

THE LONDON CRIMES

by Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. ABOARD THE BOAT TRAIN

DARKNESS had engulfed the English countryside. The special boat train from Plymouth was speeding on toward London, carrying passengers who had landed from the steamship Patagonia.

Two men were seated in a well-lighted compartment of a third-class carriage. Though they had crossed the Atlantic on the same liner, they appeared to be unacquainted. This was not surprising; for the pair made a distinct contrast.

One was a sharp-faced, ruddy-complexioned man whose age was no more than forty. Though restrained in manner, he gave occasional signs of restlessness; this was indicated by the frequent tightening of his lips, and the furrows which sometimes showed upon his forehead.

Upon the seat beside this man was a black leather briefcase. One hand, its fingers powerful in their pressure, was resting on the briefcase. The owner of the bag regarded it as important; and with good reason. His identity and his occupation were the explanations.

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This sharp-faced man was Eric Delka, special investigator from Scotland Yard. Delka was returning from a trip to New York, where he had acquired important information for the London Metropolitan Police office. All the facts that Delka had gained were contained in the portfolio which rested close beside him.

The other occupant of the compartment was an elderly gray-haired gentleman. Delka, though he had not met the man, had seen him on the Patagonia and had heard mention of his name. He was Phineas Twambley, an American.

Seated caticornered to Delka, Twambley was hunched forward, dozing. His face, though benign of expression, showed weariness. His long, scrawny hands were weakly resting upon the handle of a heavy, gold-headed cane. Delka remembered that Twambley had always needed the cane to hobble about the decks of the liner.

COINCIDENCE had apparently placed Delka in the same compartment as Twambley. A porter at the dock had told the Scotland Yard man that many of the passengers from the steamship were taking first-class carriages, which meant that there would be more space in the third-class coaches.

The porter had also offered to find a vacant compartment, a suggestion that was to Delka's liking. Though the porter had failed to make good his boast, he had done well; for he had managed to place Delka in a compartment that had but one other occupant.

Though Delka would have preferred complete seclusion, he had found no immediate objection to Phineas Twambley as a traveling companion. The only hitch had arrived when Delka had chosen to light a cigarette. Then the old man had burst into a coughing spasm. Delka had desisted without waiting to hear a protest from his fellow passenger.

Two hundred and twenty-five miles to London. Such was the distance of the trip; and the train was due to clip the mileage in less than five hours. A portion of the journey had been covered; but Delka was glum as he considered the annoyance of going without a smoke.

Casually, he eyed Twambley. The old man was dozing more profoundly. Delka produced a silver pocket-case and extracted a cigarette. He saw the old man stir and shift position. Delka smiled wryly and shook his head. He decided that a few puffs of cigarette smoke would probably awaken the old chap.

Quietly, Delka arose and opened the door into the corridor. He stepped from the compartment, eyed Twambley again, then softly closed the door. Striking a match, the Scotland Yard man lighted his cigarette. He felt an immediate appreciation of the first few puffs.

Delka had left his precious briefcase in the compartment; but that, to his mind, had been a wise procedure. Though he kept the briefcase always with him, Delka acted as though it was an item of little consequence.

In a circumstance such as this, the best plan was to let the briefcase remain where it was. Old Twambley was by no means a suspicious character; moreover, the old man had luggage of his own, heaped in a corner of the compartment. If Twambley should awake which seemed unlikely he would probably not even notice the briefcase.

So Delka reasoned; but despite his shrewdness, he was wrong. The instant that the Scotland Yard man had closed the door of the compartment, Phineas Twambley had opened one eye. Motionless, he waited until half a minute had elapsed. Satisfied that Delka must be smoking, the old man displayed immediate action.

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Dipping one long hand beneath the seat behind his luggage, Phineas Twambley brought out a briefcase that was the exact duplicate of Delka's. With surprising spryness, the old man sidled across the compartment and picked up Delka's briefcase. He laid his own bag in the exact position of the other; then, moving back, he thrust Delka's portfolio out of sight. The exchange completed, Twambley went back to his doze.

A few minutes later, Delka returned to find the old man sleeping. Delka sat down and rested his hand upon the briefcase that was in view. Totally unsuspecting of what had occurred, the Scotland Yard man decided to drowse away the time. Like Twambley, Delka began to doze.

It was a sudden noise that caused Eric Delka to awaken. Always a light sleeper, Delka came to life suddenly when he heard a click from close beside him. Opening his eyes, he caught a glimpse of Twambley, head bowed and nodding. Then Delka swung his gaze toward the door to the corridor.

Delka was nearer the door than Twambley, for the old man had chosen a seat by the window. It was from the corridor door that the noise had come; and Delka, despite his quick awakening, was too late to stop the next event that developed.

The door swung inward; two hard-faced men with glimmering revolvers spotted the Scotland Yard man before he could make a move.

"Up with 'em!" growled one of the arrivals jabbing the muzzle of his revolver straight toward Delka. Then, to this companion: "Cover the old guy, Jake, in case he wakes up."

Delka's hands went reluctantly upward. The briefcase slid from beside him; half shifting, the Scotland Yard man tried to cover it. His action brought a growl from the man who had him covered.

"No you don't, Delka," snarled the intruder. "We know what you've got in that briefcase. We're goin' to give it the once-over. An' you'll be a lucky guy if you haven't got the dope you went after. Because if you know too much, it'll be curtains for you!"

Delka stood up slowly, in response to a vertical urge from the rowdy's gun. With sidelong glance, he saw Twambley dozing as steadily as before. The second crook was chuckling contemptuously as he watched the old man.

"He's dead to the world, Pete," informed Jake. "Go ahead with the heat. See what Delka's got in the briefcase. If he starts trouble, I'm with you. The old bloke don't count."

Pete reached forward. With one hand, he started to pull back the zipper fastening of the briefcase. The train was driving forward with the speed for which the Great Western Railway is famous. It took a curve as the crook tugged at the bag.

Momentarily, Pete lost his footing. His shoulder jarred against the wall of the compartment. His gun lost its aim.

Delka, watching Jake also, saw opportunity. With a sudden bound, the Scotland Yard man pounced upon Pete and grabbed the fellow's gun wrist.

Jake swung with a snarl. He could not aim at Delka, for Pete's body intervened. The thug was getting the worse of it. With a quick move, Jake leaped across the compartment and swung to gain a bead on Delka. At the same moment, another roll of the train gave Pete a chance to rally.

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The grappling thug shoved Delka back against the wall. Jake shouted encouragement, as he aimed his revolver toward Delka. As if in answer to the call, another pair of thugs sprang into view from the corridor. Like Pete and Jake, these two had revolvers.

Odds against Delka. Murder was due. But into the breach came an unexpected rescuer one whose very appearance had made him seem a negligible factor. With a speed that would have been incredible in a young and active man, Phineas Twambley launched into the fray.

MAGICALLY, the old man straightened. His right hand swung with terrific speed. That hand gripped the heavy cane; with the swiftness of a whiplash, the stick flashed downward and cracked Jake's aiming wrist. Solid wood won the conflict with bone. The gun went clattering from Jake's fist. The thug sprawled with a howl.

That was not all. As Twambley's right hand performed its speedy action, his left shot beneath the right side of his coat. Out it came – a long, clutching fist that gripped a .45 automatic.

The thugs in the doorway snarled as they aimed to kill. Their revolvers swung too late to match that swiftly whisked automatic.

The first shot boomed for a living mark. One would-be killer thudded forward to the floor. The other, aiming, fired. But Twambley, was double quick. Diving sidewise, the old man struck the wall. The thug's hasty aim was wide. The bullet that spat from the revolver cracked the window just beyond the spot where Twambley had been. Then came the old man's second action; another roaring shot from his automatic.

Flame spurted. The thug in the doorway staggered, then went diving out into the corridor. Jake, springing upward, had grabbed his revolver with his left hand, anxious to get new aim at Twambley. A sidewise swing from the cane sent the fellow sprawling back to the floor. This time, Jake's head took the crack.

Delka had gained Pete's gun. He had twisted the crook about. With one fierce drive, the Scotland Yard man rammed his adversary's head against the wall. Pete slumped. Delka, staring, saw a leveled automatic Twambley's.

THE old man's hand moved slowly downward, following the direction of Pete's sagging form. Not content with disposing of three adversaries, he had gained the aim on the fourth. Had Pete still shown fight, this amazing battler would have dropped him.

Shouts from the corridor. Train attendants had heard the sound of fray. They were dashing up to learn the cause. They had blocked the path of one crook who sought escape. That was the reason for the shouts; but Eric Delka scarcely heard the outside cries.

For a strange sound had filled the compartment, a whispered tone that rose above the chugging of the train. It was a weird burst of mirth, a chilling burst of repressed mockery intended for Delka's ears alone.

Once before, the man from Scotland Yard had heard that taunt, upon a previous time when business had taken him to the United States. Then, as now, Eric Delka had been rescued by the author of that sinister mirth. (Note: See "The Man From Scotland Yard;" Vol. XIV, No. 5.)

Here, in this compartment, stood a man whose lips did not move; yet Delka knew that it was from those lips that the laugh had come. The lips of Phineas Twambley. Delka knew the concealed identity of his rescuer. Twambley was The Shadow.

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Strange, amazing battler who hunted down men of crime, The Shadow Delka's former rescuer had appeared in England. That Delka might choose the proper course of action, The Shadow had revealed his identity to the man from Scotland Yard.

As Delka stared, the long left hand unloosened. The automatic dropped from The Shadow's clutch, to fall at Delka's feet. In a twinkling, that long, firm hand seemed scrawny. The Shadow's form doubled; hunched, it sought the support of the heavy cane. Then, with a shudder, The Shadow sank back to the seat where he had been. A quavering figure, with a face that wore a senile grin, he had resumed the part of Phineas Twambley.

Eric Delka understood. Quickly, he grabbed up the gun that The Shadow had let fall. Train guards were already at the door of the compartment. It was Delka's part to take credit for having won this battle, alone. Such was The Shadow's order.

To that command, Delka had responded without question, even though no word had been uttered. Whispered mirth had carried the order; and its tone had borne full significance. Eric Delka could only obey.

He had heard the laugh of The Shadow!

CHAPTER II. AT SCOTLAND YARD

THE Great Western train was a few minutes late when it reached Paddington Station, its London terminus. Seated in the cab of the gaudily painted locomotive, the engineer eyed two men as they walked along the platform.

One was Eric Delka; the engineer had heard about the Scotland Yard man when the train had been held at Taunton. Delka was the chap who, single-handed, had crippled a crew of murderous attackers. Those thugs had been turned over to the authorities at Taunton.

With Delka was a gray-haired, stoop-shouldered companion who hobbled along at a spry pace. The engineer had heard mention of his name also. The man was Phineas Twambley, who had been in Delka's compartment during the battle.

According to report, however, Twambley had figured in the fray only as a spectator. The engineer was not surprised, once he had viewed Twambley. Delka's companion looked too old to have been a combatant in active battle.

That opinion was shared by every one who had come in contact with Phineas Twambley, except those who had been participants in the fight. The crooks whom The Shadow had downed were in no condition to talk, while Eric Delka was tactful enough to keep his own conclusions to himself. His first commitment came when he and The Shadow had walked from the train shed. Then Delka cagily addressed his companion.

"I should like to have you accompany me to the Yard, Mr. Twambley," vouchsafed Delka. "Perhaps you would be interested in my report to Sidney Lewsham. He's acting as chief constable of the C.I.D. I should like, to introduce you to him."

"Very well." The Shadow chuckled in Twambley fashion. "However, I should like to send my luggage to the Savoy Hotel –"

"We can arrange that quite easily."

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Delka gave instructions to the porter. The luggage that bore Phineas Twambley's tags was marked for the Savoy. During the process, however, Delka was suddenly astonished to see his stoop-shouldered companion pluck a briefcase from among the stack of bags.

"This appears to be yours, Mr. Delka," remarked The Shadow, in a crackly tone. "I shall ask you to return my briefcase."

Half gaping, Delka looked at the bag in his own hand. Hastily, he pulled back the zipper fastenings. He saw at once that the contents consisted entirely of steamship folders and British railway time-tables.

As The Shadow took the briefcase from Delka's hand, the Scotland Yard man yanked open the one that The Shadow gave him.

Within were Delka's precious documents the fruits of his journey to New York. Realization dawned upon Delka; new proof of the protection which The Shadow had afforded him. Had crooks aboard the train managed a get-away, they would have gained nothing. The very bag for which they had battled had not been Delka's! Thinking this over, the Scotland Yard man smiled; but made no comment.

WITH Twambley's luggage arranged for its trip to the Savoy, Delka and his companion descended to the Paddington Station of the Bakerloo Line, the most convenient underground route to the vicinity of Scotland Yard. A dozen minutes after boarding the tube train, they arrived at the Charing Cross underground station. From there, a short southward walk along the Thames Embankment brought them to the portals of New Scotland Yard.

Delka gained prompt admittance to the office of Sidney Lewsham, acting chief of the Criminal Investigation Department. Lewsham, a towering, heavy-browed man, was curious when he gazed at Delka's companion. Briskly, Delka introduced The Shadow as Phineas Twambley.

"Mr. Twambley aided me in subduing those ruffians aboard the train," explained Delka. "He used his stout cane as a bludgeon during the fight. Moreover, he preserved my briefcase, with its important documents."

"How so?" queried Lewsham, in surprise. "I had no report of this by telephone from Taunton."

"I saw that the attackers were striving for the briefcase," chuckled The Shadow, "so I seized it and threw it beneath a seat. The ruffians tried to make away with a similar bag that was lying with my own luggage."

Lewsham smiled when he heard the story. So did Delka; but the investigator suppressed his momentary grin before his chief spied it. Delka knew well that Lewsham was rating Phineas Twambley as an old codger who could have been of but little use. That pleased Delka; for he had no intention of stating who Twambley really was.

For Delka knew himself to be one of a chosen few who had gained The Shadow's confidence. Like Joe Cardona of the New York police, like Vic Marquette of the United States secret service, Delka had profited in the past through The Shadow's intervention. His part, Delka knew, was to aid The Shadow; and in so doing, gain a powerful ally. It was best to accept The Shadow in the guise that he had chosen to assume.

"In fairness to Mr. Twambley," began Delka, "I thought that he might be entitled to a partial explanation of the circumstances that forced him into his predicament aboard the train. That is why I brought him here, sir, in case you felt such an explanation permissible."

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"Of course; of course." Lewsham nodded, as he seated himself behind his huge mahogany desk. "Well, Delka, there is no reason why Mr. Twambley should not hear the complete story. I intend to make it public within a few days. The whole country shall know of the crimes which balk us."

"You intend to publish the facts about The Harvester?"

"I do. Moreover, our present meeting is an excellent occasion for a preliminary review. I am going into details, Delka, and your friend Mr. Twambley may hear for himself."

LEWSHAM leaned back in his big chair. He thrust out a long arm and began to spin a large globe of the world that stood near to the desk. Stopping the revolving sphere, he leaned forward and folded his arms upon the desk.

"London has become a reaping ground," he declared, "for an unknown criminal, whose methods are unique. We have styled this rogue 'The Harvester,' for want of a better sobriquet. We have no key to his identity; but we do know that he employs crafty men to aid him; also that he controls certain bands of murderers."

Drawing Delka's briefcase toward him, Lewsham opened it and extracted documents. He referred to records that were obviously duplicates of papers on file in Scotland Yard.

"The Harvester," explained Lewsham, "is always preceded by another man. This fellow operated at first under the name of Humphrey Bildon. He first opened an account with a local banking house and established credit there."

"One day, Humphrey Bildon introduced a friend: Sir James Carliff. Because of Bildon's introduction, and because persons present had met Sir James Carliff, the banking house cashed a draft for eight thousand pounds. That sum, Mr. Twambley" Lewsham smiled, remembering that the visitor was an American "amounted to approximately forty thousand dollars."

As The Shadow nodded, Delka put in a comment.

"But it was not Sir James Carliff," stated the investigator, "who received the money."

"It was not," added Lewsham, emphatically. "It was an impostor; the man whom we have dubbed The Harvester. He made an excellent impersonator. Those who saw him actually took him for Sir James Carliff."

Referring to his notes, Lewsham brought up the second case.

"Humphrey Bildon appeared again," he stated. "He had the cheek to negotiate with another banking house, immediately after his dealing with the first. He arranged for a loan to be given Monsieur Pierre Garthou, the head of a French mining syndicate. Monsieur Garthou appeared in person and left the banking office with twenty thousand pounds in his possession.

"Immediately afterward, a fraud was suspected. Bildon and Garthou were stopped by Thomas Colbar, a representative of the banking house, when they were entering a taxicab to leave for Victoria Station. Garthou produced a revolver and riddled Colbar with bullets. The victim died instantly."

"But the murderer was not the real Garthou," reminded Delka. "It was The Harvester, again, passing himself as Garthou."

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"Precisely," nodded Lewsham. "That is why we sought both Bildon and The Harvester for murder. But the leopards changed their spots. Up bobbed Bildon, this time under the name of Thomas Dabley. The bouncer arranged the purchase of a steamship."

"A STEAMSHIP?" questioned The Shadow, in an incredulous tone that suited the part of Twambley. "For what purpose?"

"I am coming to that," replied Lewsham. "The steamship was loaded with goods for South America. Both the vessel and its contents were in the hands of receivers who wished to make a quick sale. Dabley, otherwise Bildon, introduced an American named Lemuel Brodder."

"I have heard of him. He is a New York shipping magnate. Considered to be very wealthy."

"Exactly. Brodder bought the vessel and its cargo for ten thousand pounds only a fraction of the full value and insured both the steamship and its goods for thirty thousand, through Lloyd's."

"Was that the steamship Baroda?"

"It was. An explosion occurred on board, before the vessel had passed the Scilly Islands. All on board were lost. Lemuel Brodder appeared to collect his insurance. Fortunately a swindle was suspected upon this occasion. Lloyds had already communicated with New York."

Delka was nodding as Lewsham spoke. The investigator tapped a pile of papers that had come from the briefcase.

"The real Brodder was in America," stated the investigator. "The swindler here in London was none other than The Harvester."

"Impersonating Brodder!" exclaimed The Shadow, in a tone of feigned astonishment. "The Harvester again!"

"Yes," nodded Delka. "That is why I went to New York, to see what might be learned there. The Harvester was shrewd enough to take to cover when he learned which way the wind was blowing. I met the real Brodder. He closely resembled the descriptions that I had of the impostor."

"Rogues had been seen aboard the Baroda," added Lewsham, "while the ship was docked here in London. They were the miscreants who placed the explosives which caused the deaths of innocent crew members. That is how we learned that The Harvester had criminal bands at his call."

"To-night's attack upon you, Delka, indicates another thrust by The Harvester. Two of those miscreants are dead; I have received that news from the Taunton police. The others know nothing, except that they were to assassinate you and seize your documents."

"So our summary is this: We have an infernally clever rogue with whom to deal; namely, The Harvester. Of him, we have no description, for always, he has appeared as some one else. To reach him, we must first apprehend his lieutenant" Lewsham paused to emphasize the word, which he pronounced "leftenant" "his lieutenant, who has appeared under the names of Humphrey Bildon and Thomas Dabley. Who may, in all probability, adopt another name in the future."

Picking up another report sheet, Lewsham read:

"Height, five feet eleven. Weight, twelve stone –"

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"One hundred and sixty-eight pounds," inserted Delka in an undertone, for The Shadow's benefit. "Fourteen pounds to a stone."

"Military bearing," continued Lewsham, "square face, complexion tanned. Eyes sharp, but very light blue. Hair of light color, almost whitish. Voice smooth, very persuasive and precise.

"There, Mr. Twambley, is a description of Dabley, alias Bildon. Should you meet such a person while in London, notify us at once. For this chap who aids The Harvester apparently possesses none of the chameleon traits which characterize his master. Dabley or Bildon, if you prefer lacks the ability to disguise himself."

"Within a few days, his description will be public property. For the present, we choose to wait; in hope that the man may reveal himself. Should new chances for quick swindling reach The Harvester's notice, he might send his lieutenants to sound them out."

THE acting chief arose and bowed to The Shadow, as indication that his interview with Phineas Twambley was concluded. It was apparent that Lewsham wished to confer with Delka, regarding information that the investigator had brought back from New York. The Shadow knew that such facts could not be vitally important; otherwise, Delka would have made an effort to have him remain.

Instead, Delka offered to have some one accompany the visitor to the Hotel Savoy. Chuckling in Twambley's senile fashion, The Shadow shook his head.

"I shall hail a taxicab," he declared. "I doubt that I am in personal danger, gentlemen. Certainly no scoundrels will be about in the vicinity of Scotland Yard."

A few minutes later, the stooped figure of Phineas Twambley stepped aboard an antiquated taxi that stopped for him upon the embankment. The lights of Westminster Bridge were twinkling; other, myriad lights were glowing as the ancient vehicle rattled its way toward the Hotel Savoy. But The Shadow had no thoughts of the great metropolis about him.

A soft laugh issued from the disguised lips of Phineas Twambley, while long, tightening fingers gripped the head of the huge cane. The Shadow's laugh was prophetic. He had learned facts that might influence the immediate future.

For The Shadow had already devised a plan whereby he might gain a trail to The Harvester. Should luck aid his coming effort, he would have opportunity to deal with that murderous supercrook while Scotland Yard stood idle.

CHAPTER III. OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

TWO days after the arrival of The Shadow and Eric Delka, an unusual advertisement appeared in the classified columns of the London Times. The announcement was printed under the heading "Personal" and read as follows:

SILVER MINE: Wealthy American is willing to dispose of his shares

in prosperous Montana silver mine. Prefers transaction involving one

purchaser only. Apply to H. B. Wadkins, representative, Suite H 2,

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Caulding Court, S. W. 1.

When Eric Delka entered the office of his acting chief, Sidney Lewsham thrust a copy of the Times across the desk. A blue-pencil mark encircled that single paragraph, of all the advertisements that covered the front page. Delka nodded slowly as he read the silver mine offer.

"It sounds like The Harvester," said Delka. "But it is not in keeping with his technique."

"Quite true," returned Lewsham, sourly. "That is the only trouble, Eric. I can not believe that The Harvester would become so bold as to openly flaunt his activities before our faces."

"A 'sucker' game," remarked Delka. "That is what they would term it in the States. This chap Wadkins, whoever he may be, is out to trap some unsuspecting investor."

"Yet he is working blindly," mused Lewsham, "like a spider in the center of a web. I doubt that The Harvester would strive in such fashion, Eric. I can fancy him taking advantage of this announcement, once it had appeared. Yet I cannot picture him inserting the advertisement."

"Suppose I call there this morning," suggested Delka. "A chat with Mr. H. B. Wadkins might prove enlightening."

"Not too hasty, Eric." Lewsham shook his head. "Wait until the day is more advanced. Make your visit shortly before tea time. He might suspect an early caller."

Reluctantly, Delka came to agreement with his chief. Somehow, Delka had a hunch that an early visit to Caulding Court might be preferable to a late one.

In that opinion, Delka happened to be correct. Had he gone immediately from Scotland Yard to Caulding Court, he would have obtained a prompt result.

EXACTLY half an hour after Delka had held his conference with Lewsham, a man of military bearing arrived at an arched entryway that bore the sign "Caulding Court."

The arrival was attired in well-fitted tweeds; he was swinging a light cane as he paused to study the obscure entrance. Tanned complexion, with light hair and sharp, blue eyes Eric Delka would have recognized the man upon the instant. The arrival was Thomas Dabley, alias Humphrey Bildon, chief lieutenant of The Harvester.

Passing through the archway, the tweed-clad man surveyed various doorways that were grouped about the inner court. He chose the one that was marked H 2. Warily, he entered, to find a young man seated in a small anteroom that apparently served as outer office.

"Mr. Wadkins?" queried the light-haired visitor.

"No, sir," replied the young man. His gaze was a frank one. "I am secretary to Mr. Wadkins. He is in his private office. Whom shall I announce?"

"Here is my card." The visitor extended the pasteboard. "I am Captain Richard Darryat, formerly of the Australian-New Zealand Army Corps. Announce my name to Mr. Wadkins."

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The visitor smiled as the secretary entered an inner office. The alias of Darryat suited him better than either Bildon or Dabley, for he looked the part of an Anzac officer. Seating himself, Darryat inserted a cigarette in a long holder. Scarcely had he applied a match before the secretary returned.

"Mr. Wadkins will see you, Captain Darryat."

Darryat entered the inner office. Behind the table, he saw a hunched, bearded man, whose hair formed a heavy, black shock. Shrewd, dark eyes peered from the bushy countenance. Half rising, H. B. Wadkins thrust his arm across the desk and shook hands with Captain Darryat.

"From Australia, eh?" chuckled Wadkins, his voice a harsh one. "Well, captain, perhaps you know something about silver mines yourself?"

"I do," replied Darryat, with a slight smile. "As much as most Americans."

"Wrong, captain," Wadkins grinned through his heavy beard. "I am a Canadian. Spent a lot of time, though, in the States. That's how I became interested in Montana silver. I hail from Vancouver. Hadn't been in London long before an old partner of mine wrote me and sent along his shares in the Topoco Mine. Told me to sell out so I did."

"Do you mean that you no longer have shares to offer?"

"That's about it, captain. They were snapped up pronto, all except a few thousand dollars' worth. Here is what I have left."

WADKINS drew a batch of stock certificates from a desk drawer and showed them to Darryat. The fake captain's eyes lighted. Darryat knew mining stocks. He had recognized the Topoco name.

"Seven thousand dollars' worth, to be exact," remarked Wadkins. "Sixty-seven thousand was what I had for a starter. One customer took sixty thousand, cash and carry."

"Who was he, might I ask?"

Darryat's question was casual; but it brought a shrewd look from Wadkins. Then the bearded man shook his head.

"I don't even know the chap's name," he declared. "He dealt through a solicitor, who arrived here bright and early. Sorry, but I can't state the name of the solicitor. All I can do is offer you the seven thousand dollars' worth of remaining shares."

"Hardly enough," mused Darryat. "I, too, represent a prosperous client. I suppose you have no other offerings, Mr. Wadkins?"

"None at all. If I fail to sell these, I shall purchase them myself. I intend to leave London shortly; in fact, I may close the office after to-day, should I make no sale."

"And if you make a sale –"

"I shall close the office, anyway. By the way, captain, would you be interested in a large purchase of some Canadian gold mine stock?"

THE LONDON CRIMES

"I might be. Who is offering it?"

"A friend of mine in Toronto." Wadkins was rising, crablike, to hold a hunched position as he spoke. "See my secretary when you leave. Ask him to give you the Toronto prospectus. It may interest you."

Darryat nodded. Rising, he shook hands with Wadkins and walked to the outer office. Wadkins followed him and spoke to the young man who served as secretary.

"Find the Toronto prospectus, Vincent," ordered the bearded Canadian.

"Let Captain Darryat have it. Good-by, captain."

Returning to the inner office, H. B. Wadkins closed the heavy door. Stepping to the desk, he picked up a flat suitcase and opened it. His body straightened, as a soft, whispered laugh issued from his bearded lips. With quick, deft hands, he whisked away his heavy black wig and detached the bushy beard from his chin.

The laugh the action; both were revelations of identity. The so-called Captain Darryat, whatever his impressions, had failed to guess the true personality that had lain behind that disguise.

H. B. Wadkins was The Shadow!

PACKING his discarded disguise, The Shadow donned hat and coat. His countenance, calm and masklike, was one that Darryat would not have recognized. Nevertheless, The Shadow was taking no chances on an immediate meeting with his recent visitor. There was a rear door to the inner office. Opening it, The Shadow threaded his way through a narrow passage that led him to another street.

Meanwhile, in the outer office, the secretary was looking for the Toronto prospectus. In so doing, he was playing a game that bluffed Captain Darryat. For Harry Vincent, agent of The Shadow, had his own work to accomplish. He was rummaging through boxes at the bottom of a closet, giving Darryat a chance to look about the office in the meantime.

Upon Harry's desk was an envelope, one that had been brought by messenger. From it projected a letter. Sliding his body between the desk and the closet, Darryat slid the folded paper from the envelope. He opened it and quickly read the message.

The letter bore the printed heading: "Cyril Dobbingsworth, Solicitor," with an address that Darryat recognized. Dobbingsworth's office was located at the Cheshire Legal Chambers, near Chancery Lane, close to the Temple.

The message, itself, fitted with the story that Darryat had heard. Dobbingsworth had been prepared to buy the silver mine stock for a wealthy client; his note was an announcement of an early call which he intended to make on H. B. Wadkins.

Darryat slid the paper back into the envelope, just as Harry Vincent turned about. The Shadow's agent had the prospectus that Darryat wanted. It was merely a printed folder from Toronto. Darryat scanned the pages, nodded and thrust the prospectus in his pocket. Turning about, he strode out through Caulding Court.

Upon the desk lay the telltale envelope. Harry Vincent had placed it at an exact angle; the projecting message emerging just one inch. Darryat, in replacing it, had not only edged the paper further in; he had also moved the envelope. Harry knew that the bait had been taken.

The Shadow had not only drawn The Harvester's advance man to a given spot; he had also supplied him with a lead to follow. The advertisement in the Times had served a purpose that Scotland Yard had not guessed. It was The Shadow's move to reach The Harvester!

CHAPTER IV. THE GAME DEEPENS

Soon after Captain Darryat's departure, Harry Vincent went out to luncheon. He took the front door that led through the court. On his way, Harry made careful observations. From these, he was certain that Darryat had not remained in the vicinity.

When he returned, nearly an hour later, Harry again made sure that Darryat was not about. The double checkup was sufficient. Should Darryat return to find that H. B. Wadkins had gone, he would suspect nothing; for a time interval had occurred wherein Wadkins could have left through the court.

After lingering for an hour in the office, Harry proceeded to close up. He packed various papers in a suitcase; he prepared a small sign that bore the word "Closed." Attaching this notice to the door, The Shadow's agent made his departure. Again, no signs of Darryat. Harry's work was finished.

About half an hour after Harry's final exit, Captain Darryat swaggered along the street that led to Caulding Court. Peering in from the archway, The Harvester's lieutenant eyed the door with the number H 2. He saw Harry's sign and approached. A chuckle came from Darryat when he read the notice.

H. B. Wadkins had cleared out. That fact fitted perfectly with Darryat's plans. After a brief inspection, the tanned man strolled from Caulding Court. Then, of a sudden, he performed a surprising action. Forgetting his swagger, Darryat whisked about and dived into a convenient doorway. A strained, hunted look appeared upon his features; his sharp eyes narrowed as he watched a man who approached alone. The arrival was Eric Delka.

Darryat had recognized the Scotland Yard investigator; and he had been quick enough to slide from Delka's sight. He saw Delka enter Caulding Court; then, satisfied that the investigator was alone, Darryat became bold and stole to the archway.

Peering through, he saw Delka reading the sign on door H 2. He caught a shrug of Delka's shoulder. Then Darryat slid out to the street and returned to his previous hiding-place. He watched Delka reappear and walk away.

Obviously, Delka had also read the advertisement in the Times and had decided to make a visit to the office of H. B. Wadkins. The bird that Delka sought had flown; and Darryat was sure that Wadkins would not be back. Nevertheless, the chance visit of Delka had produced a definite influence upon Darryat's plans.

Darryat had his own game to further, in the service of The Harvester. He did not intend to alter it; but he did plan to use new precautions something that he would not have considered had he failed to catch that brief view of Delka.

SOON afterward, Darryat was walking briskly across the vast asphalt spaces of Trafalgar Square. Reaching The Strand, he followed that important thoroughfare until it changed its name and became Fleet Street. There, Darryat sought Chancery Lane and finally located the Cheshire Legal Chambers.

Entering, he discovered a closed door that bore the name of Cyril Dobbingsworth. Darryat rapped. A querulous voice ordered him to enter.

THE LONDON CRIMES

Inside a little office, Darryat came face to face with Cyril Dobbingsworth. The solicitor was an ancient, stoop-shouldered old fellow, who was sipping tea and nibbling biscuits at a decrepit desk. Stacks of law books were all about; the walls were adorned with faded portraits of famous British jurists.

Dobbingsworth apparently fancied himself as a traditional London barrister. Darryat, however, classed him immediately as a weather-beaten fossil.

"Your name, sir?"

Dobbingsworth's crackled query brought a smile to Darryat's lips. The pretended captain extended his card.

While Dobbingsworth was studying it, apparently puzzled, Darryat sat down and stated his business.

"I have come, sir," he stated, "to inform you of a hoax which has been perpetrated against a client of yours."

"A hoax?"

"Yes. In regard to a Montana silver mine."

Dobbingsworth blinked. Darryat could see scrawny hands shake as the tea cup jogged in the solicitor's fingers. Dobbingsworth tried to splutter, but words failed him.

"I, too, have met H. B. Wadkins," purred Darryat, in a voice that befitted Scotland Yard's description of him. "He offered me the stock that remained. I wisely refrained from buying it."

"Why so?" queried Dobbingsworth, anxiously, as he pushed back a shock of gray hair from above his withered face. "I have been assured that the Topoco Mine is a sound one. Have you evidence, sir, to the contrary?"

"None," replied Darryat, "but I hold doubts regarding the particular stock that was in the possession of Wadkins. I scrutinized it rather closely. It appeared to be a forgery."

The tea cup clattered as Dobbingsworth set it heavily upon the desk. The old solicitor clucked hopelessly. Darryat leaned forward.

"Wadkins has abandoned his office at Caulding Court," he informed. "Fortunately, I learned that you had dealt with him. That is why I came promptly to these chambers."

"This is a case for Scotland Yard!" exclaimed Dobbingsworth, in an outraged tone. "It is, indeed! I shall inform headquarters at once!"

He reached for an antiquated telephone. Darryat stopped him.

"ONE moment, sir," objected Darryat, smoothly. "Would it not be best to consult your client, prior to taking such a step?"

"What purpose would that serve?" demanded Dobbingsworth. "If my client has been swindled –"

"I have no proof of that," interposed Darryat. "I have stated merely that the stock which Wadkins showed me appeared to be spurious. In order to venture a proper opinion, I should have to examine the stock that you purchased from Wadkins."

THE LONDON CRIMES

As he spoke, Darryat eyed a large, old-fashioned safe at the rear of Dobbingsworth's office. The solicitor was not watching Darryat at the time. Instead, Dobbingsworth was shaking his head in most dejected fashion.

"I have delivered the stock," he affirmed. "My client was here, awaiting my return. I cannot show it to you."

"But what of your client?" queried Darryat. "Could we not arrange an appointment with him?"

"He has gone from London for the day. To Kew Gardens, I believe."

"Will he return this evening?"

"Yes. But I have to depart for Sheffield, to attend to a matter which concerns another client."

"Perhaps if you gave me a letter of introduction –"

"To my client?"

Darryat nodded.

"Zounds!" exclaimed Dobbingsworth, pounding the desk with his scrawny fist. "That, indeed, is a timely suggestion! But I can do better, sir. Remain seated, while I call a messenger."

Dobbingsworth picked up the telephone and put in a call. That completed, he took a large quill pen and began to transcribe a message. Darryat noted the long, old-fashioned penmanship that had characterized the letter that he had seen on Harry Vincent's desk.

A boy appeared at the office door. He was attired in the uniform and round hat that symbolized the London messengers. The solicitor handed him the envelope containing the finished letter. He added the fee that was required. The boy left.

"My client's name," informed Dobbingsworth, "is Lamont Cranston. He is a wealthy American. He resides at the old Manor Club."

"Near St. James Square?" queried Darryat, "close by Haymarket?"

"That is the location of the new club," replied Dobbingsworth, with a shake of his head. "The old Manor Club is closer to Piccadilly. It is a club no longer; it has some name which I have forgotten, although I have the actual address. It is a bachelor's apartment; very exclusive –"

"I recall the place. Known as the Moravia, is it not?"

"That is the name. Quite stupid of me to forget it. Very well, captain. I have written Mr. Cranston to receive you. You will find him there at nine o'clock this evening. I should like to have you discuss the subject of those securities with him in person. If he chooses to communicate with Scotland Yard, he may do so."

"An excellent suggestion. My thanks to you, sir."

"I owe the thanks, captain."

The old solicitor shook hands and Captain Darryat departed.

THE LONDON CRIMES

WHEN Darryat had gone, Cyril Dobbingsworth sat at his desk, sipping tea, staring out toward the direction of the Temple.

There had been definite significance in the visit of Captain Darryat; points which the smooth swindler had not amplified in his discourse with the solicitor. Darryat had stated that he had visited Wadkins; he had also added that the man had closed his office. Sure proof that Darryat had not come directly to Dobbingsworth's office.

A smile showed upon the withered features of the old solicitor. That expression proved that Dobbingsworth understood the facts. Then, from crackly lips came the soft tones of a whispered laugh the same that H. B. Wadkins had delivered earlier in the day.

Cyril Dobbingsworth, like H. B. Wadkins, was The Shadow! From one assumed personality, he had gone to another. He had left Caulding Court ahead of Captain Darryat that he might be here at the Cheshire Legal Chambers before the swindler could possibly arrive.

Darryat had been totally deceived. He had never suspected a link between Wadkins and Dobbingsworth; much less that the two could possibly be the same. He had been suspicious of Wadkins; he had been lulled by Dobbingsworth. Believing that one had fled and that the other was going out of town, Darryat would have no qualms about calling on Lamont Cranston.

There, again, he would be due to meet The Shadow. For the personality of Lamont Cranston was one that The Shadow used frequently. To-day, he had dropped the guise of Phineas Twambley altogether. After a brief appearance as Wadkins, then as Dobbingsworth, he would be Cranston and would keep that assumed identity. Except for one brief interval, long enough to put in a call to Scotland Yard.

With that call, The Shadow would announce himself as Phineas Twambley, in order to bring Eric Delka to the trail. This evening, he would tell the investigator that he had chanced to see a man answering the description of Dabley, alias Bildon, in the neighborhood of the Moravia Apartments, near St. James Square.

For The Shadow knew that he had hooked more than a little fish. The same bait that had caught Captain Darryat would snag another and a larger personage of crime. The lure of sixty thousand dollars, in sound silver securities, would bring more than a lone lieutenant.

Captain Darryat's visit to the residence of Lamont Cranston would be but the forerunner to another arrival. The Harvester, himself, would follow. Tonight, the supercreek was destined to meet The Shadow!

CHAPTER V. THE COUNTERTHRUST

AT precisely ten minutes before nine, Captain Richard Darryat strolled from the subdued glow of St. James Street and arrived at the entrance of the Moravia Apartments. The evening was mild and mellow; Darryat, fashionably attired, looked like a usual habitue of this section where exclusive clubs flourish.

Ascending the steps of the Moravia, Darryat was impressed by the fact that the place had changed but little since the days when it had housed the old Manor Club. The same exclusive atmosphere pervaded the squatty, stone-fronted structure. It was necessary to ring the bell in order to gain admittance.

A uniformed attendant answered Darryat's ring. He asked for the visitor's card. Darryat proffered it. The flunky bowed and conducted Darryat through a mammoth hallway, to an automatic elevator.

THE LONDON CRIMES

"Mr. Cranston awaits your arrival, sir," stated the attendant. "His apartment is on the third floor. Its letter is D. Are you acquainted with this type of lift, sir?"

"Quite," returned Darryat, studying the buttons of the automatic elevator. "I shall proceed to the third floor."

Hardly had the door of the elevator closed before a man emerged from the darkness of a side room. It was Eric Delka; he had seen Darryat's entry. Tensely, the investigator gave instructions to the flunky.

"That is the man," whispered Delka. "Remember: From this minute on, you are to signal if any stranger seeks admittance."

The servant bowed his understanding. He went his way along the hall, while Delka returned to the hiding-place. There he spoke to men who were stationed with him.

"Old Twambley had good eyesight," commented Delka, in a tone of approval. "It's lucky he saw that chap standing outside here this afternoon. He guessed correctly when he thought, it was Dabley, alias Bildon."

"Which name is the rogue using tonight?" came the query.

"Neither," returned Delka, studying the card. The flunky had given it to him. "He is employing a new alias. He calls himself Captain Richard Darryat. He is bound for Apartment D, on the third floor, to meet a gentleman named Cranston."

"Shall we follow?"

"No." Delka chuckled. "We shall remain here for a short while. Where Darryat appears, The Harvester will follow. It is best to bide our time."

THERE was reason for Delka's chuckle. For the first time, the investigator had learned that a man named Lamont Cranston was residing at the Moravia; that it was he upon whom Darryat was calling. Delka remembered the name of Cranston from the past. He knew that there was some connection between Cranston and The Shadow.

Not for one moment did Delka suppose that Cranston and The Shadow were one. The Shadow's brief appearance in the role of Phineas Twambley had thrown Delka from the track.

Delka thought of Cranston as an adventurous American millionaire; one well qualified to take care of himself in emergency. He believed that The Shadow occasionally shunted desperate characters in Cranston's direction, after due warning to the millionaire. Hence Darryat, alone, did not strike Delka as a threat.

A ring of the doorbell caused Delka to peer out into the hall. He saw the flunky admit a wan, droopy-faced man who nodded and went to the lift. The attendant returned to answer another ring at the door. This time, he admitted a stoop-shouldered man who was carrying a large cane and wearing a heavy overcoat.

Delka caught sight of a face that was conspicuous because of a brown Vandyke beard. The flunky conducted the new visitor to the lift, and pressed the button for its descent. The man with the Vandyke entered and went upward.

The attendant started back toward the door, making a motion with his hand. Delka sneaked out and intercepted him. The flunky spoke.

THE LONDON CRIMES

"Thought I'd better report, sir," he stated, solemnly. The first gentleman to enter was Mr. Rufus Holmes, who lodges in Apartment A on the fourth floor. The second was Sir Ernest Jennup."

"He resides here?" queried Delka.

"No, sir," was the reply, "but he calls occasionally, upon the Honorable Raymond Fellow, whose apartment is on the second floor. I deemed that it would be quite right to admit Sir Ernest without question. The Honorable Mr. Fellow is at present in his apartment."

"Quite all right," agreed Delka. "Carry on."

With that, the investigator returned to the side room while the servant took his place near the outer door.

MEANWHILE, Captain Darryat had gained a cordial reception at Apartment D, on the third floor. His knock had gained him a prompt admittance. He had come face to face with a tall, hawk-faced occupant who was attired in dressing gown.

His host had announced himself as Lamont Cranston. Richard Darryat had accepted the invitation to lay aside his coat, hat and walking stick. He had accepted an expensive panetela which Cranston proffered him.

Both men were seated and were smoking their thin cigars. Cranston, though an American, seemed to have acquired the reserve of a Britisher, for his opening conversation was stilted and formal.

Darryat, eyeing him closely, was impressed by a keenness which persisted despite Cranston's languor. Somehow, Cranston reminded him of some one whom he had met before; Darryat could not recall whom. He did not grasp the truth: namely, that this personage who now passed as Cranston had been both Wadkins and Dobbingsworth. Such was the capability of The Shadow's disguises.

"So Dobbingsworth sent you here," remarked The Shadow, in a calm, leisurely tone that fitted the guise of Cranston. "His note indicated that you wished to speak to me regarding the Montana silver stock. Do I understand, captain, that you wish to buy some shares?"

"I would like to invest in Topoco Mines," nodded Darryat. "From any one who has such securities."

"Unfortunately," declared The Shadow, "my holdings are not for sale."

"I doubt that I would buy them if they were," returned Darryat. "That is why I have come here, Mr. Cranston."

The Shadow feigned a puzzled expression. Darryat shook his head dubiously and leaned forward in his chair.

"To be frank, Mr. Cranston," he stated, "I have ventured here on a sad errand. It is my painful duty to inform you that your mining stock is spurious."

The Shadow stared, apparently startled.

"You understand, of course," added Darryat, "that such is my opinion. I saw the remaining shares that Wadkins had to offer. I have learned, for a fact, that Wadkins has left London."

"His office is closed?"

THE LONDON CRIMES

"Yes. Under the pretext that his work is finished. His work, however, was illegitimate. If you would let me glance at that stock, Mr. Cranston –"

"Certainly."

Reaching to a heavy table, The Shadow pulled open a drawer and produced the stock in question. He handed the bundle to Darryat. The pretended captain gave it close scrutiny; then shook his head.

"I doubt the stock's authenticity," he declared. "Quite sorry, old chap, but I am familiar with this sort of thing. However, I do not wish you to go upon my opinion alone. I hope to help you; and I took the liberty of inviting a friend here for that purpose."

"A friend?" queried The Shadow.

"Yes," nodded Darryat. "Sir Ernest Jennup, the well-known banker. Of course you have heard of him; he has offices on Lombard Street."

"I have met him," recalled The Shadow. "A stoop-shouldered man, past middle age, with a Vandyke beard and –"

"You have described him precisely." Darryat glanced at his watch. "Since Sir Ernest should be here, shortly, I left word with the doorkeeper to invite him up here immediately upon his arrival."

"Of course. I shall be glad to hear Sir Ernest's opinion. A chat with him will be quite in order."

"He will probably suggest that you place the securities in his custody, that he may have them examined by experts who are competent at detecting forgeries."

"An excellent suggestion."

Hardly had Darryat spoken before a rap sounded at the door. The fake captain spoke in an eager whisper.

"It is Sir Ernest!"

THE SHADOW arose leisurely and strolled toward the door to answer the knock. Before he was halfway there, the rap was repeated this time in sharp rat-tat fashion, two strokes at a time.

As The Shadow advanced, a sudden hiss came from behind him. He turned to stare at Darryat. The crook had brought a revolver from his pocket.

Darryat was leveling the weapon with his right hand, while his left clutched the mining stock. In harsh whisper, Darryat delivered a command.

"Stop where you are!"

The Shadow paused; his hands half lifted, his face showing perplexed concern. Approaching, Darryat sneered.

"The game is up, Cranston," he stated. "That man outside the door is not Sir Ernest Jennup. He is a gentleman whom Scotland Yard has chosen to call The Harvester. He is the chief whom I serve."

THE LONDON CRIMES

The Shadow's face registered bewilderment. Hands rising further, he was backing to the wall beside the door.

"We came here to make you our dupe," jeered Darryat. "We would easily have succeeded. However, this afternoon I chanced to spy a Scotland Yard investigator: one, Eric Delka. I informed The Harvester. He said to be ready for emergency."

"That second rap, delivered in double, repeated fashion, is my chief's signal. It means that Scotland Yard has meddled. We cannot risk the time that we would need to properly induce you to turn over your securities."

Again came the repeated rap. Thrusting the mining stock into his pocket, Darryat sidled to the door; there he gripped the knob with his left hand, while he still kept The Shadow covered with his gun.

"It shall have to be crudely done," was Darryat's final jeer. "By seizure, not by strategy. Those Scotland Yard men may be waiting for us. So we will coax them from their nests by starting a rampage. Too bad for you, Cranston; but murder is part of our game, when necessary —"

Darryat had turned the knob and was drawing the door inward. He moved back to admit The Harvester; and in that moment of confidence, Darryat let his right hand turn slightly. In a split-second, The Shadow's languid resignation faded. He remained Cranston in appearance, only; not in action.

THE SHADOW'S long body shot forward with arrowlike rapidity. His left hand shot for Darryat's right wrist. His right sped to a deep, inner left pocket of his dressing gown.

Darryat tried to leap away; to aim as he did so. He was too late. A viselike fist caught the scoundrel's wrist. Darryat was whirled about like a helpless puppet.

The crook tugged at the trigger of his gun. His hand, twisted sidewise, no longer held its aim. Spurting flames spat toward the ceiling, where useless bullets found their only target. The Shadow, swinging clear about, had gained the center of the room. Darryat, twisted double by the jujutsu hold, was in his clutch, between The Shadow and the door.

The barrier had swung wide. There, upon the threshold was the figure of a bearded man, stooped no longer. The Harvester still had the facial guise of Sir Ernest Jennup; but he had dropped the pose of the banker whom he was impersonating.

Hissed oaths were coming from the lips that wore the false Vandyke. Savagely, with glaring eyes, the master crook was aiming a revolver of his own.

The Shadow, in turn, had whipped out an automatic with his right fist, while his left hand had hurled Darryat into many gyrations. Sidestepping across the floor with Darryat in front of him, The Shadow was leveling his .45 past the fake captain's shoulder. Darryat was screaming with helpless rage.

The game was really up. Darryat's shots had ended it. Those barks of his revolver had been heard; for shouts were coming from a stairway, far below. Through his hopeless thrust, Darryat had precipitated an immediate duel between The Shadow and The Harvester.

Guns ripped booming shots with simultaneous fury. The Shadow was aiming at The Harvester; the supercrook was firing toward his indomitable foe. But in that battle, both had a different disadvantage. The Shadow's aim was injured by Darryat's struggles. The Harvester's openings were handicapped because The Shadow held Darryat as a shield.

THE LONDON CRIMES

The Harvester's life seemed charmed as the master crook swung back and forth in the doorway. Each stab from The Shadow's automatic was jinxed either by a movement of his target, or through a chance twist by Darryat. Yet The Harvester, in his haste, could not find an opening through which to jab a bullet. Each time that the killer fired, The Shadow was making a shift.

Viciously, fiendishly, The Harvester gave up his first tactics and opened a final volley straight for the intervening figure of Darryat.

A hoarse scream came from the helpless henchman as riddling bullets found Darryat's body. The Harvester hoped to blast the human shield from The Shadow's grasp. He counted upon a sag of Darryat's body to allow a better path toward the fighter in the dressing gown.

The Harvester failed. Not for an instant did The Shadow release his twisting clutch.

Shouts from atop the stairs. With a mad snarl, the false-bearded supercrook dived away from the doorway, just as The Shadow thrust his steadied gun over Darryat's sagged shoulder. The automatic spoke; its tongued barks were too late. The Harvester had plunged from view, diving straight into the arms of Delka and two Scotland Yard men.

DELKA and his companions were aiming, as they shouted a command to halt. The Harvester crossed their expectations. Swinging his gun hand like a bludgeon, he struck down the closest man and hurled the fellow's body at the others. As Delka and his remaining aid swung to take new aim, the fleeing crook leaped down the stairway, four steps at a time.

The Scotland Yard men launched wild shots; then took up the pursuit.

The Shadow, springing from his own apartment, made for the front of the hallway. Reaching the door of an unoccupied apartment, he jabbed a master key into the lock. A few twists opened the door. Dashing to a front window, The Shadow opened it and sprang out upon a balcony.

The Harvester had already reached the street. The Shadow caught a glimpse of the Vandyked face as the crook sprang aboard a moving car. Trees intervened as The Shadow aimed. The Harvester had made a get-away.

Still, there was work for The Shadow to perform. Delka and the man beside him had reached the outer steps. At Delka's call, other Scotland Yard men were rising from secluded spots across the way. Guns began to boom from another passing car. The Shadow caught the glimmer of a machine gun muzzle. So did Delka; and he cried a warning.

Trapped men of the law were diving for hasty cover; they would have been too late but for The Shadow. Gripping a fresh automatic, he opened a swift downward volley, straight for the portion of the car where he knew the machine gunners must be.

Cries came from within the automobile. The turning muzzle stopped. While revolvers spurted wildly, the driver, stampeded, stepped on the accelerator. The car sped rapidly away.

Pocketing his automatic, The Shadow strode rapidly back to his own apartment. On the way, he saw the slugged Scotland Yard man rising dizzily from the floor. That chap was recovering. The Shadow's present business was with Darryat. Reaching his apartment, he found the bullet-riddled crook gasping, upon the floor.

THE LONDON CRIMES

Glassy eyes looked up from Darryat's tanned face as The Shadow stooped above the victim whom The Harvester had sacrificed. Though dying, Darryat could see the glimmer in The Shadow's gaze. He recognized the countenance of Lamont Cranston; but his ears caught the tone of a strange, awesome voice.

"Speak!" It was a command, delivered in a sinister whisper. "State the identity of your chief. Your life meant nothing to his purpose."

Darryat managed a nod.

"The Harvester," he panted. "The The Harvester. I I can name him. He he pretends to be many but he is only only one. I know I know which one he is. His name his name –"

DARRYAT'S eyes had focused toward the door. There, his blurred stare saw a moving figure, coming closer. It was the Scotland Yard man, groggily entering the doorway to the apartment; but to Darryat's disjointed brain, that shape meant only the person whom he had previously seen at that spot The Harvester.

A choking gasp from Darryat's lips. Still fearful of his murderous chief, the dying lieutenant stayed his utterance. His lips trembled, closing on the name that they were about to utter. Then they unclamped with a final, spasmodic cough.

Darryat's body slumped. That cough had been his last. Dead weight pressed The Shadow's supporting arm. Darryat was dead. Chance had worked against The Shadow. Though victorious, he had not gained the one word that he wanted. The identity of The Harvester remained unknown.

Somewhere in London, a supercrook was still at large, prepared to resume a career of baffling crime. The Shadow, to frustrate The Harvester, must still continue with a blind battle. One more difficult than the first; for to-night, The Shadow had drawn The Harvester through Darryat. Under present circumstances, Darryat was no more.

Yet the whispered echo of repressed mirth that came from The Shadow's lips was one that foreboded ill for The Harvester. Unheard by the entering Scotland Yard man, The Shadow had delivered a secret challenge; one which would not end until The Harvester had met with deserved doom.

Boldness was The Harvester's forte. Balked, the crook would stage a comeback, on the rebound. Though The Shadow had not identified The Harvester, he knew the rogue's ilk. He had dealt with others of that sort before.

The Shadow was confident that soon the superfoe would strike again. The Shadow would be prepared for that coming thrust by the master of crime.

CHAPTER VI. THE LAW LEARNS FACTS

"IT'S a jolly deep tangle, Mr. Cranston. If you can produce a clue for us, we shall appreciate it."

Eric Delka made the statement. He and The Shadow were holding a morning conference with Chief Constable Lewsham, in the latter's office at Scotland Yard.

The Shadow, still guised as Lamont Cranston, was seated opposite Lewsham, in the very chair which he had occupied when playing the role of Phineas Twambley. Neither Delka nor Lewsham, however, suspected his double identity.

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"Regarding my mining stock." The Shadow, rising, paced slowly across the office. "I purchased it from this chap Wadkins, whoever he was. The stock is bona fide. Wadkins, therefore, may be honest."

"Unless he was part of the game," objected Lewsham, promptly. "Wadkins may have been in league with The Harvester."

"Which is why we are still looking for him," added Delka. "Unfortunately, we have found no traces of the fellow, despite your description of him."

The Shadow nodded, as though convinced of a new possibility by the arguments of the Scotland Yard men. He paused by the wide window, where heavy side curtains framed a view of the Houses of Parliament, beside the Thames.

"Darryat spoke of Wadkins," mused The Shadow. He had avoided all mention of the supposed solicitor, Dobbingsworth. "I doubt, though, that he could have been the rogue who showed himself at my doorway. The one you call The Harvester."

"I agree on that," asserted Delka. "The Harvester is the specialist who puts the finishing touches on every game. He was willing even to sacrifice his right-hand man, Darryat."

"Alias Bildon, alias Dabley," remarked Lewsham, referring to a record. "Also alias Darryat. Our finger-print records show him to be Louis Markin, once incarcerated in Dartmoor Prison. We supposed that Markin had left the country."

"Being dead," stated Delka, "the chap afforded us no new clue. Nor do those thugs who were covering the apartment house last night. They are like the cutthroats who attacked me on the up train from Plymouth. Mere ruffians who serve The Harvester."

Big Ben began to boom the hour of nine. As the strokes came from the great clock near the river, Lewsham and Delka both glanced methodically at their watches. That routine performed, the chief constable picked up a copy of a tabloid newspaper that was lying upon his desk.

"We have issued a complete statement," said Lewsham. "With full particulars and a photograph of Markin, with his aliases. The picture was snapped when the body reached the morgue. The one way to offset The Harvester is to give notoriety to his doings. He may have various irons in the fire."

"Any new intelligence may aid us. We came closer to The Harvester when we learned that he had been seen near the Moravia Apartments. That is why we came there to aid you, Mr. Cranston. By the way, Delka" – Lewsham turned to the investigator "you have not seen Twambley since yesterday?"

"I did not see him yesterday," returned Delka. "He called me by the telephone, sir. Twambley has left the Savoy. According to the word he left there, he intends to tour the continent."

"A good place for him to be," nodded Lewsham. "Since he provided information against The Harvester, it is wise that he should leave England. Yet this is a wretched business! Wretched, indeed, when I am forced to admit that a man is safer out of London! Nevertheless, it is true. Frankly, we are balked, unless –"

THERE was a knock at the door. Interrupted, Lewsham called to enter. A uniformed constable appeared. The man had an urgent message.

"Two persons to see you, sir," he stated. "Sir Ernest Jennup and Mr. Justin Craybaw."

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"Show them in at once!"

All eyes were upon the elder of the two men who entered. This was the true Sir Ernest Jennup. His manner his carriage most of all, the appearance of his face were proof that The Harvester's impersonation had by no means been a perfect one. The real Sir Ernest, with his well-trimmed Vandyke, was much more distinguished in appearance than the impostor had been.

The man with Sir Ernest was also possessed of dignity. Justin Craybaw was tall, broad-shouldered and robust of appearance. He was a man not over forty; his face, though tight-skinned, was healthy in its ruddiness. He was clean-shaven with short-clipped black hair, his temples tinged an iron-gray.

Sir Ernest was the first to speak. In precise tones, he took up the matter of The Harvester's most recent exploit. Indignantly, he denounced the impostor.

"I had not visited the Moravia Apartments for weeks," declared Sir Ernest. "Hence I can scarcely accuse the doorkeeper of negligence in believing the impostor to be myself. The hallway at the Moravia is a gloomy one.

"But to think that the scoundrel would have the cheek to impersonate me! Bah! It is outrageous! Last night I was traveling southward from Glasgow, a passenger in a first-class sleeping carriage. Imagine my amazement when I arrived at King's Cross at half past seven this very morning!"

Reaching to the desk, Sir Ernest picked up the tabloid newspaper and spread its pages.

"Fancy it!" he exclaimed. "This sensational sheet flaunted before my nose, with hawkers shouting out my name for the entire depot to hear! I, the victim of a hoax of which I knew nothing! Shocking scandal!"

"My apologies, Sir Ernest," interposed Lewsham, soothingly. "It was not to our liking. Our duty, however, is to further the purposes of the law when —"

"With which I quite agree," broke in Sir Ernest, emphatically, "and for that reason I have no quarrel. Instead, I have come here to congratulate you upon your course. I can overlook the temporary embarrassment which was thrust upon me. You have served the law well."

THERE was significance in Sir Ernest's tone. Keen interest gripped the listeners. Smiling pleasantly because of the surprise which he had created, Sir Ernest leaned back in his chair and waved his hand toward Craybaw.

"Proceed with the details, Justin," he suggested. "Unless you wish a further introduction."

"Such would be wise, Sir Ernest," inserted Craybaw.

"Very well." Sir Ernest nodded. "Mr. Craybaw is the managing director of Rudlow, Limited, a financial concern that is connected with my banking houses. This morning, he called me by telephone, directly after I had reached my Lombard Street office. When I heard the information that he has to offer, I suggested that he accompany me here at once."

"Information about The Harvester?" queried Lewsham, turning quickly to Craybaw. "Or about his lieutenant Markin?"

"Concerning the latter," replied Craybaw, "under his alias of Captain Darryat."

"You had met Darryat?"

Craybaw shook his head.

"No," he replied, "but I had heard of the fellow; and his ways struck me as suspicious. Suppose I give you a brief sketch of the circumstances."

"Proceed."

"Not more than two months ago," recalled Craybaw, "Rudlow, Limited, was approached by a gentleman named Lionel Selbrock, recently returned from Mesopotamia. Selbrock whose credentials appeared to be of the highest made claim that he was the holder of oil options valued at a quarter million in pounds sterling.

"It was his desire that Rudlow, Limited, should undertake the disposal of those options, at the price quoted. Selbrock, in turn, insisted that he would be satisfied to receive two hundred thousand pounds as his payment. This offered an excellent profit, fifty thousand pounds to be exact, for Rudlow, Limited.

"The directors conferred upon the matter and resolved to undertake the sale. An agreement was drawn up with Selbrock. The next process was to discover a suitable buyer."

Craybaw paused. He formed another mental calculation; then resumed:

"Less than a fortnight since twelve days ago, as I recall it Lionel Selbrock was approached directly by a man who offered to dispose of his options. That man named a potential buyer: namely, the Rajah of Delapore."

"He is here in London," put in Lewsham, with a nod. "Prepared to sell a large number of valuable jewels. One of my men talked with his secretary, to make sure that the wealth was properly protected."

"Exactly," stated Craybaw. "The rajah's purchase of the oil options was to be contingent upon his sale of the jewels, a point which has apparently been already arranged. But what is most important is the identity of the man who called upon Selbrock to arrange the transaction."

"Was it Darryat?"

"It was. He tried to induce Selbrock to visit the Rajah of Delapore and come to immediate terms. Selbrock refused to do so."

"On account of his agreement with Rudlow, Limited?"

"That was the reason. Selbrock came directly to us, as an honest man should have done. His suggestion was that we negotiate with the rajah."

"Eliminating the so-called Captain Darryat?"

"Entirely. Selbrock reasoned that Darryat was entitled to no consideration, because he had attempted to produce an illegal transaction. A point, however, with which I could not agree."

"So you did not contact the rajah?"

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"On the contrary, we did." Craybaw's tone was serious. "Our position was a rather unique one. Since we had agreed to sell Selbrock's options, we could hardly refuse to negotiate with a purchaser whom he suggested. Had Darryat come to us, we would naturally have been forced to consider him; but he had dealt only with Selbrock. Darryat's interests, therefore, were entirely beyond our jurisdiction."

"QUITE so," put in Sir Ernest Jennup. "The course was decided upon by the board of directors at Rudlow, Limited. Against the advice of Mr. Craybaw."

"Not precisely," corrected Craybaw. "I advised that Darryat be consulted, since his name had been drawn into the transaction; for that appeared to me to be the clearer course. The board of directors voted that we first open negotiations with the rajah."

"And you did so?" queried Lewsham.

"Yes," replied Craybaw. "I interviewed the rajah in my office, along with Selbrock and the board of directors. He declared that he had not authorized Captain Darryat to act as his representative. He stated that he knew very little about the fellow. Since Selbrock held to the same opinion, we decided to undertake the complete transaction."

"As it now stands, we are awaiting the rajah's disposal of his jewels. When he assures us that such negotiation has been completed, we shall purchase Selbrock's options at the price of two hundred thousand pounds. We shall then dispose of them to the Rajah of Delapore for two hundred and fifty thousand."

Lewsham had risen to his feet.

"Can this transaction be postponed?" he queried. "Without jeopardizing the interests of Rudlow, Limited?"

"My present belief," replied Craybaw, "is that it should by all means be postponed, until Scotland Yard has had time to fully investigate the possible influence of Captain Darryat."

"A decision with which I fully agree," nodded Sir Ernest. "That is why we have come here so promptly. Furthermore, as a principal stockholder in Rudlow; Limited, I believe that the entire transaction should be supervised by the authorities."

"With reports upon Selbrock," added Craybaw, "and also upon the Rajah of Delapore. For that matter, we shall also insist that you examine the status of Rudlow, Limited."

Sidney Lewsham smiled.

"Very well;" he agreed. "We shall commence at once. I shall appoint you, Delka, to the task, with as many competent assistants as you may require."

Handshakes were exchanged. Sir Ernest Jennup departed, accompanied by Justin Craybaw. As soon as the visitors were gone, Lewsham turned to Delka and The Shadow.

"THE fine hand of The Harvester has been at work," declared the chief constable. "Here we have a perfectly legitimate transaction, needing only a move to bring seller and purchaser together. Somehow, The Harvester learned of it. He used Darryat to arrange a short-cut, eliminating the natural intermediary: Rudlow, Limited. Fortunately, the game was stopped."

"It was 'spiked,' as they say in the States," chuckled Delka. "That is why Darryat was sent on a lesser game. Maybe The Harvester has given up hope of getting his fists into either the oil options or the jewels."

"Not The Harvester," returned Lewsham, with a shake of his head. "He is somewhere in the offing. We have a new lead, also. The rogue must be keeping close watch upon developments in Lombard Street."

"He has done so in the past."

"Yes. Moreover, his impersonation of Sir Ernest shows that he has had contacts among bankers. I wonder" Lewsham paused musingly "I wonder if either Selbrock or the rajah ever met Sir Ernest."

"I shall make inquiry of both, when I meet them," stated Delka. "You can ask Sir Ernest, chief. Unless you prefer that I –"

"I shall ask him. Meanwhile, Delka, when you call on Selbrock and the Rajah of Delapore, I would suggest that you have Mr. Cranston accompany you. He can listen and ascertain if their description of the pretended Captain Darryat tallies with your own."

Ten minutes later, Eric Delka left New Scotland Yard accompanied by The Shadow. As the two walked toward an underground station, Delka was delivering brief comments regarding their coming quest. The Shadow, however, was silent.

His thin lips, perfectly disguised, wore a slight, fixed smile that sometimes went with the personality of Lamont Cranston. For where Delka simply hoped for news of The Harvester, The Shadow was already positive that he would have a complete trail, before this work was finished.

CHAPTER VII. THE SHADOW DECIDES

FROM Westminster to Aldgate was a ride of a dozen minutes by the Metropolitan and District Lines, the route which Delka and The Shadow took. This was the circle service of the underground; their train traveled on the "inner rail" to make its rapid journey. When they came up the steps at Aldgate, Delka pointed to a distant sign which bore the name: "Addingham Hotel."

"That is where Lionel Selbrock is stopping," informed the Scotland Yard man. "Justin Craybaw left the address with the chief. Come; we shall see if Selbrock is at his diggings."

Aldgate marked the abrupt limit of the old city; with it, the beginning of the East End, where the most squalid quarters of London are located. Almost on the fringe of a dilapidated district, the Addingham Hotel occupied an unenviable site.

It was a hostelry that advertised bed, breakfast and bath for eight shillings the night, reasonable rates which were determined more by location than by furnishings. For the lobby of the Addingham, though old, proved quite pretentious when Delka and The Shadow viewed it.

At the desk, Delka inquired for Lionel Selbrock and was referred to Room 402. Ascending in the lift, the visitors walked along a well-kept hall until they reached the proper door. There Delka knocked. Receiving no response, he turned the knob. The door opened; Delka and The Shadow stepped into an unlocked room.

Selbrock was not about, so Delka eyed the quarters. The room was comfortably furnished and quite tidy. Upon a writing desk Delka noted a portable typewriter, with a pipe and tobacco pouch beside it. Strolling

over, Delka studied the machine.

"An American typewriter," he remarked. "Cavalier Portable, No. 4. A very popular machine nowadays. We have several at headquarters. I wonder whereabouts this chap Selbrock can be? He left his door unlocked; he cannot have traveled far."

DELKA paused as he saw The Shadow turn toward the door. Some one was entering. The visitors saw a tall, rangy man who appeared youngish despite the gray streaks in his hair. The arrival smiled a greeting.

"Cheerio," he said. "I was informed that I had visitors. Are you from Scotland Yard?"

"Are you Lionel Selbrock?" returned Delka, promptly.

"None other," responded the rangy man. "Your name?"

"Eric Delka, acting inspector. This is Mr. Cranston."

"Jove!" exclaimed Selbrock, as he shook hands. "So you two are the pair who dealt with those beggars at St. James Square, last night. I have just been breakfasting and reading the news at the same time. Congratulations."

"It appears that we encountered a friend of yours," remarked Delka, cagily.

"Captain Darryat?" queried Selbrock. "He was no friend of mine. I suspected that bounder of double dealing. I am not surprised to learn that he was a rogue. I suppose that you have come to question me regarding Darryat?"

"I have," expressed Delka. "We heard of you through Justin Craybaw. He told us of your financial arrangements with Rudlow, Limited. I should like to ask you a few questions, Mr. Selbrock. Perhaps they may strike you as abrupt; nevertheless, I shall appreciate prompt answers."

"Righto," agreed Selbrock.

"First" Delka looked about him "just why have you chosen this hotel for your residence?"

"Because of its moderate rates."

"Rather modest quarters for a man worth a quarter million –"

"Not yet, inspector." Selbrock paused to laugh. "My present circumstances are somewhat straitened. I have not yet disposed of my options, old fellow. I am living on hopes."

"I see. But just why do you keep your room unlocked? Have you no fear of thieves?"

"None at all. My valuable documents are already with Rudlow, Limited. They require my signature to complete the transfer of the options. He who robs me gains nothing but a second-hand typewriter and a worn-out tobacco pipe."

Delka nodded. Then he proceeded with a question of a different sort:

"Are you acquainted with Sir Ernest Jennup?"

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Selbrock paused; then slowly shook his head.

"That is a poser," he admitted. "I am acquainted with Sir Ernest, yes; because I know him well by sight. I saw him once at his bank; twice at the offices of Rudlow, Limited. But I have never spoken with him."

"Not even when you made arrangements with the directors of Rudlow, Limited?"

"Not even then. Sir Ernest was not present on those occasions. Justin Craybaw serves as managing director. He was in charge of the conferences."

"Very well. Next, what can you tell me concerning the man who called himself Captain Darryat?"

"Only that he learned somehow of my options. He came here and asked me to open negotiations with a friend of his, the Rajah of Delapore."

"And what was your answer?"

"That I could deal only through Rudlow, Limited."

"What was Darryat's response?"

"He was angry when he left. He told me to handle my transactions for myself. He dared me to open negotiations, through Rudlow, with the rajah. He claimed such friendship with the rajah that my cause would prove useless."

"So you took up the challenge?"

"I did. I asked Rudlow, Limited, to communicate with the Rajah of Delapore. His excellency did not rebuff us. On the contrary, he acted quite in opposite to Darryat's prediction."

"You saw Darryat after that?"

"Never. I suppose that the chap had become quite disgruntled. It was cheek that made him hurl his defy. I met the rascal's bluff. Yet I feel sorry for the beggar, now that he is dead."

Selbrock's face had saddened. Delka changed the subject. He felt no regrets for Darryat.

"About these oil interests," remarked the Scotland Yard man. "You have credentials, I suppose?"

"They are with Rudlow, Limited."

"Have I your permission to examine them?"

"Absolutely! You might also interview the Turkish ambassador, to authenticate the seals and signatures. All are quite in order, I assure you."

DELKA appeared satisfied with the interview. He nodded to The Shadow and the two took their leave. Selbrock insisted upon going with them to the lobby. The last that they saw of the man was when he waved a cheery farewell as they stepped to the street.

THE LONDON CRIMES

"A confident chap," was Delka's comment. "Nevertheless, I shall make close scrutiny of those documents that he brought from Istanbul. Suppose we walk over to Liverpool Street and take the Central London. It will carry us to Mayfair; the trains call at Marble Arch, which is a convenient station."

Mayfair, due west from Aldgate, constitutes the smartest section of London's celebrated West End. Arrived at Marble Arch, the entrance to Hyde Park, Delka and The Shadow traced their way southward along Park Lane, then turned toward Grosvenor Square. They arrived at a palatial, marble-fronted building which proved to be an apartment hotel. Delka glanced at his watch.

"Even with the short wait at Liverpool Street," he chuckled, "and the thirteen minutes' trip to Marble Arch, the journey has taken us scarcely more than a half hour. Unless the Rajah of Delapore is an early riser, we shall certainly find him at his residence."

The Rajah of Delapore was at home. Delka and The Shadow were ushered to his sumptuous second-floor apartment, to enter a living room which was thick with the atmosphere of the Orient. Carved chairs, ornate tapestries, the perfume from silver incense burners all formed a part of this transplanted room which seemed to have been brought intact from a native province in India.

A tall, sallow-faced man received the visitors. Long-nosed, with sleek, black hair, this fellow possessed a pair of quick beady eyes that had the peculiar faculty of enlarging themselves. The man was smooth-shaven; and the color of his skin seemed almost artificial.

"My name is Ranworthy," said the man by way of self-introduction. "Jed Ranworthy, secretary to His Excellency, the Rajah of Delapore. His excellency has instructed me to discuss matters with you until he can join us in conference. Pray be seated, gentlemen."

Delka decided to quiz the secretary, for a starter.

"Being from Scotland Yard," stated Delka, "I am here to find out all that can be learned concerning Captain Richard Darryat. What can you tell us about him, Mr. Ranworthy?"

"Captain Darryat?" Ranworthy smiled sourly. "I knew the chap for a rogue the moment he introduced himself here. I did not state that opinion to the rajah. I wanted his excellency to form the conclusion for himself."

"I see. How did Darryat happen to come here?"

Ranworthy shrugged his shoulders before replying.

"Like any one else," he declared, "the man could have learned that a Hindu potentate was residing in Mayfair. There was no deep secret surrounding the presence of the Rajah of Delapore in London."

A turbaned Hindu servant entered the living room while Ranworthy was speaking. Delka watched the fellow stalk quietly across the room and leave by another door. The Shadow, meanwhile, eyed Ranworthy. The secretary paid no attention to the servant's brief visit.

"His excellency has been here for nearly two months," continued Ranworthy. "Captain Darryat first appeared during the past fortnight no, perhaps it was earlier than two weeks ago. Darryat told us about Lionel Selbrock and the Mesopotamian oil holdings."

"Did he suggest terms for their acquisition?"

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"No. On the contrary, he acted as a disinterested party. He claimed that he merely wished to be of service to the rajah. Darryat tried to make us believe that he had once served as an officer in the Bengal Lancers. That was when the rajah began to doubt him."

"I see. And after that?"

"We heard from Rudlow, Limited. His excellency went to their offices. He arranged to purchase the monopolies."

"And did Darryat come here again?"

"Yes. The rajah chided him for misrepresenting facts. He told Darryat to render a bill for services."

"Did Darryat do so?"

"No. On the contrary, he acted nastily and departed in a huff. We could not understand his actions, unless –"

"Unless what?"

Delka's question came sharply when Ranworthy paused. The secretary resumed his statement abruptly.

"Unless Captain Darryat was after bigger game and chose therefore to sulk, once his moves were countered. That was the opinion which I shared with his excellency, the rajah.

Ranworthy's tone had become a convincing pur, a smooth manner of talking that matched the persuasive language of the late Captain Darryat. The Shadow alone noted this fact. Delka had never talked personally with the swindler who had died the night before. Ranworthy's tone was paradoxical; it showed that the secretary himself might be a smooth worker, contrarily it lacked his statement that he had been keen enough to see through Darryat.

"By the way," questioned Delka. "Did you ever meet up with Sir Ernest Jennup?"

"The man who was impersonated last night?" queried Ranworthy. "Yes. I met him several times at his banking house on Lombard Street. In connection with money matters that concerned the rajah."

"Was his excellency with you on those occasions?"

"Twice, I believe. Yes, twice. That is correct."

BEFORE Delka could put another question, curtains parted at the end of the long living room and a tall, imposing man stepped into view. It was the Rajah of Delapore, in person. The Hindu nabob was garbed in native costume.

The rajah's attire was a masterpiece of barbaric tailoring. His waist was encircled with a jeweled sash, from which hung a short sword, in golden scabbard. His coat was bedecked with semiprecious stones, garnets and turquoises, with an occasional topaz. His turban, too, was fronted with gems, a large ruby forming the exact center of a cluster.

The rajah's face was a true Caucasian type, with perfectly formed features. The dusky hue of his skin actually added to his handsome appearance; for it formed a relief to the glitter of his attire. The hand that the rajah thrust forward was long and shapely; but the grip that he gave to the visitors was firm.

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"Welcome, friends." The Rajah of Delapore spoke in a musical tone. "I have chanced to overhear your conversation; therefore I understand your purpose here. I have read about last night's episode. My congratulations to you, Inspector Delka; and to you, Mr. Cranston."

Delka and The Shadow bowed. The rajah turned to Ranworthy.

"You may leave," he told the secretary. "Inform Barkhir that I wish to speak with him."

Ranworthy bowed and departed. The rajah looked toward Delka with a quizzical gaze, as if inviting questions. The Scotland Yard man had one.

"This secretary of yours," he asked, in an undertone. "How long has he been in your employ, your excellency?"

"Ranworthy joined me in Calcutta," returned the rajah musingly. "I needed a secretary who knew London. Ranworthy had good references. I employed him."

"You came directly to London?"

"No. We stopped for a while in Paris."

"And since your arrival here, have you been busy?"

"Indeed not. Neither myself nor Ranworthy. I require his services only in the mornings. At other times, he is entirely free."

A sudden light showed upon Delka's features. The rajah did not appear to notice it; but The Shadow did. A moment later, a tall, native-garbed Hindu entered the living room. He was not the servant who had gone through previously. This was Barkhir, whom Ranworthy had been told to summon.

The rajah gave an order in Hindustani. Barkhir departed, to return with a tray-load of refreshments. The rajah invited his guests to join in the repast. While they ate with him, he made final remarks.

"Ranworthy has told you all that we know about Darryat," he stated. "My opinion is simply that the scoundrel was after my many gems. I have brought them to London, for sale."

"And you keep them here," added Delka. "Such, at least, is the understanding at the Yard."

"The jewels are in this room," smiled the rajah. "Yet they are quite safe. Only I know their hiding-place."

"Not Ranworthy?"

"Not even Ranworthy. I would defy him to discover them. That is why I had no fear of Darryat, even after I believed that the man was a rogue. My secrets are my own."

"But Ranworthy is close to you. He might learn facts, your excellency."

The rajah's eyes blazed suddenly; then softened.

"Ranworthy," he stated quietly, "is honest. Such, at least, is my opinion. When I form such conclusions, I am never wrong."

THE LONDON CRIMES

"I meant no offense," apologized Delka. "It is simply my business to check up on every detail."

"I understand," nodded the rajah. "Well, inspector, I can assure you that the jewels will soon be sold. No danger will remain here. I shall return to India with the oil options in their place."

THE interview ended. Ranworthy appeared; the rajah retired and the secretary ushered the visitors from the apartment. When they reached the street, Delka was in a musing mood.

"There is much to be learned," he told The Shadow. "Somewhere amid this mess is a link with Captain Darryat. Do you agree with me, Mr. Cranston?"

"I do," assured The Shadow, quietly. His gaze was upward, toward the rajah's apartment. "Yes, I agree."

As The Shadow spoke, he caught a quick glimpse of a face that drew back from the curtained window of the living room. A brief flash only, but sufficient to identify its owner. The watching man was Ranworthy, whom The Shadow and Delka had left alone in the living room.

"We are near your diggings," remarked Delka, as they turned southward on Berkley Street. "There is Piccadilly, just ahead of us. St. James Square is on the other side."

"I shall drop off there," decided The Shadow. "When shall I see you again, inspector?"

"To-morrow morning," declared Delka. "No to-morrow afternoon would be better. At the offices of Rudlow, Limited. By that time, I shall have checked upon all details."

They parted. The Shadow went directly to his own apartment. There he made a telephone call. It was Harry Vincent who responded. The Shadow gave instructions.

On hour later, Harry Vincent checked in at the Addingham Hotel in Aldgate. He obtained a room almost across the hall from the one occupied by Lionel Selbrock. The man from Mesopotamia, though unwatched by Scotland Yard, was to be covered by The Shadow.

Later that same day, an old-fashioned taxicab rolled past the marble-fronted hotel in Mayfair, where the Rajah of Delapore resided. Keen eyes stared from the interior. The cab stopped further on; a keen-eyed personage with a cane alighted and strolled back along the street.

He remained in that vicinity for a while. Later, another individual took his place, this one a hunched man with a cane. After that person had departed, a third took up the vigil. All were one and the same: The Shadow; yet in none would the rajah or Ranworthy have recognized Lamont Cranston.

Scotland Yard had ignored the rajah also; and his secretary, as well. But not The Shadow. He was keeping vigil here until the morrow, when he met again with Delka. There were threads in this skein that needed untangling. The Shadow intended to accomplish such work.

While Eric Delka still suspected a coming move from The Harvester, The Shadow was sure that such a stroke would arrive. His was the task to learn, that he might be prepared.

CHAPTER VIII. DOWN FROM LONDON

IT was three o'clock the next afternoon. Harry Vincent was seated in his room at the Addingham Hotel,

hunched in front of a gas-log fire. It was a raw day in London; creeping haze was taken that a fog might set in after nightfall.

The transom above Harry's door was open; he was listening for any sounds from across the hall. Yesterday, Harry had entered Selbrock's room while the man was out. To-day, Selbrock had not gone out. At intervals, however, Harry had heard brief clicks from the portable typewriter. That was a sound which pleased Harry.

For yesterday, Harry had performed a definite job. He had removed the roller from Selbrock's typewriter. In its place he had inserted a duplicate, of the exact appearance. A roller suitable for a Cavalier No. 4, yet one which had already begun to perform a required function. That substituted roller was a device of The Shadow's recent invention.

Footsteps in the hallway. A knock. Moving to the door, Harry edged it open. He saw a round-hatted messenger tapping at the door of Selbrock's room. Harry watched; the door opened. Selbrock, in shirtsleeves, made his appearance. He was puffing at his briar pipe.

Selbrock received the message, tipped the messenger, and ripped open the envelope. He did not move in from the doorway, hence Harry was able to watch the expression that appeared upon the man's genial face.

Selbrock appeared to be delighted. He waved the message in his hand, then pounced back into the room. Harry saw him open a suitcase and bring out a thick, squatty book with paper covers. It was a Bradshaw, the British railway guide.

Still holding his message, Selbrock consulted the time-tables. He tossed the Bradshaw into the suitcase, donned his coat and vest, then thrust his message into his coat pocket. Harry saw him move out of sight beyond the opened door.

Then came rapid clicks of the typewriter. Soon Selbrock reappeared, sealing a message in an envelope. He threw a few clothes into the suitcase and hurried from the room. His face still registered an expression of hearty pleasure.

SOON after Selbrock had gone, Harry produced the typewriter roller. Crossing the hall, he opened the unlocked door and went to Selbrock's machine. He removed the duplicate roller and inserted the one that belonged to the typewriter. Returning to his own room, Harry tugged at the end of the duplicate cylinder and pulled it loose.

From within, he brought out a most ingenious device. It was a spiral coil of paper, wound about a central core, that was loosely weighted so that one portion would always keep to the bottom. The roller, itself, was the thinnest sort of metal shell; but at front and back were strips of thicker metal, attached by end projections to the weighted core. Hence these strips always held their position, despite the coiling of the paper within.

The metal strip at the front showed a slight space between itself and a taut line of carbon ribbon. The paper coiled between the ribbon and the strip of metal. Hence, in typing, Selbrock had always had his keys encounter a solid-backed portion of the roller.

Most ingenious was the fact that the paper coil started beneath the stretch of carbon; but in uncoiling, it ran above it; that is, between the carbon and the shell of the roller. Hence, once a portion of the paper had received impressions from the keys, that part of the coil no longer came under the carbon. New paper replaced it as long as the coil unwound.

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Succeeding impressions naturally had to be driven through the increasing thickness of the coils; but that fact was offset by the remarkable thinness of the paper.

Hence Harry, as he unrolled the coil, discovered a complete record of everything that Selbrock had typed since yesterday. All of the man's notes had been brief; most of them were merely to tradesmen, ordering them to hold certain goods until Selbrock had funds available. The final note, however, was more illuminating.

It was addressed to Rudlow, Limited, and stated merely that Selbrock had received a telegram from an old friend who was in England; that he was leaving London but would be back the next day. The few sentences, however, gave no clue to Selbrock's destination.

Harry brought out his own Bradshaw and began to thumb the pages. Twenty minutes of futile effort soon convinced him that his task was hopeless. There was no way of guessing which of the many London railway depots Selbrock had chosen. Harry's only hope was to reconnoiter.

Leaving his room, he went downstairs. Near the door of the lobby, he encountered one of the Addingham's page boys.

"I am looking for a friend of mine," informed Harry. "A gentleman named Selbrock, who is stopping here. Could you find out where he has gone?" The boy volunteered to gain the information. He returned shortly to state that Selbrock had taken a motor cab, otherwise a taxi. The boy added that he had driven to Euston Station, the terminus of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway. Not an economical course, according to the boy, for his opinion was that Selbrock could have saved cab tariff and traveled much more satisfactorily by the inner rail of the Metropolitan and District Lines.

THAT was a tip to Harry. With the Bradshaw bulging from his pocket, he hurried out of the hotel and headed for the Aldgate Station of the underground. Picturing the circle service of the tube, Harry forgot himself. He fancied the trains running on the right-hand tracks, as in America; for his brief sojourn in London had not sufficed to accustom him to the British system of trains on the left.

Thus Harry took the wrong side of the underground. Boarding a train, he settled back in the comfortable seat and chuckled at the elegance of this line when compared with New York subways. He referred to Bradshaw. Concentrating upon the trains of the L. M. E., he found that there was a four o'clock Restaurant Car Express, London to Liverpool, with through carriages to Carlisle. Calculating the time from Aldgate to Euston Station, Harry believed that he would make it. Then, glancing from the window of the underground train, he recognized a station and realized his mistake.

He had taken the long route from Aldgate and was already well along the circle! Thirty-five minutes from Aldgate to Euston, by the outer rail, which Harry had taken, instead of a mere dozen which the inner rail required. A glance at his watch told Harry that he would be too late to overtake Selbrock. That quest was finished.

MEANWHILE, The Shadow had encountered an odd situation in Mayfair. He had seen Jed Ranworthy appear suddenly from the apartment hotel, spring aboard a waiting cab and ride away. The Shadow, disguised as a chance stroller, had no opportunity to follow.

The Shadow strolled away. When he returned, it was in the guise of Cranston. He entered the apartment hotel and sent his card to the Rajah of Delapore. Barkhir, the Hindu, admitted him.

A few moments later, the rajah appeared. He seemed cordial, yet puzzled by the visit. In the quiet tone of Cranston, The Shadow explained.

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"I expected to find Inspector Delka," he stated. "He said that he might be here this afternoon."

"You will probably find him at Rudlow's," returned the rajah. "I communicated with them, to-day, making final arrangements for my business. Delka was expected some time in the afternoon."

"I shall proceed there. Very sorry, your excellency, to have disturbed you. I expected to make inquiry from your secretary."

"Ranworthy is not here. He has gone out of London for the night. To Yarmouth, I believe."

"Yarmouth? At this season?"

"It was not a pleasure trip," smiled the rajah. "Word from some relative who is ill there."

After leaving the rajah's, The Shadow returned to his own abode near St. James Square. He consulted a Bradshaw and found that a through train left Liverpool Street Station for Yarmouth, shortly before five o'clock, via the London and Northeastern Railway.

That was the one which Ranworthy would probably take to reach his destination, on the east coast, at eight in the evening. But it did not explain his hasty departure, unless he had intended to do some shopping before train time.

There was not sufficient time to go to Liverpool Street, particularly because The Shadow had a telephone call to make in response to a message that awaited him. His call was to Harry Vincent.

From the agent, he learned of Lionel Selbrock's departure, and of Harry's theories on the same. That call concluded, The Shadow strolled from his quarters, hailed a taxi and ordered the driver to take him to Threadneedle Street, where Rudlow, Limited, was located.

On the way, The Shadow considered the coincidental circumstances that had taken Lionel Selbrock and Jed Ranworthy from London. Each had received an urgent message; one from a friend, the other from a relative.

Selbrock had presumably departed for the northwest; Ranworthy for the northeast. But The Shadow had only Harry's guess concerning Selbrock; and the rajah's statement regarding Ranworthy. It was possible that Selbrock could have bluffed persons at the hotel; that Ranworthy could have deceived the rajah.

What was the connection between these occurrences? The thought brought a thin smile to The Shadow's disguised lips. He was piecing the circumstances that had suddenly caused both himself and Harry Vincent to lose trace of persons whom they had been watching. The best way to find an answer was to study circumstances elsewhere. That was exactly what The Shadow intended to accomplish.

The ancient taxi was passing the Bank of England. The Shadow eyed the structure that housed England's wealth, and the view made him think of The Harvester. Wealth was the supercreek's stake. There might be opportunity for the hidden criminal to gain it, while the transactions of Rudlow, Limited, were in the making.

The taxi rolled along Threadneedle Street, to the north of the Lombard Street banking district. It came to a stop. The Shadow alighted and sought the offices of Rudlow, Limited. He was just in time to enter before the closing hour of five.

ANNOUNCING himself as Lamont Cranston, The Shadow was ushered into a quietly furnished room, where he found three men. One was Justin Craybaw, the managing director; the second, Sir Ernest Jennup. The third

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was a person whom The Shadow had not expected to find here: Sidney Lewsham, the chief constable of the C.I.D.

It was Craybaw who gave greeting.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Cranston!" exclaimed the managing director. "Your arrival is most timely. We are about to set out for my country residence, near Tunbridge Wells. Can you accompany us?"

"You are going by train?" queried The Shadow.

"By motor," replied Craybaw. "We shall travel in Sir Ernest's phaeton. I should like to have you dine with us."

"Agreed," decided The Shadow. "With one proviso, however. I must be back in London quite early in the evening."

"You may return by train," said Craybaw. "I shall have my chauffeur, Cuthbert, carry you to the station in the coupe. The others will be staying late, since they expect Inspector Delka on the train which arrives at nine o'clock."

"Very well."

The group left Craybaw's office. They went to the street and walked to a garage where Sir Ernest's automobile was stationed. Sir Ernest took the wheel, with Craybaw beside him. The Shadow and Lewsham occupied the rear seat of the trim car.

"A quiet motor, this," remarked Lewsham, leaning half from the car and eyeing the long hood. "Not a sound from underneath the bonnet, despite the high power of the vehicle."

They were crossing a bridge that spanned the Thames. There, thick mist was spreading through the darkening gloom. Every indication marked the approach of a heavy fog. Lewsham looked upward, toward the smokiness that clustered the sky.

"We are in for a pea-souper," prophesied the chief constable. "Fog so thick that one could cleave it with a knife!"

"I noticed those signs this morning," put in Craybaw, from the front seat. "Even when I was coming up to town, riding past Waterloo into Charing Cross Station. You are correct, sir. The fog will prove dense to-night."

Sir Ernest was silent at the wheel, piloting the long car southward toward the open road which led to Tunbridge Wells, some thirty-five miles from London. The Shadow, too, was silent. He was pondering upon a subject of deep concern.

Fog over London. A blanket of haze not unlike the smoke screen which The Harvester had created in regard to crime. Yet, with the coming of one fog, the other seemed to be clearing. Curious events were piecing themselves within The Shadow's keen mind.

Unless previous circumstances were matters of pure chance, the answer to certain riddles would be forthcoming before this night was ended. To The Shadow, past events would control the future. Crime was clearing because the time was near when it would strike. By then, The Shadow hoped to hold the final key.

CHAPTER IX. SOUTH OF LONDON

JUSTIN CRAYBAW'S home was a pretentious country residence, situated close to Tunbridge Wells. Past the suburban belt, it was almost a spot of rural England. The house, though large and modern, had all the isolation of a rustic abode, for it was surrounded by spacious grounds, with high hedges along the traveled roadway.

Long driveway formed entry to the grounds; and on the far side of the house was a conservatory that overlooked a secluded, rolling lawn. It was in this room where the four assembled after dinner, to smoke their cigars and to discuss the matter that was their chief concern.

"Chief Lewsham," began Sir Ernest, "we are exceedingly alarmed by the activities of this rogue you term The Harvester. I, for one, was more than annoyed to learn that he impersonated myself. To me, that fact stands as a warning that we may expect to hear from him again."

"His tool, Captain Darryat, was close to the Rajah of Delapore," added Craybaw, seriously. "For that matter, The Harvester contacted with Lionel Selbrock also. Those facts show us that The Harvester may be planning a new and more potent game."

Lewsham nodded slowly.

"I believe that you are right," he decided. "The Harvester has not reaped sufficient spoils. A rogue of his ilk will never cease until he has gained a final triumph. He is as dangerous as ever."

"Not quite," put in The Shadow, in the easy tone of Cranston. "He is handicapped by his sacrifice of a chief lieutenant, Captain Darryat."

"But he may have others," objected Lewsham. "Some one could work in place of Darryat."

"Hardly so," stated The Shadow. "If The Harvester had possessed another competent lieutenant, he would not have played Darryat as his regular trump card."

The statement impressed Lewsham. It was logical and it came as a ray of hope. The Shadow, however, was prompt to squelch the chief constable's glee.

"The Harvester has become a lone hand," emphasized The Shadow. "He possesses underlings, certainly; but none above the class of thugs. Without Darryat, The Harvester is less dangerous. But he may prove to be more slippery."

"Because Darryat's death has destroyed our only link!" exclaimed Lewsham. "You are right, Mr. Cranston! We shall have no clue to The Harvester until he himself reveals his final part."

"Which he will do," predicted The Shadow, "after he gains the spoils that he is seeking. Yet even after he has struck, he will prove slippery."

SIR ERNEST was tugging at his Vandyke beard, puzzled by words which The Shadow had uttered.

"You speak of spoils," remarked Sir Ernest. "Just what spoils do you mean? Selbrock's options or the rajah's jewels?"

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"Either," replied The Shadow, "or both. Perhaps he has designs on other wealth. Suppose you tell me, Sir Ernest, just what precautions have been taken to keep The Harvester from meddling with this coming transaction?"

"Mr. Craybaw can answer that question," returned Sir Ernest. "While I and others are the ones who have financed Rudlow, Limited, we have placed full control in the hands of our managing director."

"A responsibility which I have accepted," smiled Craybaw, "and which I recognized." Then, solemnly, he added: "And my position, moreover, is a matter which must be fully discussed to-night. That is why I wanted you here, Chief Lewsham."

Lewsham nodded. He, too, was serious.

"Let me summarize the situation," continued Craybaw. "To-day I talked by telephone with Selbrock. I told him that we were ready to take over his options. Because I had already heard from the Rajah of Delapore. His gems will be sold to-morrow."

Sir Ernest nodded to indicate that he had already heard this news from Craybaw.

"Our agreement with Selbrock," resumed Craybaw, "is a most peculiar one. Many of its provisions are awkward, yet all are clear. Selbrock appears to be a poor hand at business; hence we thought it best to comply with any oddities that he requested.

"The agreement, for instance, calls for payment in specie. To clarify that condition, I have arranged to pay with Bank of England notes to the sum total of two hundred thousand pounds. That money should be in the office of Rudlow, Limited, by noon to-morrow."

"It will be," assured Sir Ernest, with an emphatic gesture. "It will come by armored vehicle, with guards in attendance. To be placed in the vault which adjoins your office, Craybaw. You will be protected every minute while the money is there."

"A wise procedure," nodded Craybaw. "Wise, for a second reason, also. Since Selbrock was to be paid in specie, the agreement which I drew up with the Rajah of Delapore called for him to pay in similar wise. He is to produce a quarter million of currency."

"Then we must protect him, also?"

"No. The rajah has insisted that he can take measures of his own. It is not our affair, Sir Ernest. If the rajah should ask for protection, it would be our duty to provide it. As the situation stands, we cannot interfere."

A pause; then Lewsham asked:

"Do I understand, Mr. Craybaw, that you also request protection on the part of Scotland Yard?"

"Absolutely," replied Craybaw. "The presence of your competent men will be most welcome. The armored cars will be needed afterward, to carry back to bank the money that we received from the rajah."

"WOULD it be possible," queried The Shadow, "to pay Selbrock with money that the rajah provides?"

"The directors considered that plan," stated Craybaw. "It appeared to be a good one, because it would have obviated the need of bringing our own funds from bank. Unfortunately, the agreements had already been

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drawn up and signed. Therefore, we could scarcely change our method.

"As intermediaries in this transaction, Rudlow, Limited, must first purchase Selbrock's options in order to make the sale to the Rajah of Delapore. Therefore, to avoid technical dispute, we must show the sum of two hundred thousand pounds. Which means that if the rajah appears at the same time as Selbrock, there will actually be the two sums in our office. A grand total of four hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

"Which The Harvester would like to get," gritted Lewsham. "That is when the danger will arise. To-morrow, when the deal is made. By the way, who knows about this arrangement, other than the directors of Rudlow, Limited?"

"Selbrock knows," replied Craybaw. "So does the rajah. And, of course, the latter's secretary, Ranworthy."

"What was it you mentioned about Selbrock this afternoon?" queried Lewsham, as if recalling something that he had heard. "Was he going out of town?"

"For the evening, yes," replied Craybaw. "He will return to-morrow. He sent a brief message from his hotel. He intended to visit some old friend."

"Odd of him to leave London at so vital a time."

"Hardly so. He knows that the transaction will not take place early in the day. The options merely await his signature."

"And what about the rajah?"

"Either he or his secretary can sign any necessary papers. After the rajah has paid the money, the options will be his."

A pause; then The Shadow quietly remarked:

"Ranworthy has gone to Yarmouth."

"To Yarmouth?" echoed Craybaw. "Why there, at this season?"

"To visit a relative who is ill there."

"I see. Then he may not be back to-morrow."

"Possibly not."

The sound of the starting of an automobile motor came from in front of the house. Craybaw glanced at his watch.

"It is Cuthbert, starting for the station," he stated. "To bring back Inspector Delka. The train is due there shortly. It is twenty minutes before nine. I told Delka to leave the train at High Brooms, which is quite as near as Tunbridge Wells. I always have Cuthbert meet the trains at High Brooms."

CONVERSATION was resumed. A clock was chiming the hour of nine when a servant appeared at the door from the house. It was Craybaw's house man, Hervey.

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"Nine o'clock, sir," informed Hervey.

"Well?" queried Craybaw.

"You told me to speak to you at nine," replied Hervey. "You did not state the reason why."

"Forgetful of me!" exclaimed Craybaw. "I recall now that I intended to run over to Hayward's Heath in the coupe. To deliver a parcel which I brought from the city. I chanced to remember that it will be my nephew's birthday, to-morrow. After all, the matter is unimportant, unless —"

Craybaw glanced at his watch.

"I have it," he decided. "Your train, Mr. Cranston, leaves High Brooms at half past nine. We shall take the coupe as soon as Cuthbert arrives with Delka. Then I can run to Hayward's Heath and back, after leaving you at the station."

Rising, Craybaw motioned toward the door to the house.

"We must be ready with our hats and coats," he reminded. "Time will be short after Cuthbert returns. We shall join you later, gentlemen."

Craybaw and The Shadow walked through a living room and entered a small study which was equipped with desk, bookcases, and a small safe. Hervey brought the hats and coats, while Craybaw was consulting a road map.

"Not far to Hayward's Heath," he declared, pointing out the road to The Shadow. "To High Brooms; then back again. Hm—m—m. I can have Cuthbert take you to the station, then return and bring the car to me. It would be best for me to remain with the other guests."

Hervey had gone out. He came in to bring word that Cuthbert had arrived with Delka. Craybaw urged The Shadow to hasten; they reached the front door to find Delka alighting with Lewsham and Sir Ernest there to greet him.

Craybaw explained the new arrangement. The Shadow entered the car with Cuthbert and they headed for High Brooms.

IN the dimness of the coupe, The Shadow observed Cuthbert's face. The chauffeur was a methodical, honest-visaged fellow, who stared steadily along the road. They reached High Brooms with minutes to spare, thanks to Cuthbert's capable and speedy handling of the car.

The Shadow alighted. Cuthbert backed the coupe. While he was doing so, The Shadow, pausing in a spot away from the station lights, was quick to open a light briefcase that he had brought along with him from the hotel.

Black cloth came from the case. A cloak slipped over The Shadow's shoulders. A slouch hat settled on his head. His hands stuffed his own light overcoat partly into the briefcase, along with the hat that he had been wearing. With a toss, The Shadow skimmed the burden along the soft ground beneath a clump of hedgelike bushes.

Cuthbert was sliding into low gear, about to drive away from the station. A being in black, his figure obscured by darkness, The Shadow sprang across the gravel unheard by Cuthbert because of the grinding

gears. With a quick leap, The Shadow gained the rear of the coupe.

Clinging there, he pressed flat against the cover of the rumble seat, riding unseen on the return journey, through hedge-flanked lanes where traffic was absent. The Shadow was making a prompt return to the home of Justin Craybaw.

Despite the fact that he had claimed an appointment in London, The Shadow had found a reason to remain a while in the vicinity of Tunbridge Wells!

CHAPTER X. PATHS IN THE DARK

WHEN the coupe arrived back at Craybaw's, The Shadow dropped off as Cuthbert took the final curve. A black shape in the darkness, he paused beside a mass of shrubbery to observe proceedings at the lighted house front. Craybaw had come out, wearing hat and coat, accompanied by the others.

"I shall not be long," assured Craybaw. He was carrying the parcel under his arm. "Make yourselves quite at home, gentlemen. Keep the wheel, Cuthbert. You can drive more rapidly than I. We must make a swift journey."

The coupe pulled away. Sir Ernest went back into the house, accompanied by Lewsham and Delka. The Shadow saw Craybaw give a final wave from within the car. Half a minute later, the light went out in front of the house. Hervey had evidently extinguished it.

Across the driveway, Sir Ernest's phaeton was standing in an isolated spot. The Shadow glided in that direction and slid aboard the trim car. Sir Ernest had not locked it; hence The Shadow saved considerable delay. Nevertheless, he took time to glide down a short slope, not putting the car into gear until he had coasted almost to the driveway entrance.

The Shadow knew Cuthbert for a rapid driver, and the chauffeur had gained a few minutes' start. Nevertheless, his speed could not have matched the rate at which The Shadow traveled, once he gained the road to Hayward's Heath. The Shadow was determined to close the distance between himself and the car ahead.

The smooth motor was noiseless, even at high speed. The phaeton clipped the mileage, for road crossings were few and well apart. Nevertheless, the start that Cuthbert had gained proved a long one. Guided by his memory of the road map, The Shadow arrived at Hayward's Heath without overtaking the coupe.

Wheeling about, The Shadow began to retrace his course. He was working upon a definite conjecture; one that caused him to increase speed after he had ridden a short way. Rounding a curve in the return road, The Shadow gained the answer that he sought.

Right ahead was the coupe, coming back from Hayward's Heath! Yet The Shadow had taken the one road that Craybaw would have chosen and he had not passed the light car on the way. The conclusion was obvious. The coupe had not continued to Hayward's Heath. Somewhere along the road, it had swung off upon one of many side lanes, while on its original journey. That had occurred early in the pursuit.

After a brief pause at some unknown spot, the coupe had begun its return, only to have The Shadow catch its trail.

That much accomplished, The Shadow slackened speed. He let the coupe reach Craybaw's well ahead of him.

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When The Shadow piloted the phaeton softly into the driveway, he saw the coupe standing by the entrance. Craybaw was going up the house steps with Hervey, who had put on the lights. A moment later, both were inside. The lights went out.

EASING the phaeton past the coupe, The Shadow parked it in the secluded corner of the driveway, confident that no one had detected its absence. Afoot, he circled the house and came to a door that led into the conservatory. The lights were out; apparently all had gone inside to escape the increasing chill.

Softly entering the conservatory, The Shadow found the house door ajar. From the darkness, he peered into the illuminated living room, where Hervey had lighted a fire in a huge grate. Craybaw was standing there, rubbing his hands for warmth.

A definite change had come over the managing director of Rudlow, Limited one that The Shadow detected promptly, for he could see Craybaw's face against the firelight. His stubbly hair was somewhat tousled; his skin lacked a trifle of its ruddiness. His eyes, moreover, showed an unnatural sparkle against the glow from the fireplace.

Craybaw was a man who appeared slightly shrunken. His manner was nervous and restless; his eyes were quick as they darted sharp looks at the other persons with him. The Shadow caught one puzzled look upon the face of Sir Ernest Jennup. Then Sidney Lewsham registered doubt. Craybaw curbed his restlessness.

"Come, Delka!" he exclaimed, his voice carrying a natural tone. "How is it in London? Any news concerning The Harvester?"

"None," returned Delka, gruffly. "All I can report is a satisfactory check on Selbrock and the Rajah of Delapore."

"And Ranworthy?"

"All right, so far as the India Office knows. I inquired there. They know a few facts about him. All tally."

Sir Ernest and Sidney Lewsham eased back in their chairs. Craybaw's return to natural form had allayed their alarm. Then came an unexpected episode. It began when Hervey entered with a stack of papers.

"For you to sign, sir," stated the house man. "So that Cuthbert can post them in time for the last mail."

Craybaw wheeled angrily. His eyes flashed; almost with a glare.

"Why do you bring the letters here?" he stormed. "I can sign them in my study!"

"But it is customary, sir. You told me earlier that I should bring the letters to you."

"I have changed my mind about it. Take them away."

"You said that two of them were important, sir —"

"Take them away!"

Hervey hesitated; then turned and obeyed. Craybaw's glare ended. He turned apologetically to his guests.

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"Hervey's idea of importance is ridiculous," he scoffed. "Important letters! Bah! None of them are of consequence!"

Sir Ernest lifted his eyebrows.

"Not even, the letter to the Berlin shippers?" he inquired. "The one that you mentioned at dinner?"

Craybaw did not answer for a moment. His fists clenched; then opened.

"I had forgotten that one," he remarked. "Perhaps I should have it posted. No on second thought, it needs correction. I shall take it to the office in the morning."

Hervey returned.

"Shall I have Cuthbert put the coupe away, sir?" he inquired. "He is still waiting at the front."

"Cuthbert is not in the car," put in Craybaw, bluntly. "I left him at Hayward's Heath. He asked if he might go into London. I told him he could take the train from there."

"When will he return, sir?"

"In a few days. He needed a short vacation, so I granted one to him."

LEWSHAM was looking toward Delka, who was studying Craybaw. The man by the fireplace produced a handkerchief and mopped his forehead.

"I have acquired a slight chill," asserted Craybaw. "Due, perhaps, to all this worry. You will pardon my actions, gentlemen. Frankly, I am overwrought by worry."

"Perhaps it would be wise for us to leave for London," suggested Sir Ernest. "You must rest, Craybaw. To-morrow is an important day."

"I shall be quite fit by morning. No, no, gentlemen; I would prefer that you stay here. For the night, if possible. The fog must be thick there; driving would prove abominable. Am I right, Delka?"

"It's turned into a pea-souper," acknowledged Delka. "A bad one. I only hope that it will let up before morning."

"Turning out as you predicted, Craybaw," laughed Sir Ernest. "Remember? At the bridge?"

"What's that?" Craybaw snapped the question. "At the bridge?"

"When you spoke about the fog –"

"Yes. Of course. I did not quite catch your question, Sir Ernest. Gentlemen, I insist that you remain all night. We can drive up to London in the morning, in Chief Lewsham's car."

"In my car?" queried Lewsham, surprised.

"Do you mean my phaeton?" queried Sir Ernest.

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"Of course," replied Craybaw, in an annoyed tone. "What has come over me? Really, I am not myself since this chill struck me."

He turned to Hervey, who was standing in the doorway. The house man looked perplexedly toward his master.

"Scotch and soda," ordered Craybaw. "It should prove a remedy for the chill. Fetch it, Hervey, with tumblers for all of us. Cigars, gentlemen? Hervey, where is the box of cigars?"

"You never keep boxes of cigars, Mr. Craybaw. I can bring some coronas from the humidor –"

"That is what I meant. The coronas. I thought I had left some loose ones about. Very well, Hervey. Bring us a supply."

Seating himself, Craybaw regained composure by half closing his eyes. Sir Ernest decided to remain at the house; Lewsham and Delka also agreed, after the latter had added a few details about the heaviness of the evening fog.

Hervey arrived with drinks. Craybaw came to life and ordered him to put away the coupe and the phaeton. Hervey requested the keys to the garage; Craybaw fumbled in his pocket, produced a bunch and told the house man to pick out the right ones.

Lewsham mentioned that he and Sir Ernest had talked to Delka about tomorrow's plans. In so doing, the chief constable reviewed some of the conversation that had been held earlier in the evening. Craybaw, sipping at his drink, warmed up to the discussion. His manner became more natural. He decided that his chill was passing.

A clock was chiming half past ten. Lewsham, noting the time, began to reconsider his decision. He asked when the last train left; Craybaw shifted the question to Hervey. The house man stated that the last up train departed from High Brooms at two minutes after eleven.

"We could still make it," mused Lewsham. "Fog seldom delays the railways."

"Stay here," insisted Craybaw. "Sir Ernest will see to it that you reach your office at the accustomed hour."

"Very well," agreed Lewsham, in a tone of final decision.

SILENTLY, The Shadow moved from the sun porch. Gaining the lawn, he took a short-cut past the house, across to a gate. From there, he strode briskly in the direction of High Brooms station, sensing his direction, choosing paths that he knew must be short cuts.

By the time he neared the station, he was divesting himself of cloak and slouch hat. Reaching the shrubbery, he regained his briefcase. He drew out his overcoat and his fedora hat; then stuffed the other garments into the bag. A few moments later, he was hurrying to the station platform, just as the up train for London made its arrival.

It was Lamont Cranston who soon was seated alone in the seclusion of a smoking compartment, riding into London. The whispered laugh that came from the lips of the American millionaire was, however, a reminder of his true identity. The Shadow had reason to be mirthful.

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The Shadow had divined The Harvester's game. He knew where the master crook could be found. He understood the new part that the superman of crime had chosen to play. There were details, however, to be settled. The Shadow preferred to wait.

For The Harvester was shrewd. Too clever to wither if confronted with accusations. Moreover, he was the central figure of a dangerous crew. Small-fry though his henchmen were, they had proven themselves murderers in the past. They should not be allowed to remain at large.

Even before his first skirmish with The Harvester, The Shadow had decided that the master crook should be delivered to the law, under circumstances which would leave no doubt as to his ways of crime. The Harvester had nearly been trapped in the perpetration of a criminal act at the Moravia. The Shadow intended to give him new opportunity to thrust his head into a tightening noose.

The oddity of Justin Craybaw's strange behavior was no riddle to The Shadow. The change in Craybaw had taken place during that trip from Tunbridge Wells to Hayward Heath, a journey which had never been completed. Something had happened upon the road before The Shadow could arrive to prevent it.

There was a chance that new murder had entered the game. If so, it could not be rectified. But if The Harvester had chosen to spare life, the rescue of any innocent person could wait until the morrow.

For The Shadow, to be sure of positive success, had one more task to perform to-night; and duty lay in London. That accomplished, the last vestige of The Harvester's deception would be ended.

The Shadow knew.

CHAPTER XI. AFTER MIDNIGHT

IT was a few minutes past midnight when The Shadow reached Charing Cross Station, the London terminus of the Southern Railway, which line he had taken in from High Brooms. He went directly west from Charing Cross, riding in the Piccadilly Line of the underground. His only pause between the railway station and the tube was when he stopped to make a brief telephone call.

After a short trip via underground, The Shadow emerged from a station near the southern fringe of the Mayfair district. He stepped immediately into a fog so thick that the shop fronts were scarcely visible from the curb of the sidewalk. Delka had been right when he had stated that a real "pea-souper" had set in over London.

Late traffic was almost at a standstill. Wayfarers were few. Fog had stilled London, like a living hush settling over a doomed city. Sometimes fogs like these persisted for days; and always, with each new advent, London became stalled. The first nights were the worst, for it was then that citizens lacked the "fog-sense" that they always regained when a pea-souper continued its clutch.

Depending upon his keen sense of direction, The Shadow headed in the direction of Grosvenor Square. Choosing a parklike stretch, he crossed a strip of dampened grass, to pause when he reached the side of a bulky building that loomed suddenly from the darkened mist. He had arrived at the apartment hotel where the Rajah of Delapore dwelt.

The side of the squatty building lacked the smooth marble that characterized its front. Moving along a roughened wall, The Shadow paused at a definite spot. Despite the darkness and the mist, he had gauged the exact place he wanted. He was directly below a window of the rajah's living room.

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Standing in a narrow space, The Shadow was between the wall and a terraced embankment. Had he taken to the soft earth of the bank, he could have gained a height that would give a slanted view toward the windows of the rajah's apartment. That, however, was insufficient. Looking upward, The Shadow could see blackness only. There was no chance to peer into the rajah's curtained abode.

The Shadow donned cloak and slouch hat. He laid his coat and fedora against the terrace, with the briefcase upon them. They marked the right location, and would prove useful later; for The Shadow had ordered an aid to join him here. His telephone call from Charing Cross had been received by Harry Vincent, at the Addingham Hotel.

Harry's job was to watch the front of the building, to see if persons entered. If they did, Harry was to come to the side and signal from the spot where he found the hat and coat that The Shadow had worn as Cranston. For The Shadow intended to pay a visit to the rajah's sumptuous living room. He could take care of himself within; but he needed to avoid intrusion from outside.

BY this time, Harry must have arrived, despite the thickness of the fog. The Shadow decided not to linger. Pressing close against the wall, he gripped the roughened stone and crept upward like a mammoth beetle. His toes dug into depressed surfaces during the climb. Though the course would have been precarious for the average climber, The Shadow proved himself a veritable human fly. He reached a window of the second floor.

A catch yielded as The Shadow probed between the sections of a heavy sash. The window slid upward, noiselessly. High and old-fashioned, the opened window provided a four-foot space. With gloved hands, The Shadow slowly reached through and parted the thick, velvet curtains that hung within.

The living room was bathed in mellow light that came from table lamps. Those fixtures were the only modern fittings in an Oriental room. The place was empty, yet its subdued glow seemed foreboding. Nevertheless, The Shadow entered. He let the curtains close behind him.

The end door was provided with draperies; it was behind those hangings that the rajah must have stood when he heard Delka question Ranworthy. Gliding in that direction, The Shadow peered through the curtains and spied an empty, dimly lighted hall. No one was about; neither the rajah nor his Hindu servants.

The Shadow stalked back into the living room. He eyed the outer door that led in from the outer hall. After that glance, he began to look about him. The Shadow had not forgotten the veiled challenge issued by the Rajah of Delapore. The rajah had mentioned jewels, hidden somewhere in this room. The Shadow had caught a peculiar note in the rajah's expression of self-confidence. It had been enough to arouse his doubts. There was a chance that the rajah had no jewels. That constituted an important point in the present issue. Hence, The Shadow had come here to learn the exact state of the rajah's wealth.

Keen reasoning backed the method which The Shadow used in his prompt search for a hiding-place. He was confident that there could be no hidden wall space, for the rajah had merely rented this apartment. Similarly, The Shadow rejected the many Oriental objects that stood about the living room. Those were the obvious furnishings that an intruder would search.

INCONSPICUOUS about the room were the lamps that provided the mild illumination. These were useful, rather than ornamental. They were objects that no thief would want. For that very reason, The Shadow studied the table lamps. He spied one that was not illuminated. Approaching the lamp, The Shadow discovered that its cord was not attached to the wall.

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The lamp had a wooden base; set upon that was a brass ball, some four inches in diameter. The sphere supported a miniature lion, upright, with its paws upon a brass shield. A rod straight up from the lion's head supported a lamp shade that resembled an inverted bowl of glass.

The lower ball was flattened at the top, to serve as a level base for the ferocious-looking brass lion. Eyeing that portion of the fixture, The Shadow became immediately active. Gripping the lion with one hand, the sphere with the other, he began a reverse twist.

His assumption was that the portions of the fixture screwed together; that the thread would be a left-hand one, to deceive any one who guessed the fact. The surmise proved correct. The lion came free from the brass ball.

Glimmers showed within the sphere. Tilting the lamp base, The Shadow caused the contents to trickle to a thick pad which rested on the table. A shimmering array of jewels spread about. The Shadow had uncovered the rajah's cache.

Examining the jewels, The Shadow saw stones of red, others of blue. Rubies and sapphires. Then he spied glittering gems of green; large emeralds among the other stones. Carefully, The Shadow dropped some of the gems back into the spherical container. They landed without noise, for the interior was padded.

There was a dullness about the stones that another investigator might have attributed to the gloomy light. Not so The Shadow. He knew why these gems lacked lustre. The final proof came when he had completed the operation of replacement. The gems bulged from the ball; it was necessary to press them into packed formation in order to screw back the upper portion of the lamp.

These reputed jewels were paste, imitation stones that had been provided in proper quantity to jam tightly in the container, so that they would not rattle. The Rajah of Delapore had bluffed about bringing jewels to London; yet he had been wise enough to back that bluff with these false treasures that would deceive the average person who viewed them.

WHAT was the rajah's game?

The Shadow replaced the upper portion of the table lamp; then began a brief consideration of the factors. There was more to this than the present bluff. If the rajah wanted to impress persons with the fact that he had jewels, he would have logically exhibited the false stones; at least, with caution.

Instead, he was guarding these fake gems as carefully as if they were real ones. Upon making that discovery, The Shadow had been faced with an entirely new problem that concerned the motives of the Rajah of Delapore.

While The Shadow still pondered, a sound came to his ears. It was from below the opened window a low, subdued whistle. Harry Vincent's call. The agent had arrived; he must have seen some one enter the front of the building. It was time for The Shadow to leave.

At present, The Shadow was at the innermost corner of the room. To reach the window; it was necessary for him to pass in front of the curtained doorway that led to the inner apartments. The Shadow started his journey; then stopped suddenly. A key was clicking in the outer door. It was too late to depart.

Quickly, The Shadow stopped by the hanging draperies of the inner doorway. They were thick curtains like those at the window, double in their formation. Opening the front portion of a curtain, The Shadow edged between. He stopped when his body was half obscured. He did not want to allow a bulge that might be seen

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from the inner hall, should a servant appear from that direction.

The door had opened. The Rajah of Delapore appeared and closed the barrier behind him. He was clad in Oriental attire; but his present garb was quiet, rather than resplendent. It lacked the decorations of the clothes in which The Shadow had previously seen him.

Looking about the room, the rajah gave a frown; then clapped his hands. The sound must have carried, for The Shadow immediately heard footsteps in the inner hall. Barkhir came past the curtains, not noticing The Shadow. The servant salaamed when he saw his master.

"You have been keeping watch, Barkhir?" queried the rajah, his tone severe.

"Yes, highness," assured Barkhir. "Soon Sanghar will replace me."

This reference was to the other servant. The rajah put an immediate question:

"Where is Sanghar?"

"He sleeps," replied Barkhir. "Shall I awaken him, highness?"

"Not at present. First, tell me if Mr. Canonby called by the telephone."

"He did, highness. One hour ago. He said that he would expect a return call from your highness."

"Good. I expected to be here, but the fog delayed me. Remain here, Barkhir, while I call Canonby. He is at home, I suppose. He would not be at the jewelry shop at this hour."

"He is at home, your highness."

Barkhir had opened the front of a boxlike stand that was near the outer door. From this teakwood container he removed a telephone and handed it to the rajah. The latter raised the receiver and put in a call.

The Shadow listened intently. He had recognized the name of Canonby.

Among the jewelers situated in Old Bond Street, none was better known than Dawson Canonby. The fact that the rajah had dealings with a man of such repute was a significant point indeed. Whatever the game of the man from India, The Shadow was about to gain an inkling of it.

Harry Vincent, groping through the fog, had been delayed with his signal. That delay had served The Shadow for the present. Though his hiding-place was precarious, he had gained an opportunity to learn the final details that he sought.

CHAPTER XII. THE SHADOW DEPARTS

THE Rajah of Delapore received a prompt answer across the wire. Scarcely had he dialed before he began his conversation. Dawson Canonby had evidently been waiting close to his home telephone. The Shadow could hear the sound of a voice across the wire. Then the rajah spoke.

"Good evening, Mr. Canonby." The tone was musical. "Yes, this is the Rajah of Delapore... Yes, of course... The final arrangements... To-morrow..."

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"At some time in the afternoon... I shall call you when I am ready... Yes, be prepared to bring the money... Of course... Be sure that you are well guarded..."

"The armored lorry?... Does it carry the name of your jewelry house?... Excellent!... Use that vehicle when you come to Rudlow's... Yes. I shall have the false stones with me..."

"Do not be perturbed, Mr. Canonby. There is no reason. This transaction lies between us... No, no. It will be unnecessary for you to express an opinion regarding the false stones. You can indicate that you have seen them previously..."

"Certainly... The very fact that you accept them will prove sufficient... Let the witnesses form their own conclusions... Come, Mr. Canonby! This is no time to have qualms... Ah! You will carry through as I desire?... Excellent!... Yes, of course it is purely a protective measure... You understand the circumstances..."

While the rajah was talking, The Shadow had moved back further between the door curtains. Barkhir's assurance that Sanghar was asleep gave indication that no danger lay from within the apartment. The Shadow expected the rajah and Barkhir to come through the doorway. That would leave the living room empty, with opportunity for prompt departure.

The Shadow had already formed a possible theory regarding the rajah's possession of the false gems. The telephone call to Canonby had been a final enlightenment. The Shadow had come to a full conclusion regarding the motives that actuated the Rajah of Delapore.

The main problem had become departure. The only hazard that appeared imminent was a possible inspection by Barkhir. Should the servant part the thick curtains by the window, he would discover that the sash was open. That might cause a search about the living room.

In anticipation of such a possibility, The Shadow was ready to glide back into the inner rooms the moment that Barkhir made a move toward the window. He felt confident that he could find some quick means of exit before being discovered.

"Lock up, Barkhir," ordered the rajah. "Then summon Sanghar and tell him to relieve you. It is wise that some one should be up and about during the entire night."

Barkhir moved toward the window. It was The Shadow's cue. He knew that Harry Vincent, stationed below, would draw back into the fog if he heard sounds from above. The Shadow's immediate task was to find a new exit. He glided from beyond the curtains, moving backward in the dim inner hall.

A sudden sound warned The Shadow. Quickly, he wheeled toward the rear of the little hall. His move was timely. A lunging, white-clad form had launched itself in his direction. Brown hands were driving for his throat, above them a vicious face beneath a turban.

Sanghar had awakened. The servant had come to relieve Barkhir. He had spotted The Shadow!

GLOVED fists were quick enough to catch Sanghar's wrists. The servant's drive, however, was sufficient to fling The Shadow hard against the wall. Sanghar wrenched one hand free. From his sash he whisked a knife and drove the blade hard for his adversary's body.

The Shadow twisted; Sanghar's knife skimmed the folds of his cloak and pinned a portion of it to a paneled wall. The knife drove halfway to the hilt when it struck the woodwork.

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The Shadow bounded sidewise. His cloak ripped by his left shoulder, where Sanghar's thrust had pinned the cloth. With a sudden turnabout, The Shadow gripped the Hindu and hurled him, spinning, clear across the hall. Sanghar sprawled. The Shadow wheeled directly toward the curtained doorway to the front room.

Again, he was just in time. The rajah had heard the commotion, and so had Barkhir. The latter had drawn a knife; he was driving through to aid Sanghar.

Had The Shadow hesitated, the second Hindu would have been upon him. But instead of pausing, The Shadow plunged straight against Barkhir, to meet the servant's drive.

Smashing forms collided at the doorway. The Shadow's ramlike shoulder sped under Barkhir's thrust. Clamping hands caught the servant's waist. With the fury of his plunge, The Shadow drove Barkhir clear back into the living room and sent him rolling, tumbling across the floor.

One more adversary the rajah, himself. He was across the room, almost by the telephone. He had paused there to gain a revolver from the teakwood box. The rajah started to take aim; he barked a command to halt. The Shadow, whirling toward the window, came to a momentary pause.

He had guessed that the rajah would hesitate if he stopped. The rajah's desire was to trap the intruder; by feigning a willingness to parley, The Shadow saw a chance to outguess him. But the rajah's action changed suddenly into a ruse, when he saw a new opportunity.

Both, Sanghar and Barkhir had recovered themselves, despite the vehemence of the flings that The Shadow had given them. Sanghar, knife regained, was bobbing in from the curtained doorway; Barkhir, still clutching his blade, was coming up from the floor.

The Shadow was trapped the rajah straight before him, Sanghar at one side and Barkhir at the other. The servants had paused, seeing that the rajah held their adversary covered. Then came the rajah's command in rapid Hindustani words that The Shadow understood.

The order was for the vassals to spring in and capture their cloaked antagonist.

The Hindus lunged with surprising swiftness, their knives ready for fierce strokes if The Shadow struggled. But The Shadow had a counter move. An instant before the men came upon him, he wheeled toward the curtained window, a few feet behind him.

With harsh cries, Barkhir and Sanghar converged to pounce after their quarry. Their white-clad forms came between the rajah and The Shadow, forming a temporary screen. The rajah could not fire for the moment; glowering, he waited until his servants gripped their foe. That moment never came.

Hard upon his whirl toward the window curtains, The Shadow gave a mammoth bound toward the sill. Launching himself headlong, he dived squarely into the heavy draperies, half spreading his arms as he flung his full weight forward.

Like a living arrow, The Shadow's form sped clear of wild knife thrusts delivered by the Hindu servants. With a rip, the velvet curtains snapped loose from flimsy fastenings. A diver enveloped in a curtained shroud, The Shadow plunged out into space, carrying the velvet draperies with him.

Harry Vincent saw the plunge from below. Looking straight up, he saw a zooming form shoot out into the fog, a figure that formed a huge, spreading mass of indefinable shape. The Shadow's dive was one of great proportions. It carried him curtains and all clear of the narrow space between the building and the terrace.

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A dozen feet through mid-air; but it was a drive, more than a fall. For The Shadow, by the very power of his dive, reached the soft ground of the terrace six feet above the spot where Harry stood. The rajah's window was only a dozen feet above Harry's head. The Shadow had fallen less than half that distance.

The long plunge would have crippled him, nevertheless, had it not been for the curtains. Sweeping those draperies before him, The Shadow landed, completely wrapped in velvet. Jarred, but uninjured, he came rolling free, just as Barkhir and Sanghar began mad shouts of angered frustration.

Then came shots from the window. The rajah had arrived; he was stabbing bullets toward the mass that he could dimly discern upon the terrace. While flashes jabbed through the fog, a tall figure unlimbered beside Harry Vincent and gloved hands caught the agent's arm.

The Shadow had cleared in time. Lost in this lower darkness, he was dragging Harry toward the house wall. The rajah's shots had ended. His first ire finished, he had evidently decided that it was folly to dispatch new bullets toward an outsprawled foe.

FROM somewhere close by came the shrill blast of a whistle. An answering note trilled. Some police constable had heard the shots and was signaling to a comrade.

The Shadow had whisked off his torn cloak. He was stuffing it into the briefcase, which lay close to the wall. Along went the slouch hat and the gloves. The Shadow was donning coat and fedora. He gave a warning whisper to Harry.

Footsteps clattered on paving from in front of the apartment hotel. Harry expected that The Shadow would start for the rear; instead, his chief dragged him forward, then pushed Harry up a lesser slope of the embankment. Together, they reached the projecting shelter of a widespread bush, just as a London bobby, armed with torch and truncheon, appeared on the soft ground beside the building.

Another officer had come from the rear of the apartment hotel, a fact which proved The Shadow's wisdom in taking this middle course. The two were flicking their lights upward, calling to those above. They could see the dim glow of the living room, now that the curtains were cleared away. It was the rajah who answered them. He gave his identity.

"Look upon the terrace," called the rajah. "You will find the thief there. He leaped from the window. It was I who fired the revolver."

Warily, with ready clubs, the constables moved upward. Their lights glimmered upon the curtains. They began an examination of the bullet-riddled velvet.

"No one here, your excellency," called one constable. "Nothing here but curtains, sir. The blighter must have scrambled away somewhere."

"He cannot have gone far," returned the rajah.

"We shall rout him out, sir," promised the second bobby. "Trust us to find him if he is still about."

Each bobby started in a different direction. New whistles were sounding; they called to new constables who were arriving in the fog. To Harry Vincent, crouched by The Shadow, the officers seemed everywhere about. They were forming a cordon; and these London policemen were used to searches in the midst of fog.

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None the less, The Shadow out-guessed them. Rising from beside the bush, he whispered for Harry to follow. He began to thread a course through the parklike sector, changing direction with uncanny ability. At times, The Shadow paused and held Harry back, while a searching bobby lumbered by. Then they were on their way again, unnoticed.

The Shadow took an inward course, back toward the spot where they had started; then reversed the trail. He and Harry emerged upon a sidewalk. The Shadow led the way across the street, to a narrow side thoroughfare which he located perfectly despite the fog.

Harry lost all sense of direction as he walked along with his silent companion. It was not until they reached the vicinity of St. James Square that he began to gain an inkling of their location; even then, Harry was somewhat confused.

The Shadow stopped near a street lamp. Harry viewed the features of Lamont Cranston, masklike in the mist.

HARRY had met his chief in this guise, before. He knew, of course, that The Shadow was not the actual Lamont Cranston. The real Cranston was a globe-trotter, who cooperated with The Shadow by allowing the latter to assume his guise.

The Shadow had not originally asked such permission; Cranston had once balked about the matter. Subsequent events, however, had caused the globetrotter to agree upon the procedure. The real Cranston had found it wise to accept The Shadow's friendship.

"Facts are complete," remarked The Shadow, quietly, to Harry. "Various persons are concerned, among them one who is playing a double game. That one is The Harvester."

Harry nodded.

"Lionel Selbrock left London today," resumed The Shadow, in Cranston's level tone. "So did Jed Ranworthy. A strange change has come over Justin Craybaw. The Rajah of Delapore has no jewels of value. Instead, his gems are false. He has arranged a bogus sale that will take place to-morrow. The purchaser of the fake gems will be Dawson Canonby."

Harry blinked in wonderment at the completeness of The Shadow's information.

"Sometimes," resumed The Shadow, "it is best to add new complications to those that already exist. Particularly when a new riddle may allow an opportunity to accomplish something of importance. Therefore, Lamont Cranston will disappear temporarily, before tomorrow morning."

Harry nodded slowly.

"My absence," added The Shadow, "will prevent me from being at the offices of Rudlow, Limited. You must go there in my stead. Wait until the morning is well advanced; then call at Rudlow's and ask for Inspector Eric Delka.

"Tell him that you are a friend of Lamont Cranston's; that you have learned that I am absent from London; that you are concerned over my disappearance. Use every possible pretext to remain with Delka."

"I understand," said Harry.

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"It is most essential," concluded The Shadow, "that Justin Craybaw should be watched. Something has occurred that concerns Craybaw; something that Delka does not fully understand. He may suspect, however; therefore it should prove unnecessary to prompt Delka. I feel confident that he will watch Craybaw of his own accord.

"Should he show signs of omitting such duty, it will be your part to inform Delka that the last you heard from me was at midnight, to-night; that I told you to pass the word to him that Craybaw, needed observation.

"Do not, at any time, express too much anxiety for my safety. Just use enough to establish yourself with Delka. No more. My instructions should be plain."

"They are," nodded Harry. "You can be sure that I –"

An almost inaudible whisper from The Shadow. Harry broke off his sentence. Footsteps were approaching; a friendly looking bobby loomed from the fog and stared from beneath his helmet.

"Goon evening, constable," greeted The Shadow, in Cranston's quiet style. "You are just the chap to aid us. We have lost ourselves in this beastly fog. I am trying to locate St. James Street; my friend wants the underground to Aldgate."

The bobby grinned until his lips matched the curve of his chin strap.

"You are not the first wayfarers who have asked for directions," declared the officer. "Well, sir, you have as good as found St. James Street for a beginning. You are on Charles Street, just east of St. James Square. If your friend will walk east to Haymarket, he may turn north, straight to Piccadilly Circus."

"You can find your way to Aldgate easily enough," remarked The Shadow to Harry. "Good night, old chap. Ring me in the morning."

As Harry strolled away, The Shadow thanked the officer, who tipped his fingers to his helmet and resumed his beat. As soon as the bobby had pounded from sight, The Shadow chose his own direction through the fog.

Harry Vincent, groping on toward Piccadilly Circus, remained bewildered as he considered the facts that The Shadow had stated. Harry's duty was plain; still, it did not explain the circumstances that foreboded coming crime.

Selbrock, Ranworthy, and the Rajah of Delapore all three seemed oddly concerned. The Shadow had named another: Justin Craybaw; and he had specified that the managing director of Rudlow's was the chief one to watch.

Why?

Harry could not answer the question. He realized, however, that a game was afoot; that already, a crook known as The Harvester had gained first innings. Four men were involved; one of them must be the master hand of evil.

Such was Harry's final conjecture as he neared the lights of Piccadilly Circus and headed for the immense underground station. He was still perplexed when he had stopped before a slot machine to buy a ticket that would carry him to Aldgate. Harry's only consolation was that on the morrow, he might find some one more baffled than himself; namely, Inspector Delka of Scotland Yard.

For Harry Vincent was sure of one fact only. He was positive that The Shadow, alone, could have revealed the depth of the coming game. Only The Shadow, master sleuth, could fathom the ways of so insidious a supercrook as The Harvester.

CHAPTER XIII. THE SHADOW BY DAY

DAWN showed lessened fog in London. The threat of a prolonged pea-souper had been banished by spasmodic breezes in the final hours of night. The mists, however, had not lifted from the neighborhood of the Thames when an early morning train crossed the railway bridge outside of the Cannon Street station.

Aboard that Southern Railway local was an outbound passenger, the same who had come up by last night's train from High Brooms. The Shadow, garbed in walking clothes, was riding southward. With him, he was carrying a knapsack. Any one who claimed an acquaintance with Lamont Cranston would have been surprised to observe the adventurous millionaire bound on so plebeian an excursion.

The Cannon Street train required a change of cars at Tunbridge, three miles before High Brooms. Rather than wait for the connecting local, The Shadow left Tunbridge station as soon as he had arrived there. Provided with a map of the terrain, he chose a cross-country route toward Craybaw's. It was not quite eight o'clock when he arrived at the back of the country estate.

Passing through a wicket, The Shadow took a circuitous course that brought him to a cluster of trees close by Craybaw's conservatory. Parking his knapsack, The Shadow approached the high side of the porch; pausing beneath the windows, he caught the tones of cautious voices.

"Odd about Craybaw." The comment was in Lewsham's voice. "He has been behaving differently, Delka, ever since he took that short journey last night."

"He appears to be irritable this morning," returned Delka. "Why should he have quibbled so much with that chap Hervey?"

"About the landscape gardeners?"

"Yes. Hervey reminded him that he had already contracted for workmen next week. Yet Craybaw insisted that a new lot should begin here to-day."

"Where is Craybaw now?"

"In his study, mulling about. When I was there, he thrust away some papers in a lower drawer of the desk."

"Letters or documents?"

"Nothing but penciled notations. He pulled them out later, crumpled them and tossed them back."

"Probably something inconsequential. Nevertheless, Delka, you are to take complete charge of Craybaw. Do not let him out of your sight until this spell has ended. Should he become ill, stay with him."

"Do you think that some threat has been made against him?"

"Possibly. Or it may be something more serious. I have been wondering about that chauffeur of his, Cuthbert. By the way, Delka, it is time for us to be starting. Better jog inside and find out what arrangements have been

made."

Delka went into the house. The Shadow was about to move away when he heard a new voice. Sir Ernest Jennup had come out to the conservatory and was speaking to Sidney Lewsham.

"Craybaw's condition troubles me," declared Sir Ernest. "Unquestionably, the man is no longer himself. He acts as though a huge burden lies upon his shoulders."

"Does he appear ill?"

"Yes and no. He insists that he must go into the office; yet he says he is willing to relax after this business is finished."

"Should he summon a physician?"

"He will not hear of it."

The conversation ended. Delka was coming directly to the conservatory. The Shadow could hear Craybaw's voice. The man's mood had certainly improved, for his words were cheery.

"I have come out of the doldrums," declared Craybaw. "Nothing like fresh country air for a tonic, provided it is in the morning. Night is bad, when the atmosphere chills; particularly at this season."

"You feel improved?" queried Sir Ernest.

"Positively," returned Craybaw. "If you are agreeable, Sir Ernest, we might start for the city at once. I feel sure that we are all desirous of a prompt arrival."

THE four men left the conservatory. The Shadow moved back to the clustered trees. From among the trunks of the tiny grove, he saw the Londoners emerge from the front door and enter Sir Ernest's phaeton. The long car rolled from the driveway.

Finding a path to the front road, The Shadow took it and soon reached the highway over which he had driven the night before, when following the coupe to Hayward's Heath. Carrying knapsack and swinging his walking stick, The Shadow had no reason to avoid the notice of passers. No one would have recognized him as a recent guest at Craybaw's.

Glancing at a road map, The Shadow paused to make a final estimate of distances. All along the edge of the map were computations that he had completed during the morning's railway journey. The Shadow had calculated with exactitude.

He had known the average speed at which Cuthbert drove, for he had watched the speedometer when the chauffeur had taken him to High Brooms. He knew also the speed with which he, himself, had driven from Craybaw's home to Hayward's Heath. Furthermore, he had gauged to a matter of seconds the amount of start that the coupe had gained over the phaeton.

Since he had not passed the coupe on the road, The Shadow knew that it had left the route at some unknown point. That point, according to his computations; must lie within three miles from Craybaw's house. The map showed only five logical lanes within that space.

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The Shadow rejected the first, which lay fairly close to Craybaw's; also the second, for it was beyond this lane that The Shadow had picked up the coupe's trail on the return trip. The possibilities had been definitely reduced to three.

The Shadow was walking along the right side of the road, against the traffic. This was hardly necessary, for no cars had appeared upon the road. He reached the third lane, more than two miles from Craybaw's. He paused there. This was the first of his three possibilities.

The road widened somewhat at the lane; and a curve made the crossing dangerous. It was a spot at which Cuthbert would necessarily have slowed the coupe, when turning left.

At the side of the road, The Shadow found deep dust, scuffed by footmarks. At one spot, he located tire tracks that could have been from the coupe. These formed an inverted V a proof that the car had stopped at the very entrance to the lane; then had backed.

MOVING along the lane, The Shadow found similar tracks in the dust. While he was examining the marks, he heard the rumble of an approaching motor. Turning about, The Shadow hurried back to the main road. He was walking along it when the roar of the car came from the mouth of the crooked lane.

Turning about, The Shadow came strolling toward the lane, like a chance pedestrian bound upon a hike. A light truck rolled from the lane; aboard it were half a dozen workmen, who were clad in old clothes. They eyed The Shadow as the truck turned in the direction of Craybaw's. In stolid fashion, The Shadow kept on walking.

The rumble of the car faded. The Shadow stopped his stroll. He knew that he had quelled any suspicions on the part of the men in the truck; but he had formed his own conclusions about their identity. They were the workmen expected at Craybaw's; but they were not local rustics. The Shadow knew faces when he saw them.

Despite their garb, those men were thugs of the type that The Harvester had used before. They were of the same ilk as the ruffians who had been aboard the up train from Plymouth. They matched the crowd that had backed The Harvester on his raid at the Moravia.

Between the dust and the truck, The Shadow had the complete story. Last night, the coupe had been waylaid. Cuthbert had been halted by men at the lane entrance. They had forced the chauffeur to drive the coupe down the lane, carrying Justin Craybaw with him.

The map showed the lane to be one mile in length. Somewhere in that stretch, these minions of crime had their headquarters. After they had captured the coupe, The Harvester himself had driven back to the house. At present, he was being accepted as none other than Justin Craybaw.

Taking to the lane, The Shadow strolled along, watching for new signs of interest. At the end of a half mile, he passed an elbow in the road and came to the front of a tumble-down cottage. The gate was broken; an old beagle saw the stroller from the porch. With a bound, the dog jumped to the path and set up barking.

An old woman appeared at the door. Wagging a broom, she cackled at the dog; then came down to the gate. The beagle subsided; wagging its tail, it came to make friend with the tall stranger at whom it had barked.

"It's good morning to you, sir," greeted the old countrywoman. "'Tis not often that Pauper here sees wayfarers along this road. Ah! 'Tis a bad dog he is, at times."

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Pauper was apparently impressed by the criticism, for he sniffed at The Shadow's hand and stood quiet while the stroller patted him.

"But it's harmless he is, at heart," added the woman, looking at the dog. "Not like the hounds that dwell at the end of the lane. I'd advise ye, sir, to be cautious when you have gone further. The old cot below here is not a good place to venture."

"Merely on account of the dogs?" inquired The Shadow.

"And the men what own them," confided the woman. "A bad sort, they are. It was up to devilment they were, last night; and this morning some went past here. Just a little time ago, sir. Peacefullike, in their motor wagon; but it's not my way to trust them."

The Shadow thanked the woman for the advice. He was about to proceed, when she offered him a bottle of milk for tuppence, to carry with his lunch kit. The Shadow made the purchase and gave the woman a silver half crown, adding that he expected no change. He left the gate, with the woman still gasping her thanks at such surprising generosity.

NEARING the end of the lane, The Shadow left the road and climbed a little hummock. From the slight hill, he gained the view that he wanted. Secluded from the end of the lane, because of intervening trees, was a fair-sized cottage. A path through a side glade offered a convenient means of approach.

The Shadow took the path. He had neared the cottage when he encountered the dogs of which the woman had spoken. Two large hounds began to bark; then they bounded through the furze and came upon the intruder.

The Shadow stood motionless; the hiss that came from his lips was like a compelling command. The dogs stopped short.

Speaking in a low, strange tone, The Shadow approached. In the gloom beneath the trees, his eyes burned with a fiery glow that the dogs discerned. One hound whimpered; the other tried to bay, but no sound came from its quivering throat. Both beasts cowered when The Shadow reached them.

The Shadow's manner changed. Walking stick tucked beneath his arm, he stroked a dog with each hand, treating them in the same friendly fashion that he had shown the beagle. The dogs ceased their cringe. They accepted The Shadow as a master.

A whistle from the cottage. Then a gruff voice; one man speaking to another.

"Where did them hounds go?"

"Into the thicket. Started up a fox, maybe."

"A fox? There's none of 'em hereabouts. They turned up a grouse, more likely."

Again the whistle. The hounds were loath to leave. They gazed at The Shadow, with inquiring eyes. He gave a low command: "Home." The dogs hesitated. The Shadow made a gesture with his hand. Quietly, his canine friends trotted back toward the cottage.

"Here they come," were the words that reached The Shadow. "Couldn't have been any prowler in there. The hounds would have tore him to ribbons. Go tell Dokey that it was a false alarm."

"Where is he? In the kitchen?"

"Sure. Cooking lunch for that bloke upstairs. We'll have our own grub later."

The voices faded. The Shadow returned through the thicket. Skirting back to the lane, he plucked the brambles from his knickers. A smile showed on his masklike features. The Shadow had found out details that he wanted. He knew that there were still three men at the cottage; that the place was serving as a prison, due to the reference to "the bloke upstairs."

HALF an hour later, The Shadow arrived back at Craybaw's. From the trees beside the conservatory, he spied the pretended landscape gardeners at work near the rear of the grounds. They were trimming hedges, while Hervey, the house man, watched them.

The Shadow took this opportunity to enter the conservatory. He went through to Craybaw's study. There he opened the desk drawer and found some crumpled sheets of paper. He studied them and found penciled comments, arranged in schedule formation.

One name on the paper was "Twin Trees," the name of the lane where The Shadow had been. Other words were "London." and "Rudlow's," with hours and minutes checked after them. Some notations had been crossed out; others had question marks beside them. The last references stated: "Twin Trees, 2 1/2; cottage 1"; these were references to the mileage.

A soft laugh from The Shadow's lips. He dropped the crumpled papers in the drawer; then turned to the old safe in the corner. After brief experiment, he opened the strong box, finding the combination with ease. Inside were bundles of papers and filing boxes that contained various documents.

A brief inspection showed that none were important. The opened safe, however, inspired The Shadow to another idea, for he sat down at the desk and inscribed a note, which he sealed in an envelope. He went to the safe and picked out a filing box. He removed the papers, put his envelope at the bottom, then replaced them.

Closing the safe, The Shadow turned the dial, then started from the study. He heard Hervey entering from the conservatory, so he stepped into a nook beneath the main stairs, just outside of the study door.

Hervey went past; The Shadow continued through the living room. He went out through the conservatory and reached the tiny grove.

Comfortably stretched beneath the trees, The Shadow indulged in another smile. It was not yet noon; there was time to rest and gain a doze to make up for a night of very little sleep. For, The Shadow was prepared for developments that would not take place until later in the day.

He had guessed the key to crime; he had divined where the final stroke would come. Here at the home of Justin Craybaw; there was no need to travel elsewhere.

Often The Shadow sought action, and was forced to set out to find it. To-day he was confident that action would be brought to him.

A curious turn of events; but one that fitted with The Shadow's knowledge of The Harvester.

CHAPTER XIV. EVENTS IN LONDON

SHORTLY before noon, Harry Vincent arrived at the offices of Rudlow, Limited. He paused outside the building in Threadneedle Street, to watch the unloading of a bank truck. Harry was but one of many curious observers who saw four uniformed men march into the building with an object no larger than a small satchel.

There were others about, whom Harry took to be Scotland Yard men. They followed the bank guards into the Rudlow office; but the armored truck remained. Two constables moved the crowd along. Harry decided to go into the building.

The outer office occupied by Rudlow, Limited, was fenced off in one corner to form a waiting room. This was where Harry entered. At the gate, he inquired for Inspector Delka. A boy was sent into a suite of private offices. He returned, followed by Delka.

Harry introduced himself. When he stated that he was an American, and a friend of Lamont Cranston's, Delka became keenly interested. He told Harry to follow him. They went through to the private offices; there they entered a conference room, beyond which was a door marked with the title: "Managing Director."

Both Sidney Lewsham and Sir Ernest Jennup were seated in the conference room. Two bank guards were at a table in the corner, with revolvers ready in their holsters. Between them was the precious bag that had been brought in from outside.

Delka introduced Harry to Lewsham and Sir Ernest. Both eyed him with a trifle of suspicion. Harry stated himself.

"Cranston called me shortly after midnight," he explained. "He had come up to London and was at Charing Cross, so he said. He told me that he would be at the Moravia all day; but that he would be busy and would prefer to see me later."

"Yet you went to the Moravia?" queried Lewsham.

"Yes," acknowledged Harry, "because another matter came up this morning. I wanted to talk with him about my passport. But Cranston was not at the Moravia."

"How did you happen to come here?"

"I made inquiry to the Moravia. They suggested that I communicate with Scotland Yard and ask for Inspector Delka. I did so and learned that he was here."

Harry's tone was a grave one that showed deep concern. It passed muster, especially because the others began at once to wonder about The Shadow's whereabouts.

"The last we heard of Cranston was when he left Craybaw's," mused Lewsham. "But if anything has happened to him, we can now trace from Charing Cross."

"Not necessarily," put in Delka, with a shake of his head. "The call could have been from somewhere else. It came at midnight, you say, Mr. Vincent?"

Harry nodded.

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"Why was Cranston at Charing Cross as late as midnight?" queried Delka, suddenly. "His train arrived there long before that. Unless he missed it and took a later one."

"Cuthbert would have mentioned it," remarked Sir Ernest, "Or he might have brought Cranston back with him."

"And there would be no reason for Cranston staying at Charing Cross," insisted Delka. Then, to Lewsham: "This may be another development, chief."

Harry was relieved when Lewsham shook his head.

"Forget it for the present, Delka," decided the chief constable. "Since Cranston said for Vincent to wait until evening before calling at the Moravia, there is a chance that Cranston had alternate plans for the day. Let us wait until nightfall before we press this matter."

HARRY had apparently established himself because of his claim of friendship with Lamont Cranston. No one urged him to leave, so he quietly seated himself beside Delka. Lewsham made a cryptic comment to Delka.

"Remember about Craybaw?"

Delka nodded. Harry smiled to himself. He understood that Lewsham meant for Delka to watch Craybaw. There was no need for Harry to bring up the emergency warning.

The door of Craybaw's office opened and a small group of men filed out. These were evidently the directors. One remained and shook hands with Sir Ernest Jennup. He was a portly, pleasant-faced man, who wore pince-nez spectacles. Craybaw introduced him to Lewsham.

"Mr. Thaddeus Blessingwood, the comptroller for Rudlow, Limited."

Blessingwood bowed pompously and adjusted his spectacles. He talked with Sir Ernest and it became evident that Blessingwood was the official who acted as contact with the banking house that had financed Rudlow's. Finally, Sir Ernest ended the conversation and pointed to the money bag in the corner.

"Two hundred thousand pounds are waiting," he stated quietly. "It would be best to place the funds in the vault."

"At once!" agreed Craybaw. "Through my office, please. The vault connects with it."

Blessingwood went with Craybaw, followed by the guards who carried the money. Lewsham also went to see the installation of the funds. Delka spoke to Harry.

"I am lunching with Mr. Craybaw," stated the Scotland Yard man. "If you wish to remain in case we hear from Mr. Cranston, you are quite welcome to come with us."

"Thank you," rejoined Harry. "I appreciate the invitation."

When Craybaw returned, Delka introduced Harry and mentioned the matter of The Shadow's absence. Craybaw started to express concern regarding his friend Cranston; but Delka assured him that all was probably well. They went out to lunch, leaving Chief Lewsham in charge of the office. Sir Ernest and Blessingwood went out together.

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It was after one o'clock when they completed luncheon. Harry had gained a chance to chat with Craybaw; he noted that except for short spells of absentmindedness, the man seemed to behave in normal fashion. It was plain, however, that Delka intended to stay close to Craybaw.

Craybaw had taken Delka and Harry to a restaurant close by Piccadilly Circus. When they came out, they walked through Piccadilly and Craybaw stopped in front of a shop that advertised travel goods. He suggested that they enter.

"I am going to the Riviera," Craybaw remarked. "I need a rest for my health. New luggage is the first requisite toward correct travel. I shall need a steamer trunk and a stout pigskin kit bag."

Craybaw purchased both articles. He ordered the salesman to ship the steamer trunk to Tunbridge Wells. The pigskin kit bag, however, was another matter.

"A masterpiece in leather!" expressed Craybaw. "We shall carry it with us in the motor cab. Sir Ernest shall see it; and Blessingwood, also. Gad! They will be envious!"

WHEN they reached Rudlow's, Craybaw strode into the conference room and proudly exhibited the pigskin bag. He classed it as a bargain at ten guineas, a price which Sir Ernest agreed was reasonable. When Craybaw went into his private office, he carried the bag with him and placed it on a corner table, beyond his desk.

Delka had made inquiry to learn if word had come from Lamont Cranston. Learning that none had been received, the C.I.D. man made a suggestion to Harry Vincent. He decided that it would be best for Harry to go back to the Addingham Hotel and await word there.

Before Harry could produce a pretext for remaining at Rudlow's, an interruption came to save him the trouble.

Two Scotland Yard men entered the conference room, accompanying a stocky, nervous-faced man who was carrying a satchel. Introduced to Sidney Lewsham, this arrival expressed relief. He was glad to see the chief constable of the C.I.D.

"I am Dawson Canonby," he explained. "My own conveyance is outside; and my guards were with me. I left them on the street when I met your men, chief."

"You have brought valuables with you?"

"Yes. Currency. A quarter of a million, in this bag. As purchase money for the gems owned by the Rajah of Delapore."

Justin Craybaw had come from his office. He had heard the final remarks. His eyes gazed sharply toward Canonby's satchel.

"Money for the gems?" queried Craybaw. "But where is the Rajah of Delapore?"

"He will be here shortly," replied Canonby. "He called me from his hotel."

A boy was knocking at the door of the conference room to announce that the Rajah of Delapore had arrived.

Dressed in Hindu attire, the rajah made his appearance, followed by his two servants. He bowed in greeting; then beckoned to Barkhir, who produced a small package.

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"The jewels," explained the rajah. "You have seen them before, Mr. Canonby."

"Of course," returned Canonby, his tone nervous.

"But you must see them again," assured the rajah. He opened the package and showed a square teakwood box. "They are here for your inspection."

Canonby opened the box and began to count over the gems, mumbling as he did so. The others looked on, wondering somewhat about the jeweler's haste. None, however, recognized that the jewels might be imitations, with the possible exception of Justin Craybaw.

The managing director was eyeing the jewels keenly and Harry noted it. Canonby completed his inspection, dumped jewels back into the box and closed the lid. He lifted the satchel and handed it to the rajah.

"Not heavy," remarked Canonby, with a wan smile, "but that is because I acquired notes of high denomination. A quarter of a million, your excellency. Shall I count the money in your presence?"

"Mr. Craybaw can do that," returned the rajah, indifferently. "The money will soon belong to Rudlow, Limited."

Canonby turned to Lewsham.

"My men will guard my return journey," said the jeweler. "If your officers will accompany me to the street, I shall not be in danger."

Lewsham gave an order to two Scotland Yard men. They went out with Dawson Canonby.

CRAYBAW and Blessingwood were counting the money while Sir Ernest watched them. The bundles of crisp notes totaled two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. The count finished, Craybaw turned to the Rajah of Delapore.

"Your excellency," he stated, "when I called you this morning, I supposed that we would have heard from Lionel Selbrock before noon. Unfortunately, we have not. Therefore, we must hold the transaction until we know where he is."

"The delay will not matter," returned the rajah.

"It might so far as this money is concerned," objected Craybaw, seriously, "unless you wish me to place the funds in the vault. Rudlow, Limited, is willing to assume responsibility. We can give you full receipt for two hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

"That will be satisfactory."

Craybaw went into his office and produced a receipt form. He sent it to be typed; it came back a few minutes later. Craybaw passed it to Blessingwood.

"You may sign it," he said.

"But I am not the managing director," exclaimed Blessingwood. "That is your office, Craybaw."

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"This blank bears the name 'comptroller,'" stated Craybaw. "I meant to bring one of my own; but I picked out this disused form instead. You are the comptroller, Blessingwood. You have sufficient authority to sign. Others will witness the receipt."

Blessingwood nodded and picked up a pen. He sat down at the table and signed the receipt. Sir Ernest Jennup was nodding, apparently decided that the procedure was in order. He took the pen to affix his signature as a witness.

Craybaw remarked that he would place the money in the vault. In casual fashion, he picked up the satchel and walked from the conference room into his office. He let the door swing shut behind him. Other witnessing signatures were needed, so Lewsham ordered Delka to add his name below Sir Ernest's. Lewsham, himself, signed third.

While the ink was drying, Craybaw returned from his office. He began to chat with the rajah; then suddenly returned through the door to the other room. He came back, carrying the pigskin bag that he had purchased. He was holding it between both hands, in front of him, to give the bag better display.

"Look at this sample of British workmanship," remarked Craybaw, proudly. "Have you ever seen its equal, your excellency? This is the finest pigskin you –"

The rajah stepped back, withdrawing his hand before he touched the bag. His action was as quick as if he had encountered a flame. Barkhir and Sanghar dropped back toward a corner. Craybaw stood still.

"We are Mohammedans," explained the rajah, politely, "myself and my servants. To us, the pig is unclean. I admire the bag, Mr. Craybaw, but I cannot touch it."

"My apologies –"

"They are unnecessary. You did not know the circumstances."

Craybaw placed the offending bag on a table in the corner of the conference room. The rajah picked up the receipt from Rudlow, Limited, and folded it. Craybaw sat down in a corner by the table. Lewsham opened conversation with the rajah.

"There was a report at the office," said Lewsham, "concerning an attempted robbery at your apartment. I understand that nothing was taken, however."

"We thwarted the intruder," declared the rajah, with a smile. "Unfortunately, he escaped us. He was probably seeking my jewels. He did not find them."

"You have no clue to his identity?"

"None whatever."

HARRY was facing Craybaw while the others talked. He saw the managing director open the door and carry out the pigskin bag. He placed it in the custody of an office boy. Delka glanced toward the door and noticed Craybaw returning. Meeting Delka's gaze, Craybaw half closed his eyes.

"I feel the chill returning," he said to Delka. "I feel that the strain is becoming too much for me. I should not have come in town at all. I dread the train trip back to Tunbridge Wells."

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Sir Ernest overheard the remark.

"I shall carry you there in my car," he declared. "The motor trip may improve you. The day has turned mild; and we can make a rapid journey in the phaeton."

Craybaw nodded his thanks. He steadied himself, for the rajah was preparing to leave.

"I shall return," declared his excellency, "as soon as I have heard from you, Mr. Craybaw."

"That will not be necessary," stated Craybaw. "When Selbrock arrives, we shall have him sign the documents at once. We shall bring the options to your apartment."

"Very well."

The rajah left with his servants. Craybaw walked slowly back into his office, then slumped into the chair behind the desk. He had left the door open; the others saw his action. Sir Ernest entered the inner office.

"You are ill, Craybaw," insisted Sir Ernest. Delka and Lewsham had joined him. "Come. You must return to your home."

"But if Selbrock comes!" gasped Craybaw. "His options must be attested –"

"I can take charge of that," inserted Blessingwood, who had also entered. "As comptroller, the duty comes within my province."

Craybaw nodded. Reaching for Delka's shoulder, he drew himself up from the desk. Sir Ernest added support. Craybaw steadied and walked slowly through the conference room. Delka stopped to speak to Harry.

"I must go with Mr. Craybaw," said the C.I.D. man. "I shall call you at the Addingham, when we hear from Mr. Cranston."

There was only one alternative. Harry took it. He left the office and preceded the others to the street. But when he had crossed Threadneedle, he waited and watched. He saw Craybaw come out with Delka and Sir Ernest.

The phaeton had been summoned from the garage. The three men entered it, Delka going in back with Craybaw. Then the office boy appeared, lugging Craybaw's newly purchased pigskin bag. Harry watched him place it in the front seat beside Sir Ernest.

Something in the boy's action caught Harry's eye. The hoist when the bag went over the door seemed more than necessary for so light an object. Just as the phaeton pulled away, the answer struck Harry. Chance had given him a thought that had occurred to no one else.

That bag was not empty! Craybaw had carried it as though it was. He had said nothing; however, to the office boy regarding emptiness. True, the bag had been empty when Craybaw had carried it to the office; but it was empty no longer. Harry knew what it contained.

Two stores of wealth! Cash intended for Selbrock; funds brought by the Rajah of Delapore! There was only one explanation. The Harvester, clever at disguise, was playing the part of Justin Craybaw! He had taken the place of the managing director of Rudlow, Limited.

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The Harvester had not placed the money in the vault. He had put it in the bag. He was making away with it, deceiving Sir Ernest Jennup and Eric Delka.

Harry's course was to call The Shadow; he realized suddenly that it would be impossible. He did not know where The Shadow was.

One other possibility, only. That was to inform Sidney Lewsham, in hope that the chief constable might act. First a call to the Moravia, in the wild hope that The Shadow might be there. Then back to Rudlow's, to see Lewsham.

Such was the course that Harry Vincent took as duty, not knowing whether or not he would injure The Shadow's plans. But in this emergency, he could think of but one purpose. That was to defeat the game that The Harvester had played.

CHAPTER XV. SCOTLAND YARD MOVES

BACK in the Rudlow offices, Thaddeus Blessingwood had solemnly taken the place of Justin Craybaw. The pompous comptroller had decided that it was his duty to occupy the managing director's office. He had invited Sidney Lewsham to join him; and the chief constable had accepted. They were sitting opposite each other, across Craybaw's big desk.

"It is serious business, this," remarked Blessingwood, solemnly. "I cannot blame Mr. Craybaw for weakening beneath the burden that was placed upon him. Frankly, I would lose my own confidence were it not for your presence, Chief Lewsham."

"Because of the half million in the vault?" queried Lewsham, with a smile.

"Yes," nodded Blessingwood, "when I consider the crimes that have electrified London. The Harvester is a desperate criminal."

Blessingwood had opened the desk drawer in front of him. He brought out some printed sheets; then clucked his puzzlement.

"Odd," he remarked, "that Craybaw should have found one of my receipt blanks. There are many of his own here. Hah! What is this? A telegram!"

Blessingwood unfolded a paper. His eyes popped behind his pince-nez spectacles as he thrust the sheet across the desk.

"From Lionel Selbrock!" he ejaculated. "Dispatched from Carlisle this morning! Craybaw must have received it, yet he did not mention it. What in the world is Selbrock doing in Carlisle?"

Lewsham snatched the telegram. He scanned its lines. The message had been sent from Carlisle prior to noon. It stated simply that Selbrock could not arrive at Rudlow's before the next morning. Lewsham recalled suddenly that Craybaw had received several envelopes during the morning. The telegram must have been in one of them.

"Something is vitally wrong," decided Lewsham. "Why did Craybaw insist that Selbrock would be in town today? He must have read this telegram. Let me have the telephone, Blessingwood."

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The comptroller passed the instrument across the desk. Lewsham put in a call to the Rajah of Delapore. It was answered. The rajah had just returned to his apartment. Lewsham explained matters; then hung up.

"He knows nothing about Selbrock," assured Lewsham. "But the rajah is coming over here to confer about the matter. By the way" he studied the telegram "this distant trip to Carlisle is odd on the part of Selbrock; but I recall also that the rajah's secretary, Ranworthy, made a trip to Yarmouth. I wonder if there is a connection?"

"Yarmouth is not on the way to Carlisle," reminded Blessingwood.

"I know that," snapped Lewsham. "But we have no proof that either man went to the destination that he claimed."

"We have this dispatch from Selbrock –"

"A telegram with his name attached. Any one could have sent it. What ails Craybaw, for not mentioning this matter? The man is ill; but certainly rational enough at intervals to have remembered this telegram."

"Craybaw was lost in enthusiasm over his pigskin bag. That was unusual. I never saw him so intrigued before over a ten-guinea purchase –"

"THE pigskin bag!" A connection struck Lewsham, suddenly. "What became of that bag, Blessingwood?"

"Craybaw took it into the conference room –"

Lewsham bounded to the door. He saw no sign of the bag. He started to the outer door, to be met there by an entering boy.

"Mr. Vincent is back, sir," informed the office employee. "He says that he must see you at once. It is something about Mr. Craybaw –"

"Bring Vincent here!" ordered Lewsham.

Harry arrived. Lewsham hurried him into the inner office, where Blessingwood was standing, puzzled.

"What do you know about Craybaw?" demanded Lewsham. "Is it anything that concerns his pigskin bag? Did he have it with him when he left here?"

"One of the boys was carrying it," explained Harry. He realized now that his return had been wise. "I saw it go into Sir Ernest's phaeton. The bag was heavy not empty, as it was when Craybaw purchased it. I decided to inform you –"

"Blessingwood," broke in Lewsham, "open the vault at once. Look for the money that you put there."

"I did not place the funds in the vault," reminded Blessingwood, as he hurried to the vault room. "I came in here and opened the vault, to save Mr. Craybaw trouble. You were with me so were others; but we left while he was putting the money in the proper place."

"So we did," exclaimed Lewsham, while Blessingwood worked at the dials. "Then Craybaw came out afterward. At least, that was the way I recall it. But that was with the funds intended for Selbrock –"

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"And Craybaw came in alone when he brought the rajah's money," added Blessingwood. "He must have opened the vault himself; for I did not come with him."

"If he opened the vault at all!"

The grimness of Lewsham's tone made Blessingwood turn about in alarm, just as he swung open the door of the vault, Lewsham pounced forward.

"Show me the money!" he cried. "Find it, Blessingwood! Do not stand there useless! You know this vault is —"

Blessingwood pawed through the vault. His search became excited. His spectacles tipped from his nose and hung by their cord. Speechless as he ended the hunt, he stood panting, with face purpled.

"The money!" demanded Lewsham. "Four hundred and fifty thousand sovereigns!"

"Gone!" gasped Blessingwood. "It is nowhere in the vault!"

"Nor was it ever placed here!" shouted Lewsham. "Craybaw has tricked us! No not Craybaw it was The Harvester!"

"The Harvester?" echoed Blessingwood. "But it was Mr. Craybaw. At least at least —"

"You suspect something?" demanded Lewsham. "Something in the man's action, aside from his withholding of the telegram?"

"Yes." Blessingwood found his answer. "The matter of the signature. Craybaw would not have brought out the wrong receipt slip. He would not have turned that signing over to me, as comptroller. Not under ordinary circumstances."

"But The Harvester would!" ejaculated Lewsham. "In order to avoid writing a signature that was not his own; one that would have been suspected. Craybaw's! He passed that issue last night, as well, when he refused to sign letters that Hervey brought to him!"

SPECULATION ended as Lewsham suddenly remembered the great task at stake. Nearly half a million pounds had been gained by a master crook. That, to Harry Vincent, meant the staggering sum of close to five million dollars.

Lewsham went for the telephone in Craybaw's office. He put in a telephone call to the managing director's home in Tunbridge Wells. The reply came that the line was out of order. Lewsham hurried through the conference room. He called to men outside. Half a dozen C.I.D. operatives came at his command.

"Fifteen minutes ago," announced Lewsham, studying his watch, "Inspector Delka and Sir Ernest Jennup left here with a man whom they thought was Justin Craybaw. It was not Justin Craybaw. That man was an impostor. He was The Harvester."

The Scotland Yard men stared in amazement.

"The Harvester carried a pigskin traveling bag," added Lewsham, grimly. "It probably contains nearly half a million pounds. Sir Ernest and Inspector Delka do not know of the bag's contents. They are taking The Harvester to Tunbridge Wells. They will be there within the next thirty minutes.

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"Their destination is the home of Justin Craybaw, where The Harvester will still continue to pose as the owner. Our one hope is to arrive there before he learns that we have uncovered his game. We can not rely upon the local authorities at Tunbridge Wells. The Harvester would outmatch them.

"I shall ride in the first of three swift motors, leading the way to Craybaw's. We shall deploy about the grounds and close in to trap The Harvester. You, Tunning, and you, Dawsett, arrange for the cars at once."

Two men hastened to call Scotland Yard. Lewsham paced the conference room, then delivered a new order:

"Parkins, you will call Tunbridge Wells from here, immediately after my departure. Do not call Craybaw's home; that would be useless, for the telephone is out of commission. Communicate with the local authorities. Tell them to meet us on the road this side of High Brooms. Do not name our destination; otherwise they might blunder. Say that I am coming. That should prove sufficient.

"Keep Blessingwood and Vincent here with you. We shall need their testimony later. Also that of the Rajah of Delapore. Have him remain after he arrives. Wilton will stay with you. Summon more men from headquarters should you need them. Another call, also. To Croydon Air Field. Have planes set out for Tunbridge Wells in exactly" Lewsham paused to glance at his watch "in exactly forty minutes after my departure. They must not arrive overhead until we have formed a cordon.

"Blessingwood will give the location of Craybaw's home, to identify it for the air men. Procure a map at once, Blessingwood. We must ensnare The Harvester should he attempt to escape by air."

Lewsham paused, breathless. He glanced from the window. It was slightly foggy still, here in London; but the visibility would be good, south of the city. It lacked a full hour until dusk, even though the afternoon had waned.

"Duties for you two," announced Lewsham, turning to the last pair of subordinates. "Burleigh, you are to apprehend a man named Lionel Selbrock. You will find complete data concerning him in my office at headquarters. He is presumably in Carlisle, a fact of which we have no proof other than a telegram.

"Nevertheless, watch the proper railway stations. Also his hotel. Have all the motorized units of the Flying Squad ready to arrest the man on sight. Cover his hotel, the Addingham. Spare nothing in this duty, Burleigh. Here, I shall give you a written order."

Lewsham pulled a pad from his pocket. While he was scrawling the order, he gave similar instructions to the last of his six men.

"Layton, you have a man to trap. His name is Jed Ranworthy, secretary of his excellency, the Rajah of Delapore. Question the rajah about Ranworthy, who is supposed to be in Yarmouth. Whatever the rajah's opinion of the man's honesty, do not shirk your duty. Data on Ranworthy will be found at my office. Use it."

Lewsham scrawled a second order. Hardly had he finished before news came that the motor cars were in Threadneedle Street. With Tunning and Dawsett, each delegated as a car commander, Lewsham made haste to reach the street.

HARDLY had the chief gone before the Rajah of Delapore arrived. Scotland Yard men informed him of the circumstances. Questions were asked concerning Ranworthy. The conference room was in a buzz. Harry Vincent walked into Craybaw's office to cheer up Blessingwood, who was slumped behind the managing director's desk.

"It will be a terrible blow to Sir Ernest Jennup," groaned Blessingwood. "To him and the other financiers who control Rudlow, Limited. Poor Craybaw; his plight must be terrible, for he is either dead or a prisoner somewhere. But neither Justin Craybaw nor myself are owners in Rudlow, Limited. We shall suffer when the concern goes into bankruptcy, but we may find placement elsewhere.

"Who can The Harvester be? This man Selbrock? Or Ranworthy? Could he be" Blessingwood lowered his voice to a whisper "could he be the rajah? Or that jeweler, Canonby? Deuce take me!" The comptroller banged the desk with his fist. "I am mistrusting every one!"

Harry Vincent restrained a grim smile. He was pleased, at least, that he had declared himself. Otherwise he, too, would have been under immediate suspicion. Harry saw Blessingwood glance at his watch and shake his head, troubled. Harry knew the man's thoughts.

Blessingwood was considering the start that The Harvester had gained. Fully thirty minutes, by the time that Sidney Lewsham had managed to give orders and begin pursuit. Time to be more than halfway to Craybaw's home near Tunbridge Wells.

But Harry Vincent did not share Blessingwood's apprehensions. Harry was thinking of another factor in the case: The Shadow. The light had dawned. Harry knew where The Shadow must surely be. At Craybaw's. For Harry's remembrance of The Shadow's final words last night came as proof that the master sleuth had dug deeply into The Harvester's game.

The trail, Harry was sure, was leading to some spot where The Shadow waited. Sir Ernest Jennup could remain a dupe; Eric Delka could continue to be deceived by The Harvester's game. The Shadow knew the truth. He would meet the rogue who posed as Justin Craybaw. The Harvester was playing into The Shadow's hands.

Yet in his confidence, Harry still had one bewildered phase? Who was The Harvester? That, Harry decided, was a question that could be answered by only one person other than The Harvester himself.

The Shadow!

CHAPTER XVI. THE HARVESTER REAPS

THE time element had been figured closely by Sidney Lewsham. The chief constable had known, when he left Rudlow's, that The Harvester would reach Tunbridge Wells within twenty minutes after men from Scotland Yard had started their pursuit from London.

Almost at the exact minute of Lewsham's calculation, Sir Ernest Jennup's long phaeton nosed into the driveway of Justin Craybaw's country home. Sir Ernest's toot of the horn brought Hervey to the front steps.

It attracted other attention also that of distant gardeners about the hedgerows. Furthermore, it drew the keen gaze of a solitary watcher who still rested in the little grove beside the conservatory. As if in answer to an expected signal, The Shadow arose and dropped aside his knapsack. It fell, opened, to the grass.

The car was obscured by the corner of the house. The workmen could not see the inner fringe of the trees. Quickly, The Shadow gained the conservatory and entered the house through the living room. He had found a hiding-place before the arrivals entered from the front.

The voice of Justin Craybaw sounded from the doorway. The tight-skinned man was calling over his

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shoulder to Hervey, who had remained by the phaeton at his order.

"Bring in that pigskin bag, Hervey," was the order. "Take it to the study. Leave it beside my desk."

Eyes watched as the supposed Craybaw and his two companions went into the living room. The Shadow was obscured behind a corner of the niche beneath the stairs. He saw Hervey go into the study, lugging the pigskin bag. The house man dropped the burden and came out again.

Hardly had he reached the main hall before The Harvester met him. The man who passed as Craybaw gave an order which both Sir Ernest and Delka could hear.

"Scotch and soda to my guests," stated The Harvester. "Tell them that I shall return promptly, Hervey. I am going to the study for a few minutes."

Stepping into the study, The Harvester closed the door behind him. The Shadow, peering from his darkened hiding-place, could see a cunning gleam upon the features of Justin Craybaw. The door, when it closed, did not come tightly shut. The Harvester left it ajar.

The Shadow edged forward from his hiding-place. He gained the door and peered into the study. While he watched The Harvester, he heard footsteps. Hervey was coming with tray and glasses. The Shadow moved back into the stairway niche.

He had no need to spy further. He had seen sufficient. Indeed, The Shadow had hardly regained his hiding-place before the study door opened and the figure of Craybaw emerged. This time, The Harvester was carrying the pigskin bag. He took it into the living room.

GLASSES were clinking when The Shadow moved toward the base of the stairs. From beside a huge newel post, he could hear the conversation in the living room. Hervey had gone. Craybaw's voice was sounding with a note of harshness.

"Suppose we step out to the conservatory," were the words. "The fresh air benefited me during the ride in the phaeton. It will be cool in the conservatory. By the way, Sir Ernest, would you be kind enough to carry this new bag of mine?"

Sir Ernest's voice responded. The Shadow heard the men move to the conservatory. He followed into the living room. Peering from a vantage point, he could see beyond the windows. Gardeners were moving in from the hedges.

"Do you find the bag heavy?"

The query came in Craybaw's tone. Sir Ernest replied.

"Amazingly so," he affirmed. "I could not believe that it was an empty bag, had you not just bought it."

"Lift it, Delka," suggested The Harvester. "Place it upon the wickerwork table."

Delka did so. He gave a surprised exclamation.

"That bag is not empty!" expressed the C.I.D. man. "I saw and handled it at the luggage shop. Did you have some other purchases put inside it?"

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"In a sense, yes."

The Shadow had come closer at The Harvester's words. The living room was gloomy, for it was nearly sunset. Unseen, he eyed the group upon the porch. He could observe the evil curl that had formed upon The Harvester's lips. The rogue's face looked different from Craybaw's.

"Yes," hissed Craybaw. "That pigskin bag is well-filled. With spoils! To the value of four hundred and fifty thousand pounds!"

Sir Ernest came to his feet with Delka. Both were too late. From his hips, The Harvester had yanked forth revolvers. In the light of the glass-paned conservatory, he was covering his companions. Slowly, their hands came up. Delka gasped his understanding.

"The Harvester!"

A LAUGH from twisted lips.

"Yes," gibed The Harvester. "In a new disguise. One that you all suspected; but did not fathom. I play the part of Justin Craybaw better than I imitated you, Sir Ernest. This was a role which I had been practicing for a long while.

"You thought that I was in the game. No wonder. My lieutenant, Markin otherwise Captain Darryat had made good progress in his various interviews when he mixed into the affairs of Rudlow, Limited. Darryat had told me all I needed, before he failed me in another issue.

"The part of Justin Craybaw was the one I chose to enact. It gave me access to the total funds moneys, that never went into Rudlow's vaults. Cash for which I purchased the pigskin bag. The Harvester has gained his final triumph. I have reaped my greatest crop."

Sir Ernest Jennup was trembling with rage and chagrin. Eric Delka was taut, ready to spring upon The Harvester should occasion offer. The supercrook divined the intention. He snarled a warning:

"If you want death, Delka, you can have it! But if you stand where you are, you will not suffer. I have no intent to kill. Why should I?" The tone became one of contempt. "The pair of you are beggarly fools! I shall not fear you in the future.

"Look from the windows. See the men about the lawn. They are henchmen, ready at my call. Two have already bound Hervey, back in the kitchen. They have joined the others.

"I tried to kill you once, Delka. That was before I understood your full stupidity. I do not murder for love of it. Why should I waste bullets upon idiots?"

Delka's face was angered, like Sir Ernest's. Nevertheless, the C.I.D. man had been impressed by The Harvester's words. Delka's tenseness had lessened.

"You will be bound, but not gagged," promised The Harvester. His face was distorted; but his manner calm. "You can shout your bloody heads off. It will not serve you. No one lives hereabouts. The telephone wires have been cut at my order.

"I shall have ample time to make my departure before you are discovered. Scotland Yard will arrive here later; probably not for several hours. Yet I would not care if it was this very minute. My plans are made.

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"Before my men enter, let me mention a minor matter." The Harvester edged to the conservatory window. The Shadow could see men moving up from the lawn. "It is about Justin Craybaw. He is still alive; so, for that matter, is Cuthbert. I had no need to dispose of them.

"That will be a task for you, Delka, to find those whom I have left behind. Prisoners of The Harvester, the reaper of the spoils. Too bad my hands are filled. I would open the bag for you and let you see what compact bundles those bank notes form.

"Unmarked money. Good anywhere. I saw to that, gentlemen. Remember" – The Harvester chuckled "I was Justin Craybaw. Ah! Your jailors are arriving. Turn about, gentlemen, and face them. I bid you farewell."

DELKA turned with Sir Ernest. They saw two men coming up to the rear door of the conservatory, each carrying a ready revolver. But Delka spied something else. One corner pane of glass, set against an outside shrub, served as a mirror because of its darkness. Through that reflected pane, Delka caught a glimpse of The Harvester behind him.

The man who looked like Craybaw had pocketed his guns. With leering face, he was reaching for the pigskin bag. An interval had come; a moment when Delka and Sir Ernest were uncovered by weapons. Delka grabbed the opportunity.

With a cry to Sir Ernest, the Scotland Yard man spun about. He launched himself for The Harvester, pulling a revolver as he did so. Sir Ernest, after an instant's falter, made a similar swing and sprang behind the man from Scotland Yard.

The Harvester saw it coming. With a quick fling, he sent the pigskin bag skidding to the front door of the conservatory. Yanking out a revolver, he twisted away from Delka; as the Scotland Yard man aimed, The Harvester clipped his chin with a free fist. Delka had forgotten that the rogue's illness was feigned. The Harvester had outmatched him.

Delka sprawled upon the floor. Sir Ernest, coming into the fray, went staggering from a second punch. Their bodies had intervened between The Shadow and The Harvester. There was another reason, also, why The Shadow did not fire.

That concerned the two men from the rear door. They had reached the conservatory. Viciously, they were aiming for Delka and Sir Ernest, when they heard a fierce laugh from the door of the living room. They wheeled to see The Shadow, framed in the portal.

A roar rattled the conservatory window as guns blasted in simultaneous fray. Revolver bullets whizzed wide, from muzzles that were rapidly aimed. But the slugs that sped from automatics were straight and withering. Crooks staggered as they leaped forward to fight The Shadow.

One man toppled; the other still kept on. He grappled with his foes as The Shadow swung out to meet him. Gun dropped, the rogue had gained a dying grip. That did not help The Harvester. He had bounded to the front of the conservatory. Looking back, he saw two forms locked in fray. He did not recognize Lamont Cranston.

Nor did he have time to wait, to deal with this foe. He did not even have opportunity to aim at Sir Ernest or Eric Delka, who were rising groggily from the floor. The Shadow's right-hand automatic blasted from above the shoulder of The Harvester's dying henchman.

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It was like that fight at the Moravia; but on this occasion, The Harvester did not choose to wait. Bullets were cracking glass panes all about him, as The Shadow's shots sped close. Like Darryat, The Harvester's dying minion was serving his chief.

Moreover, The Harvester had gained his swag. Shouting a wild order to others on the lawn, he snatched up the pigskin bag and dived off for the cluster of trees beyond the conservatory.

The Shadow wrested free of the man who clutched him. Leaping over the body of the other, he sprang out through the rear door to deal with a new quartet of fighters.

The men were scattered on the lawn. They saw the figure that appeared by the house wall. Dropping behind terracelike slopes, they opened long-range fire. The Shadow's responses zipped the turf beside them. One man was hit; he writhed and rolled to better cover.

Delka, on his feet, was still "punch drunk." Yet he managed to shove a revolver into Sir Ernest's fist and point to the door through which The Harvester had fled. Together, they took up the chase. They spied their quarry; he had ducked past the clump of trees and was dashing for the front road.

"The phaeton!" cried Sir Ernest.

THE HARVESTER must have heard the shout. Pausing suddenly, he ripped quick shots at the car, which was scarcely twenty paces from him. Front tires delivered answering explosions. The Harvester had found the broad treads of the wheels.

Savagely, Delka and Sir Ernest opened fire. The range was too great; The Harvester was nearing the front hedge. He must have scrambled through a thicket opposite, for when they reached the roadway, he was no longer to be seen.

Shots still roared from behind the conservatory. Delka remembered the lone fighter. He decided that it must be Hervey. He told Sir Ernest to come back with him. Reluctantly, the latter agreed.

As they turned, a car roared into view. It wheeled into the driveway. From it sprang Sidney Lewsham and a squad of Scotland Yard men.

Delka gave quick explanation. Lewsham ordered his men to scour for The Harvester. Delka and Sir Ernest dashed back toward the house. Already a sudden change had marked the fray upon the lawn. The Harvester's four minions, including the wounded man, had risen and were taking to mad flight.

Other cars had appeared beyond distant hedgerows. Through gateways were pouring new reserves from Scotland Yard. The sun was down beyond a wooded hill; revolvers were stabbing wildly from the darkened streaks of the rolling lawn.

The Shadow had ceased fire. Crouched by the house wall, he watched the spreading fray. The Harvester's tools were too desperate to risk capture. They were fighting to the death, unwilling to surrender. Shooting point-blank at the Scotland Yarders, they gave the latter no alternative. Riddling bullets sprawled the thugs in flight.

The Shadow moved quickly from the wall. He hurried past the conservatory. Approaching men spied him as he circled for the trees. Delka and Sir Ernest heard their shots. Cutting through the conservatory, they watched the Scotland Yard men begin new chase. They caught but a fleeting glimpse of a figure that reached the trees.

The Shadow had found his knapsack. From it, he tugged his black cloak and slouch hat. With a slinging toss, he sent the knapsack up into the trees, where it clung, lost among the boughs. Donning the cloak, he seemed to dwindle in the gloom of the tiny grove. His figure had faded toward a hedge before the Scotland Yard men arrived.

Airplanes were coming from the sky, circling low about the lawn. One swooped downward and made a landing on a level stretch of lawn. Sidney Lewsham, arriving from the front, dashed over to talk with the pilot.

Dusk was settling, with searchers everywhere. Yet The Harvester had made a get-away with the pigskin bag. The hunt was becoming fruitless. Nor could men with flashlights uncover that other unknown whom they had seen heading for the tiny grove.

Yards from the house, resting by a hedge where searchers had just scoured, The Shadow stood enshrouded in his cloak of black. The twilight breeze caught an echo of his whispered laugh. That tone denoted satisfaction, even though The Harvester had fled.

For The Shadow knew more than did those frantic hunters. He knew that The Harvester's game was not yet through. Too bold to risk mere oblivion, The Harvester would return. Then would The Shadow seek the final laugh.

CHAPTER XVII. DELKA FINDS A CLUE

IT was a gloomy group that assembled in Justin Craybaw's study, a half hour later. Sidney Lewsham was the man in charge. He listened to the story told by Eric Delka and Sir Ernest Jennup. Then came the reports of others.

Cruising cars had found no one near the vicinity of the house. Airplanes had lost out through poor visibility. The one that had landed had risen again to lead the others back to Croydon. Darkness had covered The Harvester's flight.

"We have facts," decided Lewsham, "but they are not sufficient. Our only hope is this: The Harvester may have some hide-away close by. It is our task to find it."

"I agree, chief," put in Delka. "It is likely that swift work was done last night, when The Harvester supplanted Craybaw. Crooks must have been close. What is more; those gardeners came from somewhere near at hand."

Upon sudden impulse, Delka went to the desk drawer. Yanking it open, he found crumpled papers. With a chuckle, he spread them upon the desk. Here were the notations that he had seen that morning.

"The Harvester wrote this!" exclaimed Delka. "Look! It's like a schedule. What's this? Twin Trees, two and one half; cottage, one."

Looking about, Delka spied Hervey. The house man had been loosened from bondage in the kitchen. Delka showed him the notes. Hervey's eyes lighted.

"Twin Trees is a lane!" he exclaimed. "Two and one half miles from here. Let me see the lane yes, it is nearly a mile in length, with a cottage at the end of it."

"Take us there," ordered Lewsham. "At once."

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Leaving a few men at the house, the squads set out.

AS they passed along the road that led toward Hayward's Heath, keen eyes spied the motor cars. The Shadow was counting the vehicles. He knew which must be the last, for he calculated that one car would be left at Craybaw's.

The final car slowed for a turn. The Shadow gained the rear bumper. He rode along until the car had passed midway along the Twin Trees Lane. There The Shadow dropped away. Soon the automobile stopped.

Lewsham was spreading his men about, their object to surround the cottage. When the men deployed, The Shadow moved forward. He had an objective which he knew the others would skirt the glade where he had met the dogs that morning.

By taking a direct course, The Shadow was first to reach his vantage point. He waited under cover of the trees. He was listening for the hounds, ready to draw them should they begin to bark. Near to the cottage, he saw one of the dogs. The Shadow approached.

Luck spoiled the game. From somewhere in back of the cottage came a muffled grunt. One member of the closing cordon had stumbled into a ditch. The hounds began to bark. Quickly, The Shadow issued a low, eerie whistle. The dogs stood still; then moved toward the glade.

The Shadow had curbed the hounds; but they had given the alarm. Searchlights gleamed suddenly from windows of the cottage. The glares revealed the officers from London, amplified by local constables. Shouts from within the cottage; men sprang out into the darkness.

Under the searchlights, these defenders were in darkness. They began an unexpected fire from the edges of the front porch. The Shadow heard the starting clatter of a submachine gun. He saw the flashes as bullets streamed from the muzzle.

The Shadow's automatics roared from the glade, while the hounds quivered at his feet. An oath came from the porch as the machine gun fire ceased. Then a groan. Men deserted a crippled companion and dashed beyond the cottage.

A motor roared. A swift sedan sped suddenly out from an old driveway, to run the gantlet of the lane. This time, the Scotland Yard men were behind stone walls. The Shadow's timely fire had saved them from one machine-gun barrage. They expected another; it blasted uselessly from the sedan.

Again, The Shadow's guns were speaking; but trees forestalled his efforts. Like grim sentinels in the darkness, they received the bullets intended for the sedan. The car sped onward, followed by shots along the line. Scotland Yard men were starting a pursuit.

Up the lane, the other cars formed a partial barricade, which fleeing crooks avoided by a sharp half circuit. The men in the cars had dropped away for shelter. Their revolver shots spurred the sedan to swifter flight. Leaping back to their cars, officers wheeled the machines and began chase.

Their swift cars contained machine guns also. Chances were that they would overtake their prey. Roaring through the night, pursued and pursuers whizzed in the direction of Hayward's Heath.

Meanwhile, those about the cottage invaded.

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The Shadow watched from darkness; for the glitter of the searchlights was lost when it struck the thick-treed glade. He could see lights within the cottage. Then came exclamations. Through the window of an upstairs room, The Shadow saw men raising a figure that was bound and gagged. Cloth was ripped from the rescued prisoner's face. The light showed the pale face of Justin Craybaw.

Rescuers helped the prisoner down to the porch. Others appeared, guiding another released captive. This was Cuthbert. The chauffeur had been found in a room on the opposite side of the house. The Shadow watched the Scotland Yard men take the prisoners toward the lane. One car had remained there.

Officers remained at the cottage. The Shadow spoke to the dogs and the hounds roamed gingerly forward to make friends with the newcomers. The Shadow skirted back through the woods. He heard the last car rumble toward the main road. He circled to the lane.

WHEN he neared the outlet, The Shadow paused. A local constable had remained on duty, beneath a light that marked the main road. While The Shadow waited, the sound of approaching cars was audible. One machine rolled up and stopped. It was a Scotland Yard car.

"Back to the house," stated the constable. "That's where Chief Lewsham has gone. The cottage is in the hands of the law. The prisoners are freed."

"They found Justin Craybaw?" The eager voice from the car was Tunning's.

"They did that," replied the constable. "And they have rescued his man Cuthbert, the chauffeur."

"We have news, too," stated Tunning. "Dawsett's car bagged the one that sped away. Fairly cluttered it with bullets."

"And the men in it?"

"We found two of them. The sedan was stalled at Hayward's Heath. But neither was The Harvester."

"What became of him, inspector?"

"We don't know," growled Tunning. "He could have dropped off somewhere, to gain a car of his own. Or he might have boarded a train somewhere in or around Hayward's Heath."

"Deuce take the rogue!"

"The blighter is incredible. Sergeant Dawsett reported up to London after he found the dead men in their car. But The Harvester has slipped us."

A second car had come up behind Tunning's. It was Dawsett's. The two vehicles moved onward. The constable began a steady pace, shaking his head. Stopping, he stared speculatively in the direction of Hayward's Heath.

He was thinking of The Harvester, and his opinion was that Scotland Yard had failed when the crook had managed to slip away after the chase. The constable's decision was that the job should have been left to the local forces that patrolled and knew the vicinity of Tunbridge Wells.

Yet while he mused, the constable was revealing his own inefficiency. Directly behind him passed a black-clad shape that he would have seen had he thought to turn about. Yet the constable's inefficiency was

excusable. This passer was a personage far more incredible than the elusive Harvester.

The Shadow was gaining the main road. He passed from the lamp glare before the constable wheeled. He was gone when the man resumed his pacing. The Shadow's destination was the one that the cars had chosen. He was going back to Justin Craybaw's.

ALL patrol had ceased about the grounds when The Shadow arrived there. Nearing the trees, The Shadow moved beneath them and risked a flashlight glimmer in an upward direction. He spied his knapsack, one strap dangling. Reaching for a bough, he drew himself upward and regained the knapsack.

Stowing away cloak and hat, The Shadow rested the knapsack upon his arm. He retrieved his walking stick from beneath the steps to the conservatory. His shoes crunched the gravel as he walked toward the front door of the house.

Lights were burning above the doorway. The Shadow was challenged when he came within their focus. A Scotland Yard man demanded to know the visitor's identity. The Shadow looked curiously about, then smiled in the characteristic manner of Lamont Cranston.

"I presume that Chief Lewsham is here?" he questioned. "And Inspector Delka?"

"They are," returned the man at the door. "Do you have business with them?"

"I should like to speak with them. My name is Lamont Cranston."

The guardian had evidently heard mention of the name, for his eyes opened. He nodded and motioned toward the door.

"You may go in, sir," he declared, "and announce yourself. I believe that they were about to begin a search for you."

The Shadow entered. As he crossed the threshold, he still wore his quiet smile. He had reason to believe that his entry would cause surprise a conjecture that was to prove correct, particularly because of his costume.

But that surprise, The Shadow knew, would prove mild when compared to one that might occur before he left. For The Shadow had reason to believe that The Harvester, himself, would be revealed within these walls before the evening had ended.

Boldness was The Harvester's forte. In keeping with his game, he would have reason to return to a scene of final crime. That, The Shadow knew.

CHAPTER XVIII. CRIME REVIEWED

EIGHT o'clock was chiming when The Shadow entered Justin Craybaw's study, to find a group assembled. Lewsham and Delka stared in surprise when they recognized the tall form of Lamont Cranston. A conference was interrupted while Lewsham put a question.

"Where have you been, Cranston?" he asked. "We were alarmed about your safety. A friend of yours informed us that you had gone from London."

"Was it Vincent?" inquired The Shadow, with a slight smile.

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"Yes," nodded Lewsham. "He had an appointment with you."

"Not until this evening," explained The Shadow. "Since I did not expect my friend Vincent during the day, I decided to leave foggy London and seek the countryside. I chose this terrain because I wanted to see what it was like by day."

"Unfortunately, I hiked further than I had expected. Coming back toward Tunbridge Wells, I decided to stop here and see if Craybaw chanced to be at home. Being late, I should like to telephone to London."

"I see that I have intruded upon a conference. If I might be allowed to make a telephone call, I shall then take the next train up to London –"

"Not at all!" interjected Lewsham. "We shall need you here, Mr. Cranston. Serious events have taken place to-day. Join us and listen. Your own testimony may be required."

The Shadow seated himself. His face showed a puzzled expression, a well-feigned registration. Lewsham turned to Craybaw, who was seated in an easy chair. Lewsham's nod indicated that he wished Craybaw to proceed with a story that he had begun.

"It happened near the entrance to Twin Trees Lane," explained Craybaw. His tone was wearied. "When Cuthbert slowed for the crossing, men leaped upon the running board of the coupe. They thrust revolvers against our faces. They ordered Cuthbert to reverse the car; then drive down the lane."

"We reached the cottage. We were bound and gagged; then separated. I saw Cuthbert dragged to one room. I was taken to another. We remained as prisoners, without chance for communication. Our captors were rough fellows; but they treated us with some consideration. At least, I can so testify. Meals were brought to me during my imprisonment."

When Craybaw paused, Lewsham looked toward Cuthbert. The frank-faced chauffeur was seated on the other side of the room.

"Your story," ordered Lewsham.

"Three men captured us," corroborated Cuthbert. "I saw them bind Mr. Craybaw while others were doing the same with me. Then they dragged us apart. I was well treated. They saw to my wants. With one exception." The chauffeur stroked a stubbly growth upon his chin. "I was not allowed to shave."

"What of The Harvester?" queried Lewsham. "Did you meet him?"

Cuthbert shook his head.

"I heard the coupe drive away soon after I was bound and gagged," said the chauffeur. "I suspected that something must be up. That was all, however."

"Did you encounter him, Craybaw?"

"Not precisely," stated Craybaw. "After I was bound, I was placed in a room that was quite dark. Men entered and focused a lantern upon my face. I heard whisperings; I expected to be questioned."

"But you were not?"

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"No. The men with the light went away."

LEWSHAM pondered. At last, he spoke.

"The Harvester was overconfident," he decided. "He slipped when he played his game here. He would have done better to question you, Craybaw; but it is apparent that he must have known a good deal about your affairs.

"I fancy that he knew he would have to use his wits, no matter how well prepared he chanced to be. His feigning of illness was a clever stroke. It was the one point that lulled our doubts as to his identity.

"Various persons knew that you were entertaining guests last night. The Harvester could easily have ascertained facts. It seems apparent, however, that he must have been quite close to the game all along. That may enable us to trap the rogue."

Methodically, Lewsham began to calculate the time element.

"It was approximately half past five when The Harvester was last seen here," he asserted. "Dusk was settling. It was dark by half past six. That was when our search of the grounds was completed; and also when Delka found the clue that led us to the cottage.

"At seven o'clock, we attacked. A motor car ran the gantlet and was found later at Hayward's Heath. There is a possibility that The Harvester was in that motor car; that he escaped alive. If so, he has had but an hour's leeway. But I doubt emphatically that The Harvester was aboard that car."

"By George!" exclaimed Sir Ernest Jennup. "You have struck it! Perhaps the rotter did not return to the cottage at all!"

"Precisely," nodded Lewsham. "Why should he have necessarily gone there? His men were stationed on guard, ready to clear away when they received the order. We anticipated their move. There is likelihood that The Harvester had chosen his own course, meanwhile."

"Which would mean that he had two hours!" exclaimed Delka. "Longer than that, chief! He might have cut across to High Brooms station; or he may have had a motor of his own, somewhere."

"The Harvester could have been in London long ago," stated Lewsham, moodily. "He has had ample opportunity, whatever means of conveyance he may have chosen. The more that I consider it, the more I doubt that he would have risked carrying his spoils to the cottage.

"Tell me one thing, Craybaw" he turned to the rescued prisoner "something most important. Did you hear any sounds about the cottage that would have indicated The Harvester's return?"

"Men were moving about," recalled Craybaw. "I heard their muffled conversation. There was nothing, however, to indicate that an outsider had arrived."

"And you, Cuthbert?" quizzed Lewsham.

"I noticed no unusual sounds," responded the chauffeur. "Nothing more than Mr. Craybaw has mentioned."

"The Harvester could have taken to the cottage," put in Delka. "But he could have left from there prior to our arrival. That would have been good strategy; for he could have notified his men to dash away on a false trail."

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"Quite possible," agreed Lewsham. "That may explain why they were so prompt to run the gantlet. Zounds! I wish that we had not annihilated those beggars!"

"None would have talked if captured," reminded Delka. "The Harvester is too cagey to permit such fellows to learn his full plans. I would guess that The Harvester made for the cottage to begin with."

"And he would have reached it before six o'clock," assured Lewsham. "Through prompt departure from there, he would still have had the two-hour start which I have conceded him."

Gloomy silence pervaded the group. Justin Craybaw looked toward Sir Ernest Jennup.

"I suffered agony, Sir Ernest," declared Craybaw, choking. "I realized what lay at stake, once I had been captured. I realized the loss that your banking house might suffer through the failure of Rudlow, Limited. My own loss of position and repute that is but little compared to your plight."

"You are not to blame," stated Sir Ernest. "You bore up stoutly, Craybaw. Why should I cast blame upon you? The Harvester impersonated me, only recently. Jove! The scoundrel has the quality of being everywhere anywhere –"

A sharp rap at the door. It was Tunning, announcing arrivals. Parkins and Wilton had come from Rudlow's. They were bringing persons with them. Lewsham ordered prompt admittance.

THE first to enter were Blessingwood and Harry Vincent. The comptroller hurried over to confer with Craybaw and Sir Ernest.

The Shadow rose in leisurely fashion to shake hands with Harry, who showed a glad expression at meeting his supposed friend, Cranston.

Then came the Rajah of Delapore, his face emotionless. Behind him, with Parkins and Wilton, was another man: Dawson Canonby. The jeweler's expression was strained. Chief Constable Lewsham noticed the fact at once.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. "Why have you brought these men out here, Parkins? How does Canonby happen to be with you?"

"An idea struck me, chief," explained Parkins. "You had ordered a complete round-up; but you had left Canonby out of it. I called the Yard and ordered headquarters to fetch him to Rudlow's."

"Which was done," added Wilton, "and Mr. Canonby desires speech with you, chief. He insisted that he could talk only if all of us came here to Tunbridge Wells."

"That is what I declared," expressed Canonby, in a shaky tone. "I said that we must be brought here, under guard. I made that statement, once I had heard of the robbery."

"You have information for us?" demanded Lewsham. "Come! Speak quickly, man!"

Puzzled looks were everywhere; but neither The Shadow nor Harry Vincent shared them. Nor did the rajah of Delapore. He was standing by the desk, his lips curled in a contemptuous smile. He was watching Canonby. Again, the jeweler trembled. Then, finding his tongue, he pointed an accusing finger straight at the rajah.

"There he stands!" exclaimed Canonby. "He is the thief you seek! He is The Harvester! Yes, The Harvester this man who calls himself the Rajah of Delapore!"

CHAPTER XIX. THE RAJAH PASSES

COMPLETE hush followed Canonby's accusation. Men stared rigidly when they heard the jeweler's words. Yet listeners were impressed; for they knew The Harvester's incredible ability to change his guise at will. It was not inconceivable that the Rajah of Delapore should be the culprit.

Sidney Lewsham sat motionless. It was Sir Ernest Jennup who found voice. He looked from Canonby to the rajah; then back to the jeweler. In firm tone, Sir Ernest gave an order:

"State your reasons, Canonby, for this accusation."

"I shall," nodded Canonby. "When his excellency arrived in London, he came to me at my shop in Old Bond Street. He was accompanied by his secretary, a man named Ranworthy.

"The rajah wished me to be party to a curious transaction. He showed me false jewels, which were of fine appearance, though manufactured of paste. He declared that he intended to arrange their sale.

"I was puzzled, until he explained his purpose. He produced a large sum in Bank of England notes a quarter million, sterling and requested that I keep the money in my vault. He declared that on a specified date, he would request me to appear with the money. At that time, my duty would be to buy the false gems from him."

"Was that time to-day?" put in Lewsham.

"It proved to be," stated Canonby. "Last night, his excellency called me by telephone and told me to bring the money to the offices of Rudlow, Limited. To-day, I did so. Here are the false gems, which I purchased."

Canonby tugged two bags from his coat pockets. Opening them, he flung a glimmering clatter of false stones that rolled about the blotting pad on Craybaw's desk.

"Just paste!" denounced Canonby. "Worthless glass –"

"One moment," interposed Sir Ernest severely. "Tell me, Canonby, why you made yourself party to this arrangement which you now denounce?"

"I was paid for it," replied the jeweler. "Two thousand pounds was the amount that I received for storing the rajah's money in my vault."

"A trifling amount," remarked Lewsham, "when one considers that you risked the keeping of a quarter million."

The Shadow saw Canonby blanch.

For a moment, the fellow faltered; then his color returned.

"I was duped," he stated. "The rajah asked for no receipt. He affirmed that he would rely upon my integrity. I am honest, gentlemen. I can prove that I had those funds in my possession; that I preserved them faithfully. That should be evidence that I was no party to any vile scheme."

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Listeners seemed convinced. Lewsham turned promptly to the Rajah of Delapore.

"You had some purpose in placing these funds with Canonby," expressed Lewsham. "We await a sufficient explanation, your excellency."

"I SHALL supply one gladly," purred the rajah, with a pleased smile. "Had Canonby spoken of this at Rudlow's, I could have settled the question before our arrival. I am not The Harvester. It is folly for any one to believe so."

"I am actually the Rajah of Delapore. I came from India with gems which I valued at a quarter million, sterling. When I arrived in Paris, I transacted with the jewelry firm of Freres Francine. They purchased my gems. Here are the receipts."

Calmly, the rajah drew forth folded documents and placed them in the hands of Lewsham.

"The purchasers specified, however," resumed his excellency, "that I should not reveal the fact that I had sold my jewels on the Continent. They were perturbed by thoughts of criminal attempts in Paris. They provided me with imitation gems, which I brought to London."

"I kept the false stones hidden, guarding them as carefully as if they had been genuine. I went to Dawson Canonby and arranged the sale of the false gems. He is right when he states that I trusted his integrity. He was recommended to me by Freres Francine."

"A firm with which I deal!" exclaimed Canonby. "You should have told me of the arrangement, your excellency."

"I would have done so," assured the rajah, "had it proven necessary. However, since you accepted my proposition without question, I decided not to state the circumstances. I knew that I would not place you in jeopardy. Jewel thieves have avoided England recently; moreover, they would gain nothing if they sought to wrest these false stones from your possession."

"The payment of two thousand pounds to you, Canonby, was shared equally by Freres Francine and myself. Peruse the contract, Chief Lewsham. You will learn all the particulars, attested by Paris notaries."

Sir Ernest was on his feet. He was not convinced by the rajah's smooth tone.

"You say that you are not The Harvester!" stormed Sir Ernest. "What evidence do we have to that fact?"

"What more do you require?" laughed the rajah. "I understand that you encountered The Harvester here. That took place while I was still in London."

"He abducted Justin Craybaw!" accused Sir Ernest, indicating the managing director. "And after the abduction, he took Craybaw's place. The Harvester could also have kidnapped the Rajah of Delapore."

"At what hour?" inquired the rajah.

"At any time after six o'clock," decided Sir Ernest. "By such a process, he could have assumed a new identity when –"

"Not in my case," interrupted the rajah. "It was considerably before six that I arrived at the office of Rudlow, Limited. I have been there since, until I was brought here. I have not left the sight of the Scotland Yard men"

who had me in their keeping."

Tunning and Wilton nodded their agreement. Sir Ernest subsided. The Shadow, watching the rajah, awaited new arguments. They came.

"WHY should I have placed a quarter million with Canonby?" he queried. "It would not have been necessary for a criminal to do so. Nor would the act have given me status. On the contrary Canonby himself bears witness my action has caused me embarrassment.

"If The Harvester, that rogue, had possessed a quarter million, he would not have placed it in the keeping of a jeweler with orders to keep the matter secret. Instead, he would have used the money to establish himself.

"The Harvester may be wealthy. If so, he is keeping it a secret. He may have ability at disguise; but he would not impersonate myself. Nor could I have impersonated Justin Craybaw. Look at my skin. It is dark – not dyed. How could I have passed myself for an Englishman?

"You seek The Harvester, the man who sent Captain Darryat to me. I believe that I can name him; for I have been wary of recent circumstances. Last night, in fact, an attempted robbery took place at my abode. That made me think more deeply; for I believed that The Harvester might be in back of it.

"The Harvester, gentlemen, is a man close to this game. One who left London yesterday; who has hoaxed us with false pretensions. I can name him; it is your task to capture him. The Harvester is Lionel Selbrock!"

Almost with the rajah's words, the door swung open. Turning, those in the room saw two men upon the threshold. One was a member of the C.I.D. Burleigh while the other was the very person whom the rajah had just denounced. Lionel Selbrock, pale and staring, had arrived to hear the accusation.

He was Burleigh's prisoner; for the Scotland Yard man was holding a revolver muzzle against Selbrock's back. No more dramatic entry could have been arranged. The very circumstances were an echo of the rajah's words; they stood as proof of Selbrock's guilt.

To Harry Vincent, the answer was plain. Selbrock was The Harvester. Yet when Harry glanced toward The Shadow, something made him wonder. There was a smile upon the lips of Lamont Cranston; one that meant to wait for further judgment.

Did The Shadow believe Selbrock innocent? Or was his cryptic smile an indication that he expected the man to confess guilt? Harry could not answer. Yet he was sure that The Shadow must know all.

CHAPTER XX. TWO PLEAS ARE HEARD

"WHERE did you trap Selbrock?"

The query came from Sidney Lewsham. It was addressed to Burleigh as the C.I.D. man pushed the prisoner to a convenient chair. Burleigh answered, watching Selbrock as he spoke.

"At the Addingham," he said. "How he slipped in there, I can't guess. We were watching every terminus."

Selbrock heard the statement. He leaned back and delivered a guffaw. He followed by looking straight toward Lewsham.

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"Don't let this chap excuse his own inefficiency," he said, with a gesture toward Burleigh. "We have debated that point all the way out here. He swears that he had every terminus covered. He is wrong. If his men had been properly placed at Euston Station, they would have arrested me when I arrived aboard the Royal Scot."

Burleigh looked troubled. Selbrock grinned.

"The Royal Scot drew in ahead of schedule," he remarked. "I understand that it does so quite frequently. We covered the three hundred miles from Carlisle in less than five hours and a half. We departed from Carlisle at ten minutes after twelve. We reached Euston Station at half past five."

"Is this correct, Burleigh?" demanded Lewsham. "Were your men negligent in meeting the Royal Scot at Euston?"

"They may have been," admitted Burleigh, in a sulky tone, "but I doubt it, sir. If this chap came from the Royal Scot, he must have dashed from the gate in a great hurry."

"I was aboard one of the front carriages," assured Selbrock, promptly. "That is probably why I escaped observation. But I did not rush from the gate."

"What time did Selbrock reach the Addingham?" quizzed Lewsham.

"Not until half past seven," replied Burleigh. "That was when we apprehended him."

"I was dining in the meantime," put in Selbrock. "I tell you, I have been hoaxed. Badly hoaxed! Look at this telegram that I received yesterday. Wait Burleigh has it."

"Here it is, sir," informed Burleigh. "The slip was in Selbrock's pocket."

Lewsham received the paper. The Shadow, standing near by, could read the message. It was signed "Dorcus" and it called for Selbrock to meet him at Abbey Town, by the earliest train possible.

"Who is Dorcus?" questioned Lewsham.

"An old schoolmate," returned Selbrock. "We were friends at Rugby. I have not seen him for years. Inquired everywhere for him. Then came this telegram, which I received yesterday. That is why I took the four o'clock afternoon express to Carlisle."

Harry Vincent looked toward The Shadow. He saw the latter's smile. Selbrock was claiming that he had taken the very train which Harry had picked from the pages of his Bradshaw.

"THREE hundred miles north to Carlisle," resumed Selbrock, "arriving there at ten-fifty. I had just time to catch the last local for Abbey Town, at ten minutes past eleven. Twelve miles to Abbey Town; I reached there at eleven thirty-eight."

"And met Dorcus?" queried Lewsham.

"No," responded Selbrock, sourly. "That was the catch to it. Dorcus was not there at Abbey Town station. Some one had spoofed me. I stood there, gawking, upon the platform of the station. The last train had gone down to Carlisle. No one was about."

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"Any one will attest my statement when I say that a provincial town becomes quiescent after nightfall. The passing of the last train is heard by no one; for all are asleep. There was I in Abbey Town, with no place to spend the night.

"My only opportunity was to walk five miles to the end of the line at Silloth, where I knew that I should find a hotel; for Silloth is close to the shore of Solway Firth. I arrived there after midnight; so I slept amid the west coast breezes. The hotel register at Silloth will testify to the fact that I was there."

Lewsham nodded doubtingly. Selbrock became indignant.

"I have been hoaxed, I tell you!" he exclaimed. "When I left Silloth by the morning down train, I did not reach Carlisle until half past eleven."

"You slept too late for the early train?"

"Yes. I dispatched a telegram from Carlisle. Then I took the Royal Scot at ten minutes past noon. It was the logical train, under the circumstances. Rudlow, Limited, must have received my telegram. I addressed it to Justin Craybaw."

"The telegram was received," admitted Lewsham, "but Craybaw was not at Rudlow's to make it public. Our question, therefore, is whether or not you actually dispatched the message from Carlisle."

"I was in Carlisle –"

"A burden of proof lies upon you."

Selbrock came to his feet, his face savage. Burleigh stood ready with revolver, in case the accused man made trouble. Selbrock stormed his challenge at Lewsham.

"Your blind stupidity is the cause of this!" he exclaimed. "If the men you sent from Scotland Yard had been on the job at Euston, they would have met me at half past five! That would have supported my alibi! Burleigh has admitted negligence. The burden lies upon you. Prove that I was in Carlisle!"

"Send to the town of Silloth. Find my signature upon the hotel register there. Examine those ticket stubs that Burleigh took from my pocket along with that spoofing telegram. They prove that I traveled up to London, aboard the Royal Scot.

"Call the Wildersham Cafe, in Piccadilly. Ask for Lester, the head waiter. He will say that I arrived there at six; that I talked with him while I dined."

IT was the Rajah of Delapore who answered Selbrock's outburst. He had passed the accusation along to the man from Mesopotamia; hence the Hindu potentate took it upon himself to attack Selbrock's rebuttal.

"Lies, all these," denounced the rajah, in his well-toned voice. "The Harvester has tools everywhere. It is no use, Selbrock. Some one was in Silloth, to inscribe your name there. That same person must have sent the telegram from Carlisle. Lester, the head waiter at the Wildersham, may be in your pay. It would be wise to apprehend him also. You are The Harvester, Selbrock. Your game was to gain my quarter million –"

"Absurd!" interposed Selbrock. "My Mesopotamian oil options were worth two hundred thousand pounds alone. Why, when I had such a fortune coming to me, would I have risked a career of crime?"

"The options may be false –"

"False? They satisfied you."

The rajah had no reply. Lewsham introduced a nod.

"Quite correct," he said. "The oil options have been thoroughly investigated."

"They have," added Justin Craybaw, from behind the desk. "Yes, the options are quite in order. As a matter of fact" he paused, seriously "Rudlow, Limited, is still responsible to you for purchase. Unless we declare a bankruptcy" he turned to Sir Ernest "we shall have to buy those oil holdings at the price established."

"So that is why you have come here!" stormed Sir Ernest, convinced that Selbrock must be The Harvester. "Your bold game is to mulct us of another fortune!"

"You are wrong," rejoined Selbrock. "Unless the Rajah of Delapore has committed himself to purchase, I shall reclaim the oil options."

"Then we owe the rajah a quarter million!" exclaimed Blessingwood. "I signed his receipt! He is the one who can demand money. He must be The Harvester!"

Selbrock grinned as he gazed toward the rajah. Luck had turned the tide. The burden was tossed back upon the man who had passed it. That, however, produced a lull, for the rajah had already cleared himself. Sidney Lewsham called for silence.

"One thing is certain," decided the chief constable. "Your trip to Carlisle, Selbrock or your claim to such a journey is part of The Harvester's scheme. If you are The Harvester, the situation fits. A confederate could have sent you the telegram yesterday. He could have sent that wire this noon, the one which The Harvester received when pretending himself to be Justin Craybaw.

"Assuming you to be The Harvester, Selbrock, I can see purpose in both telegrams. Assuming that you are not The Harvester, I can see no purpose. If any one can cause me to change this position, I shall harken gladly. Otherwise, I shall arrest you as The Harvester."

"And let the crook make good his escape?" demanded Selbrock. "One more mistake on your part –"

He paused, as a voice intervened. The Shadow had stepped forward. He was picking up the telegram, studying it in Cranston's leisurely fashion.

Lewsham produced the other wire. Harry Vincent watched. Apparently, The Shadow had some defense for Selbrock.

"THE HARVESTER'S scheme, yes," assured The Shadow. "But one that he would never employ as an alibi. A freak trip to Carlisle; then to Abbey Town, dependent upon a telegram from a friend that cannot be produced. It is too flimsy, Chief Lewsham.

"Let us assume that Selbrock is not The Harvester. Why, then, did the master criminal induce him to leave London? Particularly with this telegram, which close inspection shows to be doubtful?" The Shadow passed both messages to Lewsham, who compared them. Each was marked as being from Carlisle; but the one which Selbrock had received did not quite match the one that he swore he had dispatched to-day. There were minor differences. Lewsham's eyes narrowed as he studied them.

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"I can answer the questions," assured The Shadow, quietly. "The Harvester realized that he could not incriminate Selbrock. Hence such a step was not his initial purpose. He merely desired to remove Selbrock to London; and with good reason.

"The Harvester knew that funds were coming to the offices of Rudlow, Limited funds that Selbrock could claim by merely signing over the options. The Harvester wanted to hold those funds until the rajah arrived with another supply of wealth. Then he would have access – as Craybaw to both.

"There was one step necessary; namely, to send Lionel Selbrock so far from London that he could not return until late to-day. The very schedule that Selbrock had given us is proof that such was the purpose. The Harvester arranged that Selbrock would not reach London until nearly five o'clock too late to reach the offices of Rudlow, Limited, before the closing hour. Too late, in any event, to arrive before the double wealth was stolen."

The logic of The Shadow's quiet tone was impressive. Listeners nodded in spite of themselves. The Shadow added a final clincher.

"Had The Harvester felt that he could throw the blame on Selbrock," he added, "he would have hoaxed him further to some place in Scotland. But The Harvester knew that Selbrock could stand the test. To accuse Selbrock is a folly, which is merely lengthening the short space of time which still belongs to The Harvester.

"For I assure you that the master criminal can be unmasked. Once his name is known, with his true identity, he can be taken. Cold logic should make his name apparent –"

"Jed Ranworthy!"

THE exclamation came from Justin Craybaw, who rose from behind his desk. Sir Ernest Jennup also sprang to his feet. Sidney Lewsham gave a quick nod. He turned to the Rajah of Delapore.

"Your secretary!" exclaimed Lewsham. "We are seeking him, your excellency. Can you help us?"

"He said that he was going to Yarmouth," replied the rajah, slowly. "He was to return to-night. If only I had known; if I had but suspected –"

Some one was rapping at the door. Delka opened it. An outside man was there, with new information:

"Layton is here. He has bagged the bounder whom he was set to trap."

"Jed Ranworthy?"

"Yes. Layton is bringing him into the house."

Footsteps followed the announcement. All gazed expectantly toward the door. They were not disappointed. Layton and another Scotland Yard man arrived, a prisoner between them. The man whom they had captured was nervous in his manner, blinking his dark, beady eyes.

There was no doubt as to the prisoner's identity. That long-nosed, sallow face beneath the sleek black hair, characterized a countenance that was quickly recognized. Hard upon The Shadow's statement; immediately after Justin Craybaw's declaration of Ranworthy's name, the secretary had been brought before this board of inquisition.

Again, Harry Vincent discerned a firm smile upon the masklike lips that were The Shadow's. This time, Harry was convinced that the game had found its end. The Harvester was here within this very room. Under the master quizzing of The Shadow, The Harvester's machinations would be revealed.

But Harry Vincent did not realize the strange, cross-current of events that was to ensue before the game was finally completed. Only The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER XXI. THE SHADOW'S TURN

JED RANWORTHY stood before the tribunal which had sought his presence. Flanked by Scotland Yard men, he heard the outpour of accusations. Nervously, the sallow secretary twitched, while he waited for a chance to speak. When it came, Ranworthy could not have claimed ignorance of the charges against him. Everything had been said.

"You were close to the Rajah of Delapore." The final summary came from Lewsham. "You could have been the one who brought Captain Darryat to the rajah's attention. Through Darryat, you met Selbrock, although your knowledge of his options may have begun previously.

"You came in contact with Justin Craybaw and had every opportunity to examine his affairs. You met Sir Ernest Jennup, which would have enabled you to impersonate him that night at the Moravia. This business is your doing, Ranworthy. Yet we shall allow you opportunity to speak."

Ranworthy licked his manila-hued lips.

"I admit my position," he declared, in a voice which quivered despite his attempt at smoothness. "Nevertheless, I am not The Harvester. Some one is plotting to destroy me. My case is like Selbrock's."

"No similarity whatever," interjected Lewsham. "Selbrock was duped. You were not."

Lewsham looked toward The Shadow as he spoke, as if seeking corroboration from a keen brain like Cranston's. The Shadow made no statement. He was waiting to hear Ranworthy out.

"Quite like Selbrock's," insisted Ranworthy. "I, too, was duped by a telephone call which I thought was from Yarmouth. I believed that I was summoned here to visit a sick relative. I made inquiry at Yarmouth last night, with no success.

"To-day, I remained there; and did not give up my inquiry until this afternoon. Then I returned to London. When I reached his excellency's apartment, I was arrested."

Ranworthy turned to the rajah.

"I had intended to discuss this matter with your excellency," he declared, "because it involved factors that might indicate some plot against yourself. Particularly because I read of an attempted robbery at your hotel. My assumption was that I was drawn away to make the task an easier one."

"You cannot avoid the issue, Ranworthy," asserted Lewsham, annoyed by the secretary's attempt to shift the subject. "Selbrock's story carries logic. Yours does not. You held a key position. You could well be The Harvester."

"You take me for a criminal?" scowled Ranworthy. "Ask his excellency if that is a just opinion. Had I chosen

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to become a thief, I could long ago have purloined the jewels which his excellency possessed."

Lewsham pointed to the baubles that Canonby had thrown upon the desk.

"These stones are false," declared the chief constable. "They were not worth stealing; and you knew that fact, Ranworthy."

"I refer to the real gems," persisted the secretary. "The ones that his excellency sold to Freres Francine, in Paris. I had access to those valuables. I could have stolen them while on the Continent. My escape would have been simpler in France. But I am not a criminal."

"You restrained yourself," put in Justin Craybaw, "because you saw an opportunity for double gain. You wanted the money that should have gone to Selbrock."

"THAT is preposterous!" argued Ranworthy. His tone had steadied; his logic was shrewd. "I knew nothing of Selbrock's options until after the Rajah of Delapore and I had arrived in London."

"That is true," recalled the rajah, suddenly. "We arrived in London in advance of Selbrock. There was no way in which Ranworthy could have produced those arrangements which involved Rudlow, Limited."

"Chief Lewsham, I must appeal to you in behalf of an innocent man. My trust in Ranworthy has not been destroyed. Were he The Harvester, he would not have passed the opportunity to steal my gems in Paris."

"True, I intended to convert the jewels into cash. I did that, however, in Paris not in London; and when we brought the money with us to England, it remained in Ranworthy's keeping. That would have been his final opportunity for criminal gain."

"My original intention was to invest the money in securities. This matter of the oil options, with the contracts which called for cash, was something in which Ranworthy had no hand. Ranworthy is honest; moreover, he is innocent."

Ranworthy was encouraged by the rajah's plea. Quickly, the secretary strengthened his position.

"Were I The Harvester," he declared shrewdly, "and had I posed as Justin Craybaw, I would never have played the fool by returning to a trap. What would I have had to lose by flight? Nothing. Absolutely nothing!"

"Suppose my story of a trip to Yarmouth had been a pretext. Suppose that I had gained nearly half a million, here at Tunbridge Wells. I would have let the search go on, in London and in Yarmouth. I would no longer have had need to serve as secretary to his excellency, the Rajah of Delapore."

"That makes my case stronger than Selbrock's. He might have had reason to return to London; to face it out brazenly. Not I, however. If I am The Harvester, I am also a fool. Since The Harvester is no fool, I cannot be The Harvester."

Ranworthy had drawn himself upward, to launch his statement with the skill of an orator. Harry Vincent saw The Shadow smile in satisfaction. Apparently, he had been ready to take Ranworthy's part, but had found the task unnecessary.

Huge bewilderment gripped Harry Vincent. This sequel was contrary to his expectations. The rajah; then Selbrock; finally Ranworthy all had presented clearing arguments. Was the accusation to be thrust back upon Lionel Selbrock?

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BEFORE Harry could decide what was due to follow, the unexpected came. Ranworthy was speaking again. Confident that he had proven his own innocence, the secretary was paving the way to a new consideration. One that came swiftly.

"What is The Harvester?" cried Ranworthy. "I shall tell you. He is an opportunist! A criminal who has masked himself as a man of importance. One who has had access to large dealings. One who has covered himself and trusted to confusion among those who seek him.

"How and when he learned of the transactions at Rudlow, Limited, I cannot state. I only know that he must be a man who has little to lose and much to gain. One who would remain close by only if it should be essential to his purpose."

"Which it might well be," added The Shadow, during the sudden pause that followed Ranworthy's words. "You have spoken well, Ranworthy. You have stated facts which I, myself would have given, had you not done so. With this addition: The Harvester not only would remain close by. He has actually done so."

The steady tones of The Shadow's speech brought final impressiveness to the scene in Craybaw's study. His pause came as a challenge as if he believed that the logic of his words would bring a prompt opinion from some other quarter.

Tense, breathless moments. Then the bombshell dropped. Justin Craybaw, his face regaining its ruddy color, was the man who rose and lifted an accusing finger.

"The Harvester is here!" pronounced Craybaw, solemnly. "Bold to the end, cunning as a fox, he has seen trapped men clear themselves from false blame. Ensnared at last, he has played his final card; his last stroke of daring by which he hopes to save himself.

"He has appeared in many disguises; but always has he failed to fully cover the measures that he has taken. At last I know him; he imprisoned Cuthbert and myself, after our abduction. I shall point him out; for he is here the only man who could be The Harvester. Stand ready to seize him; for he may attempt flight."

All eyes were upon Craybaw's uplifted hand. It descended, leveling firmly as it pointed. Like the others, Harry Vincent turned to eye the direction of the accusing forefinger. A startled gasp came from Harry's lips.

Justin Craybaw's finger had stopped. His eyes were glaring straight toward the object of his accusation, squarely toward a silent personage who met his gaze unflinching. Those who followed the direction saw the immobile features of Lamont Cranston.

Only Harry Vincent realized the astounding circumstance. The person whom Craybaw termed The Harvester was The Shadow!

CHAPTER XXII. THE FINAL VERDICT

HARRY VINCENT'S brain was drumming. Grim doubt had seized him at this moment. Through his mind was passing a whirl of confusion that produced ill thoughts. No matter what the outcome, he saw trouble.

It was possible that The Shadow had met with evil; that The Harvester had donned the role of Lamont Cranston.

Yet that seemed incredible. Harry felt sure that such circumstance could not exist.

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This was The Shadow, this visitor who wore the guise of Cranston. That fact, however, made the situation even more alarming to Harry. He knew The Shadow's ways. To cope with such crooks as The Harvester, The Shadow, too, was forced to bury his identity.

To prove that he was not The Harvester would be a task. For The Shadow as Harry well knew had veiled his own whereabouts during the past night and day. Others had come through with alibis. The Shadow could not.

To Harry's ears came fateful words. Justin Craybaw, looming above the desk, was pouring forth words that bespoke a righteous indignation. Past accusations forgotten, the managing director of Rudlow's was summing a new theory that made all others fade.

"You, Cranston, are the one who entered unforeseen," denounced Craybaw. "It was at your apartment that Captain Darryat was slain. Some tool of yours masqueraded as Sir Ernest, to add strength to your claims. But you were The Harvester!"

"You disposed of Darryat, whom you no longer needed, for he had blundered and made the game unsafe. As a man who had been threatened, you took up the work yourself. You gained close contact with every one concerned."

"Right!" exclaimed Sidney Lewsham. Then, turning about: "Remember, Delka, how Cranston went with you to visit Selbrock and the rajah?"

Delka was weak. He could not even nod. He had trusted Lamont Cranston, believing him to be identified with The Shadow.

"Last night you came here!" roared Craybaw. "You saw your way clear to deal a cunning stroke! You started back to London; but you did not go there. Instead, you called your henchmen. You waylaid me, with Cuthbert, upon the road to Hayward's Heath!"

"You, alone, knew that I was bound there. Returning, you took my place. That masklike face of yours" Craybaw leaned forward to eye The Shadow closely "is one well suited to disguise.

"And yet you failed." Craybaw's face was fixed in a grim smile. "Trapped in this terrain, you were forced to emergency measures, once you had finished your impersonation of myself. Boldly, you walked into this house, pretending that you had been on a walking trip past Tunbridge Wells.

"You are The Harvester. I defy you to deny it! You remained unseen, unheard of, from the time that you left this house. Forced to disappear that you might pass yourself as me. Tonight, bold to the finish, you have stood by in hope that others would be denounced. All have proven alibis except yourself."

Pausing, Craybaw wagged his finger with finality.

"There," he asserted, firmly, "stands The Harvester!"

SCOTLAND YARD men closed in, covering The Shadow with their revolvers. Sidney Lewsham, inspired by one last possibility, turned to Harry Vincent.

"When did Cranston call you?" asked the chief constable.

"At midnight," replied Harry, "from Charing Cross."

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"That call was from here," accused Craybaw. He turned to Sir Ernest. "At what hour did you and the others retire?"

"At half past eleven," replied Sir Ernest. "Am I not correct, Chief Lewsham?"

"You are." Lewsham turned to Delka. "Inspector, this man Cranston is The Harvester. All doubt is ended."

Delka arose. He knew that it would be his duty to remove the prisoner to Scotland Yard.

"Wait."

The Shadow spoke quietly, despite the four gun muzzles that were jabbing his ribs, beside the knapsack which he still wore. The firmness of his tone brought a pause.

"I am not The Harvester." The Shadow spoke directly to Lewsham. "I demand the right to furnish my proof to the contrary."

"Later. At headquarters."

"The proof lies here."

Lewsham looked startled. Then, with challenge, he ordered:

"Produce it."

The Shadow turned to Justin Craybaw.

"Before your abduction," he told the managing director, "we entered this study. That was prior to my departure for High Brooms, in the car with Cuthbert. Do you remember it?"

"Certainly," acknowledged Craybaw.

Sir Ernest and Lewsham nodded their corroboration.

"While we were here alone," affirmed The Shadow, seriously, "I gave you a sealed envelope. I asked you to keep it for me, Craybaw. You opened the safe" The Shadow nodded toward the corner "and placed the envelope somewhere therein."

"This is outrageous!" ejaculated Craybaw, to Lewsham. "This rogue gave me no envelope!"

"You said something about a filing box," recalled The Shadow. "I think that you said you would place the envelope in it. This matter is important. Surely, Craybaw, you have not forgotten the envelope?"

Craybaw spluttered. The Shadow turned to appeal to Lewsham. The chief constable, anxious to end the matter, put a demand to Craybaw.

"Have you a filing box in the safe?" he asked.

"Of course!" returned Craybaw. "Every safe of this type has filing boxes supplied with it. There are several in my safe."

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"Then one must hold the envelope," assured The Shadow. "You locked the safe afterward, Craybaw."

"Let us settle this," decided Lewsham. "Open the safe, Craybaw. We shall examine the filing boxes."

CRAYBAW arose reluctantly. He went to the corner, motioned others away and turned the combination of the safe. The steel door opened. Craybaw picked out filing boxes and handed them to Lewsham. Standing in front of the opened safe, he awaited the return of the boxes. His lips showed assurance that none would contain the envelope.

The Shadow was watching Sidney Lewsham. He spoke when the chief constable was examining the papers in one filing box. Lewsham's fingers were upon an envelope.

"That is the envelope," remarked The Shadow, quietly. "Open it, Chief Lewsham. Read the message within it."

Craybaw stepped forward indignantly. He stared at The Shadow, then eyed the envelope.

"Another hoax," he snorted. "Do not be tricked, Chief Lewsham. This man Cranston The Harvester did not give me that envelope."

The Shadow had turned his eyes toward Delka. The Scotland Yard inspector noted a singular keenness in the gaze.

"Look in the safe," suggested The Shadow. "Examine those packages in the back corner at the bottom –"

Delka hesitated; then realizing that he was not needed to cover the prisoner, he stepped toward the safe. Justin Craybaw had caught the words; he spun about to make a protest. Lewsham, meanwhile, had ripped open the envelope and was reading the first lines of an unfolded paper.

"Away from there, Delka –"

As Craybaw cried the words, Lewsham sprang to his feet. Paper in left hand, he whipped out a revolver with his right. He covered Craybaw point blank.

"Proceed, Delka!" snapped Lewsham. "Craybaw, stand as you are!"

Delka had gained the packages. Loose paper wrapping fell away. The investigator's eyes were popping as crisp bank notes tumbled from their stacks.

"The money!" gasped Delka. "All of it! The Harvester's swag! Here, in the safe –"

"Where Craybaw placed it," added The Shadow, "while you and Sir Ernest were in the living room."

Lewsham had barked a new command. Scotland Yard men turned their revolvers toward Craybaw. The Shadow stepped away, no longer covered. As his men closed in on Justin Craybaw, Lewsham passed the paper to Sir Ernest, who read its words aloud.

"Justin Craybaw is The Harvester," read Sir Ernest. "'His game is to feign his own abduction. He and his chauffeur will be seized; but he will return. To-morrow, he will leave his office, carrying funds that are in his keeping.'

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"He will reveal himself after his return, pretending that he is an impostor. He will take to flight, carrying a bag of worthless papers. He will be found, a prisoner, to prove his innocence.'

"His spoils, which he will trust to himself alone, will be found within this safe. The money will prove that Justin Craybaw is The Harvester."

SIR ERNEST dropped the paper. He stared incredulously at The Shadow.

"How did you guess this?" he queried. "Why did you not inform us of this ruse, last night?"

"It was guesswork," replied The Shadow, "inspired by my observation of Craybaw and his anxiety to set out for Hayward's Heath."

"Then you were not positive?"

"Not quite. I chose to leave the envelope for future reference. I could not condemn a man until his guilt was proven."

Justin Craybaw was glaring from the wall. He knew that The Shadow must have entered here to-day, to place the envelope in the safe. But his denial of The Shadow's statements would have served him naught. Instead of such procedure, Craybaw snarled his known guilt.

"Yes, I am The Harvester," he sneered. "I disguised myself as others; so why not as myself? I let my men fake an abduction, so that Cuthbert would testify that it was genuine.

"I came back. I acted oddly for your benefit." He glared from Sir Ernest to Sidney Lewsham. "I wanted you to believe afterward that I had been kidnapped on that trip to Hayward's Heath. That an impostor had come here in my stead. Then this morning –"

"You made the mistake of shaving," interposed The Shadow. "Odd that no one noticed it to-night."

Cuthbert, in the corner, rubbed his stubbly chin and blurted a surprised cry. The others realized that they had missed a perfect clue. It was proof, in itself, of Craybaw's ruse. His beard had not begun to grow during his supposed imprisonment.

"We know the rest," snapped Lewsham, angered by his own slip of previous observation. "You went to your offices and behaved oddly there. You refused to sign a receipt; as you had refused to sign letters last night, when Hervey brought them to you."

"All part of the game," smiled The Shadow, "to build up your illusion that The Harvester must be some one other than Craybaw."

"And you came out here with Delka and myself!" exclaimed Sir Ernest, facing Craybaw. "You had Hervey bring in the bag. In this study you transferred the money to the safe –"

"And put some form letters into the bag," interposed The Shadow. "One bundle of them; after that, two bundles of pink blanks; then one of green, to add the final weight –"

He stopped. Craybaw was staring in astonishment. So was Sir Ernest.

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"I chanced to be close by," remarked The Shadow. "I came into the house and watched the operation from outside this door. You see, Sir Ernest, I was concerned about your money. That was why I took a walking trip to-day, so that I might make positive that Craybaw if he gained the funds would place the money here in the safe."

Eric Delka, too, was staring. He realized, at last, that Lamont Cranston was the rescuer who had come out to the conservatory. He saw also that Justin Craybaw's escape had been permitted by that rescuer.

Delka was right. Once Craybaw had deposited the money, The Shadow had preferred to let him flee. Not only had that process exposed the full game, it had also assured Cuthbert's safe release. For Craybaw needed the honest chauffeur as an alibi witness.

Moreover, it had given Scotland Yard a chance to deal with those ruffians who had occupied the cottage. Knowing the ways of Justin Craybaw, alias The Harvester, The Shadow had divined that he would sacrifice his last henchmen to the law.

MEN were moving from the study, at Sidney Lewsham's order. All were to leave except those who represented the law. Delka had bundled up the money. He was coming along with Sir Ernest Jennup. Justin Craybaw snarled a parting as he stood guarded.

"You'll find the pigskin bag in the well behind the cottage," he sneered. "Covered with a blanketing of stones, that we threw down after it."

Delka grinned.

"Cheeky chap," he remarked. "Bold to the finish."

"Quite," rejoined Sir Ernest.

Harry Vincent and others had followed; all were going to the living room. The Shadow did the same; but while the crowd was clustering about the money, he strolled through the doorway to the darkened conservatory.

From there, he saw the Rajah of Delapore, Lionel Selbrock and Jed Ranworthy, exchanging congratulations in the living room. Dawson Canonby was apologizing to the rajah. Thaddeus Blessingwood was helping Sir Ernest Jennup count the recovered bank notes.

In the darkness of the conservatory, The Shadow opened his knapsack. Laying it aside with the walking stick, he donned his cloak and slouch hat. Peering from darkness, he saw Sidney Lewsham and a squad of Scotland Yard men conducting Justin Craybaw out through the front hallway.

The Shadow waited; then stole softly forward, to the front door of the conservatory. From that vantage point, he heard voices about the cars out front. The Harvester was being thrust aboard an automobile.

Then came a snarl that only Justin Craybaw could have uttered. Shouts from the C.I.D. men; a high-pitched call from Craybaw as he scrambled free from captors. Before the Scotland Yard men could down him on the gravel, shots echoed from the trees past the house.

The Harvester had ordered reserves to be present here to-night. Thugs down from London, they were ready. As their guns flashed, they came charging forward. Scotland Yard men dropped to cover. Massed foemen ripped to the attack.

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The Shadow had drawn automatics. With pumping jabs, he opened a flank fire. Fierce shouts changed to wild yells as The Harvester's crew received the fierce barrage. Figures tumbled to the turf, while others scattered.

Flashlights gleamed. Gaining their torches, ready with their guns, the C.I.D. men swooped upon the spreading crooks. Lewsham shouted orders. Two of his men Turning and Burleigh had grabbed Craybaw and were dragging him, writhing, into the house.

The law had gained the edge. Turning, The Shadow moved back through the conservatory. There, he heard a shout from the front hallway. Thudding sounds as overpowered men sprawled to the floor. Then, into the living room, came The Harvester.

With final frenzy, Craybaw had thrown off Burleigh, gaining the man's gun. He had slugged Tuning. Free, he was leaving the outside battle to his henchmen, while he dashed in, alone, upon the men in the living room.

DESPITE their number, The Harvester was not facing odds. Only one man was armed. That one was Eric Delka.

While others dropped for cover of chairs and tables, Delka whipped out his revolver. One hand against the table where the money was stacked, the Scotland Yard investigator was making a belated draw. The Harvester, gun already aiming, could have dropped him where he stood.

A laugh changed Craybaw's aim. It came from within the door to the conservatory. Its fierce burst made The Harvester swing in that direction. Upon the threshold, Craybaw saw The Shadow. In a trice, the master crook recognized that this must be a guise of the supersleuth who had unmasked him.

The Shadow, too, was aiming. His cloaked shoulders dipped as he pressed the trigger of an automatic. Craybaw, his hand moving, fired simultaneously. Tongues of flame stabbed across the room. A snarl came from Craybaw as his right hand drooped. A crash of glass resounded from beyond The Shadow.

The cloaked fighter had clipped The Harvester's wrist. Craybaw's bullet, singing past The Shadow's shoulder, had ruined another pane of glass in the much-damaged conservatory.

Despite his wound, Craybaw rallied. Dropping back, he tried to aim again. Then, springing in his path came Eric Delka, snapping the trigger of his revolver. Flame thrusts withered the murderous Harvester, thanks to the bullets that issued with them. Delka, with other lives at stake, had taken no chances.

The Shadow, ready with new aim, could have dropped Craybaw but for Delka's intervention. Wisely, he stayed his trigger finger when the Scotland Yard man blocked his path. From the doorway, he saw Delka stop short; then stoop above the caved body of Justin Craybaw.

The Harvester was dead.

Harry Vincent, first to stare toward the door to the conservatory, was the only one who caught a fleeting glimpse of a vanishing form in black. But others, wondering, heard the sound that followed a strange, uncanny tone that crept in from the night.

Shots had ceased about the house for the law had won the outside battle. The Harvester was dead; that sound, despite its taunting echoes, might have been a knell. It was a strident, eerie peal of mirth that rose to shivering crescendo, then faded as though passing into some sphere that was unearthly.

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The triumph laugh of The Shadow. The mirth of the departing victor, who had dealt with his insidious foe, The Harvester. To The Shadow belonged the last laugh.

THE END