

# **The Phantom Motor**

Jacques Futrelle



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# The Phantom Motor

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## Section 1

Two dazzling white eyes bulged through the night as an automobile swept suddenly around a curve in the wide road and laid a smooth, glaring pathway ahead. Even at the distance the rhythmical crackling–chug informed Special Constable Baker that it was a gasoline car, and the headlong swoop of the unblinking lights toward him made him instantly aware of the fact that the speed ordinance of Yarborough County was being a little more than broken – it was being obliterated.

Now the County of Yarborough was a wide expanse of summer estates and superbly kept roads, level as a floor and offered distracting temptations to the dangerous pastime of speeding. But against this was the fact that the county was particular about its speed laws, so particular in fact that had stationed half a hundred men upon its highways to abate the nuisance. Incidentally it had found that keeping record of the infractions of the law was an excellent source of income.

'Forty miles an hour if an inch,' remarked Baker to himself.

He arose from a camp–stool where he was wont to make himself comfortable from six o'clock until midnight on watch, picked up his lantern, turned up the light and stepped down to the edge of the road. He always remained on watch at the same place – at one end of a long stretch which autoists had unanimously dubbed The Trap. The Trap was singularly tempting – perfectly macadamized road bed lying between two tall stone walls with only enough of a sinuous twist in it to make each end invisible from the other. Another man, Special Constable Bowman, was stationed at the other end of The Trap and there was telephonic communication between the points, enabling the men to check each other and incidentally, if one failed to stop a car or get its number, the other would. That at least was the theory.

So now, with the utmost confidence, Baker waited beside the road. The approaching lights were only a couple of hundred yards away. At the proper instant he would raise his lantern, the car would stop, its occupants would protest and then the county would add a mite to its general fund for making the roads even better and tempting autoists still more. Or sometimes the cars didn't stop. In that event it was part of the Special Constables' duties to get the number as it flew past, and reference to the monthly automobile register would give the name of the owner. An extra fine was always imposed in such cases.

Without the slightest diminution of speed the car came hurtling on toward him and swung wide so as to take the straight path of The Trap at full speed. At the psychological instant Baker stepped out into the road and waved his lantern.

'Stop!' he commanded.

The crackling–chug came on, heedless of the cry. The auto was almost upon him before he leaped out of the road – a feat at which he was particularly expert– then it flashed by and plunged into The Trap. Baker was, at the instant, so busily engaged in getting out of the way that he couldn't read the number, but he was not disconcerted because he knew there was no escape from The Trap. On the one side a solid stone wall eight feet high marked the eastern boundary of the John Phelps Stocker country estate, and on the other side a stone fence nine feet high marked the western boundary of the Thomas Q. Rogers country estate. There was no turnout, no place, no possible way for an auto to get out of The Trap except at one of the two ends guarded by the special constables. So Baker, perfectly confident of results, seized the phone.

'Car coming through sixty miles an hour,' he bawled. 'It won't stop. I missed the number. Look out.'

'All right,' answered Special Constable Bowman.

For ten, fifteen, twenty minutes Baker waited expecting a call from Bowman at the other end. It didn't come and finally he picked up the phone again. No answer. He rang several times, battered the box and did some tricks with the receiver. Still no answer. Finally he began to feel worried. He remembered that at that same post one Special Constable had been badly hurt by a reckless chauffeur who refused to stop or turn his car when the officer stepped out into the road. In his mind's eye he saw Bowman now lying helpless, perhaps badly injured. If the car held the pace– at which it passed him it would be certain death to whoever might be unlucky enough to get in its path.

With these thoughts running through his head and with genuine solicitude for Bowman, Baker at last walked

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on along the road of The Trap toward the other end. The feeble rays of the lantern showed the unbroken line of the cold, stone walls on each side. There was no shrubbery of any sort, only a narrow strip of grass close to the wall. The more Baker considered the matter the more anxious he became and he increased his pace a little. As he turned a gentle curve he saw a lantern in the distance coming slowly toward him. It was evidently being carried by someone who was looking carefully along each side of the road.

'Hello!' called Baker, when the lantern came within distance. 'That you, Bowman?'

'Yes,' came the hallooed response.

The lanterns moved on and met. Baker's solicitude for the other constable was quickly changed to curiosity.

'What're you looking for?' he asked.

'That auto,' replied Bowman. 'It didn't come through my end and I thought perhaps there had been an accident so I walked along looking for it. Haven't seen anything.'

'Didn't come through your end?' repeated Baker in amazement. 'Why it must have. It didn't come back my way and I haven't passed it so it must have gone through.'

'Well, it didn't,' declared Bowman conclusively. 'I was on the lookout for it, too, standing beside the road. There hasn't been a car through my end in an hour.'

Special Constable Baker raised his lantern until the rays fell full upon the face of Special Constable Bowman and for an instant they stared each at the other. Suspicion glowed from the keen, avaricious eyes of Baker.

'How much did they give you to let em' by?' he asked.

'Give me?' exclaimed Bowman, in righteous indignation. 'Give me nothing. I haven't seen a car.'

A slight sneer curled the lips of Special Constable Baker.

'Of course that's all right to report at headquarters,' he said, 'but I happen to know that the auto came in here, that it didn't go back my way, that it couldn't get out except at the ends, therefore it went your way.' He was silent for a moment. 'And whatever you got, Jim, seems to me I ought to get half.'

Then the worm – i.e., Bowman – turned. A polite curl appeared about his lips and was permitted to show through the grizzled mustache.

I guess,' he said deliberately, 'you think because you do that, everybody else does. I haven't seen any autos.'

'Don't I always give you half, Jim?' Baker demanded, almost pleadingly.

'Well I haven't seen any car and that's all there is to it. If it didn't go back your way there wasn't any car.' There was a pause; Bowman was framing up something particularly unpleasant. 'You're seeing things, that's what's the matter.'

So was sown discord between two officers of the County of Yarborough. After awhile they separated with mutual sneers and open derision and went back to their respective posts. Each was thoughtful in his own way. At five minutes of midnight when they went off duty Baker called Bowman on the phone again.

'I've been thinking this thing over, Jim, and I guess it would be just as well if we didn't report it or say anything about it when we go in,' said Baker slowly. 'It seems foolish and if we did say anything about it it would give the boys the laugh on us.'

'Just as you say,' responded Bowman.

Relations between Special Constable Baker and Special Constable Bowman were strained on the morrow. But they walked along side by side to their respective posts. Baker stopped at his end of The Trap; Bowman didn't even look around.

'You'd better keep your eyes open tonight, Jim,' Baker called as a last word.

'I had 'em open last night,' was the disgusted retort.

Seven, eight, nine o'clock passed. Two or three cars had gone through The Trap at moderate speed and one had been warned by Baker. At a few minutes past nine he was staring down the road which led into The Trap when he saw something that brought him quickly to his feet. It was a pair of dazzling white eyes, far away. He recognized them – the mysterious car of the night before.

'I'll get it this time,' he muttered grimly, between closed teeth.

Then when the onrushing car was a full two hundred yards away Baker planted himself in the middle of the road and began to swing the lantern. The auto seemed, if anything, to be traveling even faster than on the previous night. At a hundred yards Baker began to shout. Still the car didn't lessen speed, merely rushed on. Again at the psychological instant Baker jumped. The auto whisked by as the chauffeur gave it a dextrous twist to prevent

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running down the Special Constable.

Safely out of its way Baker turned and stared after it, trying to read the number. He could see there was a number because a white board swung from the tail axle, but he could not make out the figures. Dust and a swaying car conspired to defeat him. But he did see that there were four persons in the car dimly silhouetted against the light reflected from the road. It was useless, of course, to conjecture as to sex for even as he looked, the fast receding car swerved around the turn and was lost to sight.

Again he rushed to the telephone; Bowman responded promptly.

'That car's gone in again,' Baker called. 'Ninety miles an hour. Look out!'

'I'm looking,' responded Bowman.

'Let me know what happens,' Baker shouted.

With the receiver to his ear he stood for ten or fifteen minutes, then Bowman hallooed from the other end.

'Well?' Baker responded. 'Get 'em?'

'No car passed through and there's none in sight,' said Bowman.

'But it went in,' insisted Baker.

'Well it didn't come out here,' declared Bowman. 'Walk along the road till I meet you and look out for it.'

Then was repeated the search of the night before. When the two men met in the middle of The Trap their faces were blank – blank as the high stone walls which stared at them from each side.

'Nothing!' said Bowman.

'Nothing!' echoed Baker.

Special Constable Bowman perched his head on one side and scratched his grizzly chin.

'You're not trying to put up a job on me?' he inquired coldly. 'You did `see a car?'

'I certainly did,' declared Baker, and a belligerent tone underlay his manner. 'I certainly saw it, Jim, and if it didn't come out your end, why – why –'

He paused and glanced quickly behind him. The action inspired a sudden similar caution on Bowman's part.

'Maybe – maybe –' said Bowman after a minute, 'maybe it's a – a spook auto?'

'Well it must be,' mused Baker. 'You know as well as I do that no car can get out of this trap except at the ends. That car came in here, it isn't here now and it didn't go out your end. Now where is it?'

Bowman stared at him a minute, picked up his lantern, shook his head solemnly and wandered along the road back to his post. On his way he glanced around quickly, apprehensively, three times – Baker did the same thing four times.

On the third night the phantom car appeared and disappeared precisely as it had done previously. Again Baker and Bowman met half way between posts and talked it over.

'I'll tell you what, Baker,' said Bowman in conclusion, 'maybe you're just imagining that you see a car. Maybe if I was at your end I couldn't see it.'

Special Constable Baker was distinctly hurt at the insinuation.

'All right, Jim,' he said at last, 'if you think that way about it we'll swap posts tomorrow night. We won't have to say anything about it when we report.'

'Now that's the talk,' exclaimed Bowman with an air approaching enthusiasm. 'I'll bet I don't see it.'

On the following night Special Constable Bowman made himself comfortable on Special Constable Baker's camp-stool. And he saw the phantom auto. It came upon him with a rush and a crackling-chug of engine and then sped on leaving him nerveless. He called Baker over the wire and Baker watched half an hour for the phantom. It didn't appear.

Ultimately all things reach the newspapers. So with the story of the phantom auto. Hutchinson Hatch, reporter, smiled incredulously when his City Editor laid aside an inevitable cigar and tersely stated the known facts. The known facts in this instance were meager almost to the disappearing point. They consisted merely of a corroborated statement that an automobile, solid and tangible enough to all appearances, rushed into The Trap each night and totally disappeared.

But there was enough of the bizarre about it to pique the curiosity, to make one wonder, so Hatch journeyed down to Yarborough County, an hour's ride from the city, met and talked to Baker and Bowman and then, in broad daylight strolled along The Trap twice. It was a leisurely, thorough investigation with the end in view of finding out how an automobile once inside might get out again without going out either end.



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On the first trip through Hatch paid particular attention to the Thomas Q. Rogers side of the road. The wall, nine feet high, was an unbroken line of stone with not the slightest indication of a secret wagon-way through it anywhere. Secret wagon-way! Hatch smiled at the phrase. But when he reached the other end – Bowman's end – of The Trap he was perfectly convinced of one thing – that no automobile had left the hard, macadamized road to go over, under or through the Thomas Q. Rogers wall. Returning, still leisurely, he paid strict attention to the John Phelps Stocker side, and when he reached the other end – Baker's end – he was convinced of another thing – that no automobile had left the road to go over, under or through the John Phelps Stocker wall. The only opening of any sort was a narrow footpath, not more than 16 inches wide.

Hatch saw no shrubbery along the road, nothing but a strip of scrupulously cared for grass, therefore the phantom auto could not be hidden any time, night or day. Hatch failed, too, to find any holes in the road so the automobile didn't go down through the earth. At this point he involuntarily glanced up at the blue sky above. Perhaps, he thought whimsically, the automobile was a strange sort of bird, or – or – and he stopped suddenly.

'By George!' he exclaimed. 'I wonder if—'

And the remainder of the afternoon he spent systematically making inquiries. He went from house to house, the Stocker house, the Rogers house, both of which were at the time unoccupied, then to cottage, cabin and hut in turn. But he didn't seem overlaid with information when he joined Special Constable Baker at his end of The Trap that evening about seven o'clock.

Together they rehearsed the strange points of the mystery as the shadows grew about them until finally the darkness was so dense that Baker's lantern was the only bright spot in sight. As the chill of the evening closed in a certain awed tone crept into their voices. Occasionally an auto bowled along and each time as it hove in sight Hatch glanced at Baker questioningly. And each time Baker shook his head. And each time, too, he called Bowman, in this manner accounting for every car that went into The Trap.

'It'll come all right,' said Baker after a long silence, 'and I'll know it the minute it rounds the curve coming toward us. I'd know its two lights in a thousand.'

They sat still and smoked. After awhile two dazzling white lights burst into view far down the road and Baker, in excitement, dropped his pipe.

'That's her,' he declared. 'Look at her coming!'

And Hatch did look at her coming. The speed of the mysterious car was such as to make one look. Like the eyes of a giant the two lights came on toward them, and Baker perfunctorily went through the motions of attempting to stop it. The car fairly whizzed past them and the rush of air which tugged at their coats was convincing enough proof of its solidity. Hatch strained his eyes to read the number as the auto flashed past. But it was hopeless. The tail of the car was lost in an eddying whirl of dust.

'She certainly does travel,' commented Baker, softly.

'She does,' Hatch assented.

Then, for the benefit of the newspaper man, Baker called Bowman on the wire.

'Car's coming again,' he shouted. 'Look out and let me know!'

Bowman, at his end, waited twenty minutes, then made the usual report – the car had not passed. Hutchinson Hatch was a calm, cold, dispassionate young man but now a queer, creepy sensation stole along his spinal column. He lighted a cigarette and pulled himself together with a jerk.

'There's one way to find out where it goes,' he declared at last, emphatically, 'and that's to place a man in the middle just beyond the bend of The Trap and let him wait and see. If the car goes up, down, or evaporates he'll see and can tell us.'

Baker looked at him curiously.

'I'd hate to be the man in the middle,' he declared. There was something of uneasiness in his manner.

'I rather think I would, too,' responded Hatch.

On the following evening, consequent upon the appearance of the story of the phantom auto in Hatch's paper, there were twelve other reporters on hand. Most of them were openly, flagrantly sceptical; they even insinuated that no one had seen an auto. Hatch smiled wisely.

'Wait!' he advised with deep conviction.

So when the darkness fell that evening the newspaper men of a great city had entered into a conspiracy to capture the phantom auto. Thirteen of them, making a total of fifteen men with Baker and Bowman, were on hand

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and they agreed to a suggestion for all to take positions along the road of The Trap from Baker's post to Bowman's, watch for the auto, see what happened to it and compare notes afterwards. So they scattered themselves along a few hundred feet apart and waited. That night the phantom auto didn't appear at all and twelve reporters jeered at Hutchinson Hatch and told him to light his pipe with the story. And next night when Hatch and Baker and Bowman alone were watching the phantom auto reappeared.

## Section 2

Like a child with a troublesome problem, Hatch took the entire matter and laid it before Professor Augustus S. F. X. Van Dusen, the master brain. The Thinking Machine, with squint eyes turned steadily upward and long, slender fingers pressed tip to tip, listened to the end.

'Now I know of course that automobiles don't fly,' Hatch burst out savagely in conclusion, 'and if this one doesn't fly, there is no earthly way for it to get out of The Trap, as they call it. I went over the thing carefully – I even went so far as to examine the ground and the tops of the walls to see if a runway had been let down for the auto to go over.'

The Thinking Machine squinted at him inquiringly.

'Are you sure you saw an automobile?' he demanded irritably.

'Certainly I saw it,' blurted the reporter. 'I not only saw it– I smelled it. Just to convince myself that it was real I tossed my cane in front of the thing and it smashed it to toothpicks.'

'Perhaps, then, if everything is as you say, the auto actually does fly,' remarked the scientist.

The reporter stared into the calm, inscrutable face of The Thinking Machine, fearing first that he had not heard aright. Then he concluded that he had.

'You mean,' he inquired eagerly, 'that the phantom may be an auto– aeroplane affair, and that it actually does fly?'

It's not at all impossible,' commented the scientist.

'I had an idea something like that myself,' Hatch explained, 'and questioned every soul within a mile or so but I didn't get anything.'

The perfect stretch of road there might be the very place for some daring experimenter to get up sufficient speed to soar a short distance in a light machine,' continued the scientist.

'Light machine?' Hatch repeated. 'Did I tell you that this car had four people in it?'

'Four people!' exclaimed the scientist. 'Dear me! Dear me! That makes it very different. Of course four people would be too great a lift for an –'

'For ten minutes he sat silent, and tiny, cobwebby lines appeared in his dome–like brow. Then he arose and passed into the adjoining room. After a moment Hatch heard the telephone bell jingle. Five minutes later The Thinking Machine appeared, and scowled upon him unpleasantly.

'I suppose what you really want to learn is if the car is a – a material one and to whom it belongs?' he queried.

'That's it,' agreed the reporter, 'and of course, why it does what it does, and how it gets out of The Trap.'

'Do you happen to know a fast, long–distance bicycle rider?' demanded the scientist abruptly.

'A dozen of them,' replied the reporter promptly. 'I think I see the idea, but –'

'You haven't the faintest inkling of the idea,' declared The Thinking Machine positively. 'If you can arrange with a fast rider who can go a distance – it might be thirty, forty, fifty miles – we may end this little affair without difficulty.'

Under these circumstances Professor Augustus S. F. X. Van Dusen, Ph.D., LL.D., F.R.S., M.D., etc., etc., scientist and logician, met the famous Jimmie Thalauer, the world's champion long distance bicyclist. He held every record from five miles up to and including six hours, had twice won the six–day race and was, altogether, a master in his field. He came in chewing a toothpick. There were introductions.

'You ride the bicycle?' inquired the crusty little scientist.

'Well, some,' confessed the champion modestly with a wink at Hatch.

'Can you keep up with an automobile for a distance of, say, thirty or forty miles?'

'I can keep up with anything that ain't got wings,' was the response.

'Well, to tell you the truth,' volunteered The Thinking Machine, 'there is a growing belief that this particular automobile has wings. However, if you can keep up with it–'

'Ah, quit your kiddin',' said the champion, easily. 'I can ride rings around anything on wheels. I'll start behind it and beat it where it's going.'

The Thinking Machine examined the champion, Jimmie Thalauer, as a curiosity. In the seclusion of his

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laboratory he had never had an opportunity of meeting just such another worldly young person.

'How fast can you ride, Mr Thalhauer?' he asked at last.

'I'm ashamed to tell you,' confided the champion in a hushed voice. 'I can ride so fast that I scare myself.' He paused a moment. 'But it seems to me,' he said, 'if there's thirty or forty miles to do I ought to do it on a motorcycle.'

'Now that's just the point,' explained The Thinking Machine. 'A motorcycle makes noise and if it could have been used we would have hired a fast automobile. This proposition briefly is: I want you to ride without lights behind an automobile which may also run without lights and find out where it goes. No occupant of the car must suspect that it is followed.'

'Without lights?' repeated the champion. 'Gee! Rubber shoe, eh?'

The Thinking Machine looked his bewilderment.

'Yes, that's it,' Hatch answered for him.

'I guess it's good for a four column head? Hunh?' inquired the champion. 'Special pictures posed by the champion? Hunh?'

'Yes,' Hatch replied.

'"Tracked on a Bicycle" sounds good to me. Hunh?'

Hatch nodded.

So arrangements were concluded and then and there The Thinking Machine gave definite and conclusive instructions to the champion. While these apparently bore broadly on the problem in hand they conveyed absolutely no inkling of his plan to the reporter. At the end the champion arose to go.

'You're a most extraordinary young man, Mr Thalhauer,' commented The Thinking Machine, not without admiration for the sturdy, powerful figure.

And as Hatch accompanied the champion out the door and down the steps Jimmie smiled with easy grace.

'Nutty old guy, ain't he? Hunh?'

Night! Utter blackness, relieved only by a white, ribbon-like road which winds away mistily under a starless sky. Shadowy hedges line either side and occasionally a tree thrusts itself upward out of the sombreness. The murmur of human voices in the shadows, then the crackling-chug of an engine and an automobile moves slowly, without lights, into the road. There is the sudden clatter of an engine at high speed and the car rushes away.

From the hedge comes the faint rustle of leaves as of wind stirring, then a figure moves impalpably. A moment and it becomes a separate entity; a quick movement and the creak of a leather bicycle saddle. Silently the single figure, bent low over the handlebars, moves after the car with ever increasing momentum.

Then a long, desperate race. For mile after mile, mile after mile the auto goes on. The silent cyclist has crept up almost to the rear axle and hangs there doggedly as a racer to his pace. On and on they rush together through the darkness, the chauffeur moving with a perfect knowledge of his road, the single rider behind clinging on grimly with set teeth. The powerful, piston-like legs move up and down to the beat of the engine.

At last, with dust-dry throat and stinging, aching eyes the cyclist feels the pace slacken and instantly he drops back out of sight. It is only by sound that he follows now. The car stops; the cyclist is lost in the shadows.

For two or three hours the auto stands deserted and silent. At last the voices are heard again, the car stirs, moves away and the cyclist drops in behind. Another race which leads off in another direction. Finally, from a knoll, the lights of a city are seen. Ten minutes elapse, the auto stops, the headlights flare up and more leisurely it proceeds on its way.

On the following evening The Thinking Machine and Hutchinson Hatch called upon Fielding Stanwood, President of the Fordyce National Bank. Mr Stanwood looked at them with interrogative eyes.

'We called to inform you, Mr Stanwood,' explained The Thinking Machine, 'that a box of securities, probably United States bonds, is missing from your bank.'

'What?' exclaimed Mr Stanwood, and his face paled. 'Robbery?'

'I only know the bonds were taken out of the vault tonight by Joseph

Marsh, your assistant cashier,' said the scientist, 'and that he, together with three other men, left the bank with the box and are now at— a place I can name.'

Mr Stanwood was staring at him in amazement.

'You know where they are?' he demanded.

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'I said I did,' replied the scientist, shortly.

'Then we must inform the police at once, and—'

'I don't know that there has been an actual crime,' interrupted the scientist. 'I do know that every night for a week these bonds have been taken out through the connivance of your watchman and in each instance have been returned, intact, before morning. They will be returned tonight. Therefore I would advise, if you act, not to do so until the four men return with the bonds.'

It was a singular party which met in the private office of President Stanwood at the bank just after midnight. Marsh and three companions, formally under arrest, were present as were President Stanwood, The Thinking Machine and Hatch, besides detectives. Marsh had the bonds under his arms when he was taken. He talked freely when questioned.

'I will admit,' he said without hesitating, 'that I have acted beyond my rights in removing the bonds from the vault here, but there is no ground for prosecution. I am a responsible officer of this bank and have violated no trust. Nothing is missing, nothing is stolen. Every bond that went out of the bank is here.'

'But why – why did you take the bonds?' demanded Mr Stanwood.

Marsh shrugged his shoulders.

'It's what has been called a get-rich-quick scheme,' said The Thinking Machine. 'Mr Hatch and I made some investigations today. Mr Marsh and these other three are interested in a business venture which is ethically dishonest but which is within the law. They have sought backing for the scheme amounting to about a million dollars. Those four or five men of means with whom they have discussed the matter have called each night for a week at Marsh's country place. It was necessary to make them believe that there was already a million or so in the scheme, so these bonds were borrowed and represented to be owned by themselves. They were taken to and fro between the bank and his home in a kind of an automobile. This is really what happened, based on knowledge which Mr Hatch has gathered and what I myself developed by the use of a little logic.'

And his statement of the affair proved to be correct. Marsh and the others admitted the statement to be true. It was while The Thinking Machine was homeward bound that he explained the phantom auto affair to Hatch.

'The phantom auto, as you call it,' he said, 'is the vehicle in which the bonds were moved about. The phantom idea came merely by chance. On the night the vehicle was first noticed it was rushing along— we'll say to reach Marsh's house in time for an appointment. A road map will show you that the most direct line from the bank to Marsh's was through The Trap. If an automobile should go half way through there, then out across the Stocker estate to the other road, distance would be lessened by a good five miles. This saving at first was of course valuable, so the car in which they rushed into The Trap was merely taken across the Stocker estate to the road in front.'

'But how?' demanded Hatch. 'There's no road there.'

'I learned by phone from Mr Stocker that there is a narrow walk from a very narrow foot-gate in Stocker's wall on The Trap leading through the grounds to the other road. The phantom auto wasn't really an auto at all – it was merely two motor cycles arranged with seats and a steering apparatus. The French Army has been experimenting with them. The motor cycles are, of course, separate machines and as such it was easy to trundle them through a narrow gate and across to the other road. The seats are light; they can be carried under the arm.' Is

'Oh!' exclaimed Hatch suddenly, then after a minute: 'But what did Jimmie Thalhauer do for you?'

He waited in the road at the other end of the foot-path from The Trap,' the scientist explained. 'When the auto was brought through and put together he followed it to Marsh's home and from there to the bank. The rest of it you and I worked out today. It's merely logic, Mr Hatch, logic.'

There was a pause.

'That Mr Thalhauer is really a marvelous young man, Mr Hatch, don't you think?'