

The Lone Tiger

Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. JUSTICE RENDERED.

THERE was a murmur, a stir, throughout the well-thronged courtroom. Buzzing sounds were silenced by the stern rap of the judge's gavel. The quiet that ensued seemed chilled with fearful omen, particularly to the three prisoners who awaited the verdict.

The judge's eyes were fixed upon that trio. His gavel looked like a weapon more formidable than any that these prisoners had ever before faced. Those raps that the hammer had delivered were fateful strokes that ended all hope of future freedom.

Steadily, grimly, the judge droned the names of the defendants, adding the aliases that the three men had used in crime. Then, to emphasize the identity of the culprits, he added:

"You are the last members of that notorious band that styled itself the Tiger Mob. Seven others of your outlaw organization have already received the penalties that they deserved. I need not repeat their names, nor the details of their individual capture.

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"Suffice it, that you three managed to avoid justice during the two-year period while the others were being apprehended. With your arrest, the score became complete. Law and justice have gained a tenfold victory!"

There was a pause. The judge's austere face retained its solemnity, but his expression indicated that he was thinking of other persons, and contemplating past events.

"Most heinous of the crimes committed by the Tiger Mob," resumed the justice, "was the raid upon the home of Joseph Mileson, esteemed New York citizen and philanthropist. Not satisfied with the large loot obtained through that robbery, the ten fiends subjected Mr. Mileson and his family to gross mistreatment.

"The Milesons, together with their servants, were locked in an airtight wine cellar, to await their fate. It has been pleaded"—the judge's voice was cold again, his eyes returning to the prisoners—"that the criminals did not realize that they were leaving helpless persons to die. But the law can make no allowances for the oversight of individuals engaged in crime."

The judge was leaning forward again; the culprits quailed beneath his stern gaze.

"Chance saved you," he told the prisoners. "Your victims, luckily released, escaped death; hence I cannot sentence you for murder. But there was one member of that party who was in ill health. She was Joseph Mileson's only daughter, Dorothy."

A sob stabbed through the courtroom. The judge sat silent, while sympathetic attendants aided a black-veiled woman toward the door. She was Mileson's wife, mother of the girl that the judge had named.

A gray-haired man was seated in the chair next to the one just vacated. He was Joseph Mileson; his face, handsome and of kindly mold, was fixed in an expression that gave it the appearance of granite. Great though the ordeal, Joseph Mileson was determined to see it through.

"DOROTHY MILESON died soon after that horrible night," continued the judge. "Forced from her bed, insufficiently clad against the chill of the wine cellar, she suffered a relapse that made her illness fatal. The law, unfortunately, cannot declare that death to be murder; but Joseph Mileson has always regarded it as such.

"He has thrown his entire effort into the capture of the Tiger Mob. He has been unsparing of his wealth, in his desire to see every member of that evil band brought before the bar of justice. I commend him for that work, and herewith affirm that he deserves all credit for the law's complete triumph.

"Scattered everywhere, the members of the Tiger Mob used every device to keep themselves hidden and unrecognized. Only Mileson's perseverance could have ferreted them out. Only his willingness to leave no stone unturned, no penny unspent, could have produced the mass of indisputable evidence that made the conviction of each mobster a foregone result, with each capture."

His own eyes meeting Mileson's, the judge flashed emphasis of his approval. He understood the nod that the gray-haired man gave. Mileson wanted to hear the words that would bring the trial to an end. The judge turned to the shrunken prisoners.

"You have pleaded guilty," he told them crisply. "Under other circumstances, that might bring leniency. With the weight of evidence against you, it has no bearing in this case. I sentence each of you to a term of twenty years in the State prison."

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From somewhere in the courtroom came a vague, whispery tone; it seemed the echo of a strange laugh, sinister, unearthly. The judge heard it, and started. But the prisoners were the ones most impressed. Taunted by that weird, evasive mirth, they quivered like frail saplings in a wind.

Only a ghost of a laugh! But it brought them terror that would persist long after they had become accustomed to the penitentiary cells!

The laugh of The Shadow!

STRANGE whispers were drowned by a scurry at the rear of the courtroom, where reporters were dashing out to flash the news that marked the end of the Tiger Mob. Photographers were crowding the doorway, to take flashlight shots of Joseph Milesen when he came out.

His granite pose gone, Milesen was again a pathetic father saddened by the loss of his daughter. Sympathetic friends jostled the photographers and clapped hats in front of camera lenses. Reaching the corridor, Milesen hurried shakily toward a stairway. He was stumbling, clutching for the rail, when a firm hand clutched his arm.

Helped down the stairs, Milesen stared at his rescuer. He saw a tall man, whose countenance was masklike, hawkish in its mold. Yet those fixed features conveyed a greater sympathy than any that Milesen had previously received.

"Lamont Cranston!" Milesen gulped his recognition. Then, huskily: "You were there in the courtroom?"

Cranston nodded. Outside the building, he guided Milesen into a large limousine, then shut the door in the faces of reporters and cameramen, who came dashing over. As the limousine started, Cranston spoke through a tube to the chauffeur:

"Mr. Milesen's residence, Stanley."

Milesen smiled his gratitude. This ride in Cranston's limousine was saving him a lot of difficulty with reporters. Riding along, Milesen became quite composed; then asked, casually:

"What did you think of the trial, Cranston?"

"Excellent!" returned Cranston, calmly. "As far as it went."

"As far as it went? Why, it marked the finish of the Tiger Mob!"

"Not quite."

There was something in Cranston's tone that made Milesen stare. With piercing eyes, the gray-haired man studied his friend's masklike face. Cranston's expression was inscrutable—a fact which impressed Milesen even more.

"It is obvious," observed Cranston, "that no member of the Tiger Mob was of sufficient caliber to head the organization. Two or three claimed temporary leadership, which satisfied the law. But there must have been a hidden brain behind the mob's long campaign; one clever enough to preserve his identity even from his own followers."

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"You have guessed it, Cranston," declared Mileson. "There is such a man. I know it, yet I cannot prove it. I saw him, that night at my home: the Lone Tiger!"

Cranston's eyes seemed to flash a question. Mileson smiled.

"You wonder where I coined that name," remarked the elderly man. "Let me tell you the details."

Settling back in the cushions, Mileson stared into the early dusk that was gathering over Manhattan. Then:

"ON that terrible night," Mileson related, "I was in my study when the mob invaded it. Masked men marched me to the living room, where others held the rest of the family, and the servants, under the threat of guns.

"I counted ten in the mob. So did the others who were imprisoned with me. But twice—once outside the study; again, during the march to the wine cellar—I glimpsed a leader who kept in the background. I saw his face—first against a window shade; then with a door as background.

"He had a hideous profile; a nose that bulged outward like a vulture's beak. A hooked nose, as ugly as the lips beneath it. I might be wrong on other details, but the nose was so conspicuous, that I remembered it."

Mileson paused. His thoughts traveled to a later episode.

"We were rescued," he recounted, "by a stranger who arrived an hour after the Tiger Mob had gone. It was he who unbarred the door, while I was trying to force it from the inside. I, alone, saw him, and spoke with him later. He was a being clad in a black cloak, who called himself The Shadow."

Cranston's look seemed almost doubtful.

"These are facts!" insisted Mileson, "Facts that I have never before mentioned to any one, Cranston! All during my search for the Tiger Mob, in which I employed hundreds of investigators, I received mysterious messages from The Shadow. The facts that he supplied enabled me to gain results.

"It is The Shadow, not myself, who deserves credit for what has been done. Always, with his communications, he has reminded me not to forget the Lone Tiger. It was The Shadow who coined that apt title for the hidden chief of the Tiger Mob."

Doubt was erased from Cranston's face. Mileson was pleased when he observed that his friend was convinced. Then came Cranston's even-toned question:

"Have you forgotten the Lone Tiger?"

Mileson lifted his head. Again his face had taken on a granite appearance, that made the elderly millionaire seem a symbol of righteous vengeance.

"I have not forgotten!" Mileson's tone had risen. "I have merely waited, hoping that some culprit would testify regarding his hidden chief. Not one has done so; therefore, the next move will be mine. Tomorrow, Cranston, New York will be startled by the greatest man hunt in the city's history!

"Crook will turn against crook. Men who have fought against the law will aid in the search for the Lone Tiger. Every stone will be turned; from beneath those stones will crawl slimy humans, who will voice their testimony regarding the Lone Tiger.

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"The greatest of all rogues will be found! He will be treated like the smallest of his followers. The law will recognize both his existence and his hidden part in crime. This time"—Milesen's final words were emphatic—"I shall insist that credit for the triumph be given to The Shadow!"

THE car had reached Milesen's home, a large, old-fashioned mansion on the corner of a secluded avenue. Around the grounds was a high stone wall designed to keep out intruders, but which had served, ironically enough, to hide the operations of the Tiger Mob, after they had invaded Milesen's premises on that tragic night, two years ago.

Stepping from the limousine, Milesen gripped Cranston's hand with a firm parting shake. The elderly philanthropist had felt a letdown after today's trial, but that had passed. Inspired by his own account of the task that lay ahead, Milesen was again an instrument of justice, intent upon waging ceaseless war until the final score was settled. Though Milesen had not specified just what the morrow's move would be, Cranston seemed quite satisfied as he settled back in the rear of the limousine. A lone passenger in the big car, he let his thin lips form a smile; one of conviction, not of doubt.

That Lamont Cranston believed Milesen's statements regarding a master crook known as the Lone Tiger and an amazing crime hunter called The Shadow, was proven when a soft laugh came from Cranston's smiling lips.

Though repressed, that tone carried the same sinister touch that had characterized the mirth heard in the courtroom. Weird, persistent in its sibilant echoes, the laugh was the sort that no other lips could imitate.

The tone revealed Cranston's deep interest in things to come; his desire to make the most of opportunities that would arrive when Joseph Milesen released tomorrow's bombshell.

For this person who posed as Lamont Cranston, gentleman of leisure, was none other than The Shadow!

CHAPTER II. THE TIGER HUNT

THREE days had passed since the trial. Those days had produced the very excitement that Joseph Milesen had promised. The excitement was not over; in fact, it seemed just beginning, as Lamont Cranston could have testified as he sat in the spacious reading room of the exclusive Cobalt Club.

Spread before him, Cranston held a newspaper; for the hundredth time, he was studying a full-page advertisement that had appeared in every edition during the last three days. Heading the ad, in big, smashing type, was:

WANTED—THE LONE TIGER!

Under that line were paragraphs stating briefly that the men convicted three days ago were not the last of the Tiger Mob; that bigger game was still at stake, in the person of the Tiger himself. Then, plastered across the middle of the page, in bigger type than any other, was the announcement:

\$100,000 REWARD—DEAD OR ALIVE!

Most such rewards had strings attached. Not this one. The cash was ready, waiting, for anyone who could prove who the Lone Tiger was, and thereby lead to his capture. If death had already found the unknown crime

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master who had controlled the Tiger Mob, proof of that fact, along with evidence of the man's identity, would result in payment of the hundred thousand dollars.

The next paragraphs covered such details, stating also that no questions would be asked; that any informant's name would be kept from the public, if so desired. At the bottom of the ad was the name of the man who offered the reward, along with his printed signature, in facsimile: "Joseph Mileson."

The plan was everything that Mileson had claimed. It was a direct appeal to the underworld, urging the surrender of the Lone Tiger, could he be found. It offered opportunity to anyone who, through some past chance, might have learned that such a supercrook existed.

Mileson was right. Money talked; it would turn crook against crook. The Shadow had checked on that fact personally, through many visits to the badlands. Day and night—mostly the latter—he had prowled the worst districts of Manhattan, sometimes in garb of black, other times in one of his many disguises. His present visit to the Cobalt Club was merely a breathing period, for he found it restful, here in the reading room.

One hundred thousand dollars.

Mileson was spending more than that on advertising alone. As The Shadow laid the newspaper aside, he could hear the music of a steam calliope penetrating to the almost soundproof reading room. Glancing from the window, he saw the calliope truck go by along the street, its side plastered with printed sheets proclaiming: \$100,000 REWARD. The music cut off and a voice came from a loud-speaker, bawling the words:

"Wanted, dead or alive—the Lone Tiger! Wanted, dead or alive—"

From his pocket, The Shadow produced another newspaper, the pink-covered edition of the tabloid Classic. The tabs, like the larger newspapers, carried the \$100,000 advertisement, and with good reason, for they circulated widely in districts where hoodlums dwelt.

The Classic had done more than print the advertisement. On its front page it had a picture of a tiger dressed in clothes, stalking along a New York street, with the caption: "The Lone Tiger—Who is He?"

Turning the pages, The Shadow came to a two-paragraph story signed by a writer named Clyde Burke, and carefully scanned its lines. Burke, it chanced, was an agent of The Shadow, and a very useful one, for he handled crime stories for the Classic and could therefore be assigned-by The Shadow, as well as the newspaper—to important sectors in the underworld.

STROLLING out into the foyer, The Shadow entered a telephone booth and put in a call. Soon he was talking to Joseph Mileson, asking him, in Cranston's style, if anything had developed.

In a disappointed tone, Mileson replied that nothing had. Many letters had been received, most of them anonymous, offering to sell information on all sorts of crime for prices ranging as low as fifty dollars; but no one had guaranteed facts regarding the Lone Tiger.

Mileson invited Cranston to drop in, whenever he chose, and look over the correspondence, and received Cranston's assurance that such a visit would be made.

Calling another number, The Shadow was answered by an even-toned voice:

"Burbank speaking."

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"Report!"

No longer was The Shadow's tone the drawl that suited Cranston. He spoke the word "report" in a sinister whisper that Burbank recognized. The reports came, as given by many agents. All workers for The Shadow reported through Burbank, as their contact man.

One report particularly interested The Shadow.

"From Hawkeye," stated Burbank. "Pug Lorby showed up at the Pink Rat. Said he just got back to town. He called Steve's Place, to say he'd be there by seven o'clock;"

"Instructions—"

The Shadow was assigning his agent Hawkeye to new duties. The matter of Pug Lorby was one that The Shadow could handle on his own. It offered excellent prospects, for the simple reason that Pug was wanted by the police. No crook in his situation would have returned to Manhattan unless important work was afoot.

The Shadow had instructed his agents to be on special lookout for any hoodlums in Pug's category.

Though streets were darkening, the sky was still bright when The Shadow stepped from the door of the Cobalt Club. The doorman grinned when he saw the aristocratic Mr. Cranston stare upward like other gawkers who lined the sidewalks. They were watching a sky writer.

With streams of smoke from his toy-like plane, the airman had just completed a sky message that read: "\$100,000."

Cranston's limousine wheeled from across the street. Its owner stepped aboard, spoke an address through the tube. Stanley grimaced, but drove stolidly ahead. The chauffeur didn't like Cranston's habit of visiting dingy districts.

Oddly, Stanley did not see Cranston leave the car when it parked at the designated place. Yet Stanley was used to that. His employer had a remarkable ability at sliding in and out of the limousine unnoticed. Maybe the fact would have no longer puzzled Stanley, had he seen Cranston draw a black cloak and hat from beneath the limousine's rear seat, while they were nearing the destination.

ENVELOPED in blackness, The Shadow shrouded his course through alleyways and other passages that seemed to open in the dusk as he approached them. Easing to a door, The Shadow blackened himself against it.

The door was latched, but not bolted. It was the rear exit from Steve's Place, a grogshop popular with hoodlums. The door was meant for quick departure of patrons.

Making entry into the rear room of a stone-walled basement, The Shadow picked his way past liquor cases and cans of alcohol. Turning the knob of a rickety door, he gained an inch-wide view into the main room of the grog shop. Though it was only quarter of seven, The Shadow had not arrived too early.

Pug Lorby, who had a nose that someone had pounded a few degrees off center, was seated at a corner table nursing a fifteen-cent glass of amber-colored liquid that the indiscriminating patrons of Steve's Place accepted as whiskey.

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Pug was near the telephone, which occupied a closet near The Shadow's door. He was keeping his eye on the improvised phone booth, while he occasionally rubbed his left ear, which was of the cauliflower variety.

Five minutes proved The Shadow's wisdom in arriving early. The phone rang; Pug hurried to answer it. Though he kept his lips close to the mouthpiece, The Shadow was close enough to hear him growl:

"H'lo... That you, Goofer?... Sure, this is Pug... Yeah, I got your letter, that's why I'm here... What's that? I don't get it, Goofer—"

The message was being repeated. Meanwhile, The Shadow was linking the name Goofer with Pug's return to New York. To a certainty, the caller was Goofer Shayne, a mob leader who had specialized in strong-arm work for racketeers.

Goofer's thugs were usually of Pug's sort: fighters who were better with fists and brass knuckles, than with guns. That was no guarantee, however, that they did not carry revolvers. Tonight's business, it seemed, was to prove more important than the mere slugging of a few laundry truck drivers whose owners had failed to pay "protection" fees.

Stirred by what was coming across the telephone wire, Pug had shifted the receiver from his cauliflower ear to his good one. The lips beneath his twisted nose showed eager enthusiasm.

"So the guy knows about the Lone Tiger!" gruffed Pug. "You bet I'll be there to help you put the heat on him! You'll be cutting me in, same as all the rest, hey, Goofer? Yeah, it won't be my fault, if I ain't there in time to help grab him.

"Whered'ya say the place is?... Yeah, I get it—half a block east of the Hotel Romany... Sure, I know the joint... All right, I'm going east, then what?... Just past the shoemaker shop... A little door in a big one—"

"I got it, Goofer. . . . Yeah, I'll grab the subway and be up there inside of twenty minutes. Hold off the heat until I show up... No, don't let no lugs get started with a hunk of hose, until I show 'em how—"

Banging down the receiver, Pug stepped from the shallow closet and started for the bar, fumbling in his pocket to produce payment for his drink. His lips showed contempt as he looked at the coins in his hand. Pug was visioning a fat roll of bills as his share of the Mileson reward.

While Pug was going out through the front of Steve's Place, The Shadow vanished by the rear exit. His trip back to the limousine was swift; entering the car, he startled Stanley by his early return.

"Back to the club, Stanley," came Cranston's order.

There was method in The Shadow's return to the Cobalt Club. He could not have picked another destination. It happened that the Cobalt Club was only a half block north of the corner occupied by the Hotel Romany, the landmark from which The Shadow intended to locate his next goal.

The Shadow still had time to arrive before crooks "gave the heat" to some unfortunate, who might have some clue to the Lone Tiger's identity. Therefore, The Shadow was figuring on the future; not the past.

He was picturing the corner of the Hotel Romany, where grimy walls beneath old-fashioned high-built windows would offer a perfect spot for cover. It would be easy, too, to drop off at that corner as Stanley slowed for the final turn.

The Shadow's whispered laugh foretold that Goofer Shayne would be sorry he hadn't assembled a larger crew, before tonight's events were finished.

CHAPTER III. THE SILENT WITNESS

THE Hotel Romany was exactly as The Shadow had pictured it—an old, forbidding structure, dim except at the high-stepped entrance some fifty feet from the corner. The Shadow intended to avoid that lighted area; but some persons found it desirable.

Marion Delmar was one. On a quiet avenue like this, a girl as attractive as Marion was apt to receive unwanted greetings from strangers, unless she stayed in the shelter of the lobby entrance. That was why Marion always waited here when Kremp was bringing the car.

This was Marion's night off. Usually, she worked evenings, going over the rental ledgers in the little office that formed part of Mr. Cadbury's apartment. Retired from active business, David Cadbury was making the best of unwise real estate investments by renting properties.

Cadbury had only two employees: Marion, his secretary; Kremp, his chauffeur. Tonight, Cadbury had told Kremp to meet Marion at whatever time she stated and take her to Times Square. Marion had named the Romany, because she was having dinner there and because it was near the garage where Kremp kept the car, when downtown. She had set the time at quarter of seven, but Kremp was already fifteen minutes late.

Kremp had a habit of being late, as Marion could have told Cadbury; but she felt it poor policy to criticize another employee. However, with her watch showing seven o'clock and no sign of Kremp, she decided that she could at least call Mr. Cadbury and let him form his own conclusions. She had a good enough excuse; she had remembered that a fire insurance premium was due, so she could remind Cadbury to send the check.

Finding a telephone in the lobby, Marion dialed Cadbury's number, but received no answer. She was starting to dial again, when the noise of a raucous radio, shouting through the lobby, made her decide that a call would be useless, since Cadbury was hard of hearing and would not be able to hear her voice, since it would be mixed with the radio noise.

Besides, maybe Kremp had arrived by this time. If he had, he'd blame Marion for being late.

Again, there was no sign of Kremp outside the hotel steps. Marion began to look about for a cab; then she had a better idea. She knew where the garage was—only a few minutes walk away. It wouldn't be a bad idea to find out just what was keeping Kremp.

WALKING along the side street, Marion came to the garage. The big door was closed tight, but there was a little door cut in it and the little door was unlocked.

Marion opened it, stepped into a long, gloomy space filled with cars. Away at the back, she could see a little door that led to the rear street.

No one was about, not even an attendant. But Marion saw Cadbury's sedan, parked beside the wall. She opened the rear door and stepped into the car. Closing the door again, she lighted a cigarette and began to think of something sarcastic to tell Kremp when he arrived.

Lost in a reverie, Marion did not hear the sneaky footsteps that entered the garage through the very door that she had used. The first token that told her of an arrival was the low rap of a hand knuckling a peculiar signal

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against woodwork.

There was the creak of an opening door. Marion located it, just as the door closed. Her alarm was merely momentary. It faded when she decided that the signal had probably admitted another player to a crap game in a side room of the garage. Probably that was where Krempp was—shooting dice with the attendants.

Concentrated upon the door, Marion failed to notice a new occurrence. Again, a person was entering the garage, but with a stealth far greater than the man before. In fact, the being who was entering gave no proof that he was of solid substance.

Rather, he was a shadow. A black blot against the grimy white of the garage wall, the figure faded in elusive style, shifting uncannily from spots where light was prevalent. Almost before Marion's gaze, the strange invader blended with the dark surface of a black sedan.

Then the shape was against the very door that Marion was watching. It clouded there, creeping upward, until the door was blotted. Marion blinked, wondering what was the matter with her eyes. She decided that she had been staring too intently into the gloom, so she relaxed.

Had there been any betrayal of light from beyond the door, the girl would have noticed it; but there was none. The black-clad intruder had his own method of entering doors unobserved. His arm raised, crooked itself, to block light from above. The door opened noiselessly; when it closed, the figure was beyond it.

INSIDE a peculiarly-shaped room, The Shadow had gained an excellent advantage. The room was lighted, and occupied by men; but the portion that The Shadow had entered was a sort of alcove, and the occupants were beyond the corner. They had chosen a remote spot, so that the sound of their voices would not carry.

As he moved forward to the main portion of the room, The Shadow saw a hiding place that offered a perfect chance for closer observation. Just past the corner were some stacks of tires, set out a few feet from the wall. Squeezing in back of them, The Shadow crouched low and tilted his head against a tire that was slightly off center in its stack.

Through that lookout space, he saw the scene at the inner end of the room—a drama that was dominated by a rangy, sallow-faced man whose flattish nose and wide, greedy-looking lips were topped by eyes that flashed black and ugly with every thrust of the fellow's bulldog chin.

The fellow was Goofer Shayne; he was the only well-dressed man in the ill-assorted group that surrounded him. Not that Goofer was fastidious; it was contrast, alone, that made him look conspicuous. The rest of his band, four in number, were rough-clad hoodlums much like Pug Lorby, who had joined the throng just before The Shadow entered and was a member of the quartet.

It was Pug who had attracted Marion's attention by his raps at the door; and the crooked-nosed slugger was already trying to make himself important.

On the floor lay a man in chauffeur's uniform, except for his cap, which had been tossed beside him. Goofer was threatening the prisoner, and Pug, his ugly face shoved forward, was nodding approval of every word.

"You'll talk, Krempp"—Goofer's voice had a bite like steel—"and you'll talk plenty! I'm telling you what's good for you—or else—"

"Or else this!" supplied Pug, exhibiting a short length of rubber hose, which he wagged in front of Krempp's upturned face. "Listen, mug; the coppers are boobs when it comes to handling a hunk of hose. I oughta know;

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they tried it on me more than onct. You know what I done? I laughed at 'em!"

"Pipe down, Pug!" growled Goofer. "I'll tell you when to talk. Listen, you"—he shoved his face close to Kremp's—"I'm going back to the other proposition! Savvy?"

Muscles showed taut, as Goofer's left hand clutched the front of Kremp's jacket and yanked the chauffeur to a sitting position. Kremp was helpless, though unbound; the paleness of his sharp, pointed face proved that he knew his plight.

"Here's what we know," snapped Goofer. "You were with the Tiger Mob before they pulled that sour job at Mileson's. But you didn't get out of the mob because you got feeling soft. Nobody ever pulled a run-out on that outfit.

"They let you quit because they were told to. And there's only one guy who could have shoved that order through. That guy was the Lone Tiger. The mob was smart, keeping their lips buttoned about the big-shot.

"Maybe none of them knows who he is. But if any guy knows, it's you! It's a cinch you're still tied up with the Lone Tiger. He told you to get a chauffeur's job, just for a blind. Have I got it right?"

FOR the first time, Kremp gave acknowledgment in the form of a weak nod. He wasn't looking at Pug; but the latter took credit, by nudging the rubber hose and staring about, expecting approval from the rest of the mob.

"You picked a soft job," continued Goofer, "with an old cluck, this guy Cadbury, who don't overwork you. That gives you plenty of time to do jobs for the Lone Tiger. Whenever he wants you, huh?"

"He hasn't wanted me," Kremp said, huskily. "Not since Mileson has been running down the mob. He's laid low, the Tiger has, like I have."

"Jittery, huh?"

"No. He's gone into another racket. He cleaned up plenty out of that Mileson job."

Goofer wiggled both hands, as a sign for his four followers to move back. However, Pug remained; with a glare, Goofer pulled a blackjack from his hip pocket.

"Want this behind the ear?" he asked Pug. "If you don't, get back! Why don't you talk to yourself through that hunk of hose? Try it with that funny-looking ear. Maybe you can hear something, if you can remember what you tell yourself."

Pug edged back with the others. Goofer squatted beside Kremp. His growl became a low, convincing roll, as he talked with the helpless chauffeur.

"Here's the go," declared Goofer. "You give me the dope—I collect the hundred grand. I'm going fifty-fifty with the boys, here. But there's only four of them, which leaves ten grand over. That's yours, Kremp!"

The chauffeur licked his lips, but not from eagerness. He simply wanted to put them in condition for the contemptuous smile that he promptly gave. Goofer shrugged.

"You're a guy that's worked for real dough," he said. "I'll sweeten the ante. Ten grand more, out of my take."

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Kremp managed a chuckle, and a good one. Goofer's patience ended. He beckoned to Pug, who advanced with the rubber hose. Kremp didn't quail; his nerve had returned. Plucking at Goofer's arm, he said "Wait!"

Goofer waited.

"I don't need dough," declared Kremp, coolly. "I've made mine. I could buy and sell old Cadbury, that simp I'm working for, three times over! All I want to do is clear out somewhere, to a place where nobody's going to know me.

"If you want the low-down on the Lone Tiger, I'll tell you how to get it, and it won't cost you a dime! Handle it the way I say, and the hundred grand is yours!"

There was a ring of truth in Kremp's tone that impressed Goofer and his crew. It carried weight with The Shadow, the silent, unseen witness to this scene. Kremp was ready to reveal facts that concerned the Lone Tiger. The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER IV. THE FACE FROM THE DARK

AT Kremp's request, the crooks let him sit in a chair in the far corner of the room. Resting there, Kremp faced a small alcove very much like the one that served as an entry passage. The Shadow could see a flicker in Kremp's gaze, as though the man contemplated a rush to that rear alcove, in hope of escaping by a door that he probably saw. Then Kremp resigned himself to circumstances.

He hadn't a chance to break loose from Goofer and the other four thugs. Knowing it, he was going back to his original plan. He was going to talk, and make his captors listen.

"You guys have put me in a tough spot," began Kremp. "You're asking me to tell you who the Lone Tiger is, but I can't. Because I don't know!"

Goofer's eyes went hard.

"Don't pull no stall!"

"This isn't a stall," interrupted Kremp. "Don't forget that I belonged to the Tiger Mob, and none of those birds knew who the big-shot was. We used to hear from him plenty, and he'd be around when we staged the jobs. But his best trick was keeping out of sight."

Kremp did know who the Lone Tiger was. Of that, The Shadow was sure, because he had noticed the glibness with which Kremp had smoothed his statement of denial. Kremp's argument, however, was good enough for Goofer. The mob leader's bulldog face showed signs of conviction, which Kremp was very prompt to strengthen.

"I was switched to inside work," explained Kremp, "but I still saw the mob. That's why the Tiger wouldn't wise me up to who he was. I could have found out, but I was smart enough not to try."

Kremp was talking Goofer's language. The prisoner leaned forward, wagged a finger confidentially, and resumed:

"What I did find out was this: I learned of two guys who knew the big-shot personally. They didn't belong to the mob, either of them; that's why he let them get wise. The kind of work they were doing for him made

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them know he was a crook. So he went the whole hog, told them everything."

"Who are the guys?" asked Goofer.

A warning look came from Kremp. It signified his doubt of Goofer's crew, for Kremp's eyes took in the circle, then centered on Goofer, who leaned his ear forward. The Shadow saw Kremp's lips move. Goofer returned a short nod.

Apparently, Kremp was doubting Goofer's wisdom at trusting his own followers, and the mob leader seemed to appreciate the tip.

Stepping from the wall, Goofer began to move his men away, in keeping with Kremp's suggestion. He displayed enough tact, however, to keep most of his crew mollified.

He told one man to go to the door at the front alcove of the room and look out into the garage, to see that all was well there. He posted another in the rear alcove; then told off a third, to join the man at the front. The only one left was Pug.

With a wise grin, Pug leaned back against a stack of tires, while Goofer returned to talk with Kremp.

UNWITTINGLY, Pug Lorby had managed something rather remarkable. By leaning back against the stack of tires, he was making things tough for The Shadow. Forced to shift deeper, to avoid being seen by the thugs who went through the front alcove, The Shadow found his present view completely blocked by Pug's bulky form.

His only course was to shift farther along the wall—a ticklish move, with Pug so close. Nevertheless, The Shadow managed it. He stretched flat along the floor, squirmed past the final stack, and brought his head into a narrow space where a pile of boxes supplanted the tire stacks. Through a one-inch crevice, The Shadow sighted Goofer and Kremp in their corner.

"All right, Kremp." Goofer was letting his voice carry purposely, so that Pug could hear. "There's two guys know who the Tiger is. Who are they?"

"You're letting me lam?" queried Kremp. "Tonight?"

"Sure. That's the deal, ain't it?"

Kremp thought a few moments, then nodded. But his tone was wary, as he stated:

"One guy is a fence. He's the fellow that used to peddle sparklers for the Tiger. We always grabbed a lot of jewelry, and this guy knew how to get rid of the stuff at plenty on the dollar. That's why the Tiger used him. The other guy is different. He's—"

"I ain't asking what they are," interrupted Goofer. "I'm asking who they are!"

"I'll come to that," returned Kremp. "I'm giving you the other details first. The names come when we're outside shaking hands and saying good-by."

"Holding out, huh? No go, Kremp! I don't work it that way. Say, Kremp, did you ever get hit on the bean with a piece of lead pipe? That's what a rubber hose feels like!"

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A wince came over Kremp's peaked face. Goofer saw it, and snapped his ultimatum:

"Let's hear those names!"

On the wall at the rear alcove, a thing had taken form. It was a silhouette, cast by a man who was out of sight. It couldn't have been the thug that Goofer had posted at the rear door, for that fellow's face was flattish. This silhouette was the sort that could only be cast by an unusual face.

Unusual, because of the nose. It was hooked, like a vulture's beak. It symbolized a creature of prey, seeking human carrion. Its approach, silent and steady, would have suited a stalking jungle beast, particularly, a tiger.

The corner of the alcove cut off all view of that silhouette from the spots, quite close together, where The Shadow and Pug Lorby watched. Only Goofer and Kremp could have seen that alcove; and Kremp alone, was turned toward it.

That was the reason why Kremp's lips went voiceless, at the very moment when the prisoner was trying to speak the names that Goofer wanted. Coming up from his chair, Kremp made a clutch at Goofer; whipping back, the mob leader yanked a gun from his hip.

The revolver was hardly out of Goofer's pocket, when a shot echoed through the windowless room. The burst didn't come from Goofer's gun; it was fired from the alcove. That one shot, coolly aimed, exactly timed, accomplished its intended purpose.

It jolted Kremp, staggered him back into his chair, from which he rolled helplessly, clawing as he struck the floor. Goofer, stupefied, was standing with his own gun aimed. But there was no target before him. Pug was dumbly staring at Goofer's gun, wondering how the mob leader could have managed so quick a shot.

Only The Shadow, rising, flinging away tires and boxes, realized what Kremp had seen and where the shot had come from. This was the very moment that The Shadow wanted; one that could bring him face to face with the very adversary that he sought.

Kremp's murderer, still in this very room, could be none other than the Lone Tiger!

CHAPTER V. THE BALKED TRAIL

SO rapid was The Shadow's appearance on the scene, that he actually saw the shaded profile that Kremp had observed. It was there against the whitewashed wall—a satanic silhouette etched in black. Bulging forehead, beakish nose, lips widened in a leer above a sharp chin.

But the face itself, just past the alcove corner, was lost from The Shadow's sight. So was the silhouette, before The Shadow reached the corner. The Lone Tiger, his mission finished, was heading out through the route that he had used for entrance.

Swinging in pursuit, The Shadow reached the rear alcove before either Goofer or Pug had recovered from his stupefaction. They heard the clatter of the boxes, saw a sweep of blackness pouring for the alcove, but that was all. Literally, The Shadow was whisking himself from the midst of lesser crooks, to overtake an adversary worthy of a man-to-man duel.

From the corner, The Shadow saw the Lone Tiger just beyond a half-opened door. In the gloom of the garage—the rear alcove, also, opened onto it—the murderer's face showed only as a whitish blotch. His body,

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half crouched, ready to spring away, was also indefinable.

One hand was out of sight clutching the doorknob, ready to slam the barrier. The other fist was half concealed in the folds of the Tiger's coat, where it clutched the revolver that had delivered the death shot.

Remembering Milesen's description of the Lone Tiger, plus his own fleeting glimpse of the murderer's silhouette, The Shadow launched straight through the space that formed a passage to the door. In his drive, he had whipped an automatic from beneath his cloak; he was shoving the .45 ahead of him as he lunged.

From lips half-hidden in the folds of a cloak collar, came the weird challenge of The Shadow's laugh. No whisper, that taunt. Instead, it was a peal that burst with an effect more startling than the report of the Tiger's gunshot of a dozen seconds before.

That mockery was calculated to spur the Tiger's flight. Once turned from the doorway, he would reveal the side-face view that The Shadow needed. A glimpse of that beakish profile in the flesh would give The Shadow a photographic impression that he would not forget. Escape, if the Tiger managed it, would be made at fateful cost. Once identified by The Shadow, the murderer would be hunted to a finish.

The murderer sprang back from the door, making a frantic effort to close it. He must have known his dilemma, for he did not wheel. Instead, he swung his gun to aim, hoping vainly to beat The Shadow to the shot. Still driving for the doorway, The Shadow pressed his gun trigger.

As the big automatic spoke, the cloaked fighter was no longer driving toward his prey. Instead, he was hurtling, head foremost, toward the single step that stood beneath the doorway. Something had marred his dash, spilling The Shadow to the cement floor.

In that sprawl, The Shadow twisted, flinging his free hand to break his fall. His gun fist went wide and high, as he tugged the trigger. The bullet meant for the Lone Tiger found the door frame instead, splintering the woodwork just above the crouched killer's ear.

From the doorway came an answering report from the Tiger's gun. That shot, too, was high. A slug ricocheted from the wall, three feet above The Shadow's rolling form.

The Shadow's gun spoke from the floor—a quick shot, but even closer than the first bullet that had missed. By that phenomenal rally, The Shadow partly regained his purpose. The Tiger did not linger to be outclassed by such a superfoe. He slammed the door; from beyond it came the hurried scurry of his feet.

The murderer had gotten a start, and had prevented the side-face glimpse that The Shadow wanted. His flight was rapid, for he knew that The Shadow would pursue. In fact, The Shadow was already halfway to his feet, ready to grab for the doorknob, which was almost within reach.

AS he came up, The Shadow shoved aside the thing that had tripped him. It was the motionless body of the thug that Goofer had posted in the rear alcove. The Lone Tiger had slugged that fellow, on arrival, while the thug had been watching the conference between Goofer and Kremp.

Hand on the doorknob, The Shadow recoiled as if he had taken an electric shock. He was spinning about, flattening against the wall. It was his sense of hearing, not that of touch, that produced the sudden twist. The Shadow had caught the scuffle of feet from the room behind him.

Forgetting the Lone Tiger, he was just about in time to meet Pug Lorby and Goofer Shayne as the two drove in upon him.

The Lone Tiger

Guns spoke in unison. One was The Shadow's automatic; the other, Pug's revolver. An instant duel, in which Pug regretted that he had reached the alcove ahead of Goofer. The Shadow's bullet took Pug just above the heart, while the crook's shot missed the sidestepping fighter in black.

Mortally hit, Pug sagged upon the stretched figure of the slugged thug near the doorway. The coughs that he gave marked his death throes.

Away at the moment of Pug's sprawl, The Shadow drove upon Goofer. No use to risk a chance shot in these cramped quarters. Goofer was a better shot than Pug, and luck might favor him. Clamping a fist upon Goofer's gun hand, The Shadow shoved the mob leader's gun aside and rushed Goofer backward toward the room where Kremp lay dead.

During the last of those quick paces, The Shadow's gun barrel contacted Goofer's head, just above the ear. Goofer was limp as they reached the room. The shove that The Shadow gave him sent the crook reeling toward the corner. Half stunned, Goofer flopped to the floor before he reached Kremp's body.

From the corner of that rear alcove, The Shadow looked to the front of the room. If other thugs, the pair that still remained, wanted a share of this battle, he would give it. But The Shadow's thought, at that moment, was to fire only if his foemen were already on their way toward him. There was still time to desert this scene and take up the Lone Tiger's trail.

What The Shadow saw, ended all hope of pursuing the elusive murderer.

The thugs at the front alcove were dragging a new prisoner, who fought valiantly to escape, despite their threats.

Their prisoner was Marion Delmar.

FROM the window of Cadbury's car, Marion had seen a man come out from the door that she had watched, then return to speak to another. Irked because Kremp had not appeared, the girl had decided to question these men, mistaking them for garage attendants.

Marion had come from the car, paused at the dangerous door and opened it, just before the Lone Tiger had fired the shot that settled Kremp. Guarding thugs had seen her, grabbed her. Hearing the shooting from the room, they connected her with it. Dragging the girl into the room, their sight of Kremp's body had made them suppose that all was well.

They were shouting for Goofer to look at the girl, and in suppressing Marion's struggles, they were too busy to observe that Goofer's return had been a reeling topple.

Angered at Marion's resistance, one thug was lifting a drawn gun, intending to slash it against the girl's brown-haired head.

The Shadow saw a strained brave face; brown eyes that sparkled fearlessly; lips tight-pressed and determined, beneath a shapely nose. He saw the thrust of the girl's small chin, witnessed her last effort at escape. That Marion had struggled was evidenced by her dress, torn here and there. Her slender arms were clamped behind her, but the muscular motion of her bared shoulders proved that she still had strength.

Despite the disheveled hair that streaked her face, her eyes saw the gun that a crook intended to use as a cudgel, and she swung her head away from the menacing weapon, cleverly enough to make the slugger shift his hand before he could make the stroke.

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All that Marion needed was a break; she would be quick enough to take advantage of it. The Shadow supplied the required interruption.

He delivered a sinister chuckle—a low, deep-throated token of contempt for the two thugs who found one girl as much as they could manage. Startled, the crooks swung about. Previously, they had been in the front alcove, where they had not heard The Shadow's mockery. His arrival, to them, was a startling manifestation.

The two crooks did exactly what The Shadow expected. As Marion wrested from their grasps, they flung her roughly from their path. She was rolling to the wall, as they lunged forward, aiming as they came. They saw The Shadow dive toward them, making for the shelter of the stacked tires. Ugly in their glee, the mobsters expected to clear that barrier and get at The Shadow.

Instead, the barrier itself came at them. The Shadow had struck the first stack of tires with all his weight. Bounding, rolling, the tires were like things alive, meeting their human opponents in capricious, forceful fashion. The dodging thugs floundered; one, stumbling over a rolling tire, was encircled by another of the rubber assailants, that flopped over his head and shoulders. His pal, hooking a settling tire with his foot, grabbed foolishly for a rolling one, that gave with his weight and smacked him to the floor.

Shoving another stack of bouncing missiles to halt the rising crooks, The Shadow grabbed Marion and hurried her out through the front alcove. There, he reversed the course, toward the garage door that led to the rear street. Though she scarcely saw her rescuer in all the confusion, Marion blindly let him guide her.

Men were pounding at the garage's big front door. They finally discovered that the little door was unlocked and shoved it open, just as the two thugs came into sight looking for Marion and The Shadow. The men from the front street were police; instantly, the garage roared with gunfire, as the uniformed invaders spotted the armed thugs.

It went badly with Goofer's last two followers. They were foolish enough to return the fire. Hopelessly outnumbered, they were riddled with bullets.

The Shadow and Marion were gone. Officers, bending over the dead mobbies, failed to notice the half-groggy man who came from another door, and did a sneak from car to car, to reach the rear exit of the garage. Goofer Shayne, his whole crew banished to oblivion, alone was making a departure.

HURRIED half a block through the darkness, Marion suddenly found herself urged into a limousine. As the car pulled away, a whisperer was questioning the girl regarding her part in the adventure. Marion gave all the details.

She told The Shadow that she worked for David Cadbury, whose office was part of his ground-floor apartment in a building that he owned; how she had gone to the garage to find Kremp, the chauffeur.

Marion had a one-room apartment of her own in the same building as Cadbury's. She thought that she ought to return there, and inform Mr. Cadbury of what had happened. For Marion had seen Kremp's body, dead upon the floor of the inner room.

The Shadow's voice, sibilant from the darkness beside her, settled Marion's quandary:

"Your testimony will be unnecessary," he told her. "Sometimes, witnesses accomplish less through speech, than by silence."

The Lone Tiger

Those words struck home. Marion realized that her own part had been slight; her knowledge of the case imperfect. She recognized that her mysterious rescuer intended to keep facts to himself, and was suggesting that she do likewise. Marion's nod was visible against the slight light from the window.

The limousine had been wheeling through Central Park; it was swinging in toward Fifth Avenue when Marion again heard the quiet voice, giving the chauffeur a destination: "Times Square."

Apparently The Shadow expected Marion to proceed with her plans for an evening off, exactly as if nothing had occurred. She began to smooth her ruffled dress, finding, by the passing lights of the avenue, that her attire, though slightly torn, could be easily made presentable.

Occupied with that task, Marion missed her opportunity to glance toward The Shadow and get a better view of the rescuer that she remembered only as a figure in a black cloak, with strange eyes that burned from beneath a hat brim—and a voice.

A hand gripped her arm; she felt the hand raise, and saw a curious ring that attracted her whole attention.

From the ring glowed a gem that shone like flame, changing its deep sparkle from ruddy purple to scintillating blue, then to a deep green. It was a girasol, a rare fire opal, of matchless splendor. Marion heard The Shadow's tone:

"You will know this token! Like my voice, you will remember it! You will either hear from me, or we shall have another meeting."

The girasol's fire faded as the car swung into a darkened stretch along a side street leading into the Times Square area. The limousine slackened speed, then pulled close to the curb into the blaze of neon signs. Marion hadn't heard the door latch click. She was amazed to find the seat beside her empty.

She saw that the door had swung wide. Stepping quickly from the car, Marion expected to see The Shadow on the sidewalk. She saw no one, except an obliging taxi driver, who closed the limousine door for her and strolled back to his parked cab.

Her bewilderment must have lasted for a dozen seconds; for when she turned; the limousine had pulled away. Marion couldn't even guess the license number of the car that had brought her here. The big machine had vanished into traffic.

From somewhere—perhaps from the depths of her own imagination—Marion sensed a whispery laugh, like an echo of The Shadow's sibilant tone. Whether actual or unreal, that echo gave her renewed confidence.

Marion Delmar knew The Shadow to be more than a chance rescuer. He was a friend, a protector upon whom she could depend, should new ill come her way.

CHAPTER VI. LINKED TRAILS

AT six o'clock the next afternoon, Lamont Cranston was again at the Cobalt Club, in the grillroom, with his friend Ralph Weston, New York's police commissioner. They were neither chatting, nor having dinner together, for Weston was doing all the talking and all the eating.

"You've read the newspapers, Cranston"—the commissioner paused to gulp another mouthful—"so you know about this man Kremp. A very important link, Kremp. He belonged to the Tiger Mob.

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"We've learned that much from convicted members of the mob," said Weston. "They admit that Kremp was once active in the group. But he wasn't with them when they raided Mileson's; hadn't been for months. So they never mentioned him in their confessions.

"We know who murdered Kremp. The killer was a mob leader called Goofer Shayne. The bullet in Kremp's heart didn't come from any of the guns of the thugs who were found dead on the scene. Since they all worked for Goofer and no one else, it is quite obvious that he was the murderer."

Weston now shoved some report sheets at Cranston.

Cranston glanced languidly at the typewritten papers. Actually, they were exactly what he had come here to see; but he did not betray his interest. The Shadow wanted to learn if the police had uncovered any facts not known to himself. They hadn't.

Kremp, it seemed, had gone from one job to another, after severing active relations with the Tiger Mob, finally easing himself into a soft and well-paying situation with David Cadbury.

Needing a chauffeur to drive him on inspection tours of real estate properties, Cadbury had hired Kremp for that service. It had suited Kremp, because it offered many hours—sometimes days—when Cadbury did not need him.

That fact was mentioned in the final paragraph of the report. Weston saw Cranston reading it, and remarked:

"Inspector Cardona is checking on Kremp's activities during off hours. So far, he has found nothing to indicate that the fellow was still engaged in crime. And that"—Weston was almost contemptuous in the emphasis he used—"should do much to end this foolish myth regarding a criminal known as the Lone Tiger!"

As for Weston's idea that a blank report regarding Kremp would explode all talk of the Tiger, The Shadow did not agree. Any inactivity on Kremp's part could be due to the very reason that the murdered man had stated to Goofer Shayne: namely, that the Tiger had been lying low while Mileson rounded up the mob.

The Shadow's own conclusions were much sounder, and stronger.

The Lone Tiger feared nothing from any of the men who had been jailed. They wouldn't be able to use a hundred thousand dollars for the next twenty years, even if Mileson were permitted to pay it to any of them, which was doubtful.

Kremp, however, was a different proposition; as were the two men that the chauffeur had mentioned. Fearing that Kremp would be the first to blab, the big-shot had kept tally on him. Entering the garage last night, the Lone Tiger had caught Kremp in the act of a betrayal to save his own hide, and had therefore finished him.

Ever since then, The Shadow had been checking over his own files, in an effort to identify the master murderer. He was glad that the police had laid the crime on Goofer Shayne. That gave The Shadow opportunity to seek the Tiger on his own.

Bidding Weston good evening, The Shadow strolled from the grillroom. The commissioner didn't consider the departure impolite, because he knew that Cranston had a dinner engagement elsewhere.

Which was true. What Weston didn't know was the fact that Cranston's engagement concerned the matter of the Lone Tiger.

The Lone Tiger

ENTERING his limousine, The Shadow ordered Stanley to drive to the Club Carioca, a glittering night club not far from Times Square. Riding there, The Shadow pictured the place and the man who ran it.

The Club Carioca belonged to a very shady gentleman known as Beak Barlett.

There wasn't a big-money racket in which Beak had failed to profit, one way or another, but always with a subtle skill that had kept him beyond the law. Beak had controlled various strings of crooked games, that could be cut so neatly, when required, that the authorities never had a chance to trap him.

As for The Shadow, he had ignored Beak for a very definite reason. The Shadow's record showed no case wherein Beak had ever instigated crime. Always, Beak had been first a spectator then a participant.

In a sense, Beak Barlett had proven valuable to The Shadow. By checking on persons who visited Beak, The Shadow had frequently linked criminals who were using Beak as a go-between. Therefore, The Shadow had chosen to let Beak survive, until such time as the cagey racketeer might try to create crimes of his own.

For two years, Beak had been idle, so far as crooked work was concerned, unless trimming customers at the Club Carioca could be termed a crime. Beak's present course was one that The Shadow had attributed to the lack of profitable rackets in Manhattan; but there was a chance that the situation might be a mere coincidence.

Those same two years marked the period during which the Tiger Mob had been on the run, thanks to the campaign backed by Joseph Mileson.

There was another coincidence that interested The Shadow: Beak Barlett bore an appropriate nickname.

The racketeer was famous for his hook-shaped nose. It was one nose, definitely, that could have cast a silhouette much like the one that The Shadow had seen on the garage wall last night.

Therefore, Beak Barlett might actually be the Lone Tiger.

As a racketeer, Beak probably dealt with persons known to Goofer Shayne. Through some leak along the line Goofer could have discovered that Kremp had served with the Tiger Mob. If such a clue led back to Beak Barlett, it was probably a remote one; otherwise, Goofer would not have had to talk with Kremp.

But it might be that The Shadow was many jumps beyond Goofer, in ferreting out the Lone Tiger.

The car had reached the Club Carioca. A young man was awaiting Lamont Cranston. He was Harry Vincent, one of The Shadow's agents. Shaking hands with him, The Shadow motioned to the doorway. They entered the club, where a bowing attendant smiled at sight of Cranston. Soon, the two were dining at a choice table close to the dance floor.

Tonight, The Shadow was building for the future. His lips scarcely moved, as he undertoned to Harry:

"Beak Barlett."

Turning slightly in his chair, Harry saw a tall man in evening clothes, who was shaking hands with guests. Spying Cranston, Beak approached. Introduced to Harry, the tall man shook hands, but even his grip seemed oily and insincere.

Beak's voice was smooth, almost a purr. His smile looked as though it had been painted on his face. As he bowed and walked away, Harry saw his profile; noted the sharp hook of the man's nose. It was the sort that

The Lone Tiger

could be easily remembered; and with it, Harry observed that Beak's lips were thick, a feature not ordinarily noticed, for the man's smile compressed those lips.

FOR nearly an hour, Beak continued his parade; during that time, Cranston and Harry had finished dinner. A floor show started; ignoring it, Beak went into a little room marked "Office" and closed the door behind him. Though obscure, that door was plainly visible from where Harry sat.

With a nod, The Shadow left Harry at the table. From then on, the watch would be the agent's, for The Shadow had an appointment elsewhere. Soon after Cranston's departure, Harry noted that waiters began to pay individual visits to Beak's office. The reason soon became apparent.

It was pay night; the waiters were opening small envelopes that contained money. When the eighth waiter, a baldish, rat-faced fellow, entered the office, Harry decided that he could mark off employees as unimportant visitors.

Perhaps The Shadow would not have made that unfortunate mistake.

Inside the office, the baldish waiter was standing in front of Beak's big mahogany desk, waiting for his pay envelope. Beak, his false smile gone, was studying the fellow in a fashion that made the waiter nervous. Then, tapping a newspaper with the pay envelope, Beak asked:

"You know this bozo, don't you, Korza?"

The waiter winced. The "bozo" referred to by Beak was Goofer Shayne, whose photograph occupied a space two columns wide.

"You heard me, Korza. Answer up!"

Prompted by Beak, the waiter gave a nod. In whiny tone, he made a plea:

"I cut loose from Goofer. Honest, Mr. Barlett! I ain't no mobby—"

"Any longer," interposed Beak, with his oily purr. "But you used to be."

Korza gulped. But his face showed a furtive, ratlike expression that marked him. He was a small-fry hoodlum, precisely as Beak hinted. He wanted to keep this job, because crime was his only other vocation and the law had too much evidence that would finish Korza, if he mixed in anything more.

Beak's smile returned. He dropped the envelope in a desk drawer, brought out another, fatter, one and passed it to the shaky waiter.

"Take a vacation, Korza," suggested Beak. "But make it a short one."

"You mean you aren't firing me?"

"Of course not! Your vacation will be on pay. Double pay, the same as you'll find in that envelope."

Korza's mouth took on an expression that resembled a brook trout which he had just served to one of the club's patrons. When his jaw clicked shut, a moment later, his eyes acquired a sudden squint. Korza decided there was a catch to Beak's proposition. There was.

The Lone Tiger

"There's a favor you can do me, Korza," purred the big-nosed man. "While you're away, look up Goofer for me. Tell him I want to see him."

"But if I can't find him?"

"You'd better find him!" Beak's tone hardened. "You know the hide-outs, Korza. Check on them. Get hold of Goofer."

"But if he's leery—"

"He won't be. Not when he hears I want him. Goofer knows more about me than you do, Korza. He knows how to keep his trap shut, too. I hope you do, Korza."

The waiter, nodded that he did. Beak gestured toward the door. Korza went out, to make room for another waiter who was coming to receive an ordinary pay envelope.

Trails had linked—those of Goofer Shayne and Beak Barlett—a fact that would have interested The Shadow, in his search for the Lone Tiger. But that link, for the present, would remain ungained. Harry Vincent had decided the waiters to be unimportant.

CHAPTER VII. THE NEW INFORMANT

UPON leaving the Club Carioca, The Shadow had gone to call on Joseph Mileson.

The elderly philanthropist was highly pleased by the visit. Meeting Lamont Cranston in the spacious first-floor hallway, he conducted his friend up a grand staircase to a very large study on the second floor of the huge mansion.

The study had been turned into an office, with small desks for half a dozen clerks. The helpers had concluded their day's work without sorting all the mail that Mileson had received. Stacks of letters lay upon the desks, ready for classification in the morning. These from people after the Lone Tiger reward.

Near a corner, close to a row of filing cabinets, sat a rotund, baldish man who was checking over lists. He turned from his work at Mileson's call, displaying a serious heavy-jowled face, conspicuous because of its brushy mustache.

Like the man's thin hair, the mustache was grizzled; and The Shadow recognized the fellow before Mileson introduced him. The man who shook hands with Cranston was Fred Treefe, former head of a local detective agency.

Treefe had once found that business profitable, for he was hired by many society folk to be on hand at weddings and other affairs, where the presence of loose valuables attracted sneak thieves. He had shown some skill at tracking down lesser crooks, particularly those who had positions as servants in wealthy households.

Treefe had signed up with Mileson to aid in the campaign against the Tiger Mob, and he had done a creditable job. His card index system, containing the names and descriptions of thousands of domestic servants, had been thumbed through many times in checking on the scattered criminals.

Treefe was credited, in part, with having tracked down two of the Tiger Mob, who were working as cabana

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boys at a swanky resort near Miami. They were using names of servants who were employed elsewhere, according to Treefe's index system; and that discovery had led to their capture.

Milesen stepped over to Treefe's desk. "Look at these letters, Cranston," the elderly man suggested. "Treefe is picking out the ones that require first attention."

He passed a small bundle to The Shadow. The letters varied in content, but all referred, in some way or another, to the Lone Tiger. Most of the writers thought they knew who the wanted crook might be, or offered further information in return for a preliminary payment.

Some—a very few—were signed; but only two or three bore return addresses. None of them was specific in any details. Noting Cranston's unchanging expression, and deciding that the visitor was unimpressed, Treefe spoke up.

"I've picked these for a good reason," explained the private investigator, gruffly. "Everyone of them tallies, either with name or handwriting, with ones that are in my files."

"Treefe believes that we should investigate servants first," explained Milesen. "That work is his specialty."

Treefe came to his feet.

"It's not just that, Mr. Milesen," he argued, seriously. "Those two guys that were landed in Miami had been working as servants. What's more, this fellow Kremp that was knocked off last night, was a chauffeur."

Milesen said: "But Treefe, we are interested in obtaining voluntary information."

"We're after the Lone Tiger, aren't we? And Kremp could have told us who he was. The least we can do is dig into that Kremp business."

"I told you to do so, Treefe."

"That's what I did. I called up Kremp's boss this afternoon. Cadbury's his name, and he said that I could stop in tonight. Inspector Cardona will be there, he said. I know Joe Cardona, and it wouldn't hurt to talk with him."

MILESON agreed. Looking at his watch, Treefe found that it was half past eight; later than he thought. He mopped his forehead, stared at a batch of letters near the corner of the desk.

"Going through those gets you kind of woozy," said Treefe. "Maybe I ought to go over that bunch again, before we file them separate."

"Have they been listed?" asked Milesen.

"Yeah." Treefe picked up a typewritten list. "I'll take 'em with me, and check 'em while I'm riding in the subway."

"It would be better to leave them here," decided Milesen. "Besides, I prefer to have you ride by cab. You are an important cog in my organization, Treefe, and it is not wise for you to appear too publicly."

Treefe took the statement as a compliment. He put the discarded letters into a desk drawer; stuck a half a dozen cigars in his coat pocket, and picked his derby hat from the top of a statuette that had been moved back

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against the wall, to make room for the filing cabinets. Lighting a cigar, Treefe clamped the derby on his head, gruffed a good night and strode out.

Milesen sat down at the desk, smiled wearily at Cranston. He picked up some letters and began to separate them.

"I must read them all personally, I suppose," he said in a very tired voice. "Not only are they addressed to me, but I cannot depend entirely upon Treefe. He is a capable man, but he has his limitations.

"This letter, for instance, is the sort that Treefe would eliminate. Its writer states that he is an architect living on Long Island. He is suspicious of a neighbor, whose home is closed at frequent intervals and whose guests are an ill-assorted lot.

"It may mean nothing, but the letter is frank and intelligent. Yet Treefe would pass it by because the writer admits he is not a servant. If you have a short while, Cranston"—Milesen's voice was almost a plea—"you might go over some of these with me."

The invitation was accepted. It was surprising, to Milesen, how rapidly they went through the letters. Cranston's opinions were terse and pointed, resulting in quick eliminations. In deference to Treefe, the letters were replaced in their original stack, after all had been examined.

"I am almost sorry," observed Milesen, when they had finished, "that more letters have not been sorted. You have shown rare enthusiasm, Cranston, and remarkable analysis!"

"What about the letters in the drawer?" queried The Shadow, in his leisurely tone. "The ones that Treefe discarded, but thought he should check over."

"Of course! I had forgotten those letters. We must have a look at them."

They had just about finished the fresh task, when Milesen chuckled. He was reading the bottom letter of the batch.

"A curious letter, this one; but highly absurd. Read it, Cranston."

The Shadow took the letter. It was crudely printed, as if its sender feared that his writing might betray him. Its statements were brief, choppy:

I can tell you all about the man you call the Lone Tiger. I can prove that I know who he is. I have jewels that belong to you, Mr. Milesen. I can bring them when I come to see you.

Give the word. I will come. You must have the one hundred thousand dollars ready. To give the word, so I can see it, have your skywriter mark a dot after one hundred thousand dollars, some day soon. I will call you by telephone after eight o'clock that night.

The letter bore no signature. Milesen saw a lift of Cranston's eyebrows, but merely smiled.

"The letter is a hoax," declared Milesen. "Some of my jewels were stolen by the Tiger Mob, but all were recovered. Including the gems that belonged to Mrs. Milesen. They almost tore the rings from her fingers, when they thrust her into the wine cellar!"

Cranston's gaze was sympathetic. So was his tone, for he was broaching a most tender subject:

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"Your daughter's jewels?"

"She was wearing none," replied Miles on, sadly. "She was ill. Dorothy had a safe–deposit box of her own, where she kept her jewels, but they were very few."

"Do you have a list of them?"

MILESON nodded. He went to a large wall safe at the opposite end of the study, turned the combination. That safe contained Miles on's reward money, in cash, but it was formidable and had an intricate combination.

Returning with the list, Miles on placed it on the desk. His idea of a small amount of jewelry was rather large. The list included half a dozen finger rings, a variety of brooches and bracelets. At the bottom, it mentioned two necklaces—one of jade, another of pearls; three sets of earrings—jade, pearl, and topaz.

"Dorothy bought those topaz earrings the day she was taken ill," recalled Miles on. "I met her outside the jewelry store and took her to the bank in the car. She left the earrings in the safe–deposit vault."

"Were any packages delivered here," came Cranston's query, "during the time that she was ill? Packages addressed to your daughter?"

"A great many," replied Miles on. "She was well enough to open them, that afternoon before the robbery. Poor girl! She was really over that illness, Cranston, when tragedy stalked."

"Perhaps among those packages," persisted The Shadow, in his even tone, "there could have been a topaz necklace to match the earrings. The jade made a set; so did the pearls."

Miles on was riveted. He turned suddenly, hurried back to the safe. He dug deep into a box that he found there; came back, trembling with excitement, to place another paper in The Shadow's hands.

"The bill!" exclaimed Miles on. "Paid, and receipted by the jeweler! Dorothy's bills—I never thought to look them over. I told my secretary to pay them, that was all. There was a necklace, Cranston! It must have been taken by those fiends, when they found it in Dorothy's room"

The magnitude of Cranston's discovery left Miles on weak. The Shadow stepped over, clamped a steadying hand upon Miles on's shoulder. Strength seemed to flow from that touch.

Calming, Miles on gave a questioning gaze. His thoughts were answered before he could find words to express them.

"Tomorrow morning," said The Shadow, in Cranston's calm tone, "you must call the skywriter and give him the new instructions. Let this letter"—his free hand added it to the packet and placed all in the drawer—"remain where it is."

Miles on was nodding as they walked from the study. He was still nodding when he shook hands with Cranston in the lower hall. Then, his reverie ended, Joseph Miles on found himself standing at his own front door, repeating thanks that he had voiced before.

The Shadow, known to Miles on as Lamont Cranston, had made his departure into the night.

CHAPTER VIII. WORD TO THE SHADOW

IN contrast to The Shadow's swift way of finding facts, the law was gleaning information slowly, yet with passable results. The law, in this case, was represented by Inspector Joe Cardona, who was investigating the death of the Tiger Mob's forgotten member, Kremp.

Joe's purpose was to add more details to the reports that he had given Commissioner Weston. After a day of plodding effort, the ace inspector was checking his data with persons who were more than anxious to assist him: David Cadbury and Marion Delmar.

They were in Cadbury's office, which fitted the description that Marion had given The Shadow. The room was on the ground floor of a small, but fairly modern apartment house; it was reached by the first door on the right, when one came in the entry.

Simply furnished, the room had two desks: one for Cadbury, the other for his secretary. A single filing cabinet contained all the papers that went with Cadbury's real estate business; and the bottom drawer of that same cabinet served as a strong-box. Cadbury kept nothing of great value in his office, and the steel cabinet had drawers that locked.

An open door at the inner wall of the room showed a short passage, with rooms on either side. Those rooms were Cadbury's living quarters. The passage turned, opened into an outside hall, so that it wasn't necessary to go in and out through the office.

Until a few years ago, Cadbury had rented this apartment, office and all, to a physician; but the location—in a rather poor neighborhood—had not suited the former tenant. Rather than keep the apartment empty, or sacrifice it at too small a rental, Cadbury had moved into it himself.

Cadbury was a rather pitiable figure. He looked prematurely old, and bowed with cares. His face was droopy, with lips that sagged habitually at the corners. His forehead bore many wrinkles, partly hidden by his unkempt gray-streaked hair, which he frequently mussed with strokes of his long, lean fingers.

His eyes troubled him; for that reason, he wore large-lensed blue-tinted glasses, rimmed like a pair of goggles. At times, his eyes would blink, bringing a responsive twitch from his tired lips. Then Cadbury would wince, stare like a wide-eyed owl while he carefully adjusted the glasses, setting them exactly at right angles to his thin, straight nose.

Tonight, Cadbury had been mild-toned and helpful, as he read over papers that Cardona handed him. All pertained to Kremp. Some were bills that the chauffeur had run up at various garages. Others were personal items that had been found in Kremp's lodging, a few blocks from Cadbury's apartment.

Others were reports from persons who had known Kremp: garage attendants, drugstore clerks, fellow lodgers at the Juan's rooming house. Out of these, Cardona was hoping to find some track to questionable parties with whom Kremp had associated. But the task was so tedious and unproductive, that Cadbury began to show weariness.

"I am worn out, inspector." For the first time, Cadbury's tone was querulous, as he sank back in his chair and let his hands fidget on the arms. "My eyes are troubling me. Sometimes, I feel that I have no eyes"—his lips increased their saddened droop—"and then I depend entirely upon Miss Delmar. Can't you let her carry on from this point, while I listen?"

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Cardona looked at Marion, who nodded. She knew how nervous Cadbury could become through overstrain. From across the desk, Marion reached for the rest of the exhibits that Cardona held.

ANOTHER witness shifted his position, by stalking around to Marion's side of the desk. The spectator was Fred Treefe, who had been admitted to the conference.

"Kremp went to night clubs a lot," declared Cardona. "You'll find some guest cards in that batch, Miss Delmar. I wonder"—Joe was stroking his chin—"if that's where he met up with some of the mob."

"He couldn't have," interjected Treefe. "The Tiger Mob is all in jail."

"I don't mean the Tiger Mob," snapped Cardona. "I mean Goofer Shayne's outfit. It's plain that somebody in that crew knew Kremp, and found out he'd been one of the Tiger Mob.

"That's why they grabbed him in the garage and tried to make him talk. When he didn't, Goofer gave him the works. That started a fracas, natural enough, because Goofer's pals had wanted to hear Kremp talk. That's when Goofer went out and we came in."

By "we," Cardona referred to the police, even though he had not been with the raiding squad. The reference made Treefe grin. Gesturing with a half-smoked cigar, he asked:

"How d'you know Kremp didn't talk?"

Cardona's swarthy features stiffened. With arms folded, his stocky seated figure looked like a solidly fixed rock.

"Kremp couldn't have talked," growled Joe, "because this Lone Tiger stuff is the bunk! You ought to know that, Treefe."

"Mr. Mileson doesn't see it that way."

"So, of course, you wouldn't! Mileson's your meal ticket!"

Treefe let the jab pass. He had a good answer to deliver.

"Seems to me," he said, casually, "that you're siding with the police commissioner. Weston was the first guy to razz the Lone Tiger talk, because he didn't want his ritzy friends to get the jitters. If I'm taking Mileson's say—so, you're taking Weston's. So what?"

Cardona couldn't answer that one. Treefe had ribbed him where it hurts. He decided to ignore Treefe, and turned to Marion.

"What about those night clubs?" queried the law ace. "Did Kremp ever mention them to you? Did he ever ask you to go places with him?"

Marion shook her head emphatically. "He wouldn't have," she replied. "I knew what his wages were. He couldn't afford such luxuries as night clubs. I might have suspected that he had some shady source of income."

That logic brought a nod from Cardona.

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"There were many nights, though," resumed Marion, "when Kremp was late with the car, or in a hurry to take me to certain destinations. Those were probably evenings when he was 'going places,' as you term it, inspector."

Cadbury leaned his elbows on the desk. He looked at Marion, and his eyes, no longer blinky, showed a grieved gaze.

"You never reported Kremp," rebuked Cadbury. "That was negligence on your part, Marion."

"I had no evidence against him," explained the girl. "I usually supposed that he had been delayed in the garage. I thought that last night; that's why I went"—she caught herself, gave an apologetic smile—"well, I just went over to Times Square without him. After all, there were other ways to get there."

CADBURY took Marion's explanation as sufficient. He shrank back in his chair, to rest his eyes from the light. Treefe, little interested in that short discussion, turned to Cardona.

"What about the garage attendants?" asked the private dick. "Didn't they know what was going on when Goofer and his bunch were taking it out on Kremp?"

The question interested Marion; it was something that had puzzled her ever since last night. She showed tense eagerness as she waited for Cardona's answer.

"There were only two on duty," replied Joe. "One was called out on an emergency job, to fix a car that wouldn't start. The other got a call later, saying the first man needed him. When he got there, he found his pal in a jam. The car owner hadn't called up at all. Seeing a man working on his machine, he'd summoned a patrol car.

"Nobody knew anything about the phone calls. It took the garage men half an hour to prove that they were on the level."

Treefe showed briskness. He brought a pad and pencil from his pocket. He wanted the names and descriptions of the garage attendants, to check with his card index system. Cardona gave the details from a report sheet; then grinned.

"Flunkies don't get jobs working in garages," said Joe. "You won't find those two in your files. Those boys were all right. Our real bet"—he took the cards from Marion—"is this list of night clubs. The guy I'm after is Goofer Shayne, and one of these places may give me a lead to him."

Among the cards was one that bore the name of the Club Carioca. Cardona listed it with the rest. He shook hands with Marion and Cadbury, then nudged Treefe in the ribs.

"There's an idea for you," suggested Joe. "Tell Miles on you ought to make the rounds of the night spots, looking for dope on the Lone Tiger. That will give you a swell chance to pad your expense account!"

WHEN Cardona had gone, Treefe remained to look over statements that Marion had typed regarding Kremp. Most of that data had been condensed for Cardona's reports. Marion found an opportunity to leave; going up to her own apartment, she took pen and ink and wrote a brief account of all that had happened during the conference.

She was following instructions that a voice had given her across the telephone that afternoon—the voice of The Shadow. The ink that she was using had been delivered to her apartment a short while later. She noticed

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that a blot that fell upon the envelope disappeared when it dried.

By that time Marion had sealed the edges of the letter, by using gum that ran around the edges. She realized that her writing, at present preserved, would disappear rapidly if the letter should be opened by anyone other than The Shadow. So rapidly, that an unwary person would not have time to read it.

Going downstairs and out through a side door, Marion reached from the steps and laid the sealed envelope on a window ledge. She was sure that no one saw her, for the only thing in sight was a parked taxicab and its driver was in a lunchroom across the street. It happened, however, that Marion's action was seen by the right person.

As soon as the girl had gone inside, the taxi driver finished his coffee and came over to his cab. Placing a cigarette between his lips, he paused to strike a match against the shoulder-high window ledge. The match wouldn't light; as he threw it away, the cabby plucked the letter from the ledge.

He was tucking that letter in his pocket, when he stepped into his cab. There, he did light the cigarette, and the flame's glow showed a wise, sharp-pointed face. The cab driver was Moe Shrevnitz, speediest hackie in Manhattan. Like other specialists in individual lines, Moe was an agent of The Shadow.

Marion did not hear the cab drive away, for she was back in Cadbury's office. Treefe was still there, pacing the floor and puffing a fresh cigar. He was urging Cadbury to recall any other details concerning Kremp.

Wearily, Cadbury repeated that he had told Cardona all he knew; that he had never met any of Kremp's acquaintances. Cadbury looked very weary, for he usually retired early; so Marion intervened, suggesting that Treefe had interviewed him long enough.

She saw Treefe to the outer door, stating that she would notify him of any new facts concerning Kremp. As he left, Treefe remarked:

"Maybe I will hit the night spots. I'd like to look over some of the waiters. A lot of 'em are house servants that rich folks were glad to get rid of, and gave 'em references just on that account."

Instead of calling a cab, Treefe strolled for the subway, figuring that the difference between a nickel and eighty-five cents would be good profit from his expense account. He was still in sight, approaching a lighted corner, when Marion reached her own apartment and gazed from the window.

Mentally comparing Treefe and Cardona, Marion decided that neither would go far in the search for the Lone Tiger. Treefe, in her opinion, wasn't capable; and Cardona had unwisely closed his mind to facts. Only one investigator, in Marion's opinion, could ever hope to find the hidden master hand of crime.

That investigator was The Shadow!

CHAPTER IX. THE MAN WHO KNEW

WITHIN a half hour after his departure from Mileson's mansion, The Shadow had begun one of the swiftest, most efficient campaigns of his entire career; an organized action that was still more remarkable, because it was conducted without a single surface sign.

That campaign had to be completed within twenty-four hours, a time limit which The Shadow had himself supplied, despite the pressure and uncertainty that it would cause. For, through one uncertainty—his

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self-imposed difficulties—he was avoiding another; the possibility that the man who had written the unsigned letter would change his mind.

The Shadow was working on a double clue. He had coupled the fact of the topaz necklace with Kremp's statement that one man who knew the Lone Tiger was a fence, a person who disposed of stolen goods. There were specialists in that line, and it was obvious, since jewels were involved, that the new informant was a worker in that field.

Moreover, he must be a man no longer active. The tone of his letter, the fact that he happened to be alive, proved that he had chosen some place of residence where the Lone Tiger could not find him. It was up to The Shadow to find the man and the place, before the time limit ended.

Once the man left the security of his hide-out, he would be prey for the Lone Tiger. The closer he came to Mileson's house, the greater the danger. Yet there was no way possible to reach the man and suggest other plans. Therefore, The Shadow had chosen to let events take their natural course, but under his own observation.

From his sanctum, a hidden, black-walled room somewhere in Manhattan, The Shadow telephoned instructions to Burbank, and thereafter kept in frequent communication with his contact man. Through those orders, a smooth machine was put in action, its cogs the agents who served The Shadow.

Such men as Cliff Marsland, who knew many big-shots personally; Clyde Burke, the reporter who covered crime news for the Classic, began to make their rounds. Hawkeye, familiar with every dive in the badlands, was off on a scouring expedition. Jericho Druke, an affable African who served The Shadow often, was checking on matters up in Harlem, where he rated tops.

By midnight, two other agents were on the job. Moe Shrevnitz, having delivered Marion's letter, was burning the asphalt with his cab tires, checking on every address that came in from other agents. Harry Vincent, his duty at the Club Carioca ended for the night, was making the rounds of hotels, inquiring for certain guests whose names were relayed to him.

It was a hunt for a needle in a mammoth haystack; but there was a chance

that the needle was threaded. Once the proper clue could be found, the man would be traced.

The Shadow had supplied the original lead. From his files, he had checked the names of many fences, cutting the list to those whose whereabouts were at present unknown. Those were the men for whom the agents inquired, and there was nothing to arouse suspicion in the process. Men who peddled stolen wares were the sort who always kept up a presentable front; no crooks hesitated at steering friends to them.

By three in the morning, the list had tapered down remarkably well. At that hour, The Shadow ordered his agents off duty, with instructions to be on the job again by nine in the morning.

Probably The Shadow slept some that night. But by nine o'clock in the morning, The Shadow must have spent many hours on his task, for every agent who called Burbank received fresh instructions.

ALL day, the list was weeded and narrowed, until, late in the afternoon, it was cut to a single name. The man in question was Simon Erwig, and he fitted the situation to perfection. Erwig had been a jeweler with a small but respectable business, until five years ago.

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Then he had warily handled stolen gems, so neatly that big-shots who considered themselves the upper crust of the underworld had wondered why Erwig hadn't stepped out in a big way. Their only explanation was that Erwig had cold feet, for he had suddenly quit the racket, two years ago.

Later, he had closed his jewelry shop, claiming ill health. After that, he had taken a trip abroad. Since then, Erwig hadn't been heard from. He might be anywhere, except in New York.

That had been the stumbling block. The Shadow knew that Erwig must be in New York, though no one else believed it. With his agents' aid, he had winnowed away, until, from a mass of chaff, he had found the kernel that he needed. Simon Erwig had been seen in New York only a few weeks ago, by a man who once had known him.

The fellow who had seen Erwig was a pickpocket who had been located by Hawkeye.

It was Moe, following Hawkeye's lead, who finally spotted the man that The Shadow knew must be Erwig. Moe, his cab parked on the stated street, had seen a withery old man who wore a green eye shade looking from the steps of a little bookstore, watching a skywriter mark "\$100,000." in the blue above Manhattan. The old man had waited until the period was added to the figures; then he had ducked back into his store.

Dusk, therefore, found The Shadow riding in Moe's cab to that very bookshop. The skywriter had ended his day's work, but it didn't matter. His purpose had been served. He had not only told Erwig what the ex-jeweler wanted to know; he had proved The Shadow's point.

The letter to Mileson, asking that a skywriter be used to show that the reward was open, had, in itself, been positive assurance that Simon Erwig had returned to New York.

It was half past seven when The Shadow reached the bookshop. The place was lighted, but the blinds were drawn. In the gathering dark, The Shadow moved through a rear passage, where Hawkeye was on watch. Like all the other agents, except Moe, whose cab might be needed, Hawkeye promptly left the neighborhood.

The Shadow's plan was to convoy Erwig to Mileson's home, conveying him in Moe's cab, if possible. All along the way, other agents would move into the picture, to form a protective cordon against the Lone Tiger, should that hook-nosed murderer appear.

A bolted door proved easy. Once past it, The Shadow strengthened the bolt, to make the door difficult for any other entrant. Probing a pitch-black hall with his tiny flashlight, The Shadow came to another door, where a thin streak of light showed beneath. He listened there, heard occasional sounds that caused him to postpone work on the lock.

A grating noise came from the keyhole, just as The Shadow was inserting a tiny pick-like instrument. The door opened in his direction; he went back with it, into a corner where he had to stretch to find space. A shaggy head came into sight; The Shadow recognized a wizened face that tallied with an old photograph of Simon Erwig.

THE hall showed dim by the light from the bookshop. Erwig peered cautiously; even glanced at the space behind the door, but he was looking through a three-inch width and did not notice The Shadow. He swung the door shut, poked a hand into the space as the hall went dark.

This time, a betraying creak from Erwig's single footstep caused The Shadow to slide downward. Erwig's hand went above The Shadow's head.

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Moving along the hall, Erwig lighted a match. He came to a solidly bolted door that The Shadow had noticed at the side of the passage. Drawing the bolt, Erwig opened the door and looked into a hall that was the counterpart of this one, except that it had a dim light.

The door was a connection to the other half of a double house. The hall that Erwig entered had a shop in front of it, a Chinese laundry that The Shadow had seen from the front street.

Cautiously trying the door to the laundry, Erwig found it locked and gave a withery smile. Turning to his right, he entered an old telephone booth that stood against the wall.

From the connecting door, The Shadow was noticing that this rear hallway, like Erwig's, had a bolted door at the back. Like its hinges, the door's bolt was old and rusted. Evidently that rear door was never used; so Erwig considered it safe to come here and use the telephone.

He was dialing Mileson's number, although eight o'clock had not arrived. Knowing that number, The Shadow could detect it from the return clicks of the dial. Then Erwig's voice:

"Hello. Hello. Mr. Mileson, please... He expects this call—"

The door of the booth rattled shut under a sudden shove from Erwig's hand. He was having trouble hearing, and while the closing of the door helped him somewhat, it hindered The Shadow. The next snatches of the conversation were lost, until The Shadow was almost at the booth, when he caught a muffled repetition of the original words:

"Hello. Hello—"

The booth door opened. The Shadow wheeled back to the other hallway. He heard Erwig returning, muttering to himself. Perhaps the old man had gotten the wrong number, or had his call cut off. The Shadow was interested in finding out why Erwig hadn't called again.

A partial explanation came very soon. Erwig closed the connecting door and bolted it, but he left the rear door of his bookshop open. Peering through, The Shadow saw the old man go behind a large bookshelf, into a space that he used as a bedroom, for there was a blanket-covered cot in the corner.

Erwig glanced at a thick gold watch, muttered as he shook his head. He had called too early. Seated on the cot, he thumbed his chin and waited, referring again and again to the watch. At moments, The Shadow felt an urge to step into view and accost the old jeweler; but he restrained himself.

It was preferable that Erwig talk to Mileson. He would do so more willingly, less fearfully.

Again, Erwig looked at his watch. A quarter hour had passed; it was after eight. Yet Erwig did not stir. Instead, he tilted his head and listened. The Shadow drew back, sensing that the old man, despite his poor hearing, might have caught some sound. From deeper darkness, he saw Erwig rise.

Pulling up the end of the mattress, Erwig ripped it open. Drawing out a chamois bag, he poured its contents into one fist. The Shadow saw the amber hue of gems, every one a topaz. They were of the varying shapes that showed they had once made a necklace.

RECOLLECTIONS of his former profession caused Erwig to admire the stones, as he poured them from hand to hand. Then, impatiently, he let them drop into the bag. Clutching the chamois container with one clawlike fist, he came toward The Shadow's door with quick steps.

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He was going back to the telephone. Gliding deep into the hallway, The Shadow let the old man pass. He gave Erwig time to reach the telephone in the adjoining hall and dial his call; for it would be easier, then, to make an approach. Half a minute was the interval that The Shadow allowed.

When he came through the darkness, The Shadow saw that the telephone booth was closed. Skirting toward the other wall, he had a glimpse of Erwig's face through the glass of the door. The booth was old-fashioned, large in size; chances were that Erwig would lean forward, out of sight, as soon as he began to talk.

The Shadow took three silent paces forward; halted as the booth door gave a slight creak on its hinges. With his stop, The Shadow became as rigid as a statue. The hall was dim enough, he hoped, to render his shape obscure against the wall. It was better, at that moment, to attempt to remain unseen, than to resort to a quick shift that would surely reveal him as his figure passed the light.

So suddenly that only his quick sight had detected it, The Shadow was confronted by an unexpected menace that threatened to spell finish to himself, as well as his plans. It was doubly startling, that menace, coming from so seemingly helpless a person as Simon Erwig.

A glittering object had thrust from the partly opened booth, and its sparkle was not that of the gems that Erwig carried. The Shadow was covered by the muzzle of a revolver, aimed straight for his heart!

CHAPTER X. DEATH FROM THE BOOTH

THE next few seconds called for more than quick thought from The Shadow. Quick thought, alone, was a force that spurred to action; whereas, in this emergency, The Shadow's complete lack of motion seemed to be the one factor that was postponing a fatal gunshot.

But if he waited here, that gun might talk, to probe the dimness with death-giving bullets.

A move was needed; a move rapid enough to trick a dangerous marksman. Erwig, his nerves taut, could prove deadly. It seemed that a finger was toying with the trigger on the gun that confronted The Shadow. In fact, the gun itself made a slight nudge, as The Shadow watched it.

The motion had just the slightest waver toward The Shadow's right. That fact was important.

To the right lay safety, against the outer wall of the phone booth. The wary marksman expected a shift in that direction. He wasn't sure, perhaps, that he had seen The Shadow; but he was convinced of the route that The Shadow, if actually here, would take.

Muscles tightening, The Shadow prepared for a spring. He didn't reach for his own gun; the slightest flutter of his cloak could have betrayed him. Instead, he sped his arms ahead of him as he launched suddenly toward the wall on the right. With the same motion, he whipped himself about, took a long dive to the left, toward the floor outside the door of the booth.

Roaring, the gun ripped a blast while The Shadow was in motion. It shifted as it fired, throating its message a split second after The Shadow's dart had begun. The ruse, plus the mere instant of delay, served The Shadow in the pinch. He had actually flung himself from the path of fire, leaving a void through which the belated bullet whined, to plunk the darkened wall.

The Shadow's dive was a long one, carrying him almost to the door that led frontward into the Chinese laundry. Since the crack of the booth door opened toward the rear of the hall, there was no way for the man in

The Lone Tiger

the booth to twist his gun to the front without yanking the booth door wide.

That door was clattering open as The Shadow came to hands and knees. He was pulling a gun as he came about; the weight of the automatic, slung forward by his sweeping arm, seemed to haul him upward.

But it wasn't a matter of driving back an alarmed enemy into the confines of the booth.

Erwig came to meet The Shadow. He lurched outward with a headlong force that The Shadow had not expected. Ramming his black-clad assailant, Erwig's frail form supplied a weight as surprising as his speed. The twist that The Shadow made threw him off balance. He struck the floor, with Erwig pounding hard upon him.

The Shadow, rolling away, flung one arm backward with a flaying stroke that rolled the man from him. Diving forward toward the door into the laundry, The Shadow struck it shoulder first, coming about to fire.

At that instant, a revolver shot roared from a spot beyond the phone booth. It wasn't Erwig who fired; it was another marksman, who had come—amazingly, it seemed—into the very center of the scene. His shot, directed for The Shadow, was a trifle high. It splintered a panel of the flimsy door against which The Shadow had struck.

HALF to his feet, The Shadow threw his whole weight backward, as he stabbed a shot for a face that was blotchy white in the dimness of the hall. As he tugged the trigger, the door behind him gave. The Shadow's hand went high; so did the bullet that his gun dispatched.

That very misadventure favored The Shadow a half second later, when the blotch-faced foeman fired a return shot. Though his aim was well planned, the marksman missed, for The Shadow was no longer in the doorway.

He had gone through, in a backward plunge that carried him down two short steps, like those into the rear of Erwig's bookshop. Below the sill, he was safe from his foeman's fire.

The Shadow came up to the top edge of the steps, like a sniper peering over a trench top. He heard the swift rush of footsteps, that made momentary pause. Forgetting Erwig, The Shadow stared along the rear hall. His enemy was out of sight, past the edge of the phone booth, but the ceiling light threw his grotesque silhouette against the deeper wall.

There, enlarged to a horrendous magnitude, was the same vulturous profile that The Shadow had seen once before: the silhouette of a face with bulging forehead; below, a sharp-chiseled notch that marked the top of an ugly beak-shaped nose. Below that hooked beak the puffy, wide-open lips, with the sharp chin beneath.

Suddenly, the silhouette vanished. Again, the Lone Tiger had stalked, and was gone. Casting off his urge to lunge for further battle, he was starting through the door that led to Erwig's rear hall.

The Shadow began an upward spring, the first move toward new pursuit. His left knee gave; it had taken a severe jolt from his sprawl. Staggering sideward, The Shadow grabbed for the back of a small counter, and saved himself from tripping over the stunned form of a slugged Chinese laundryman who lay there.

It was by this route that the Lone Tiger had entered. He had unlocked the door from the laundry, after knocking out the Chinaman. He hadn't relocked the door, for he had foreseen its value as a possible exit. The door, its latch weak, had sprung wide when The Shadow struck it.

The Lone Tiger

Another fact was plain. The Lone Tiger had hidden himself in the phone booth prior to Erwig's arrival. It wasn't Erwig who had covered The Shadow with a gun. The marksman had been the master crook. Erwig's body, face upward on the floor, told its own story.

Projecting from the jeweler's breast was the handle of a knife. A portion of the blade was in sight; it was thin, rounded like an ice pick, and from its slight taper, evidently long.

Erwig, hurrying into the darkened booth, had met that point the instant he entered. Guided by a skilled hand, the knife had penetrated his heart, bringing instant, silent death.

Hurled outward by the Lone Tiger, Erwig's body had seemed a living thing, lunging for The Shadow. The dead weight of his lifeless form accounted for the heaviness with which he struck. All that flashed to The Shadow as he reeled back to the doorway and steadied there, while he grasped his crippled knee.

Like Kremp, Erwig was dead. His lips, though open, like the scrawny hand upon the floor, could not speak. His story would be learned in part, from the scattered beads of topaz that strewed the floor beside him. But those baubles that Erwig had dropped in death could give no clue to the identity of the Lone Tiger.

ABOVE the wail of a distant siren, The Shadow heard the sharp rattle of a bolt. The sound echoed through from the adjoining hall and it gave The Shadow new urge. The Lone Tiger, too, had met an obstacle: the rear door that The Shadow had purposely strengthened. There might still be time to overtake him, by a shorter route.

With hobbling stride that favored his injured knee, The Shadow headed through the Chinaman's rear hall. He reached the door with the rusted bolt, wasted no time in getting past it. Pressing the muzzle of his gun against the door, The Shadow blasted the bolt to atoms with a single shot.

The Lone Tiger had heard the shot. He glimpsed The Shadow wheeling out from the doorway and fired a hasty reply from a house corner forty feet away. The Shadow answered with a gun blast far more accurate than the Tiger's hurried effort.

That bullet would have clipped the lurking crook, except for an intervening ash can that was hidden in the darkness. The clang of metal told The Shadow that he had missed. So did the ensuing clatter of footsteps dashing off through a passage beyond the house.

Swiftly, The Shadow kept up the chase. His limp delayed him little, for previous injuries, frequent in his campaigns against crime, had trained him to a hobbling gait.

Reaching the front sidewalk, The Shadow looked across the street. Vague light showed the back-turned figure of his fleeing prey scrambling for an alleyway in frantic haste. In his mad haste, the Lone Tiger wasn't daring to look back.

Coolly, The Shadow aimed at his moving target. His thoughts entirely upon that one important shot, he let his weight shift—naturally enough, but to the wrong knee.

An eye-witness would have thought that The Shadow was dropping himself with his own shot. He crumpled sideward as the gun roared. The answering crash of a house window near the alley told that he had missed his mark by yards. Writhing from momentary agony, The Shadow saw the Lone Tiger disappear into the alley's mouth. Further chase was useless.

The Lone Tiger

In fact, The Shadow was in a dilemma of his own; for sirens told police cars were on the way. The shooting in the passage behind the laundry had been heard and reported.

Fortunately, the first automobile that swung the corner wasn't a patrol car. It was Moe Shrevnitz's cab, and the taxi driver, spying The Shadow at the curb, hopped out to help his chief into the rear seat. The cab was a block away by the time police arrived.

Moe, as he drove along, had a rueful report to make. He had seen a man enter the laundry, but had not glimpsed his face. Moe had overlooked a possible connection between the laundry and Erwig's bookshop—until the shooting began.

A low laugh came from the rear of the cab. A tone that showed no tremor from the pain that still racked The Shadow's knee. To Moe, that sibilant whisper meant that his earlier lapse would be forgotten, as reward for his quick-witted action later.

The mirth signified more. It told that The Shadow, despite Erwig's death, had learned new facts. Certain circumstances demanded explanation, and The Shadow saw a possible answer.

Though the Lone Tiger had vanished, his identity still undisclosed, another day might bring The Shadow closer along the murderer's trail.

The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER XI. EXIT THE SHADOW

LATE the next afternoon, Joseph Mileson had visitors. One was his friend Lamont Cranston, who sported a walking stick. His jaunty handling of the cane completely covered the fact that he occasionally used it to prevent a chance sag of his left knee.

The other visitors were Commissioner Ralph Weston and Inspector Joe Cardona.

Mileson, it seemed, had aged overnight. The kindly-faced millionaire had nurtured a secret exuberance, in expectancy of Erwig's visit. It had been a great shock to him, late the night before, to learn that an obscure, forgotten jeweler had been murdered in the back hall of a Chinese laundry.

The fact that the separate stones of a topaz necklace were found beside the body was sufficient to link him with the letter that Mileson had received. Until then, the name of Simon Erwig had meant little; but the gems told his real importance.

All day, Mileson had been awaiting new reports, in hope that they would produce some clue to the identity of Erwig's murderer; for that man, so Mileson claimed, must be the Lone Tiger.

Fred Treefe, aided by a corps of newly hired private detectives, had tried to trace the dead jeweler's recent past, to reach some of his friends; but the result was blank. The private dicks did not go after information with the efficiency used by The Shadow's agents.

At least, Treefe had been able to buoy Mileson's fading spirits to some slight degree. The police, Treefe declared, would have to accept the fact that a criminal called the Lone Tiger actually existed. Otherwise, Treefe argued, Mileson would not be receiving a visit from the police commissioner.

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Seated in a deep chair, Miles on awaited the commissioner's views. Treefe stood by, with bundles of letters handy on his desk, in case Weston cared to see them. But the commissioner asked for one letter only—the missive that had come from Erwig.

Treefe produced the letter; Weston read it, handed it to The Shadow, with the question:

"Was this the letter that you saw here?"

The Shadow nodded; then, in Cranston's tone:

"It is the letter," he said. "The one that Mr. Miles on showed me from those that he brought out of the desk drawer. When he read it, he remembered that his daughter had owned a topaz necklace."

THE SHADOW was crediting Miles on with the entire discovery. His mind in a whirl, Miles on did not dispute the details. Instead, he nodded wearily, which made it appear that he agreed with Cranston's testimony.

"Did Erwig phone here?" Weston asked Miles on. "At some time after eight o'clock?"

There was a negative shake of Miles on's gray head.

"There was a call before eight," said Miles on, "but I don't believe that it came from Erwig."

"I think it did," objected Treefe. Then, apologetically, as he turned toward his employer: "You'll remember that I answered it, Mr. Miles on."

"I remember," nodded Miles on. "Go right ahead, Treefe."

"The fellow asked for Mr. Miles on," explained Treefe, to Weston. "I said that Mr. Miles on wasn't here—which he wasn't, because he was downstairs. I said I'd get him, so I told the fellow to hold the line.

"Instead, he muttered funnylike. All I could make out of it was something about calling up later. Either he hung up on me, or the connection went sour. Anyway, he didn't say where I could get hold of him.

"For the next ten minutes, I was trying to trace that call through the phone company, but I had no success. So I went downstairs and told Mr. Miles on that some guy had called him, and would call again."

Miles on nodded his recollection.

"It may have been Erwig," he admitted. "He could have become too eager to wait until eight o'clock, though I didn't think so at the time. My error"—he shook his head sadly—"was in not telling Treefe to be ready for an important call.

"I forgot, too, that the mantel clock in my smoking room is sometimes slow. I didn't realize that, until I said to Treefe: Why, it's only quarter past seven; then he looked at his watch and told me it was ten minutes of eight."

COMMISSIONER WESTON gestured to indicate that the discussion no longer interested him. He had wanted to learn if Erwig had actually completed a call at the time when he was murdered, since a listener, across the telephone, could be classed as a witness. There was something else that interested Weston: the matter of the topaz necklace.

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He had the gems with him, and spread them on the desk for Mileson's identification. The best that Mileson could do was offer the topaz earrings, to see if they matched, which they did. Earrings and necklace appeared to be parts of one set.

Cardona, meanwhile, was carrying on a side conversation with Treefe, which The Shadow overheard.

"They tell me you've been bossing a lot of agency boys," said Joe, in an affable tone. "Been chasing them around to see what they could pick up on Erwig?"

"Yeah," returned Treefe. "I've been chasing around myself, too."

"Get anything?"

"Nothing worth while. Nobody seemed to know the guy. Here. Take these along and look 'em over."

Treefe handed Cardona some duplicate copies of reports filed by private operatives. While Joe was glancing at them, Treefe began to hint at what he wanted in return for his generosity.

"I stopped in to see old Cadbury," remarked the private dick, "to find out if Kremp had ever mentioned Erwig. He's an old sourpuss, Cadbury is. He told me to talk to Miss Delmar, and she was out. All I got out of Cadbury was that he expected you later."

"I saw him," responded Cardona, catching Treefe's hint. "He said you'd been bothering him. He'd never heard of Erwig. He had a call yesterday, though, from Kremp's aunt, and sent the Delmar girl to see the old lady last night."

"Did she learn anything?"

"No. The aunt gave her some letters that Kremp had written. Cadbury turned them over to me today, but there's nothing in them. Crooks don't usually tell their aunts much."

The Shadow had already received copies of the letters that Cardona mentioned; for Marion had relayed them. She had called Burbank on her way back to Cadbury's, at nine o'clock last night. Cardona was giving Treefe straight facts; the letters mentioned nothing that pertained to crime.

Treefe took Cardona's word for it, and changed the subject.

"Been hitting the night spots?" queried the dick. "Like you said you were going to?"

"Yeah," returned Cardona. "My job is still what it was. I'm looking for Goofer Shayne. For all we know, he may be the guy that murdered Erwig, as well as Kremp."

"Which would make him the Lone Tiger."

"Suit yourself on that. I've got a line out on some bozos that used to work with Goofer, but weren't along that night he croaked Kremp. Looking those birds up is enough to keep me busy."

WHEN The Shadow left Mileson's with the police commissioner, he ordered Stanley to drive him to the Club Carioca.

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On the way, The Shadow reviewed a report that he had received from Harry Vincent, who had been covering the night club on the previous evening. Harry's report stated that he had seen Beak Barlett enter his office at seven thirty. Persons who had knocked at the office door during the next hour had received no response.

Evidently Beak had given orders that he did not want to be disturbed, for none of the visitors had persisted with their raps. It was nearly nine o'clock when Beak had finally reappeared, coming from the office.

That hour and a half was time enough for Beak to have made a quick round trip to Erwig's bookshop; and the fact raised a most important question. The Shadow, at present, was setting out to seek the answer: to learn whether or not Beak Barlett had a secret route to and from his office.

Strolling into the Club Carioca, The Shadow, by seemingly being hard to satisfy as to a table location, managed to wangle one close to Beak's office.

Noting that Cranston was carrying garments that appeared to be an opera cape and a crush hat, the head waiter offered to take them to the check room. He was met by Cranston's headshake.

"You shouldn't help the check room, Henri," reproved the guest. "Let the chaps who pay for the privilege worry about it. Run along and attend to the other customers. I want to relax a while, before the orchestra arrives and disturbs me."

Soon after Henri's departure, the door of Beak's office opened and the big-nosed racketeer came out, very much hurried. He had just received a telephone call from a parking lot, stating that someone had smashed a fender on Beak's new imported roadster. That was the sort of thing that called for the racketeer's personal attention.

While the door was disgorging Beak in the direction of the sidewalk, The Shadow drew the garments from the chair beside him. Half stooped behind his table, he blotted out the attire that he wore as Cranston and became The Shadow.

The supposed cape was his cloak; the flat headgear his slouch hat. Sidling along the dark-papered wall, The Shadow glided into Beak's office and closed the door behind him.

After a look about the place, which included an inspection of a shallow closet, The Shadow began a rapid tapping process along the paneled wall. At the rear of the room, he detected a hollow sound, but continued his expert probing until he had covered every inch of wainscoting.

Satisfied that one panel alone was specially made, The Shadow returned to it. Working coolly, he found a strip of molding that shifted to the left, then upward. The reward was a sharp click, which caused the panel to slide aside.

The space that opened showed a tiny elevator, with a light that came on automatically. Entering the car, The Shadow saw only a single button on its wall. His conclusion was that the elevator operated between this floor and another; hence the button would start it up or down, according to where the car happened to be.

Sliding the panel shut, The Shadow pressed the button. His interest, at that moment, was a very simple one. He was waiting to see in which direction the elevator went. Never had he less expected the thing that actually occurred.

The light blinked out instantly. A leftward jerk beneath The Shadow's feet threw him violently to the right. His fingers slipped from the smooth wall of the elevator, as his body dropped into a blackened space below.

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Twisting as he plunged, The Shadow made an amazing grab for the receding floor. His fingers nipped the edge, but it still slid to the left, drawn by a powerful mechanism. For instants, that seemed endless, The Shadow dangled, swinging like a pendulum because of the continued motion.

Then the floor edge slithered completely beneath the wall, into a crevice so narrow that even The Shadow's fingernails could not negotiate it. His last grip gone, The Shadow dangled no longer. He took the drop that he had so valiantly postponed, into a pitch-black cavity that gulped him.

Less than a second later, but too late for The Shadow to profit from it, the floor slashed back in place, sealing the route by which the black-clad victim had entered the trap.

Beak Barlett, crook de luxe, had planned that trap to dispose permanently of enemies. The snare had swallowed crime's archfoe, The Shadow!

CHAPTER XII. CROOKS MAKE TERMS

IT wasn't long before Beak Barlett returned to his office. He arrived in a fuming mood, because his trip to the parking lot had been unnecessary. It wasn't his car that had received the battered fender. He had seen the car in question, and it was an ancient wreck that someone had brought to the parking lot already battered.

Who the boob was that had mistaken that jalopy for Beak's elegant roadster, was an unsolved question. Nobody knew who had called the Club Carioca.

Beak would have been badly worried had he learned that one of The Shadow's agents had made the call. About the only thing that would have stifled such jitters would be the added information that The Shadow had dropped into the concrete pit beneath Beak's fake elevator.

Ignorant of both facts, Beak seated himself at the desk and began to go over a stack of unfinished correspondence. A rap at the office door disturbed him.

Beak ignored the knock. He was busy. But the raps came again, in persistent fashion. When the pest knocked a third time, louder than ever, Beak strode from the desk and yanked the door wide. The oaths that he started to deliver faded rapidly from his thickish lips.

The man outside was Korza, dressed in his waiter's uniform. The fact that the fellow was back on the job aroused Beak's instant interest. He admitted Korza, and closed the door.

"Goofer's outside," whispered Korza, hoarsely. "I found him at his hide-out, and talked to him."

"Well, what's the stall?" queried Beak, resuming his usual purr. "Why doesn't the guy come up here?"

"He's out by the service entrance."

"Good enough. Bring him through."

Korza shook his head.

"They're after Goofer," he reminded, "and he knows it. He wants to see you, and all that; but he's been asking if there ain't some special way of getting in here."

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Beak delivered a hopeless shrug. His lips tightened, as he pondered the problem. At last, he put the proposition plainly to Korza.

"I need a guy like Goofer," declared the racketeer. "Tell him that. What's more, let him know that it means big dough. But if Goofer's yellow, I don't want him. Tell him that, too."

Those instructions reached deaf ears. If other thoughts had not been occupying him, Beak would have realized that Korza was yellow, whether or not Goofer was dyed the same hue. As a go-between, Korza was too scared of both Beak and Goofer to deliver any uncomplimentary message to either.

His own jitters held Korza speechless. Beak, misunderstanding his silence, gave him credit for being determined.

"Forget it!" declared Beak. "Goofer's O.K., or he wouldn't have come as far as he did. We've got to slide him in here, so no body knows it. I tell you what"—Beak was eyeing Korza's attire:

"Give him a waiter's outfit and steer him up here."

THE suggestion was good enough to end Korza's qualms. The fellow went out, and Beak waited at the door, until he heard another knock. The man that he admitted was Goofer Shayne, who promptly divested himself of a false shirt front and waiter's apron, along with a fake bow tie.

Seated behind his desk, Beak eyed the visitor coolly. Goofer's flattish face, marked by a thrust of his underslung jaw, showed no signs of nervousness. Nevertheless, Goofer was not entirely undisturbed. He had reasons of his own for wanting Beak to do the talking first.

"So you croaked Kremp," spoke Beak, in his oily tone. "Pretty slick, that job! What about Erwig? Did you get him, too?"

Goofer didn't answer right away. He was studying Beak's face, but getting nowhere, for the racketeer had assumed his customary smile. Reaching to a desk drawer, Beak brought out a box of cigars and shoved them across the desk.

The chance turn of Beak's head gave Goofer a perfect view of the racketeer's profile. It brought recollections, uncertain at first, but those thoughts grew in Goofer's mind.

"I didn't rub out either of them," growled the mobleader, between the bites that he gave the end of a cigar. "It was the Lone Tiger that gave those boobs the works. He got Kremp, right enough, because I was there to see it. I can't say for certain about Erwig, because I wasn't around when he got his."

Beak's eyebrows lifted, as though the news intrigued him. His smile, as fixed as ever, gave no indication of his actual thoughts. Again, Goofer waited.

"I thought you'd staged the Kremp job," observed Beak, idly. "What you tell me, though, makes it all jake. I like a guy who hands the credit where it belongs. What I don't like"—his tone hardened—"is a squealer!"

Goofer puffed his cigar. He was doing some quick thinking. He had come here gripped with the growing suspicion that Beak Barlett was the Lone Tiger. That glimpse of Beak's profile had strengthened his belief. Beak's statements had removed the last bit of doubt from Goofer's mind.

The one bet was to spread his cards; and Goofer did it.

The Lone Tiger

"I'll tell you why I came here, Beak," he declared. "I was taking a long chance, and I knew it. But you wanted to see me, and if I didn't show up, I was afraid you'd work on Korza. If he blabbed where my hide-out was, I'd be sunk.

"I was out to put the heat on Krempe, that's all. If there'd been any squealing, he'd have done it. He told me there were other guys who knew the Tiger and that one of 'em was a fence. So he must've meant Erwig.

"But suppose Krempe had blabbed everything. Suppose I'd got to Erwig and made him talk. How would that make me a squealer? I never worked for the Lone Tiger. I wouldn't even have been double-crossing him, if I'd gone after that hundred grand that old Mileson is putting up. How can you double-cross a guy you don't even know?"

GOOFER sat back, satisfied that he had delivered a clever speech. He'd shown his hand, yet he had done it cunningly. He hadn't let out the thought in back of it—his sure-fire guess that Beak was the Lone Tiger.

The net result was exactly what Goofer hoped for. Beak seemed visibly impressed. His smile, for the first time, began to show signs of real relish. But Beak, when he spoke again, put his remarks in the same impersonal fashion as Goofer.

"Let's forget the Lone Tiger," suggested Beak, in a live-and-let-live style. "We don't have to bother with the guy, when there's an easier way to pick up that hundred grand."

Goofer's jaw receded, as he became suddenly intent. What Beak was driving at puzzled him; but it sounded real.

"Why sell out the guy?" Beak's tone was more indulgent than ever. "It only brings you trouble, that sort of stuff. I'll tell you how you can collect that dough, Goofer; but it's a fifty-fifty proposition. What's more, the Lone Tiger won't bother you when you swing it. How does that sound?"

"O.K. by me," assured Goofer. "What's the lay?"

"A perfect setup!" returned Beak. "There's old Mileson sitting with his dough, ready to pay off without asking questions. What does that mean to you?"

"A hundred grand—but try and get it!"

"You should say, 'Go and get it.' The Tiger Mob had a cinch, when they cracked Mileson's place two years ago. This is even easier. He's got the door wide open, hoping somebody will walk in and ask for it. All right, go ahead; but take a mob with you. You can put the heat on Mileson easier than you did on Krempe."

The idea fascinated Goofer. It was amazingly simple, yet absolutely sure. As Beak said, it would be something that the Lone Tiger would let pass, because he would welcome a smashing stroke against Mileson's campaign. With Beak Barlett none other than the Lone Tiger, the scheme would be perfection.

Goofer's wide lips spread in a big grin. "Pick up a few gorillas," ordered Beak, briefly. "Don't tell them what the job is, until you've pulled it. Then pay them off cheap. We'll split on that part of it."

Thinking of any available mobsters, Goofer began a slow nod. He'd have trouble getting the right ones in such a hurry but he could probably manage it. Thoughts of the police did not bother him; he was already wanted for murder. There was something, though, that did disturb him.

The Lone Tiger

"Miles on ruined the Tiger Mob," recalled Goofer. "If he goes after my outfit the same way—"

"He won't," inserted Beak, smoothly, "because you'll take my advice and lay off hurting anybody. Dough doesn't count with Miles on. He's lousy with it!"

THAT argument clinched matters with Goofer. He thrust his hand across the desk, to close the deal. During the handshake, Goofer began to talk about building his new mob.

"Call in Korza," he suggested. "He'll do, for one. He's worked for me and he's worked for you. So he's a good guy to use."

The idea appealed to Beak. He picked up his telephone and called the kitchen. As soon as Korza rapped, Beak admitted him and personally told the man that he was to rejoin Goofer's mob. The fellow's response was unexpected.

"Not a chance!" exclaimed Korza, looking from Beak to Goofer. "I ain't working with no mob! Even if I was, it wouldn't be Goofer's."

"Yellow, huh?" snarled Goofer. "Say, if you squeal—"

"I ain't squealing," put in Korza hastily. "But things ain't like they was. The bulls are after you, Goofer. You oughta be on the lam, instead of figuring on another job."

Appealingly, Korza looked toward Beak. The racketeer sat silent, thoughtful. Before he had weighed his opinions well enough to speak, the telephone bell began to ring. Beak answered the call:

"Hello... Yes, Henri... Who?...Hold him there! For a couple of minutes, anyway. Tell him I'll be right out to see him..."

Slamming the telephone on its cradle, Beak turned grimly to his companions. His smile was gone; his words, put steadily, seemed tuned to the muffled blare of music that burst suddenly from beyond the door, as the orchestra began its overture for the floor show.

"It's Joe Cardona," announced Beak. "He wants to talk to me. Henri's holding him, so I'm going out to see him. Stick here, both of you"—he looked from Goofer to Korza, noted that they were shaky—"and keep your shirts on!"

Goofer grabbed for the arms of a chair and sat down. He had reason to be jittery, for he thought that Cardona had come here after him. Korza didn't budge. His pasty face took on a wise look, that increased into a shrewd smile; while Beak, standing behind the desk, was opening a drawer and reaching among a stack of papers.

Then, with a bound, Korza reached the door. His hand on the knob, he swung about to utter hoarsely:

"You two stay here! I'm the guy that's going to talk to Joe Cardona!"

As Korza finished that cry, Goofer Shayne witnessed the event that supported his conviction that Beak Barlett was the Lone Tiger. The thing was proof conclusive.

Beak's hand was up from the desk drawer. His finger tugged the trigger of a gun that he had found there.

Korza sprawled in front of the unopened door, a bullet through his heart.

CHAPTER XIII. UNFINISHED DOOM

ECHOES of the gunshot died within the confines of the office. Outside, the music of the orchestra continued blatant. To Goofer, Beak's smile gave assurance that the sound of the weapon's report could not have been heard in the night club proper.

Turning about, Beak pressed a panel at the rear wall. The woodwork slid back, disclosing the fake elevator in which The Shadow had recently met with grief. Goofer saw Beak beckon, and started to raise Korza's body. The waiter was frail, but his dead weight taxed Goofer's efforts. Beak crossed the office and lent a hand.

While they were putting the body in the fake elevator, Goofer asked:

"Which way does this thing go—up or down?"

"Neither," returned Beak. "It's a phony. The only thing underneath it is a pit, walled up solid."

"What's the idea of fixing it to look like an elevator?"

Beak chuckled at Goofer's question.

"I've always had the hunch," he said, "that some guy might sneak into this thing on his own. Every couple of days, I take a look to see if anyone has. Watch."

Avoiding Korza's body on the elevator floor, Beak reached around and pressed the button. It stayed in the wall, under pressure. Coming back into the office, Beak started to close the panel.

"As soon as this is shut," he explained, "that button will pop out again. That's when the floor will slide"—Beak made a side sweep with his right hand—"sending Korza on his way."

The sweep of Beak's hand ended with a downturn of his thumb. As the panel closed, Goofer listened; he thought he heard a faint sliding noise that was repeated a few seconds later, when the floor came back in place.

"I get it," nodded Goofer. "If some sap got in that elevator, he'd try to start it himself. He'd close the panel, and the button wouldn't stick. The guy would go where Korza's gone."

Beak nodded.

"It's safe in there," he commented, "provided you don't push the button. It would be a good place for you to listen from, Goofer, when I bring Cardona into the office."

Suspicion flashed from Goofer. Maybe Beak was thinking, at this moment, that it would be sensible to get rid of anyone who had seen him kill Korza. Being the only witness to that murder, Goofer did not feel oversafe. Perhaps that elevator had another hidden gadget that would dump him down into the pit with Korza.

The flickers that Goofer registered gave away his thoughts. Beak, ever smiling, changed the proposal quite casually. Pointing to the shallow, doorless closet in another portion of the room, he told Goofer to go in there.

"Get as deep as you can," said Beak, "on the right side. I'll take a gander from the front of the room and see if you're hid all right"

The Lone Tiger

GOOFER managed to squeeze out of sight. Beak voiced approval; then, puffing his big cigar to overcome what gun smoke and smell that remained, he picked up the waiter's disguise that Goofer had worn and shoved the rolled garments into the large bottom drawer of his desk.

Next, he dumped extra cigar butts into a hollow ash stand. Satisfied that no trace of a visitor remained, he looked along the floor for any bloodstains. There was a blotch on the bare floor near the door. Drawing a handkerchief, Beak was about to blot those traces, when someone rapped at the door.

Coolly, Beak scooped a small scatter rug from a few feet away, laid it across the threshold. Cigar in mouth, he opened the door, to find Joe Cardona outside.

Beak's lips immediately formed an apologetic smile. Bowing, he invited the inspector to enter.

"Sorry, Joe," he said smoothly, as they sat at the big desk. "I was adding up some accounts, or I'd have come out sooner. Have a cigar."

Cardona's acceptance of the perfecto told Beak that the visit was a friendly one. Despite Goofer's alarm, Beak had half expected it to be something of the sort. Waiting blandly, he heard Cardona say:

"I'm looking for a fellow named Korza. Maybe you can help me find him. He works here."

"Korza?" The name seemed new to Beak. "I'll check on it, Joe."

Bringing a list of employees from a desk drawer, Beak ran through to K.

He started a nod; then shook his head.

"He used to work here," informed Beak, "but he quit, several days ago. He was a waiter and a pretty punk one, according to this record."

"That fellow Henri said he thought he saw Korza around here tonight."

Beak used the telephone to call the kitchen. Letting his lips straighten, he nodded.

"Korza was here, all right," he said, soberly. "He put on his waiter's uniform, claiming he thought he still had his job. They told him different, and he took the hint. Guys we fire don't get away with that stuff. We give them the bum's rush."

Cardona, usually poker-faced, forgot himself enough to show signs of glumness.

"If Korza shows up again," promised Beak, "I'll talk to him. What's more, I'll hold him here for you. Only"—the racketeer's tone became anxious—"I ought to know just how tough the guy is likely to get. What do you want him for, Joe?"

"To get a line on Goofer Shayne," returned Cardona, bluntly; "Korza used to be with Goofer's mob."

Beak gave a worried grunt.

"Don't worry," assured Joe. "Korza is yellow. No nerve, except when he's with a mob. You won't find him tough to handle, Beak."

The Lone Tiger

The racketeer's smile returned; but Cardona did not catch its meaning. Beak Barlett had already demonstrated that he could handle Korza.

THE chat soon finished, Cardona left. Goofer peered from the closet. He saw Beak's hook-nosed profile against the door and felt that he had enjoyed the rare privilege of seeing the Lone Tiger work under ideal conditions. The master crook had fled after he had murdered Kremp; and from all accounts, had done the same after settling Erwig.

But there had been utter coolness in Beak's murder of Korza, and the way he had disposed of the body Goofer could see how necessity, not lack of nerve, could have caused Beak's flight on previous occasions. Because of that, Goofer brought up a matter that he might otherwise have avoided.

"The Shadow was in on Kremp," declared Goofer. "That's the real reason that I've been lying low. It's a cinch dodging the bulls; but not The Shadow."

Beak registered no surprise at the news.

"I thought so," he said slowly. "The way that crew of yours was banged around sounded pretty funny when I heard of it."

"He was after the Tiger," added Goofer, to keep up his pretense that he did not think of Beak as the hidden master of crime. "I guess he was on the job again, The Shadow was, when the Tiger rubbed out Erwig."

"So what?"

"Well"—Goofer put it cautiously—"if I'm slow getting a mob together, it won't be my fault. Dodging The Shadow ain't no cinch. If he's got the finger on me!"

"He hasn't!"

There was confidence in Beak's interruption. It made Goofer gawk, wondering how the Lone Tiger could know so much about The Shadow.

"Cardona is on your trail," Beak told Goofer, "because he thinks you murdered Kremp. Everybody thinks you croaked the guy. Even I did"—Beak's smile was steady—"until you told me different, tonight. But when I say everybody, there's one I don't include.

"That's The Shadow. He knows who got Kremp, and he's keeping mum. He's letting Cardona worry about you, while he goes after the Lone Tiger. The longer you're in circulation, the better The Shadow likes it. You're the one crook in town that The Shadow has forgotten.

"That makes the setup swell for that job of ours. Get your new mob together, and duck the bulls while you're doing it. I'll tell you when to move, and I'll be on deck to see it goes right. By the way, don't forget that there's something else we've got to handle."

A recollection flashed to Goofer's mind.

"You mean the dame?" he questioned. "I was kind of groggy after The Shadow konked me, but I seen her. I don't know who she is, but maybe she's wise to too much."

Beak's eyes showed interest in this new angle. After a few puffs at his cigar, he dismissed the matter.

The Lone Tiger

"Forget the dame you're telling me about," he said. "We can figure that out later. What I'm talking about"—he poked his thumb across his shoulder—"is getting rid of Korza's body. But it can go a while. I'll tell you when to send a couple of gorillas up here, to haul the stiff out of the pit. Some time when the joint is closed, along in the early morning."

BRINGING out the waiter's garments. Beak told Goofer to put them on and sneak out through the kitchen. As soon as Goofer was ready, Beak went outside, to make sure that Cardona had actually gone. It was Beak, himself, who rapped a signal from the other side of the office door, telling Goofer that the route was clear.

Having neglected the night club's paying customers, Beak did not return to the office. Passing minutes made it plain that he would be busy elsewhere for a while. As tobacco smoke settled in the vacant office, the trick panel in the rear wall showed more clearly. Oddly, that panel was not quite shut.

Soon, it began to open, bringing a trickle of light from the fake elevator. There was a blotch of blackness, that came edging forward when the panel finally slid wide. That shape took on a living form, that rose to full height, staggered wearily, and sank to rest in the big chair behind Beak's desk.

A being cloaked in black, a slouch hat askew upon his head, but with eyes that burned with keen light, while hidden lips phrased a whispered laugh. That mirth, though strained, was a token that a victim could come back alive from Beak's well-set snare.

The Shadow had returned, so amazingly that Beak, had he been present, might have viewed the black-cloaked being as the ghost of the dead man Korza, back from a temporary grave!

CHAPTER XIV. AFTER MIDNIGHT

CONTRASTED to The Shadow's black attire was his face, which showed plainly when he pushed his hat back from his head and let the cloak collar drop from his chin. That face, bearing the features of Lamont Cranston, was bloodless in its whiteness.

The sag of The Shadow's body told that he had undergone an ordeal. He was drawing his breath in weary puffs, finding even the stagnant air of the office to be welcome. Behind him, the open panel still yawned; but the floor of the elevator, closed again, did not reveal the story of The Shadow's journey from below.

As Beak had told Goofer, the pit ended in the basement under the Club Carioca. It was deep enough, however, to uphold Beak's boast that anyone who dropped there, alive, would come out dead. It happened that varying circumstances had altered The Shadow's case.

The Shadow's first achievement had been that grab for the disappearing floor. His dangle, though brief, had saved him from a hopeless twenty-foot plunge to solid concrete. Hanging at arm's length, The Shadow had stretched approximately eight feet downward, before he took the actual fall. Moreover, his body had been properly set for the twelve-foot drop.

A wait, prone on the floor, had recuperated him; then, with his flashlight, he had studied the closed elevator floor above. The walls of the pit, constructed of rough stone cemented, had enabled The Shadow to work his way up to the higher level; but there the path was blocked.

Though he had wedged himself directly beneath the sliding floor, his efforts to work the barrier open were futile. The floor had no available edges; all sides fitted into the same sort of slots that had given The Shadow previous trouble.

The Lone Tiger

The dilemma had been still unsolved, when The Shadow had heard a thump above his head. Dully, he had suspected what might occur, and had wedged as far to the left as possible. While he was rallying for work to come, the floor had suddenly slid away, dropping a body past him in the blackness.

From the lumpy fall of that human form, The Shadow had known that the man was dead. His hands following the sliding edge of the floor, The Shadow had kept his wedged position, waiting with fingers pressed against the wall crack. When the floor returned, The Shadow was ready for it.

Hands pressing hard, he had hoisted head and shoulders upward. Swinging his weight against the moving slab, he had used the floor as a lever's fulcrum, to carry him upon the upper side. With a quick roll, he had brought his legs up through the closing space in time to save them from the floor's slash.

Returned to Beak's trap, The Shadow had lain with drawn gun, in case the panel opened. Light had returned when the door slid shut.

However much luck had favored The Shadow, it had done more for Beak and Goofer, when the night-club owner had decided to hide the mob leader in the closet, instead of the fake elevator. Disaster would have met them both, had they broke in upon The Shadow.

It was during Beak's chat with Cardona, that The Shadow had eased the panel slightly open; not enough to reveal the elevator's light, but simply to hear what was said. He had recognized both voices; and later, had listened in on Beak's conference with Goofer.

RESTING at Beak's desk, The Shadow pictured the future. Beak and Goofer had allied themselves in some criminal enterprise; that much was plain, from what The Shadow had overheard.

He could foresee, too, certain details of that coming crime, even though the two schemers had mentioned very few of its particulars during the while that he had listened.

Rising from the chair, The Shadow did not trouble to look through the desk drawers. He knew that there would be no evidence there proving Beak to be the Lone Tiger. Nor would he find anything else that would serve as incriminating evidence against the crooked night-club owner.

In fact, The Shadow found no need to worry about Beak Barlett at all; certainly, not for the present. The man's very position was such that Beak could not afford to change it. Having soft-soaped Joe Cardona, Beak would be quite satisfied in keeping up his usual front.

Besides, there was that body in the pit. From Cardona's talk with Beak, The Shadow had learned of Korza; the remarks that Beak had later made to Goofer, had identified the victim who had dropped past The Shadow, as well as bearing out the fact that the fellow was already dead,

Stiffly, The Shadow limped to the office door, inched it open and saw that no one was about. He managed to glide back to his table, by supporting himself as he moved along the wall. He peeled off the cloak and hat, rolled them into a compact bundle. Again Lamont Cranston, The Shadow was ready for dinner, glad that he had brought his cane along; for The Shadow's drop to the concrete had not improved his weakened knee.

While he dined, The Shadow was no longer thinking about Beak Barlett, not, at least, in present terms. The man who interested The Shadow more, and for whom The Shadow had immediate plans, was Goofer Shayne.

Beak had struck the truth, when he told Goofer that The Shadow would not be looking for him. But he had not analyzed the case entirely. It was true that The Shadow knew that Goofer had not murdered Kremp. But

The Lone Tiger

Goofer, in The Shadow's estimate, was still too dangerous a crook to be allowed at large.

His brief dinner finished, The Shadow left the Club Carioca. Reaching a telephone, The Shadow put in a call to Burbank. Agents were to start on new duty. Cliff Marsland, Hawkeye, others acquainted with the underworld, were to visit the dives where Goofer was most likely to appear when seeking recruits for his new crew. The choice of such places was definitely limited. Goofer didn't know many spots where it would be safe.

MEANWHILE, The Shadow decided that his Cranston guise called for another visit to Milesen's. He wasn't in trim for heavier work; it would be a relaxation to chat with Milesen. Moreover, there was a slim chance that there had been some letter from another reward seeker.

The Shadow had not forgotten Kremp's statement—that there were two other persons beside Kremp himself, who knew the Lone Tiger's identity.

At Milesen's however, The Shadow was not at all surprised to learn no word had arrived. Thousands of letters had been sifted, without result. The only bit of news was brought by Treefe, when he came in a little after eleven o'clock.

"I ran into Joe Cardona," announced Treefe, "at a night club, trying to find out if they'd hired any new waiters. Stealing my ideas, Joe is. He's going after the servant angle.

"I asked Joe where else he'd been, and he said he'd stopped at the Club Carioca. That's a nifty spot; and the guy that runs it is smart. Joe said he'd been talking to him—Beak Barlett."

Milesen showed sudden interest.

"Beak Barlett?" he inquired, quickly. "That's an odd nickname—Beak. How did the man acquire it?"

"From his nose," returned Treefe. "Any guy with a big schnozzle is likely to have that moniker. Only, there ain't many can match Beak Barlett."

"How long has he been running that night club?"

"A couple of years. Don't ask me what Beak did before that. Nobody knows. They say he's been in on as many rackets as he has thumbs and fingers; but nobody ever pinned the goods on him."

Milesen was thoughtful. His eyes gave a momentary glance toward Cranston, the only person to whom he had ever mentioned the Lone Tiger's hook-nosed profile. Wisely, Milesen had kept to himself his knowledge of the Tiger's side face, to be used as an acid test of the supercrook's identity.

Noting no change of Cranston's expression, Milesen was pleased. His secret was safe, as he believed it would be. There were times when Milesen regretted what he had told Cranston regarding the Tiger's facial appearance; but this incident ended the last of those qualms.

"I want you to call on this man Barlett," said Milesen to Treefe, flashing another significant look in Cranston's direction. "From what you say, he is the sort of person who might have unusual information."

"He's got that, all right," assured Treefe. "Say"—the private dick's tone became wise—"you're not thinking that Beak might be the Lone Tiger, are you, Mr. Milesen?"

The Lone Tiger

"Of course not!" exclaimed Mileson, hastily. "But be tactful, Treefe. Let Barlett assume that you are checking on facts that might be of value to Inspector Cardona."

Noting Treefe's nod, Mileson added:

"At the same time, learn all you can about Barlett. He may know more than we suppose."

When The Shadow left Mileson's, a half hour later, he went directly to his sanctum. He arrived there just after midnight, and found a tiny light glowing on the wall—a signal that Burbank had a report to make.

Through earphones that he lifted from a polished table, The Shadow heard news that pleased him. Both Cliff and Hawkeye had done more than spot Goofer Shayne; they had talked with the wanted mob leader.

That meeting promised further results, of a sort that might do much to shape The Shadow's future plans.

Again, The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER XV. THE TIGER MOVES

IT was nearly six o'clock the next afternoon when Fred Treefe made his call on Beak Barlett. Treefe had tried to make the visit earlier, but hadn't succeeded. Beak's business hours didn't begin until around six o'clock, and ran from then on until three in the morning.

There were early diners in the Club Carioca, but Treefe scarcely noticed them while being conducted to Beak's office. In the paneled room, he found the hook-nosed racketeer awaiting him with a pleased smile.

"Hello, gumshoe!" greeted Beak. "What are you doing—looking over the waiters? Who sent you—Cardona?"

Such luck left Treefe wordless.

"Joe was around here last night," continued Beak, "asking about a guy named Korza, who was on my pay roll. I should have figured that you'd come next. If anybody can solve the servant problem, you're the guy."

Treefe gave his usual wise nod.

"I was talking to Joe," he said, as though making an admission. "He's been covering the night spots, and he wanted me to follow along."

"Running kind of late, aren't you?"

"Sure! I'm doing all the heavy work. If Joe don't lamp a mug that reminds him of some mobby, he runs along. The real checkup job is mine."

To Treefe's satisfaction, Beak took the statement at face value. Opening a desk drawer, Beak rummaged through a batch of papers and finally tossed an old letter on the desk.

"That's all I have on Korza," he said. "A letter of recommendation from the manager of the Hotel Goliath. That got him his job here. But he quit a few days ago, like I told Cardona."

Treefe read the letter several times over. He was simply stalling for time, hoping that Beak would say more.

The Lone Tiger

It was a system that worked, even with so keen a person as Beak.

"I thought you were working for old Mileson," remarked Beak, suddenly. "The guy that wants to hand over a hundred grand, to get even with some big-shot that nobody ever heard of."

"Yeah, I work for Mileson," returned Treefe. "But he hasn't been getting anywhere. He made friends with the police commissioner and decided to let him handle it."

"Which sort of put you on the shelf?"

"It would have, if I hadn't used the bean. I talked Mileson into keeping me on the pay roll. So he fixed it for me to work; kind of *ex libris*, Mileson called it."

Beak gave a chuckle.

"You mean *ex officio*," he corrected. "Next time you're looking at books in Mileson's library, you'd better read one, instead of stopping at the book plate."

Treefe snapped his fingers.

"That's where I seen *ex libris*," he remembered. "On a label inside the cover of a book. All Mileson's books are like that. With his name printed there, too."

Pretended dumbness was Treefe's best bet. It was working well on this occasion. It produced a question from Beak; one that the racketeer thought would be safe with Treefe.

"What about this old duck Cadbury?" asked Beak. "The guy Kremp worked for. Didn't he have any other servants?"

"Only a secretary," replied Treefe. "But she don't come under the head of my specialty-domestic help."

"What is she? Some wall-eyed old maid?"

"No. She's a looker. I was talking to her this afternoon, when I stopped in there. Her name's Marion Delmar."

Beak gave a chuckle.

"Date her up for dinner some time," he suggested. "Bring her down here. I'll pay the check. I'd like to see your idea of a good-looking dame."

AS Beak finished, his smile faded. He was looking past Treefe, toward the office door. Thinking that he had seen it move, Beak stepped across and opened the door. No one was outside; Beak didn't notice Lamont Cranston, seated at his table of the night before.

Observing Treefe's interest in the occurrence, Beak resumed his smile.

"Thought I heard some one knock," he said. "Maybe it was Henri, the head waiter. I'd better look him up. Help yourself to a cigar, Treefe, while I'm gone."

Treefe had a pocketful of cigars by the time the door closed; but he didn't stop with that. Swinging around the desk, he yanked the top drawer open and began to rummage through letters and other papers that he found.

The Lone Tiger

Hurriedly selecting certain ones that suited him, he stuffed them in a side pocket of his coat.

He was bothered by the same worry that had influenced Beak, for it was Treefe's turn to be on the side of the desk that let him face the door. Through pale-blue tobacco smoke, which seemed a permanent institution in Beak's office, Treefe fancied the door was open to the space of about one inch. Shoving the drawer shut, the dick regained his chair, expecting Beak's immediate return.

It was several minutes before Beak did arrive, and by then, Treefe had managed to compose himself. Remarking that he was due for dinner at Mileson's, and would probably hear from Cardona while there, Treefe made his departure.

Soon after the dick had gone, Beak, his eyes fixed steadily on the door, picked up the telephone and dialed a number. It was Goofer's voice that answered.

"You were right about the dame," said Beak, in a low, cold tone. "It looks like she's the one that works for Cadbury. No use in taking chances. We'll go through with it like I suggested when I called you this afternoon. After that—Mileson."

Lamont Cranston was nowhere near the office door when Beak made that call. His interest in the place seemed to have ended after Treefe had gone. In less than half an hour, however, Cranston received a call of his own. It was Henri who brought word that he was wanted on the telephone.

The Shadow took that call in a booth that was situated in the lobby. The tone that he heard was Burbank's, and the contact man's information brought an abrupt end to Cranston's half-finished dinner.

Entering Moe's cab outside the Club Carioca, The Shadow opened a suitcase that lay on the seat and began rapid changes in attire, while Moe drove along darkened streets.

WHEN, at nine o'clock, Beak Barlett told Henri that he was going out to look over a location for a new night club, the head waiter detected nothing sinister in his employer's tone. He knew that Beak had talked of starting a second night club, and wished him luck at finding a suitable site.

It was also at nine o'clock that Marion Delmar, returning from a late dinner, met Fred Treefe coming from the door of Cadbury's apartment house. The private detective greeted her with a very sour smile.

"Where've you been, beautiful?" he gruffed. "That boss of yours told me I could await and talk to you."

"About what?" demanded Marion, not pleased by Treefe's style of greeting. "There is nothing new regarding Kremp."

"I've got a line on a guy named Korza," explained Treefe. "He used to be a waiter, and I thought maybe Kremp knew him."

"I know nothing of Kremp's acquaintances," said Marion, impatiently. "I have told you that a hundred times, Mr. Treefe!"

The dick tilted his derby-topped head. "Sure Kremp never took you to any of those night clubs?"

To repress her anger, Marion bit her lips. Treefe was not fazed.

The Lone Tiger

"He used to go to the Club Carioca, Kremp did," persisted Treefe. "That's where Korza worked. Ever see the place?"

"Never!"

"You ought to. It's a classy joint. How about you and me having dinner down there soon?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Treefe." Marion's words were polite, but her tone had bite. "I have other engagements."

"For all next week?"

"For all next year!"

Pivoting on a tiny heel, the girl entered the apartment house. Treefe tightened his derby on his head, shoved a cigar into his mouth, and muttered to himself as he went down the steps. Forgetting that economy helped pad his expense account, he gestured at the first cab that passed. Seated in the taxi, Treefe gave Mileson's address and told the driver to get him there in a hurry.

Marion, meanwhile, had entered Cadbury's office, to find her elderly employer in a very weary mood. Cadbury's hair was more ruffled than usual; his glasses were crooked, though he did not know it. He shook his head impatiently, when Marion sat down at her desk.

"No more work tonight," spoke Cadbury, testily. "I can't blame you for not returning sooner, Marion, because you did not go out until an hour ago. But I wish you had been here to dispose of our most obnoxious pest."

"You mean Treefe?"

"Who else could I mean?" Cadbury's tone was peevish. "Again and again, he comes here. Always with the same question: what else do I know about Kremp? If it isn't Kremp, it's Kremp's friends. I've told him that I never met any of them."

"The last time Treefe came here," recalled Marion, "I asked him to stay away in the future."

"So did I," declared Cadbury, "but he claims that he was told to come here by that old dotard who employs him. You know the man I mean. Milestone, or whatever his name is."

"Milesen," corrected Marion. "Maybe he doesn't like having Treefe around, any more than we do."

"That may explain it. Anyway, I have given up all thought of working late tonight. You may go, Marion."

THE office light went out as soon as Marion had left. Running up to her apartment, Marion picked up a handbag that she had forgotten and started downstairs again. There was still time to catch the feature picture at the neighborhood theater. It was a movie that she had waited a long while to see.

She couldn't have been upstairs mere than five or six minutes, yet she noticed a change in the lower hall. The light had gone out, producing darkness outside the door to Cadbury's office, and as Marion listened, she was sure that she heard sounds in the gloom.

It couldn't be Cadbury; he wouldn't have turned out the light, and he would be in bed by this time. Remembering the door from the side hall, Marion decided to reach the office through Cadbury's apartment. Fortunately, she had a duplicate key to that door; one that she had forgotten to return to Cadbury.

The Lone Tiger

The door, however, was unlocked when Marion tried it. Overtaxed by his talk with Treefe, Cadbury had probably taken it for granted that the latch was set. Entering, Marion closed the door and stole through the stilled hallway of the darkened apartment.

She didn't want to disturb Cadbury, unless something really happened to be wrong, so she tiptoed past the closed door of his bedroom. Sounds had ended from the hallway beyond the office; but in the darkness, Marion sensed a new fear.

The impression would not leave her. It seemed that someone was close by in the blackened hall. Someone, perhaps, who had entered the unlocked door ahead of her! Spurred by that dread, Marion increased her pace, almost stumbling in her haste to reach the office.

Past the connecting door, she caught her breath. It wasn't wholly dark, here in the office, because a street lamp cast a glow through the unshaded front windows. In fact, she could see the whole room and there was no one hiding in it. Marion began a relieved sigh.

That sigh died with an instinctive gasp. Cold steel pressed between Marion's shoulders, through the slitted opening at the back of her dress. She knew that she felt a revolver muzzle, poked from the darkened hall behind her.

There was something else that Marion saw against the office wall, as her head gave a chance turn. It was a giant silhouette, cast against that inner wall; a thing with an ugly beak-nosed profile that symbolized the face that blocked the light from the window.

Marion's captor, the man who cast that evil grotesque silhouette, was Kremp's murderer—the Lone Tiger!

CHAPTER XVI. THE NEW MOB

TIME seemed at a standstill for Marion, while she waited for that gun to blast between her shoulders. It couldn't be that seconds were passing, because she could think of nothing but instant death from the hand of the Lone Tiger.

Yet time did pass; and Marion suddenly realized it, when she found herself moving forward under the prod of the gun point. Next, she was turned about toward the windows past Cadbury's desk. There she stopped; the gun drew away, but a hissed voice told her not to move.

There was the crinkle of paper. The Lone Tiger was searching the desk. What it was he wanted, Marion couldn't guess, for she had arranged all of Cadbury's papers this very afternoon. They all related to real estate and other business matters. None of them concerned the Lone Tiger.

Then she recalled those letters that Kremp had written to his aunt. It could be that the Lone Tiger had learned of their delivery to Cadbury. But it happened that Cadbury had given them to Cardona. Therefore, the master crook was making a useless search.

Odd, how coolly she was summing it all. But what would happen when the Tiger found his search in vain?

Would it be murder, then? Or would he sneak out again, letting Marion shout for Cadbury? The Tiger might do just that; for her screams would certainly attract no more persons than a gunshot. Perhaps the Tiger would order her to remain silent and stay where she was. If he did, Marion promised herself she would.

The Lone Tiger

Through her brain was drumming the thought that the Lone Tiger had a calculating mind; that his murders—those of Kremp and Erwig—had been directed against persons who actually knew who he was. Possibly Marion's own ignorance would cause him to let her remain alive.

Thus, Marion held hope, until she heard a sound from the office door. It was beginning again, that scraping noise that had stopped before she had entered by way of the apartment. With it, the paper's crinkle ended. The Lone Tiger was no longer at the desk. His gun again between Marion's shoulders, he gritted a metallic order in her ear:

"Stay where you are! A single move—"

He completed the sentence by a hard press of the muzzle, which made Marion imagine that the gun was still against her back ten seconds after it was gone. A slight creak from the hallway revealed that the Tiger had withdrawn to that watching post. But Marion sensed that the revolver still covered her.

Her hands half lifted, she heard the office door creak inward. Other invaders, coming from that direction, had picked the lock. From a medley of low whispers came one that had a raucous touch:

"There's the moll! Over by the window!"

THE speaker bounded past the desk, straight for Marion. Realizing that the Lone Tiger would not shoot with these others in the room, Marion wrenched away. She was too late; there was time for neither struggles nor screams. Her arms were twisted behind her, a hand clapped across her mouth.

The leering face that showed by light from the window was that of Goofer Shayne. Another mobster aided him in suppressing the prisoner. While they were thrusting her back into a big easy-chair that was Cadbury's favorite, Marion saw a third man at the office door, watching, ready with a gun.

Somehow, these lesser crooks seemed fangless, compared with the Lone Tiger. Once in the chair, Marion began a struggle when they tried to bind her. They already had adhesive over her lips, and her wrists were pinned, but she kicked furiously at Goofer when he tried to bind her ankles.

That was when the third thug intervened. With Goofer fighting to control Marion's lashing legs, the fellow stepped over from the door and caught her feet. His hands tugged, leaving the girl shoeless. Within a few seconds, a strap was around her ankles.

"That took the kick out of them kicks of yours," grunted Goofer. "Shove them brogans on her hoofs again, Slim. She can't do nothing with them."

Slim obliged. Marion could see his face against the window. It was pasty, cadaverous.

"Ever hear of the Tiger Mob?" queried Goofer, pushing his face close to Marion's. "That's us! But not the same outfit that used to be. We're the new mob—and we ain't making the mistakes the old crew did.

"Not a chance! We ain't croaking nobody, not when there's any way to find it out. But that ain't helping you, cutey face. Because nobody's wise that we grabbed you except the Lone Tiger, and he's in on it. So you can kiss yourself good—by, baby!"

Marion knew only too well that the Lone Tiger was "in on it"; from his lurking spot in the darkened hall, he had viewed the capture. She could see a good reason why the Tiger had left her standing by the window. With this murderous crew on hand, he hadn't needed to supply the kill himself.

The Lone Tiger

Her ears strained, Marion thought that she could hear the hidden master crook moving out through the hall that led to the other side of the apartment. Then, for a moment, she was worrying over others, not herself.

"Take a gander, Hoppy." Goofer was speaking to the other mobster. "Make sure that old cluck Cadbury ain't awake. It's time we was starting down to see that simp Mileson. Won't he feel smart when we tell him to cough over his hundred grand."

FORTUNATELY, from Marion's viewpoint, Hoppy heard no sounds from Cadbury. He wasn't sure which was the bedroom, so he listened at all the doors. Coming back, he mentioned the exit at the far end of the hall, and Goofer decided to use it. Carrying Marion as if she were no more than straw, Slim and Hoppy led the way.

Goofer, coming along behind, listened again to be sure that Cadbury was asleep. He passed the others at the side door of the apartment house; told them to wait, while he brought the car. Goofer was gone at least five minutes, which made Marion sure that he had contacted the Lone Tiger during that time.

It was evident that Goofer was working under special orders. When his pals had put Marion in the rear seat of their old sedan, he hopped on the running board and told them to get started. They'd gone a block, when the mob leader spoke through the window:

"This is where I'm dropping off. Get rid of the dame and do it right! The Tiger's down at Mileson's by this time, waiting for me to show up with the mob. If you can make it inside half an hour, come along."

Hoppy was driving the car. He showed speed as soon as Goofer had dropped off. Marion heard Slim growl:

"Nix, Hoppy! We don't want no argument with coppers. Don't give her the gas until we've dumped the moll."

Slowing down, Hoppy traveled southward, crisscrossing occasionally to other avenues. After squinting in the mirror several times, he said anxiously:

"Somebody's tailing us!"

Slim snorted; but Hoppy insisted that another car was on their trail. He began to shove the accelerator closer to the floor board. Slim protested.

"Take a look yourself," insisted Hoppy. "It's a cab that's tailing us. He'll be riding our bumper, if we don't move along."

Slim looked back. His own tone became anxious, and Marion felt a new thrill of hope. In recent minutes, she had been experiencing the horrible regret that she had not shown wit enough to send word to The Shadow before it was too late.

Perhaps The Shadow had made up for Marion's omission, by learning beforehand, that Goofer intended to abduct her! Though the Lone Tiger had surprised Marion in advance, it was possible that The Shadow had been close.

Remembering that The Shadow's agents had at times been near her apartment house, Marion convinced herself that word must have reached her protector. If he had found the trail, her chances for life were great; for she heard Hoppy say:

"We can't make the water front, Slim. We'll be boxed when we ride into that dead end."

The Lone Tiger

Slim, to Marion's dismay, didn't share Hoppy's concern.

"Head east a block," ordered the cadaverous thug, "then go three south, double back, and cut into the parking lot on the left. The one Goofer told us about."

"He didn't tell me," retorted Hoppy. "When was it he told you?"

"While he had you working on the door at Cadbury's. He says the lot has an alley through to the next street, and a couple of guys are waiting there, in a wheeler."

"Just for a pinch like this? Goofer sure knows his stuff!"

SPEEDING up, Hoppy followed the directions that Slim had given him; but the trailing taxi clung close. With the parking lot in sight, Slim looked back, then formed a quick plan.

"Hit right through the lot," he told Hoppy. "If that hack comes up on us, we'll pile out and get whoever is in it. The guys that are waiting will know it's us. They'll take the moll."

There was a screech of brakes, as the sedan swung in from the street. Hoppy roared the car right through the lot, jammed the brakes, as he saw another sedan waiting in the alley. Right behind, came the glaring headlights of the cab.

Slim was out before the sedan stopped. He made for the cab, ignoring the ducking driver. Yanking open the door, Slim pounced into the rear. Hoppy, coming around from the other side, heard a warning yell just as he yanked the opposite door.

A figure lunged outward. It wasn't Slim; he had already been eliminated as a factor in this fray. The fighter that flung upon Hoppy was cloaked in black; above the head that wore a slouch hat, his gloved hand swung a heavy gun.

Hoppy had no chance to shoot. He managed to ward the blow and start a grapple; but another stroke found his skull and left him senseless. Marion was right; The Shadow had planned her rescue. He was the fighter from that cab!

But the battle, rapid though it was, did not bring the result that the captive girl expected. While Slim and Hoppy had been rushing back to the cab, two other men had piled from the car parked in the alley. They yanked Marion out of the stalled car and into theirs. One of them was at the wheel, shoving the car into gear the instant that The Shadow disposed of Hoppy.

Then the car was on its way, whizzing through to the next street, off on a rapid flight that could only have been traced through an immediate chase. Such pursuit was impossible, for the car that Slim and Hoppy had abandoned was in the mouth of the alley, blocking The Shadow's cab.

When the cab finally swung around a corner, its driver, Moe, could sight no trace of the swift sedan that had carried Marion away. Nor could The Shadow, a lone passenger in the cab. Transferred to another pair of captors, Marion Delmar again was gone.

This time, her fate depended entirely upon the men who had seized her, for The Shadow was no longer on the trail!

CHAPTER XVII. CROOKS INVADE

BLOCKS distant from the scene of Marion's transfer, lurking figures were moving along a dark street—some close to a wall that gave them cover, others choosing the shelter of empty cars parked along the curb.

Goofer Shayne had brought his assembled crew to its planned goal: the mansion where Joseph Mileson lived.

Motley mobbies, these, but the best that Goofer had been able to recruit on rapid notice. They had one merit: they came cheap. Goofer had signed them on a cash—and—carry basis, with money supplied by Beak Barlett. Their portion of the hundred grand that Goofer expected to get would therefore be small.

There were a dozen in the outfit, but Goofer intended to use most of them as reserves. He pointed a few of them through Mileson's gate, while the rest crouched by the wall and near the parked cars. Goofer, in turn, sidled across the street, to see how the arrangement looked. He was close to a dark doorway, when a voice caused him to wheel about with drawn gun.

It was Beak Barlett. The racketeer stepped out from cover, let Goofer have a look at his smiling face.

"Get them all inside the wall," toned Beak. "Then nobody's going to see them."

"Yeah?" returned Goofer. "Suppose somebody shows up?"

"I'll flash the signal," interposed Beak, "provided they need it. Move them inside, I tell you. That's the way the Tiger Mob worked it two years ago."

Evidently, Beak was not granting Goofer's claim that this new mob bore the Tiger stripe; at least, not until the crew had shown its ability. However, that did not annoy Goofer at the moment. He remembered that the Lone Tiger had once before directed an invasion at Mileson's, and therefore knew the ropes.

Goofer muttered to himself though, as he was sneaking across the street. He should have remembered what all crime—land had discussed two years ago: the fact that the old Tiger Mob had occupied Mileson's grounds before entering the house.

Soon, all Goofer's followers were through the darkened outer gate and he was moving them to strategic positions outside the large mansion. There were various doors that could be covered to advantage; Goofer saw that, as he scouted around the mansion. He posted men so lavishly, that when he reached the front door again, only five of his squad were with him.

No one was covering the gate. Goofer placed two men there, instructing them to pass the word along if a signal came from across the way. Stepping up to the front door, he rang the bell and waited.

A servant answered. Goofer shouldered through, threatening the startled man with a gun. While the servant stood shakily, arms straight up, Goofer beckoned his pals through. They faced the servant about, ready for a march upstairs.

Drawing one thug back into the gloomy vestibule, Goofer told him to keep the front door open.

"Don't let nobody through, Skeet," ordered Goofer, "unless it's important. We don't want to be bothered while we're talking with Mileson."

The Lone Tiger

Rejoining the two who covered the servant, Goofer gruffed questions to the prisoner.

"Where are the other flunkies? Who's upstairs with old Mileson? Who's been here, and who's due?"

FEARFULLY, the man answered. He was the only servant on duty; the others were out, or gone to their quarters on the third floor. Fred Treefe was the only person upstairs with Mileson, who was in the study. But there had been a visitor, a while ago.

"Inspector Cardona was here," informed the servant, as they paused on the grand staircase. "I was in the study when the inspector received a phone call. It must have been important, because he left at once; but he asked Mr. Mileson to tell the police commissioner that he would be back later."

Goofer didn't ask how long ago Cardona had gone. It wasn't necessary, because Beak would have seen the inspector leave, had it been recent enough to matter. Besides, Goofer was more interested in the servant's mention of the police commissioner.

"What did Cardona mean, when he said tell the commish?" demanded Goofer. "Weston ain't here, is he?"

"He is expected," replied the servant, "but not until half past ten."

Goofer chuckled. It wasn't quite ten o'clock. That gave a half hour's leeway, and he figured that his business with Mileson would require no more than ten minutes. It would be a good one, thought Goofer—the commissioner arriving to find old Mileson in a new stew over the loss of a hundred thousand dollars.

The procession moved up the stairway, made the turn toward Mileson's study, still preceded by the servant, whose ribs were aching from the jabs of Goofer's gun.

Down in the vestibule, Skeet, on the alert, heard footsteps on the steps outside. As he turned, Skeet caught a signal—a low hiss. It was the countersign that Goofer had given to the members of his ill-composed crew, few of whom had known each other well until tonight.

But Skeet recognized the face that thrust into the gloomy light when he answered the signal. It was cadaverous and pasty-hued, but marred with signs of recent combat that aroused Skeet's alarm. Oozing down the arrival's forehead, Skeet saw blood that signified a deep gash.

"Slim!" hoarsed Skeet. "What did you run into?"

"The Shadow," returned Slim. "He slugged me and Hoppy, while we was getting rid of the moll."

Skeet poked his face out through the door, wangling his gun as if he expected The Shadow to materialize on the steps.

"Don't get jittery," said Slim, mopping his forehead as he stood in the vestibule. "We shoved the dame along to a couple of other guys, and they've got The Shadow chasing all over town. What's more"—Slim chuckled—"I'll bet he won't catch up with 'em! Anyway, when I got down here, the boys by the gate told me to go through. I gotta see Goofer. Where is he?"

"Upstairs." Skeet was still watching from the door. "He says nobody's to go up, unless it's important. But you'd better go. If The Shadow's in it, Goofer oughta know."

The Lone Tiger

WHILE that conversation was ending below, Goofer had reached the closed door of Mileson's study. The servant was knocking there, at Goofer's order. When Mileson gave the word to enter, the servant went through the doorway first.

He went through rapidly, for he was shoved halfway across the floor. Goofer behind him, swung his revolver toward the corner where he saw Mileson and Treefe rising in alarm. After a quick glance, Goofer chose to cover Treefe, for the private detective was reaching for a gun.

One of Goofer's pals covered Mileson. The third thug took charge of the servant, as the shaky man arose from the floor.

"We ain't hurting nobody," announced Goofer. He had impressed that point time and again upon his crew. "We got business to talk over. That's all!"

Mileson's eyes were half alarmed, half puzzled. He had an idea that the invasion was not quite as desperate as it appeared. Perhaps this was Goofer's way of bringing information regarding the Lone Tiger. Mileson recognized the mob leader, from photographs that he had seen, and logically assumed that Goofer, wanted for murder, would prefer to be backed by a mob, when making social calls.

"Very well," declared Mileson calmly. "State your business."

"I'm collecting that hundred grand," growled Goofer. "They say you got it here. All right, let's see it!"

Mileson hesitated, not liking Goofer's tone. Then, making allowance for the mob leader's case, he questioned:

"Do I understand that you will give me the required information in return? That you are able to identify the criminal called the Lone Tiger?"

Goofer was prompt to make the most of Mileson's mood.

"Sure thing!" he returned. "That's the deal you offered, ain't it? I can tell you who the Lone Tiger is, all right"—Goofer's chuckle was genuine in its conviction—"but I don't want to waste no time about it. So let's see the kale."

Treefe shifted, as if to speak a low-voiced objection in Mileson's ear. Goofer's glare, a nudge of his gun, caused the dick to desist.

With quiet dignity, Mileson walked to the large safe and began to turn the combination. As usual, he blocked sight of the process with his body; but one hand was visible; the other was obviously busy with the combination.

The safe came open. Goofer told another man to cover Treefe. The mob-leader approached Mileson, watched the gray-haired man bring out an oblong box. The cover was lifted; onto a table Mileson poured stacks of bank notes, all of high denominations.

"Count it," ordered Goofer, greedily. "Run through 'em fast."

Mileson obliged. Goofer told him to put the cash back in the box and leave it on the table. While Mileson was thus engaged, Goofer queried:

"That mazuma ain't marked?"

The Lone Tiger

"I give you my word that it is not," replied Mileson, with all his dignity. "The money is yours, provided"—Mileson was resting his hand upon the closed box—"that you tell me who the Lone Tiger is.

Goofer's greedy gaze went toward the safe.

"Any more dough in there?" he demanded. "If there is, cough it over!"

MILESON'S eyes went stern. They met Goofer's with an unyielding expression. Lips set, Mileson understood at last that this was an actual raid, with robbery its purpose. Under such circumstances, he did not intend to give an inch.

"I told you we weren't hurting nobody," gritted Goofer, suddenly. "That's because we don't want you hounding us, like you did with the old Tiger Mob. But if I croak you, Mr. Big Dough, you won't be on deck to try that stuff again! Savvy that?"

Whether or not such prospect had occurred to Mileson, he met it with a smile. An odd smile, that made Goofer squint in puzzled fashion. Right at this moment, Goofer was "putting on the heat" as he termed it, backing his growl with a gun thrust calculated to make Mileson quail.

Yet the man that Goofer called Mr. Big Dough was treating the whole thing as a joke!

Understanding came suddenly to Goofer. It came in the shape of a rounded gun muzzle, that pressed its coldness against the mob leader's neck. The chill was accompanied by a whispered laugh close to Goofer's ear; a tone that made the mob leader begin an instinctive wheel.

Then Goofer was frozen halfway around, his gun dropping from his fist, to thud the floor. He saw his two thugs; also startled by the laugh, they turned from Treefe and the servant. Like Goofer, they faced The Shadow!

One gun against Goofer's neck, The Shadow had another ready, sweeping back and forth from man to man. But his need to think of three was very temporary. A door had shoved open across the room. In stepped Inspector Joe Cardona, revolver in hand.

As cornered thugs let their guns fall, Fred Treefe pulled a stubby .38 from his pocket and copied Cardona's example of covering a crook. With both of Goofer's followers helpless, The Shadow concentrated upon the mob leader alone.

To Joseph Mileson, that changed scene was more than a triumph over crime. He viewed it purely as a foretaste of something else to come. Somehow, Mileson knew that the arrival of The Shadow presaged the finish of a long, arduous quest.

Tonight, the identity of the Lone Tiger would be disclosed—through the efforts of The Shadow!

CHAPTER XVIII. THE DEATH THRUST

SECONDARY events unraveled themselves in Mileson's mind. He realized that the phone call which Cardona had answered must have come from The Shadow. In fact, Joe had come here tonight as if expecting something, without knowing what it was.

The call had come only a short while before Goofer and his mob invaded. Goofer hadn't questioned the

The Lone Tiger

servant on that point, taking it for granted that Cardona had gone out. But the ace inspector had stayed.

Instructions from The Shadow were the sort that Joe never ignored. He had stepped into a side room that opened, by a connecting door, to Mileson's study, and had there stayed on watch. All the while that Goofer had been pressing Mileson, Cardona had kept the mob leader covered.

Then, Joe alone had seen The Shadow arriving just as he had promised when he called. He had come in from the hallway, unnoticed by the two thugs, who were quite as busy as Goofer.

It didn't occur to Cardona that The Shadow had made a most remarkable entry, for Joe knew nothing of the cordon that surrounded the mansion. This looked like an easy victory; and if Goofer knew anything about the Lone Tiger, Cardona was confident that he would spill it. Crooks had a habit of talking, when The Shadow applied the pressure. Cardona was interested in seeing that happen.

So interested, in fact, that he neglected an important duty. The Shadow was speaking to Goofer in sibilant tones that the captured crook could not ignore. He wasn't putting questions; he was putting brief statements that he expected Goofer to complete. At any rate, The Shadow was busy, and it was Cardona's job to watch the door. Joe forgot that detail.

Footsteps were creeping along the hallway. Cardona was too intense to hear them. Goofer, shrunken before The Shadow's gaze, was staring in the hall's direction. He may have seen something there and given away the fact by some flash of his eyes. Or The Shadow, ever alert, may have heard what Cardona didn't. Which case was true, was something that remained unanswered in the excitement of what occurred.

Whipping suddenly about, The Shadow made a quick twist across the room, stabbing shots for the hallway as he went. A gun barked in answer, its changing aim only inches behind the fleeting figure in black. There were five shots fired in that rapid duel; three by the man in the hall, two by The Shadow.

Two proved better than three. There was a howl from the hallway, as a wounded man fell. But battle was by no means finished. Cardona and Treefe, swinging to The Shadow's aid, forgot the mobsters they covered. Like Goofer, the others grabbed for their guns.

They were off for the door, all of them, turning to fire at The Shadow. A bad attempt, for they couldn't come rapidly to aim with guns that they had scooped from the floor. The Shadow's quick-drilled shots clipped two of them; Cardona added a bullet that sprawled one of the staggering pair. But the third man, protected by the bodies of the other two, kept on. As chance had it, the lucky fugitive was Goofer.

IN the hall, Goofer tripped over Skeet's writhing form. It was the man from the front door who had dueled with The Shadow; for Skeet, hearing nothing from Slim, had decided to come upstairs. Goofer didn't know who it was that tripped him, and he didn't care. He simply snarled an oath at the hapless thug, instead of giving the thanks that Skeet really deserved.

For Goofer's sprawl took him below the line of fire from Mileson's study. Cardona, closer to the door than The Shadow, had jumped in ahead, cutting off the black-cloaked fighter's fire. Joe didn't allow for Goofer's stumble; hence the blasts that he fired were above the mob leader's head.

Cardona's gun went empty. Before Joe could reload, Goofer was away, for the stairs. He swung about, hoping to take a shot at Cardona, but saw The Shadow pushing into sight. Goofer went down the curving staircase three steps at a time, yelling for his crew to rally.

The Lone Tiger

They were pouring in from everywhere, nine of them, and Goofer, at the bottom of the staircase, pointed them upward to attack. They saw The Shadow rounding the turn of the staircase; springing toward the walls of the huge hall, the crooks flung about to fire.

By that time, they were leaderless. His mocking laugh a strident peal of challenge, The Shadow was puncturing its echoes with staccato jabs from a brace of automatics; and the thug to take a bullet was Goofer, who had stopped in the center of the hall, foolish enough to try and beat The Shadow to the first shot.

Other aiming crooks were clipped; but there were enough of them to fight on and avenge Goofer. So they thought, but they were only seven, not nine. Two of their number had dropped for shelter past the staircase, and were opening fire at the rest!

Those two were The Shadow's agents:

Cliff Marsland and Hawkeye. They had worked themselves into Goofer's mob. Posted at side doors, they had been among the first to enter when the din of upstairs battle began. They knew that The Shadow was depending on them, otherwise he would not have thrust himself in sight. And they proved as efficient as their chief expected.

Picking out aiming mobsters, Cliff and Hawkeye told them off with bullets. Frantic from the fire that flayed them from three directions, those thugs who were still able took to flight.

On the staircase, smoke pouring from his guns, The Shadow watched the chase that followed. Cardona and Treefe, seeing the carnage below, had sprung past the cloaked fighter, to round up fleeing crooks. They didn't think of the risk involved; but The Shadow did. That was why he waited, to prevent some snarly wounded thug from taking pot shots as the pursuers passed.

Cliff and Hawkeye, recognizing the situation, covered the men close by. That freed The Shadow from his self-appointed task. Sweeping down the stairway, he paused only long enough to give terse orders.

His agents were to disarm the wounded crooks, then make their own getaway through the back door. It wouldn't do for them to be identified in any way with Goofer's mob, now that their work had been accomplished.

REACHING the front door, The Shadow heard a shout from the gate. That was the direction that Cardona and Treefe had taken, slugging down the last crooks that they had overtaken. In the chase, Treefe had been the first to reach the gate and the shout was his.

Treefe was grappling with someone; the two were reeling toward a lighted patch of sidewalk, where a fire plug marked the center of an open space in the line of parked cars. Cardona bounded to the gate to see what happened; but The Shadow took a shorter course. He cut into the darkness of the lawn, to obtain an angled view.

Treefe reeled suddenly from the side stroke of a gun. Cardona began to shoot, and the other man answered fire.

He was backing away, that fellow, his zigzags saving him. Cardona's shots were rapid, but badly aimed, for Joe was keeping to the shelter of the gateway. As before, the police inspector was unwittingly preventing The Shadow's fire.

The Lone Tiger

In the light above the fire plug, however, there was no mistaking the identity of the new foe who had started for Mileson's mansion, then found it too late to retreat. His face, livid with its fixed smile, was the hook-nosed countenance of Beak Barlett.

The shooting ended abruptly. Both Cardona and Beak were out of bullets. Beak made a lunge in Joe's direction; as the inspector made an evasive duck to lure him, Beak was stopped by another fighter, who came in again.

It was Treefe, raising a gun in half-groggy fashion. Seeing the weapon, Beak wheeled away. Treefe, clutching the fender of a parked car, managed to trigger a close-range shot that clipped Beak's right shoulder. Clapping his left hand across his chest, Beak managed to retain his revolver with his right.

Treefe was aiming again; and as he did, shouted for Cardona and all others to hear:

"Get him! Get Beak Barlett! He's the Lone Tiger!"

Cardona bounded from the gateway, overtaking Beak by the curb. It was The Shadow's turn to reach the gate, just as the two began a grapple. At that same moment, a big car pulled in from the street, where all other passing automobiles had sped away at sound of gunfire.

It was Weston's official car. As it halted by the fire plug, the police commissioner sprang out. With him came his chauffeur; and to these newcomers, Treefe shouted the same news:

"Get Beak—he's the Lone Tiger!"

That cry had a boomerang effect. It brought Weston and the chauffeur into the grapple that Cardona had started, but it spurred Beak to superhuman effort. Despite his wounded shoulder, the racketeer flayed strokes right and left. Whenever his hook-nosed face bobbed from the melee, the light showed its features leering in satanic fury.

Of a sudden, Beak's assailants were sprawling, no longer able to hold him. Looking for some stronghold, Beak saw Weston's car. The chauffeur had slammed the front door shut, but the rear was open. Beak started for it.

The Shadow's automatic was leveled, his finger on the trigger. He stayed that shot as another gun spoke. It was Treefe who fired—and his shot went home. Beak took a jolt that straightened his shoulders; he would have fallen, had his left hand not caught the car door.

With a stumble, Beak rolled through to the floor; his hand, coming up, managed to tug the door shut. Treefe, seeing others come too slowly to their feet, dashed forward hoping to get at Beak through the open window in the car door.

Scarcely had the dick reached the fire plug, when Beak's face loomed at the window. It was grotesque, distorted, its smile gone. One glimpse of that face told that Beak had received a mortal wound; but Treefe wasn't satisfied.

He sprang from curb to car step; Beak's head and shoulders shifted, lunging out to meet him. Through the window, a laboring hand thrust its gun against Treefe's heart. Before the dick could drop back, the gun spoke. When Treefe came away, he fell, stabbed by a bullet that spelled his own finish. Beak had managed to reload his gun for a final shot.

The Lone Tiger

The gun dropped from the window, clattering on the step. A last wisp of smoke was coiling lazily from the muzzle when Beak's body, waving stiffly at the car window, sagged forward.

One drooping arm, sliding outside the window, drew Beak's head with it. His features frozen, without regaining their lost smile, Beak's glazed eyes bulged from each side of his conspicuous nose, as though taking a last view of Treefe.

PRONE upon the curb, Treefe groaned as Weston tried to lift him. Cardona, reaching the car door, yanked it open. Beak's body, its whole weight thrown against the door, came pitching outward.

The racketeer was dead.

Cars were going past again, as The Shadow stepped swiftly toward the parked row at the curb. He was coming close, to view the double death scene from his own vantage point. By the time The Shadow had approached Weston's car, he saw Milesen hurrying from the mansion gate.

In a few moments, Milesen had heard Cardona's account of that final duel:

"It's Beak Barlett," said Joe, pointing to the dead racketeer. "Treefe clipped him, but Beak got him later. We heard Treefe yell that Beak was—"

"The Lone Tiger!" interrupted Milesen. "I heard that shout, too. What is more"—he was gazing at Beak's profile, plain against the dark asphalt—"Treefe was right."

It was Weston who recognized the certainty of Milesen's tone.

"Do you mean," questioned the commissioner, "that you knew who the Lone Tiger was, while we doubted his very existence?"

"I saw the Lone Tiger," assured Milesen, "and I know that the face you see there could be his. Both Treefe and I have talked about Beak Barlett, though only Treefe had interviewed him. Poor Treefe perhaps had already gotten the proof!"

As Milesen spoke, Treefe stirred.

His head lifted in death agony. His lips muttered:

"Cadbury . . . find Cadbury—"

"Can Cadbury help us?" questioned Milesen, bending beside the dying man. "Can he give us the proof we need?"

Treefe's lips moved, but they were wordless. His head managed a nod. From his voiceless lips trickled a dying sigh. His body, quivering with a final spasm, slumped from the curb.

There was a whisper in the darkness, that phrased a grim, mirthless laugh. The Shadow had departed, but his return would come soon. To whatever proof Cadbury might produce identifying Beak Barlett as the Lone Tiger, The Shadow would add facts of his own.

CHAPTER XIX. THE PROOF

IT was an hour later, when David Cadbury arrived at Mileson's mansion. Phone calls to his apartment had failed to awaken him, but Cardona had gone there in an official car and had pounded at doors of office and apartment until Cadbury had finally aroused.

Hearing the details of all that had happened, Cadbury had curbed his first annoyance at being wakened in what he termed the "middle of the night." He had sent Cardona up to rouse Marion, to help him gather papers. When the inspector had failed to find the girl, Cadbury had been forced to do the task himself.

All the way to Mileson's, Cadbury was muttering over the fact that Marion had not been in her apartment. It was after eleven o'clock, and she was seldom out that late, except on her evening off. Cadbury couldn't understand it.

When they arrived at Mileson's, they joined a group in the study. Weston was there with Mileson, but he had not been able to locate his friend Cranston, who would have made a welcome addition to the conference. A pair of headquarters detectives were in attendance; and the rest of the gathering was ill-assorted.

Seated glumly in their chairs, guarded by the watchful detectives, were four members of Goofer's mob. All wore bandages, but they were the least crippled of the crew. The rest of those who were still alive, had gone to the hospital and stayed there.

In brisk manner, Weston summed facts for Cadbury's benefit.

"These prisoners"—the commissioner gestured toward the gallery of toughs—"tell us that their leader, called Goofer Shayne, was working for the Lone Tiger. You recall Shayne, of course, Mr. Cadbury. He was the killer who murdered Kremp."

Cadbury nodded.

"When Inspector Cardona and Fred Treefe pursued the fleeing mob," resumed Weston, "they encountered Beak Barlett outside these grounds. Treefe shouted that Barlett was the Lone Tiger. In the duel that followed, both Treefe and Beak were slain. Treefe, dying, said that you could supply the proof that Beak was the Lone Tiger."

Wearily, Cadbury shook his head. He opened the brief case that he had brought with him.

"Time and again," he declared, "I told Treefe the same thing: that I knew nothing about Kremp's acquaintances. Tonight, he called again. He talked about this man Beak Barlett, and a waiter named Korza. I had never heard of either.

"In hope that Treefe would cease annoying me, I opened the bottom drawer of my filing cabinet, where I keep all my old real-estate records, and let him look through them, so that he would know that he had seen everything in the place.

"Treefe left many papers strewn on my desk, and I was so tired that I merely dumped them in a drawer. Here they are, for I have brought them all along. If Treefe gleaned anything from them, you will find it there."

EAGER hands sorted the papers. As Cadbury said, they were mostly expired rental contracts, old insurance papers, and other discarded documents that had to do with real-estate transactions. It was Weston who found

The Lone Tiger

the first item that promised value.

"This has Kremp's name on it!" he exclaimed. "Do you recognize this, Mr. Cadbury?"

Peering through his blue-tinted glasses, Cadbury studied the document. He nodded.

"It is an accident insurance policy," he declared, "that I had issued for Kremp when he became my chauffeur. It was in his possession until a year ago, when I gave him the new policy instead."

"I remember the new one," put in Cardona. "We found it in Kremp's place. I think we have it here, with other exhibits."

"This old policy," said Cadbury, slowly, "must have been put among the old papers by mistake. Miss Delmar would remember; we might call her apartment and ask her."

"Hardly necessary," observed Weston. "An insurance policy could have no bearing on the matter of the Lone Tiger."

The commissioner changed that opinion, as soon as he had given it. Cadbury had opened the insurance policy; from between its pages dropped some other sheets of paper. Cadbury caught them as they struck his lap; impatiently motioning other hands away, he began to read them.

Suddenly, Cadbury's eyes went very wide. They showed an avid spark through his dark spectacles. Rising from his chair, he clutched the papers close to his body with one scrawny hand, while his other thrust back the shaggy hair that had trailed mop-like toward his glasses.

"What a fool I've been!" exclaimed Cadbury hoarsely. Then, with a sharp cluck of glee: "Tell me, Mr. Mileson. What is the nature of this reward that you have offered?"

"One hundred thousand dollars," returned Mileson, "for proof leading to the capture of the Lone Tiger, dead or alive."

Cadbury licked his tight-drawn lips.

"You regard Beak Barlett as the Lone Tiger," he asserted, "but you are going only on the unsupported statement of Fred Treefe. You cannot regard that as conclusive."

"Without proof—no," agreed Mileson. "Furthermore, Treefe was in my employ, and therefore ineligible for the reward."

"Then the reward is still open?"

"Certainly! The money is on that table, in the metal box that lies there."

Cadbury swung triumphantly to Weston and Cardona, waving the papers that he held.

"You heard?" he demanded. "That is why I am giving these documents to Mr. Mileson. The fact that Treefe saw them tonight means nothing. They belonged to me and Treefe knew it. Treefe may be dead"—Cadbury shook his head sorrowfully—"but he was a sharp one."

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Milesen reached for the papers, saying as he did: "If this proof is satisfactory, the money goes to you, Mr. Cadbury."

OVER Milesen's shoulders, Weston and Cardona saw that the papers were letters; one in longhand, which Joe recognized immediately as Kremp's writing. Cardona produced one of the letters that Kremp had written to his aunt, so that the two could be compared.

The note was undated; it was addressed to Milesen, and it stated:

DEAR SIR: In return for a suitable reward, I can supply you with important information regarding the actual leader of the Tiger Mob. If you are interested, insert an ad in the personal column of the Classic, addressing it with my initial.

K.

The next letter, typewritten, was a month old by its date. It explained, in part, why Kremp's own letter had not been mailed. It was addressed to Kremp, and it was signed by Beak Barlett.

The letter stated that if Kremp would call at the Club Carioca, Beak would pay him the thousand dollars that he "owed for services rendered," and that he was sure "another deal could be arranged." But there was another letter, from Beak to Kremp, dated the day before Kremp's death. It stated:

DEAR KREMP: You know why I've been handing you dough. I haven't forgotten the crack you made, one time, about how old Milesen would pay plenty if he knew I ran the Tiger Mob.

You were right. The old guy has got the same idea. But I've handed you plenty to forget it. Don't let that reward stuff throw you. Get rid of this letter and keep your trap buttoned, or you'll be paid off with something different than dough.

The second typewritten letter, like the first, was signed with Beak's usual signature: "J. F. Barlett." Cardona compared those signatures with Beak's driver's license, which had been found in the big-shot's pocket. They matched.

"Something comes back to me," recalled Cadbury. "Kremp was in my office the day before he was murdered. That file drawer was open. He must have put the papers in it himself."

"Hidden in the insurance policy," nodded Milesen, "so they would not be noticed, yet would be safe."

Both Weston and Cardona agreed. It was the commissioner who added:

"It is fortunate that Kremp kept the letter he originally intended to send you, Milesen. It shows his intent to expose the Lone Tiger."

"Barlett's letters are sufficient," returned Milesen. He arose, stepped over to the table that bore the metal box. "This is yours, Mr. Cadbury, with one suggestion. Kremp had an aunt; she should be entitled to a share of the reward. Would you be willing to pay her ten thousand dollars?"

"Indeed, yes," returned Cadbury. "In appreciation of your generosity, Mr. Milesen."

"Then I shall add an equal sum. As for Treefe, it is possible, I regret to admit, that he may have intended to filch those letters and claim the reward by proxy. Nevertheless, he did his part when the test came. I shall

provide for his family."

THE box with the hundred thousand dollars under his arm, Cadbury began to bow his way toward the door. He stopped suddenly, a worried expression on his face.

"About my secretary, Miss Delmar," he said. "Somehow, I cannot understand why she has not returned to her apartment. I wish, inspector"—he was turning to Cardona—"that you would call her apartment, and if she does not answer, begin a search for her. Perhaps—"

Cadbury's eyes had noted the row of faces along the wall. Wounded thugs were exchanging shifty looks. With a sharp exclamation, Cadbury pointed. Cardona wheeled around.

"Out with it!" snapped Joe, catching the stir among the crooks. "What do you know about the dame?"

"It was Goofer that snatched her," pleaded a thug. "We wasn't in on it. He pulled it before he come here."

"And who helped him?"

"Slim and Hoppy. The Shadow must have got them. But if the girl ain't back, they croaked her!"

Cadbury clutched Cardona's arm.

"Start the search at once!" he pleaded. "Look!" He held up the box containing the reward money. "I offer any of this cash, all of it—a price up to one hundred thousand dollars—for her safe return!"

A calm, modulated voice spoke from the hallway—a girl's voice, that said in biting tone:

"That will be unnecessary, Mr. Cadbury!"

Facing the door, Cadbury saw Marion Delmar. His droopy face contorted, as his mouth went wide. It wasn't the sight of Marion, however, that made him back away. In the hallway behind the girl, stood a shape in black.

The Shadow!

CHAPTER XX. SETTLED SCORES

TO all witnesses except The Shadow and Marion Delmar, Cadbury's sudden change of front was unexplainable, until he had completed a series of very rapid moves. Noting that Marion partly blocked the doorway, Cadbury wheeled away, making for the wall beside the door.

As he went, he whipped his hand to his hip pocket, producing a gun with snakelike speed. With an upward sweep of his forearm, he brushed off his blue glasses and swung about, aiming his gun along the line of the wall, to cover the doorway.

When the spectacles struck the floor, they made a peculiar sight. Large-framed, with a wide, thick metal bridge, their use had never been to improve Cadbury's eyesight. In fact, the blue lenses had bothered him; that was why he had so suddenly flung the glasses away.

Affixed to the metal bridge was a flesh-colored piece of metal, bent like an inverted U. With the glasses in

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use, that pink-painted metal became an integral part of Cadbury's face, so close-fitted that its falseness could not be observed. The metal addition was a false bridge for Cadbury's nose.

Without it, Cadbury's profile was completely changed. A gap appeared beneath his bulgy forehead. His nose, which, with its fake addition, had looked long but straight, became a hooked beak. No longer needing to keep his features lengthened, Cadbury threw off his droopy expression. His lips, their compression gone, were thick and ugly.

The silhouette that his face cast on the wall was far coarser, more vulturous, than that of Beak Barlett. To Joseph Mileson, sight of both face and silhouette stirred memories that made him forget the profile of Beak Barlett, as he had seen it on the asphalt. It was Mileson who cried, with a conviction that wiped out all previous guesses:

"The Lone Tiger!"

Self-revealed, the Lone Tiger was out to kill. Had he completed his quick change of face a second sooner, he would have found Marion Delmar a target for his gun. But the girl was whipped from harm before Cadbury could fire. From the hallway, The Shadow whirled her into outer safety.

Diving sideways, Cadbury fired a wild shot, hoping to clip The Shadow. Too deep in the hallway to be reached by that first bullet, The Shadow spurted an answering shot that should have dropped the maddened Tiger. All that saved Cadbury was the metal box he clutched. He was shifting it as he sprang; its side came into the path of The Shadow's bullet.

Deflected, the slug from the .45 failed to complete its mission, and Cadbury, loping across the room, was beyond a filing cabinet, away from The Shadow's present aim. His one danger was from others: Weston, Cardona and the two detectives; but Cadbury settled that, with a shout to the row of wounded thugs:

"The hundred grand! We split it, if we make a getaway!"

THOUGH unarmed, the mobbies took the bait. They piled for their captors. Wrestling with the two detectives, they beat off others who tried to suppress them. Occasionally a gunshot muffled close to a crook's body, announced that there would be one less claimant for a share of the hundred thousand dollars.

But the remaining thugs did not care. They were counting on the Lone Tiger to defeat The Shadow and then clear the way.

Across the center of the room, a strange duel was in progress. The Shadow had wheeled in from the door, taking a vantage point quite as good as Cadbury's, in a corner diagonally opposite. His position was behind the big door of Mileson's safe, which the millionaire had left wide open.

Bullets clanged filing cabinet and safe, as the two combatants took wary shots. At first, it seemed The Shadow's policy to prolong the fray; for once the thugs were settled, other men would help snare the Lone Tiger. But in the midst of that sniping duel, The Shadow saw a coming disaster.

One crook had grabbed a detective's gun; in a few seconds, the husky thug would have it. After that, anyone might be a victim: Mileson, Weston, Cardona. For the fight would no longer be an attempt at suppressing unarmed thugs. It would become an open battle, with shots on both sides.

Marion was safe. She had kept going in the direction that The Shadow sent her. She was under a steel desk, watching the progress of the duel. Keeping where Cadbury wouldn't see her, the girl was judging the situation

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by watching The Shadow.

The cloaked fighter saw the intensity of Marion's gaze, realized how strained she was after the evening's ordeal. Her nerve, under this new emergency, had reached a breaking point. Upon that keen guess, The Shadow based his rapid strategy.

Swinging out from behind the safe door, he jabbed a shot at Cadbury's improvised fort, then ducked from sight. The Tiger's gun spoke in quick reply, as the cloaked figure whisked away. Instantly, The Shadow slumped. As he sprawled, one flinging arm knocked off his slouch hat, sent it rolling out from cover.

Swaying, wavering, on one knee, The Shadow looked ready to topple in that same direction. The sight was too much for Marion. She gave a piercing scream, in the frantic hope that someone else could aid before The Shadow fell, a helpless target. The girl's cry cut high above all other din, and Cadbury heard it. The master crook thought he understood. He bounded from behind the filing cabinet. More than halfway across the room, he saw The Shadow crumpled past the edge of the safe door. The new angle of fire offered opportunity to the Lone Tiger. Halting his drive, he aimed point-blank.

It was swift, that move. One instant, Cadbury was leaping; the next, he had stopped. One moment more, he had his aim; another meant a trigger tug. That speed, however, was wasted against an adversary who lay with waiting gun already aimed for a spot where he knew that a living target would appear.

Such was The Shadow's situation. He fired before Cadbury could press his trigger. This time, there was no intervening box of metal. Cadbury had the swag beneath his arm, never thinking, in his exuberance, that it would be better placed in front of his heart.

Upon the position of that box depended one simple question: whether Cadbury would fall wounded, or dead. With the target wide open, The Shadow took the latter choice. His bullet drilled the murderer's heart. As Cadbury's body settled on the floor, The Shadow came to his feet and drove in to settle the minor fray. His hard slugging gun hand downed the thug who had finally gained a revolver, before the crook had time to use it.

Another of the mobbies, about to bash a chair over Cardona's skull, was halted when a black-cloaked avalanche struck him.

Finishing that drive, The Shadow reached the door. He stood there, the same figure in black that Joseph Mileson, gazing steadfastly, remembered as a rescuer on a night two years ago. Then, as others looked toward the door, they saw that cloaked form blend with gloom beyond it.

The room caught the weird echoes of a shivery laugh—a knell for the Lone Tiger, lifeless on the floor; yet a tone that carried mockery for the sullen thugs who had been smothered in their effort to side with the head criminal.

To those who had fought for justice, the strange mirth brought a note of triumph. It betokened The Shadow's victory over a foe whose cunning brain had devised the superlative in crime. For David Cadbury, alias the Lone Tiger, had actually collected the reward offered for himself, and would have carried it safely with him, but for the intervention of The Shadow!

Thanks to that same avenger, The Shadow, Cadbury had lost the wrong reward, to receive the right one. A single bullet that had marked the end of the Lone Tiger.

The Lone Tiger

AROUND a table in Mileson's study, a rescued group listened, later, to the details that pieced together Cadbury's strange career. It was Joe Cardona who summed up the story, although there were gaps that the ace inspector did not completely bridge.

"He was lying low, Cadbury was," declaimed Cardona, "with only three men knowing who he was. One was Kremp—he had him working for him, but we were too dumb to realize it—and another was Erwig, who was where Cadbury couldn't find him. The third"—Cardona spoke ruefully—"was Fred Treefe.

"Cadbury kept an eye on Kremp, because he probably didn't trust him. When Goofer found out that Kremp had been with the Tiger Mob, and tried to make him squeal, Cadbury was on deck and murdered the guy."

Marion, listening, remembered how she had tried to call Cadbury from the hotel, but had received no answer.

"Next came Erwig," resumed Cardona. "You got his letter, Mr. Mileson, and gave him the signal he wanted. But when he phoned here, it was Treefe that answered. That's when we should have guessed that Treefe was in it, like The Shadow did.

"Treefe must have told Erwig that he'd have you call him back. Erwig told him where to call, and Treefe phoned the dope to Cadbury while he was pretending to be checking with the telephone company. Not getting his call like he expected, Erwig started out to try and get you again; but Cadbury was there by that time."

Cardona paused in his story, while a visitor was announced. It was Lamont Cranston, who had at last received Weston's message. Shaking his head, when Cardona wanted to begin the story over again, Cranston joined the group, saying that he could hear the first details later.

"Don't forget," reminded Cardona, "that Treefe had seen Erwig's letter and could look at skywriters, too. You made it easy for Treefe, Mr. Mileson, when you had him go to see Cadbury, regarding Kremp. From then on, none of his visits caused suspicion. Cadbury's talk of not liking Treefe was all hokum."

"But where," queried Mileson, "does Beak Barlett enter?"

"Beak had an idea of his own," declared Cardona. "He knew he could get hold of Goofer through Korza. He figured it would be hot stuff to send Goofer in here to grab the reward money. Beak acted so wise that Goofer took him for the Lone Tiger, and told the mob it was the Tiger they were working for.

"Somehow, Treefe got wise that something was up. He went around to see Beak, and then told Cadbury. They didn't know that a raid was coming here; but they hatched a swell stunt. Cadbury figured they could frame it so Beak would appear to be the Lone Tiger. Then Cadbury could prove it and collect the dough."

Mileson was stroking his chin. He couldn't fathom how Treefe had picked out Beak, until Cranston remarked:

"You must have given yourself away, Mr. Mileson, that time when you asked Treefe about Beak and how he acquired his nickname. Treefe realized, then, that you must once have seen Cadbury's face and noticed its hooked profile. Learning that fact from Treefe, Cadbury saw the need for important measures.

Mileson gave an understanding nod.

"Tonight," concluded Cardona, "it was Goofer's mob that went up to Cadbury's apartment to grab you, Miss Delmar. Cadbury heard you sneak in, and trapped you. He was afraid you'd look in the desk and find the letters that he and Treefe had just fixed.

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"They were forgeries, those letters. One from a sample of Kremp's writing; the others from letters that Treefe must have sneaked when he was in seeing Beak. But when Goofer shoved in, Cadbury slid out. Hearing Goofer say what he was going to do with you, Cadbury was delighted."

A FAINT smile showed on Cranston's lips. It denoted The Shadow's approval. Cardona was doing very well.

Marion, too, was smiling.

"I'm glad he didn't guess what was really going to happen," she said. "When I was put in that other car, I found out that my new captors were working for The Shadow. When I met him later, he told me that he had been with Goofer, passing as a crook called Slim.

"It was Slim who talked the other crook, Hoppy, into going to the parking lot where the agents waited. The cab that had followed us was empty, and Slim was the first to run back and enter it. When he came out the other door, to meet Hoppy, he was no longer Slim. He was The Shadow."

Cardona nodded. Remarkable though Marion's account was, it fitted The Shadow's ways of action.

"There's only one thing I'd like to know," declared Joe, thumping the table. "What gave The Shadow the hunch that Beak Barlett wasn't the Lone Tiger? Beak was big enough to be, for he bumped that Walter Korza. We just got a tip-off, a while ago, that Korza's body was in a pit under a fake elevator; and we found it there, all right."

"Perhaps the explanation is quite simple." The suggestion came from Cranston. "Suppose, inspector, that on a certain night—say the one when Erwig was murdered—someone had reported to The Shadow that Beak was in his office at the time. Beak didn't have a secret exit, did he?"

"No," replied Cardona. "Only the elevator pit. But there's no way out of it."

"There were many shots at the time of Erwig's murder," added Cranston. "So we can assume that The Shadow was there and met the Lone Tiger. From his other information, he would have therefore known that Beak was not the master criminal."

Cardona sat silent, nodding. Then, rising, he spread his arms and said:

"That cleans it up. There's nothing more to settle!"

"Just one thing more," corrected Miles. He, too, had risen from his chair. "The matter of the reward."

For a moment, Cardona stared, incredulous; then exclaimed:

"You're going to pay it to The Shadow?"

"No," replied Miles, seriously. "I doubt that The Shadow would claim it. Should he need money to continue his career against crime, I shall be ready to furnish it, whenever he requests, to the extent of all my millions.

"The reward is a separate matter. It should go to the person concerned in this case, whose individual effort was most instrumental in proving David Cadbury to be the Lone Tiger. I feel sure that all present will agree with my choice."

The Lone Tiger

Lifting the bullet-dented box containing the fortune, Joseph Mileson extended it to the astonished girl who faced him across the table, Marion Delmar.

Marion wondered, as she stammered her amazed thanks, if she should accept that overwhelming gift. Her eyes met approval, wherever she turned her gaze. Finally, they settled on the eyes of Lamont Cranston.

In those eyes, Marion saw a singular burn—a steady glow that she had never witnessed in any gaze except The Shadow's. That revelation called for silence; and Marion nodded.

In turn, The Shadow nodded, but his eyes had lowered toward the box. From that new gaze, the girl understood. The reward was rightfully hers.

The Shadow had decided!

THE END