaping into the car, he fired a wild shot as he went.

That was the Green Hood's last bullet. Madly, he flung his antique pistol at an officer who tried to grab him. The car sped around the corner; a fire plug stopped the bullet that The Shadow fired at the gasoline tank.

Moe's cab wheeled into view. The Shadow's clever cabby was always Johnny-on-the-spot. The Shadow put Evelyn aboard; as the cab spun away, he made his own path through the darkness, picking the space between

the two apartment buildings.

Crime had reared up again tonight. Crooks had tried to down The Shadow, to their own disaster. To some degree, however, the Green Hood had gotten results. In addition to his escape, he had spoiled The Shadow's plan to obtain Radcorn's list without revealing his own presence.

That did not disturb The Shadow. He had an alternative: a shift of strategy. A laugh in the dark a parting strain of shuddering mirth –proved that The Shadow would soon have an answer for the riddle of the Green Hood.

CHAPTER XVII. TWO FROM FIVE

CLIPPINGS and report sheets lay on The Shadow's table. Together, they told all that had happened since the battle in the artist's studio Radcorn sometimes used. Newspaper accounts told how police had sighted the Green Hood; how the murderer had lost the .28–caliber antique pistol. The wanted gun was owned by the law. Ballistic tests proved that it had discharged the bullet that killed Junius Purling.

On a sheet of paper, The Shadow summarized the law's clues in ink of vivid blue:

Borgia stiletto

Baby Paterson .28

Malay creese

To those, he added three more bits of evidence found at Purling's, plus one from Wenz's home:

Paper with "WE"

Louis medallion

Chain with charm missing

Note signed "T. S."

The writing dried and faded, the way with notations that The Shadow made. But before the ink had finally vanished, The Shadow's own clues lay on the table.

They were five in number. Two were the hotel phone memo from the Triton and the monogrammed cigar band marked with a notation in the handwriting of Professor Breer.

A third was the coin with the same monogram, brought from the room where Purling had died; another, the carbon paper from Wenz's house. The last was Radcorn's certified list of Sherrred's weapon collection.

In that list, The Shadow had checked the Borgia stiletto, the Baby Paterson .28, and the wavy–bladed creese.

The Shadow had an afterthought. He added it to the paper on which he had written the law's list of clues:

Message from Wenz to Breer

That message was actually in The Shadow's own possession in duplicate form, for he had its imprint on the

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sheet of green carbon paper.

Letting his own clues rest, The Shadow studied data that gave the inside of the newspaper stories. Though the trail led to Tobias Sherred, the law had not yet mentioned that fact. It wasn't wise, for the law didn't have the goods.

Learning of the battle at the studio, Cardona had put in a call to Sherred's home, hoping to find him out. That would have helped Cardona prove that Sherred was the Green Hood. It happened that Cardona had been totally thwarted in that call.

Ishi, the Jap valet, had answered. He had said that Mr. Sherred was tired of talking to the police and would not converse over the phone. Cardona had hot-footed it up to the Middleton Apartments; when Calvin answered the door, the old servant announced that his master had retired.

Joe hadn't insisted on seeing Sherred. By that time, the collector could have arrived home from Radcorn's studio.

Cardona had mentioned these facts to Commissioner Weston, in the presence of Kent Allard. He had also expressed the opinion that the Green Hood had made away with Radcorn's list of Sherred's weapons, assuming that there had been such a list at the studio.

Radcorn, it appeared, was somewhere in Yucatan, getting material for travel articles. There was no way to reach him for purposes of inquiry.

That summary finished, The Shadow turned to an important fact of his own finding. More than twenty-four hours had passed since the studio episode, but in that time, The Shadow's agents had been rewarded after an unceasing search.

They had found the blind alleyway with gate entrance and broken paving. It answered Evelyn's description of the place where the Green Hood had taken her, even to the brick wall on one side and concrete on the other.

The alley lay between the end row of some old houses and the blank wall of a warehouse. It was in a very disreputable district the sort that the Green Hood would choose for his thugs to visit.

Agents had noted hoodlums skulking thereabouts. Chances were that Breer's Truth Inducer was still housed in the hide-out at the end of the alley.

Burbank's signal light glowed. The Shadow answered the contact man's call. The report concerned Evelyn.

She had been constantly guarded by agents of The Shadow, detached from the search duty. She had just finished a trip in Moe's cab. Passing the alley with the metal gate, Evelyn had positively identified it as the right one.

The Shadow's lips phrased a sardonic laugh. Its chilly echoes bespoke future action. The Shadow was ready for a bold move, to crack the case of the Green Hood.

Long fingers plucked the clues that lay on the table. Methodically, they separated the bits of evidence. One by one, The Shadow chose three items: the cigar band, the engraved ten-dollar gold piece, and Radcorn's list of weapons.

The Shadow placed those articles in an envelope. He wrote a note in blue ink, folded it in with the clues. He

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addressed the envelope to Inspector Joe Cardona.

From the total of five, The Shadow reserved two items for himself: the hotel memo received by Professor Breer; the much-scored carbon paper that had been in Wenz's wastebasket.

It was dawn when The Shadow left his sanctum.

SHORTLY after noon that same day, Inspector Cardona found The Shadow's envelope upon his desk at headquarters. Joe couldn't guess how it arrived there. The one person to whom he would never have attributed the secret delivery was Fritz, the janitor.

In fact, Fritz hadn't actually delivered it. The envelope had been left by the janitor's double, otherwise The Shadow.

Speculation of that angle didn't bother Cardona. He was most concerned with the value of the clues that had popped in from nowhere. Every one was a sure bet.

The cigar band had Sherred's initials; and it had certainly once been in Breer's possession, for the professor's own handwriting proved that.

The coin also bore Sherred's initials, which marked it as a former item in his collection. It linked directly with Purling, for it fitted the broken end of the safe salesman's watch charm.

As for the itemized list of Sherred's weapon collection, Cardona didn't care whether it had come from Radcorn's or not. It was certified by a notary; there would be no trouble proving its authenticity.

Cardona was dubious on one matter only. That was the contents of The Shadow's note. It gave explicit instructions for Joe to follow, in return for the evidence. For a while, the police ace wondered if he dared go through with it. At last, he decided that it was the only course.

Putting the clues in a safe place, Cardona reached for a telephone to call a newspaper office. He was saved that trouble when a wiry, keen-eyed young man strolled into the office. The chance visitor was Clyde Burke, of the Classic:

"Hello, Joe!" greeted Clyde. "Anything new on the Green Hood stuff?"

"There is," returned Cardona, "and since you've walked in at the right time, I'll let you make the most of it. Print this in your sheet: We've landed new clues on the case!"

"By tomorrow, they'll be public. We'll have the murderer. What's more we've got evidence that he doesn't even know about! Play that part big, Burke."

Cardona grinned after Clyde had gone. That story was going to be a jolt for Sherred. It was exactly as The Shadow had ordered it. What was more, Cardona figured that The Shadow had the right dope.

There was one item that Sherred probably didn't know about. That was the cigar band from one of Sherred's own cigars, with Breer's notation on the back. It was a dandy, that clue. It linked Sherred with Breer, as he was with Purling and Wenz.

A FEW hours later, newsboys were shouting the big story. It produced the very result that Cardona expected: a call from Commissioner Weston. Joe didn't answer the telephone; when he heard who was on the wire, he

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told the detective who answered it to stall a minute.

"Tell him I'm out," ordered Cardona, remembering a suggestion from The Shadow's message. "Say that I'll get to his place at eight o'clock."

The detective relayed that news to Weston. Then, in an undertone, he told to Cardona:

"The commish is plenty sore! Wants to know if you left a message for "

"Tell him this," interposed Cardona, "like you were reading it off a slip of paper. That I've got the clues the Classic talks about I'm out trying to dig up more I'll be at his place at eight o'clock."

"Say that I want to get hold of all the bunch that were members of the Green Hoods. That I'd like it if he'd call them and have them show up at nine. That maybe they'll help us when they see the clues."

The detective did a good job passing the message along. When he hung up the receiver, he said that Weston sounded a whole lot different. Joe grinned; again, he owed a debt to The Shadow. That sort of stuff, having all the former Green Hoods in for a conference, was the kind that Weston liked.

Clear of headquarters, Cardona found himself in an unusual position. He was keeping out of sight, dodging anyone who might recognize him. He realized he was getting good experience, for he was learning how crooks felt when they were in the same situation.

That wasn't all that Cardona was due to learn. The end of his dodging was to mark the beginning of another sort of experience. There was an indicator that might have given Joe the right idea; but the ace inspector didn't catch it.

The Shadow had ordered Cardona to leave the three items of evidence at headquarters. It didn't occur to Joe that the reason The Shadow wanted them there was because something was to happen to the ace himself.

CARDONA finished dinner at quarter past seven. He decided to walk to the commissioner's apartment, which was about fifteen blocks away.

It was twenty minutes of eight when Cardona strolled past the final corner. There were some touring cars parked at the curb. Cardona didn't notice that anyone was in them, until the occupants popped out.

Inside of ten seconds, Cardona was overpowered by half a dozen thugs, who fairly smothered him with their attack.

Snatched almost from the commissioner's doorstep, the struggling inspector was heaved aboard one of the touring cars. The caravan started; in the middle automobile, huskies had silenced Cardona with adhesive plaster across his face. Battle was useless; they had Joe's wrists and ankles bound.

The cars followed a twisting course. All along the route, the crooks were watching for trailers. Satisfied that they were entirely clear, they pulled into a side street where a warehouse bulked near the end of a long row of houses.

Cardona was carried through a gate, along battered paving. He was taken down stone steps, in through an underground passage past rooms that looked like cells. He was finally planted in a chair set in the center of the end room.

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There, a glaring light was thrown on Cardona's face. It made him feel like a prisoner brought into a police line-up. That was bad; but it was worse when the chief of Joe's captors stepped into the light.

Face rigid, Joe Cardona met the gaze of glaring eyes that peered through the eyeholes of a green hood. He recognized the type of robe that covered his captor's shoulders.

Joe Cardona had followed instructions from The Shadow. That deed had brought the police inspector to this plight. The situation was so stunning, that the prisoner could hardly grasp it.

Yet the facts were real. Joe Cardona was in the power of the master murderer who masked as the Green Hood!

CHAPTER XVIII. CARDONA TALKS

BOTHERED by the glare of the focused light, Joe Cardona found it difficult to observe the Green Hood closely. There were moments when the robed murderer stepped into the light, but that did not help much.

The green garb was evasive. The lowered hood hid the face, except for its eyes and a slight glimpse of lips through the mouth slit. They weren't enough to provide an adequate description. The best that Cardona could do was to try to picture how Tobias Sherred would appear, if thus attired.

That gave Joe a jot of satisfaction. He was willing to swear that this figure might be Sherred.

The Green Hood spoke. His voice grated; but it was a forced tone. The tone wasn't as deep as Sherred's usual one, but it could be his. Over the telephone, Cardona had noted that Sherred raised the pitch of his voice when he became excited.

It would be smart business for him to do the same when playing the role of the Green Hood. That was a foregone conclusion on Cardona's part.

"You have talked too much," rasped the murderer. "That is why I have brought you. Since you have talked to the wrong persons" the Green Hood inserted a sharp chuckle "I am giving you opportunity to speak to the right one!"

A green-clad arm swept forward; fingers, gloved in a sleeve end, ripped the adhesive plaster from Cardona's lips. A pair of thugs slipped up in back of the prisoner, slashed the ropes that bound him. That done, the pair retired to corners, leaving the Green Hood alone with Cardona.

Curiously, Cardona no longer felt like offering fight. There was a heaviness to the atmosphere of the underground room. It lulled Joe, although he didn't realize it. The truth gas was seeping into the chamber, tingeing the air by degrees.

The Green Hood drew up a chair, seated himself opposite the prisoner. He reached to one side, drew over a small machine that had a dial. He started to attach a rubber tube around Cardona's forearm, like a physician taking a patient's blood pressure.

Cardona was interested. He watched the Green Hood wrap his own arm. It was then that Joe's face lost its contemptuous expression. The ace was up against something that he hadn't expected.

The Green Hood intended to quiz him, using Professor Breer's Truth Inducer!

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CARDONA tried to scramble to his feet. The thugs piled from their corners, forced him back into his chair. The mild increase of the gas wasn't bothering them; they had taken previous doses. But the effect was becoming powerful on Cardona.

Monotonously, the Green Hood droned questions. At first, Cardona's lips twitched, holding back replies. Then, spontaneously, he began to answer. The Green Hood was inquiring details regarding the law's investigation.

Every answer that Cardona gave was the truth!

At moments, Joe wavered. Always, the Green Hood had his eyes upon the dial. Whenever it fluctuated, he repeated his question sharply; sometimes he changed its wording. The method worked. Cardona kept on giving the correct answers.

The quizzing murderer was too intent upon the dial to observe anything else. The watchful thugs were completely engrossed with noting Cardona. Their lips were tight, holding back the jeers that they wanted to mouth.

This was great stuff! Joe Cardona, old poker-face, blabbing away everything he knew! The Green Hood was a smart guy. Nobody could match him not even The Shadow!

With side-mouthed words, the thugs expressed those opinions as they drew together in one corner. Their mention of The Shadow was more timely than they knew.

The door of the room had opened a tiny space. An observer stood there one who had slipped the cordon of thugs, by the simple expedient of being inside the underground lair before the crooks arrived.

A keen eye sparkled at the door edge. The blackened muzzle of an automatic jutted through, as unnoticed as the gloved hand that held it. The Shadow had thrust Cardona into this mess. He was on hand to see that Joe came out of it.

As he watched, The Shadow heard the Green Hood come to the vital questions.

"Today," the murderer rasped to Cardona, "you talked to a reporter –"

"Yeah." Cardona was answering without heavy persuasion. "Burke of the Classic."

"And you told him you had new clues?"

"Sure! They came in this noon."

"From whom?"

"From The Shadow. That's what the note said. I've got new evidence, right enough. I put away the things The Shadow sent me."

"How many items?"

"Three."

With a satisfied hiss, the Green Hood paused. He was getting to his climax. Eyes lifting from the dial, the

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master criminal ordered:

"Name them."

CARDONA hesitated. The dial showed a quiver when the Green Hood eyed it. The robed inquisitor reworded his question, to take the quiz by degrees.

"What was the first clue?"

"A cigar band," admitted Cardona. "It's got the monogram 'T.M.S.' on it. There's writing on the back; and I know who wrote it. Professor Breer. It says: 'Must investigate this' and that's all."

The Green Hood watched the pointer of the dial steady; then: "The second item "

"A charm off Purling's watch chain," returned Cardona. "It isn't a locket, like I thought it would be. It's a ten-dollar gold piece. One side's scraped, and it has the same initials as the cigar band."

"And the third "

"The list I thought you swiped from Radcorn's. Only, The Shadow must have picked it up, instead. It names all the weapons that we've grabbed. They're from the collection that belonged to "

This time, desire to speak truth emboldened Cardona. His voice was gruff, his eyes had flash. The Green Hood met Joe's glare; masked lips rasped the question:

"Belonged to whom?"

"To you, Sherred!" Cardona was on his feet, tugging away the wrapping that bound his arm. "You're the murderer I'm out to get!"

The Green Hood was wrenching loose to meet Cardona's spasmodic attack. Henchmen sprang forward, ready to slug the prisoner with their guns. The unnoticed door swung wider; The Shadow was prepared to deliver bullets. The thrust proved unneeded.

Cardona's speed faded. The Green Hood was loose from the Truth Inducer apparatus, shoving Joe back into his chair. The thugs didn't need to swing their guns. The Green Hood's hiss halted them.

"Put him away," sneered the triumphant murderer. "In the second cell on the right. You have one thing in your favor, inspector" the tone was biting "You are harmless! Only your information counts.

"It will never be used against me. What I shall do with you remains to be seen. Perhaps I can use you, once your teeth are drawn. By teeth, I mean those clues. I shall induce you to hand them over.

"Or I may dispose of you. Circumstances alone will tell. In any event, you are helpless. Reconcile yourself to the fact. Later, I shall talk with you again."

A GESTURE of a green-clad arm, and the thugs dragged Cardona to the very door where The Shadow had waited. He was gone, blended with the darkness of an opposite doorway, when the hoodlums shoved Cardona into the cell that the Green Hood had specified.

The murderer came personally to lock the cell door. He listened outside, heard Cardona thrashing about

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within. There was a clatter, as if Cardona had started a frenzied attack on a grating. Soon, the noise ceased.

Out through the corridor, the Green Hood strode. The Shadow let him pass. The thugs followed; The Shadow heard the command that their chief gave them. They were to watch the alleyway, and make occasional visits to the door of Cardona's cell.

One other point was mentioned. The Shadow understood it from the Green Hood's gesture back toward the innermost room. Other henchmen would be arriving later, to remove the Truth Inducer to another hide-out.

Soon, The Shadow was alone in the dim corridor. He glided across, listened outside Cardona's cell. He could hear a muffled stir, inside. It ceased.

Silently, The Shadow began to work on the lock. It was a tough one; but his smooth picks solved it after minutes of effort.

Easing the door inward, The Shadow entered Cardona's cell. He spoke in a warning whisper as he blinked his flashlight.

The cell was empty!

Above, The Shadow saw a wrenched grating. It accounted for the rattles that Cardona had made. The steelwork was strong; Cardona could not have broken it. But the cell had a weakness that Joe had discovered. Mortar had crumpled beneath the whitewash that covered the stones of the window frame.

His strength returning, Cardona had broken the Green Hood's trap. Like the murderer, the police inspector was at large although Cardona's departure had been somewhat delayed.

The Shadow's rescue was not required.

A laugh sounded, hollow in the confines of the cell. Its tone denoted that the present situation suited The Shadow. Moving back to the cell door, The Shadow closed it from the inside, used his pick to turn the lock.

Brief minutes were all The Shadow waited. He heard shuffling footsteps beyond the door. Thugs were listening outside. The Shadow shook the grating that hung from one edge of the window. The sound satisfied the inspecting mobsters.

Back at the door again, The Shadow heard more sounds. The crew the Green Hood mentioned had arrived. They were taking away the apparatus that formed the Truth Inducer. There was a compressed gas tank with it. The Shadow could hear growls to be careful, as the appliance was lugged along.

SPEEDILY, The Shadow shifted out through the cell window. He found himself in a little air shaft; the window of another cellar was opposite. The Shadow took the same route that Cardona had followed. It brought him to a rear street.

Moving with haste through darkness, The Shadow reached an appointed spot. There, he blinked flashlight signals. A coupe came from the next block. The Shadow jumped in, gave instructions to the man at the wheel—an agent.

The coupe rounded the block. A touring car was pulling away from the entrance to the Green Hood's lair. Another car followed it with a cover-up crew. The coupe took the trail of the crooks who were carrying off the Truth Inducer. In its turn, the coupe was a guide for another automobile, carrying agents of The Shadow.

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Ten blocks away, the climax struck.

The car that held the cover-up crew was filled with vigilant thugs. They spotted the trailing coupe and eased to the curb to await it. Nearing their ambush, the light coupe snapped into terrific speed. Its pick-up was more rapid than the mobsters expected.

From the passing coupe came a fierce, challenging laugh; with it, spurts of gunfire from The Shadow's automatics. Crooks dropped low; tried to get a machine gun into play. Before they could release damaging shots, another car came smashing hard upon them.

In a second, the thug-manned car was overturned. Trigger-men went bashing to the sidewalk, their machine gun clattering in their midst. Before they could recover from that upset, agents of The Shadow were upon them.

Rising crooks were banged right and left. Groggy, they remained to be picked up by the police. The Shadow's agents boarded their own car, made a swift departure carrying the captured machine gun and a supply of seized revolvers.

Blocks ahead, the car that carried the Truth Inducer was forced to the same mistaken tactics that the cover-up car had used. It pulled to the curb to await the pursuing coupe. The light car swerved, jounced up to the sidewalk. Spinning close to a house wall, it nosed in against the touring car.

The Shadow was on the coupe's running board, one of his big automatics blasting out shots, before the crooks could realize how The Shadow had outguessed them. Some sagged; others dived, took to flight across the street.

When a police car arrived, five minutes later, the coupe was gone. The touring car was empty, save for two slumped mobsters. The Shadow had packed the Truth Inducer apparatus into the back of the coupe.

Three corners away, a weird laugh throbbed from the interior of that coupe. The strange tone came as the car swerved off into a new course. Again, the sardonic mirth of The Shadow predicted new developments.

The Green Hood had staged one climax. Soon, it would be The Shadow's turn to outmatch it with another.

CHAPTER XIX. THE VITAL LINKS

IT was quarter past nine when some cars stopped in front of the Middleton Apartments. The foremost automobile was Commissioner Weston's official car. The commissioner alighted; with him were Lionel Atherland and Robert Leng. Other persons, former members of the Green Hoods, stepped from the next automobiles.

Irritably, Weston glanced about. He saw three men come from the doorway of a store close by. The center figure of the group was Joe Cardona. The inspector was flanked by two headquarters detectives.

"Here we are, Cardona," snapped Weston, testily. "But why did you send word insisting that we leave my apartment and come here?"

"I've been watching for Sherred," returned Cardona. "He's in his apartment, but he got there before I landed here. What I've been on the job for, is to see that he doesn't get out."

"Do those mysterious clues of yours concern Sherred?"

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"They do, commissioner. You'll know all about them when we talk to him."

They went up to Sherred's apartment. Weston and Cardona led the way. Atherland was with them, because it seemed well to have him on hand, since Sherred had met him before. The rest of the large group stayed in the background, some coming up in a second elevator.

Cardona asked a question, just as they reached Sherred's door:

"Where is Mr. Allard?"

"You suggested that I summon former members of the Green Hoods," reminded Weston. "Allard was not an actual member."

Cardona remembered the fact. The Shadow's order had been to bring members of the defunct organization; no one else. Weston had interpreted that literally. Something that The Shadow had foreseen, although Cardona didn't realize it.

When Calvin opened the apartment door, Cardona shouldered through. The rest followed, passing the protesting servant. Cardona made straight for Sherred's reception room. He arrived in time to grab Ishi, as the Jap was scudding from the door.

"Where's Sherred?"

Before Ishi could answer Cardona's question, Sherred himself appeared. Gruffly, he boomed outraged words at sight of the wholesale invasion. Cardona gestured to the detectives. They shoved Sherred into the reception room.

"All you've got to do, Sherred," declared Cardona, "is listen to what I've got to say. These witnesses are going to hear it. When we're through, we'll walk out. Only" Joe shot a wise look at Weston "I think you'll be going with us!"

THE huge reception room absorbed the large group with ease. Sherred found himself seated at a table, with Cardona opposite. Weston was close by; Atherland was near the commissioner. Others were away from the center of the room.

At the doorway stood the two detectives, watching Calvin and Ishi, who seemed quite bewildered.

At Cardona's order, one of the dicks lugged in a suitcase and placed it beside the table.

"At the last meeting of the Green Hoods," announced Cardona, "Professor Smedley Breer was slain with this weapon!"

Dramatically, Cardona produced the Borgia stiletto, placed it on the table, where its jeweled handle glittered before Sherred's gaze.

"We traced through the Green Hoods," continued Cardona. "We came to Member 9. He was Junius Purling. We found him dead, killed by a bullet from this gun."

Cardona's hand swept from suitcase to table. The Baby Paterson revolving pistol thumped the woodwork.

"On this paper" Cardona had the slip with the letters W and E – "Purling tried to print a name. He left another

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clue, this Louis medallion. We found a watch chain on Purling. Here it is.

"Those led us to Louis Wenz, Member 10. We were fools enough to think that he had murdered Purling, until we found Wenz dead. In his desk was this note, signed with your initials, Sherred."

Sherred showed his first interest. He glanced at the note, gave a disdainful smile.

"I wrote that note." Sherred shrugged as he spoke. "It does not refer to the Green Hoods. It means nothing!"

"Here is another note," snapped Cardona. "A carbon one, done on Wenz's typewriter. A warning to Professor Breer to beware an outsider. Wenz meant you, Sherred."

Sherred fairly bayed his deep-throated laugh. Weston became impatient.

"Come, Cardona!" insisted the commissioner. "You've got to show us something more."

"Here it comes, commissioner."

CARDONA flattened a cigar band on the table, pointed to its monogram. He asked Sherred:

"Do you recognize this?"

"Of course!" returned Sherred. "It is one of my own bands."

"And on the back of it" Cardona turned the band over "is a notation in Breer's handwriting. How do you account for that, Sherred?"

Sherred shook his head. He wasn't much perturbed.

"It shows a link between you and Breer," asserted Cardona. "And here" Joe drew a gold piece from his pocket "is another link, which hooks you up with Purling. This is the charm that fits the end of Purling's watch chain. It has your initials, Sherred."

This time, Sherred showed a look of puzzlement. Cardona expected that. He figured the man would fake surprise.

"And most important of all" Cardona unfolded a paper "we have the certified list of your weapon collection. Look at it, commissioner" –Joe turned to Weston. "It lists the stiletto, the old pistol and this!"

From the suitcase, Cardona yanked the Malay creese. He clanged the big knife on the table, thundered the accusation:

"The weapon with which Sherred murdered Wenz!"

Sherred was on his feet, storming that all was a lie. Cardona demanded that Sherred account for his actions on this very night. To that, Sherred shouted:

"This is all a frame-up! Look!" He produced a telegram. "This came from Commissioner Weston, telling me to meet him outside the Cobalt Club at eight o'clock. I went there, commissioner; but you didn't appear."

It was Weston's turn to be stormy. He insisted that he hadn't sent the telegram. Sherred accused Cardona of

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faking it. Joe retorted that Sherred had probably faked it himself, as an alibi.

"To cover yourself when you bagged me," Cardona told Sherred. "You put the heat on me tonight, Sherred. The Truth Inducer worked, only I knew it was you, tricked up in that green outfit. The cell you shoved me into wasn't strong enough to hold me. You didn't expect to see me here, did you, Sherred?"

The big-browed collector had heard enough. Whatever Sherred's emotions, they drove him beyond his limit of endurance. He saw Cardona reach for handcuffs. With a quick movement, Sherred sprang for the door, shouting for Calvin and Ishi to aid him.

It might have gone bad with Sherred at that moment. The detectives were handling the servants, but the doorway was clear. Sherred was making for it; Cardona, drawing a revolver, had no chance to pursue. Joe's only way to stop Sherred's bolt was gunshot.

Cardona never leveled his revolver. Sherred's dive came to an abrupt stop. A figure had stepped in through the doorway, to halt the big man with a gun muzzle. Sherred sagged back, agape.

He was covered by The Shadow!

COLDLY, The Shadow laughed. His sardonic tone was mirthless. It carried command that even Sherred could not resist.

Slowly, the accused man backed to his chair behind the table. He slumped there, his eyes bulging in The Shadow's direction.

Before the amazed gaze of more than a dozen witnesses, The Shadow stepped to the table where the law's clues lay. It was The Shadow's turn to speak; to provide the vital clues that linked with those already on display.

Chilled silence marked the advent of The Shadow. His purpose here was throbbing through every brain.

The Shadow, alone, could clinch the case against the master murderer, the only man who still was known as a Green Hood.

CHAPTER XX. TRUTH UNINDUCED

THE eyes of The Shadow burned upon Tobias Sherred. Mocking in tone, The Shadow pronounced an order:

"We shall hear your alibis!"

A hard glint came to Sherred's gaze. His paunchy face showed sudden challenge. Abruptly, the big man rumbled:

"All right! I'll give them."

Pointing to the table, Sherred showed a return of nerve as he discounted Cardona's batch of evidence.

"What if these weapons did belong to me?" demanded Sherred. "I disposed of them. Someone else could have used them to frame me. Radcorn's list does not change that likelihood.

"The cigar band? Someone could have picked it up anywhere. At my club at a restaurant where I dined and

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sent it to Professor Breer. From what I've heard of him, Breer was an eccentric character. He would have supposed that the band had some significance.

"Purling printed the letters 'WE'; those show that he knew Wenz, but not me. The Louis medallion; the gold coin with my initials they may have been mine once; but I had disposed of them, like other things that I no longer wanted.

"The murderer could have planted all those things, to turn the trail to me. Probably he sent that fake telegram tonight. It hadn't occurred to me before."

Sherred paused. His gaze looked pleased too much so to suit Cardona. Joe rustled a paper in front of Sherred.

"What about this warning that Wenz sent to Breer? It states that an outsider was a menace."

Sherred hesitated. His eyes met The Shadow's. He thought he heard a low whisper. Nerved to the limit, Sherred gained a sudden flash of inspiration. He pounded the table.

"That list didn't get to Breer's before the meeting!" roared Sherred. "You've admitted that yourself, inspector. What if somebody typed it instead of Wenz?"

"Who, for instance?"

Sherred couldn't answer. The Shadow suddenly supplied the answer. His tone was gibing, as if he wanted to help Sherred's alibi, then wreck it later.

"Someone," spoke The Shadow, with sibilant mockery, "who was a member of the Green Hoods."

"That's it!" Sherred was alive again. "Some member of the Green Hoods organization "

"We thought that at first," inserted Cardona. "We figured that one member murdered the man who had introduced him, to cover the trail. Purling was dead, so we picked Wenz as the murderer. But Wenz was murdered too "

CARDONA halted. His eyes had met The Shadow's. Like Sherred, Joe thought he heard a whisper. Though he didn't quite catch the words, Cardona began to ponder.

From his cloak, The Shadow drew two objects. They were the missing clues. One was the telephone memo that Breer had received at the Hotel Triton. The other was the green carbon paper from Wenz's wastebasket.

"For some reason," spoke The Shadow, "the man who murdered Breer deliberately delayed him from reaching the meeting at the usual time of half past eight."

The Shadow's words were addressed to Cardona, but his eyes were upon Sherred. It was the accused man who realized the answer that was already in The Shadow's mind.

"I'll tell you why!" boomed Sherred. "The murderer wanted to pin the goods on me! He knew that I would be here until half past eight, but that I had a directors' meeting at half past nine. I had to be out, away from here, at the time when Breer was slain!"

There was logic in what Sherred said. A crinkle came as The Shadow spread the sheet of green carbon before

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Cardona's eyes. Holding the paper to the light, Joe saw the letters imprinted upon it.

"Say!" Cardona was suddenly enthused. "I was a dub to miss this one! It's the carbon Wenz used to send the warning to Breer. Wait, though. Why did he type it over, a couple of times?"

"Wenz never used dashes," reminded The Shadow. "His exclamation points were always perfectly typed."

"But there are dashes here, on this carbon! And crooked exclamation points. I've got it!" Joe didn't realize that The Shadow had practically informed him. "Wenz didn't type that message to Breer! The murderer faked it; but had to do it over a couple of times, to make sure it was enough like Wenz's work to fool us!"

"What's more, he could have delivered it at any time after the Green Hood meeting. Probably when he went to Breer's to get the Truth Inducer. Or the next night "

In the midst of that, Sherred inserted a hearty chuckle. Cardona realized what his own words meant.

He was clearing Sherred!

THE SHADOW did the rest. He spoke for all to hear.

"Sherred had no reason to delay Breer's arrival at the meeting," declared The Shadow. "The telephone memo makes it doubtful that Sherred was the murderer.

"The warning, faked on Wenz's typewriter, clears Sherred absolutely. Its mention of an outsider makes it point to him. It fits with all the other clues; knowing that such links might exist, Sherred would never have typed such a message."

Those words drove home, particularly to Cardona. He caught the inference, that the murderer must have been an insider who knew the ways of the Green Hoods. Cardona faced The Shadow.

"We're back to the original theory," admitted Cardona. "One member of admitted Green Hoods murdered the man ahead of him. But if "

Joe hesitated. The Shadow supplied the needed words:

"If you had found Wenz dead before you discovered Purling "

Cardona was on his feet.

"That's it!" he shouted. "Wenz was Member 10. If we'd found him dead, we'd have gone after Member 11. He's the killer but how he foxed us! He murdered Wenz; then saw that wasn't enough. So "

"He murdered Purling," spoke The Shadow. "That brought confusion. It led the trail outside the organization of the Green Hoods. That done, he picked a suitable man Tobias Sherred to take the blame for the crimes."

From the moment that he began to speak, The Shadow had crossed his automatic over one arm. It was pointed past Cardona, covering someone. Cardona realized suddenly that the gun had a purpose. Joe swung about, just as The Shadow voiced the taunting introduction:

"Meet Member 11!"

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THE SHADOW'S .45 was trained on Lionel Atherland. He, Member 11 by his own previous admission, was the murderer that the law wanted. His game was up.

Atherland didn't try to cover it. The insane glare from the murderer's eyes reminded Cardona distinctly of the gaze that he had earlier seen through the front of a green hood, in the cellar square room where the Truth Inducer had been used on Joe.

The Shadow's laugh told more.

Joe Cardona realized that Atherland had planted all the needed clues to Sherred, including the list at Radcorn's studio. Atherland had wanted those clues to reach the law. But he had been troubled when some came by way of The Shadow.

Today, The Shadow's subtle tactics had alarmed Atherland. The Shadow had ordered Cardona to talk of mysterious clues. Knowing that they must have come from The Shadow, since certain evidence was absent, Atherland had wondered if The Shadow held too much.

As the Green Hood, Atherland had bagged Cardona as The Shadow expected to find out just what evidence Joe had gained. The Truth Inducer treatment had been a helpful measure.

But The Shadow had kept the two clues that really counted.

That was why Atherland had put Cardona in a cell fixed so that Joe could easily escape. Since the trail still led to Sherred, Atherland wanted Cardona loose.

Once The Shadow revealed the final clues the real links that didn't fit with the case against Sherred Atherland was through. Cardona's own experience as the Green Hood's prisoner was added evidence against the actual murderer.

Faced by The Shadow's gun, Atherland stiffened. He tried to mouth words. His fuming utterances were at last coherent.

"You'll never prove it on me!" scoffed Atherland. "You couldn't hook Sherred with good evidence. You can't get me with bad. I'll never talk "

Atherland broke. He was looking past The Shadow, to the hallway door. There stood Evelyn Rayle; behind her, two of The Shadow's agents, their faces tilted downward as they shoved a square tank through the doorway.

Resting on top that gas tank was the dialed indicator and other apparatus of Breer's Truth Inducer.

Cardona spied what Atherland saw. The police ace grabbed the murderer's shoulder.

"You're not talking?" jabbed Cardona. "Wait until we hook that dial again, Atherland! This time, I'll be asking the questions!"

ATHERLAND'S fist ended Cardona's shout, when it cracked hard against the inspector's jaw. Others grabbed for Atherland; in the melee, The Shadow could not take aim. With savage strength, Atherland kept flinging off attackers.

The murderer grabbed for the Malay creese. The Shadow sped a timely bullet that clanged the wide side of

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the wavy blade. The weapon went from Atherland's hand. He snatched up the Baby Paterson pistol, aimed between fighters, to shoot at The Shadow.

Although Atherland fired, his aim was useless. The Shadow had sidestepped. However, the shaky shots did some damage. They drilled the side of the gas tank in the doorway. The precious vapor needed for the Truth Inducer began to filter through the room.

That gas wasn't inflammable, so an explosion didn't come to Atherland's aid. Nevertheless, the murderer laughed crazily, as he dropped the antique pistol, now empty of bullets.

Atherland had destroyed Breer's formulas, after memorizing them. He, alone, knew the elements that composed the valuable gas. The Truth Inducer would never again be used.

Moreover, the surge of gas began to benefit Atherland. It was hissing rapidly; it weakened Atherland's attackers. More accustomed to the vapor's power, Atherland wrested free. He grabbed the last available weapon the Borgia stiletto.

Men were succumbing to the gas all around Atherland. The Shadow's agents had hurried away with Evelyn, out through the hall, at The Shadow's command. Free, with the narrow-bladed knife in his hand, Atherland wanted another victim. He saw the best of all The Shadow.

The black-cloaked avenger was sagging in the doorway, his automatic dangling from his fingers. Thinking that the gas had stifled The Shadow, Atherland sprang forward, pulling back his arm to ready a long throw with the stiletto.

Quickly, The Shadow's eyes came over the coat sleeve that muffled his face against the gas. His fist tightened, snapping its gun upward. The big muzzle tongued flame. Atherland jolted as the stiletto left his hand. The jeweled knife sped past The Shadow's head, to clatter against the hallway wall.

The Shadow had faked his sag to bring Atherland's thrust. It was sure protection for the others in the room. But even The Shadow, with the gas seeping all about him, could not take too great a risk with Atherland.

That was why The Shadow's lone shot was aimed straight for the murderer's heart. Atherland was crumpled on the floor by the gas tank by the time his tossed knife, after hitting the hallway wall, bounced to the floor.

Calvin and Ishi had groped to the windows. They yanked them open. Clear air dispelled the gas. Weston, Cardona, Sherred and other witnesses all saw Atherland's figure on the floor. Beyond, they saw a shape of blackness that wavered, then steadied.

A moment later, The Shadow had faded beyond the hallway door. Emptiness remained where the black-cloaked victor had been, but from that void came a sound that marked the departure of The Shadow.

The tone was a mirthless laugh; a solemn knell that quivered above the dead form of Lionel Atherland.

The Shadow had delivered deserved doom to the triple murderer who had tried to make an innocent man suffer for his crimes.

The reign of the lone Green Hood was ended.

THE END