



# THE RED MENACE

**Maxwell Grant**

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## CHAPTER I. A DESPERATE FLIGHT

A TAXICAB stopped at a corner in upper Manhattan. As it pulled to the curb, the passenger thrust his hand through the open window beside the driver and pressed a ten-dollar bill into the taximan's glove.

"Keep the change," came a low, quick voice with a foreign accent. "Keep the change, and drive away. Tell no one that you brought me here."

Before the astonished driver could reply, the passenger was gone. The taximan caught a glimpse of his back as the man hurried across the sidewalk and turned the corner.

It was one of those strange episodes which occur nightly in New York. The taxi driver shrugged his shoulders as he pocketed the ten-dollar bill.

As the cab drew away from the brightly lighted corner, a sedan pulled up alongside of it. The two vehicles ran along together, while unseen eyes from the sedan peered into the cab, as though seeking some one.

Then the large automobile stopped; and as the cab went on, the driver of the sedan turned his car down the street where the stranger had gone.

The block was a long one. The sedan had arrived in less than a minute after the passenger had left the cab. There was little chance that the pedestrian could reach the next corner before the pursuing car overtook him.

BUT the man had chosen a closer destination. At the very moment that the sedan had begun its chase, the man on foot stopped at a house midway in the block.

He heard the approach of the sedan as he waited for admittance to the house. Instinctively he drew his body into the protecting shadows of the doorway.

The effort to gain concealment was a failure. The eyes that peered from the sedan were too keen. An exclamation came from the car; it stopped suddenly as the driver applied the brakes.

But as the sedan's momentum ceased, the door of the house was opened, and the man on the steps was admitted.

Within the house, the hunted man gasped breathlessly as he stood in the dimly lighted hallway. He had been admitted by a dull-faced, brutal-looking servant, and this individual now studied him in a rather antagonistic manner.

"What do you want?" demanded the servant, in guttural tones.

"I must see Mr. Albion. At once!" The visitor's reply was urgent. "Tell him it is important."

"What is your name?"

"Berchik."

The servant turned and went up the stairs.

The visitor stared anxiously at the closed door. He was a heavy-set man, dark in complexion, and with a stern yet expressive face. His features showed the marks of worry.

The servant returned.

"Follow me," he said.

He led the way upstairs. They came to a front room on the second floor. The visitor was admitted, and the servant retired, closing the door behind him.

THE man called Berchik found himself in a most luxurious apartment. The decorations of the room were almost barbaric in their splendor.

A Russian wolfhound was reclining upon a magnificent Oriental rug. The huge dog arose and stretched itself; then it stalked across the room and rubbed its head against the visitor's hand. Berchik smiled as he stroked the dog's back.

Two velvet curtains parted at the left side of the room. A man entered.

He was a tall man, of courtly appearance. His hair was gray; his face was clean-shaven. His features were those of a stern, unyielding fighter; his entire appearance showed that he regarded himself as superior to other persons.

The visitor bowed as he observed the man enter.

"Your name is Berchik?"

The tall man's words came in sharp syllables, with a slight accent.

"Yes," replied the visitor, in a respectful tone.

"You asked to see me," replied the tall man. "I am Mr. Albion."

Berchik looked at the tall man, and a smile of recognition dawned upon his face.

Despite the plainness of the man's attire—he was dressed in somber black—the visitor knew that he stood in the presence of an important personage.

"I know you, sir," explained Berchik, in a respectful tone. "You are Prince Zuvor."

The tall man held up a warning hand.

"Hush!" he commanded. "Do not mention that name. It must be forgotten."

HE walked across the room, and sat in a huge armchair. He waved his hand, and Berchik took his seat opposite him.

"My name is Richard Albion," said the tall man, with a slight smile. "It is better that I should be known by that name than by my former title."

He stared anxiously about him; then pointed to the windows at the front of the room.

There were black window shades there. One was not fully drawn, and Berchik could see the bottom of an outer yellow shade.

"I am Prince Zuvor," admitted the man, in a low voice. "But you can see the precautions I take to conceal my identity and my actions. I always fear spies and intruders. As Richard Albion, I manage to avoid troubles."

Berchik nodded. He was still stroking the wolfhound, which stood beside his chair.

Prince Zuvor gazed intently at Berchik.

"I believe I recognize you," he said. "I remember you now. It is many years since you came to my palace in Petrograd, with your master -"

The tall man ended his sentence abruptly, as though loath to mention the name that was upon his lips. Berchik nodded to show that he understood.

"Your master is dead," said Prince Zuvor quietly.

"Yes," replied Berchik, in a voice choked with emotion.

"He was not so fortunate as I," continued Zuvor. "All of my wealth has been saved. He lost much; but I have heard that he managed to retain a considerable portion of his valuables."

Berchik nodded.

"That is why I have come here to-night," he said eagerly. "I am in danger, your excellency. You are the only one to whom I can turn for help."

Prince Zuvor smiled sympathetically.

"When Prince"—Berchik caught his words—"when my master died, he left me with a singular mission. I was to bring what remained of his vast wealth here to America, to divide it among men who had befriended my master when he was in trouble."

"Did you succeed?"

"Yes. After difficulties. I dealt with one man alone—the man who had been appointed by my master to divide the wealth among the others.

"But since then, I have been hounded. Agents of the Reds have been upon my trail. I have not dared to attempt an escape."

"What do they want of you? Do you still have any of your master's wealth?"

"None of it. I have some money of my own enough to enable me to escape."

"Why do they seek you then?"

"To learn the name of the man to whom I delivered the jewels," explained Berchik. "They seek to capture me, to torture me; that I may betray my trust.

"For if they learn the name of that man—a name which I alone know - they will seek to take his portion from him."

"He received more than the others?" questioned Prince Zuvor.

"Yes," replied Berchik, "he gained twice as much as any other; and he knows the names of all to whom he delivered a share."

PRINCE ZUVOR was silent. So was Berchik. Both men listened. They could hear sounds from the street outside the house the throbbing of a motor came to their ears.

Were Berchik's pursuers waiting there?

"Where do you wish to go?" asked Prince Zuvor suddenly.

"To Australia," replied Berchik. "If I can elude these Soviet agents, I can easily gain safety. Then I can communicate with the American to whom I gave the jewels."

Prince Zuvor nodded.

"He should be warned," he said. "But is it right that you should leave? He may be in danger, and may need your advice."

"It is dangerous for me to stay here," objected Berchik.

"That is true," replied Prince Zuvor. He seemed to be formulating a plan.

"Perhaps I can help you—to escape. Perhaps I can also—keep a guarding eye upon this American whom you have mentioned."

A smile of relief appeared upon Berchik's face. The Russian servant seemed to be freed of his former anxiety. His appeal to Prince Zuvor had been successful.

"What is the American's name?" questioned Prince Zuvor quietly.

"Bruce Duncan," whispered Berchik. He drew a slip of paper from his pocket, and scrawled some words upon it. "This is his address. Can I count on you to protect him, your excellency?"

"Certainly," replied Prince Zuvor, with a smile. "Now for your escape, Berchik!"

"Unknown to any one, I have devised a plan whereby I can flee from here at a moment's notice. That plan will be utilized to-night; but it will be you who will escape. You have money, you say?"

Berchik nodded.

Prince Zuvor went to a handsome mahogany writing table, and inscribed a series of directions. He passed the paper to Berchik. The servant read the words, and smiled. Prince Zuvor shook hands with Berchik, as the latter rose.

"Go!" he said. "Ivan will start you on the way to safety."

He rang the bell, and the dull-faced man entered. Berchik followed him, and was conducted to the cellar.

There, Ivan, with amazing skill, placed make-up on Berchik's face that gave an entirely different appearance to Berchik's features. Then Ivan supplied him with a new overcoat, of different pattern than his own.

Prince Zuvor's servant opened a door, and Berchik found himself in a concealed alleyway that led to the street in back of the house.

Berchik was off to safety!

HE followed the alleyway to the side of the house in back of Prince Zuvor's residence. The house was apparently deserted. But Berchik, following the directions which he had read, opened the side door and entered.

He went to the front door of the house and peered through the glass panel. A taxicab drove up. It had been summoned to this address by Prince Zuvor. Berchik hurried out and entered the cab.

As they turned the corner to the avenue, a car rolled by in the opposite direction. It was the sedan that had followed Berchik to Prince Zuvor's house. The eyes within must have spotted Berchik in spite of his disguise, for the sedan stopped suddenly.

"Hurry!" said Berchik to the driver. He had given the man an address named on the list of directions.

The cab sped rapidly onward. It turned into a side street, and Berchik left it.

He entered a small unpretentious house, which was entirely dark, and locked the door behind him. He saw the sedan draw up as the cab pulled away.

Berchik dashed through the empty house and ran out the back door into another tiny alley which did not go to the front of the house. This way led him to another street, where he found a second cab awaiting him.

He instructed the driver to take him to the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street railway station.

The sedan had lost the trail.

Berchik caught his train; one hour later, he reached a small town in Connecticut. There he went to a garage, and gave his name as Robert Jennings. The garage man brought out a small coupe. The car was an old one, but as Berchik drove away, he realized that it was in excellent running order.

A few miles outside the little town, Berchik stopped the car. Beneath the front seat, he found two New York license plates.

He removed the Connecticut plates, and threw them into the woods beside the road. He attached the New York plates and drove along.

He smiled contentedly in the darkness. His safety was now assured.

This automobile, kept in the Connecticut town under an assumed name, would enable him to reach a city named in the directions; there he would take a train for the West.

AS Berchik's car whirled along the deserted road, the fleeing man felt the first relief that he had known since he had come to America to deliver his master's wealth.

The Red agents had picked up his trail after he had given the jewels to Bruce Duncan. Since then they had played a waiting, catlike game.

Now he was safe—free from any avenging hand. He could write a warning letter to Bruce Duncan from the Middle West; and could keep on to California; then to Australia.

These thoughts were in Berchik's mind as he rounded a long curve, on the side of a hill. Below him, at the right, yawned a deep ravine.

"Prince Zuvor is clever," murmured Berchik. "This is the plan he chose for escape. They are watching him—as they watched me. But there is no danger for me now. I am safe. They cannot strike me."

He turned the wheel to the left, as the curve increased. From the back of the car he heard a slight click. He wondered what it meant. Then came a second click.

A sudden fear came over Berchik. He thrust his foot forward to the brake pedal.

But his action was too late. Before Berchik could save himself from the unknown danger, a terrific explosion came from the rear of the car.

The back of the light coupe was lifted upward as though by a giant hand. The shattered automobile hurtled forward and crashed through the fence at the side of the road.

Rolling in its plunge, the car fell over and over into the ravine below, leaving a trail of wreckage as it went. It smashed into a large tree, and its course ended there.

In ten brief seconds, the speeding automobile had become a battered hulk, and in the mass of twisted metal and broken glass lay the dead body of Berchik.

## **CHAPTER II. ONE HOUR TO LIVE**

THE young reporter glanced nervously at his wrist watch as he sat by the window in the waiting room. Nearly four o'clock. He had been waiting half an hour.

He looked out the window and studied the myriad buildings that lay below. Manhattan was an amazing spectacle when viewed from the thirty-eighth floor of the Farworth Building; but his eyes scarcely saw the scene.

He was anxiously waiting his interview with Jonathan Graham, the millionaire importer.

The reporter started suddenly as a quiet, somber man approached and spoke to him.

"I am Mr. Berger," explained the man. "I am Mr. Graham's secretary. What can I do for you?"

The reporter arose and fumbled nervously with his hat.

"Stevens is my name," he said. "Reporter on the Morning Sphere. I'd like a private interview with Mr. Graham."

"He is very busy," replied the secretary smoothly. "I usually take care of these matters for him."

"I must see him personally."

The secretary shrugged his shoulders.

"I think that will be impossible," he told the reporter. "It is late in the afternoon. Mr. Graham has urgent matters on his mind."

"I made the appointment by phone this morning," objected Stevens.

"I understand that well," answered Berger. "But I attend to all matters such as newspaper interviews. You will have to talk with me."

The door of the inner office opened, and a stout, gray-haired man entered the waiting room. He spoke to a stenographer seated at a desk; then he turned to go back into his office.

The reporter saw him and recognized him.

"Mr. Graham!" he exclaimed, darting away from the secretary. "I am from the Sphere, Mr. Graham. May I talk with you for a few minutes?"

The millionaire looked disapprovingly at Stevens. Then he pointed to his secretary.

"Mr. Berger will take care of you," he said.

"But this is a personal interview, Mr. Graham," pleaded the reporter. "I won't be long, sir. Just a few minutes. I hate to bother you, sir. But it means a lot to me -"

The millionaire smiled indulgently.

"Come in," he said, holding the door open. "I'll see you in ten minutes, Berger. Bring Miss Smythe with you. I have some letters to dictate."

Safely within the private office, the young reporter sat on the edge of a large leather-covered chair, and looked at the millionaire as the latter took his position behind a mahogany desk.

"My name is Stevens, sir," explained the reporter. "They gave me this assignment because our regular man was laid up. They waited for him to come back; but he won't be in until to-morrow. So I have to get this interview. Your name was on the list -"

"What is it all about?" demanded Jonathan Graham.

"It's a series of articles we're running," said the reporter. "Prominent people are interviewed on the same subject. We get all kinds of different opinions.

"We ask them what they would do if they had only one hour more in which to live -"

Jonathan Graham held up his hand.

"That's enough," he said coldly. "I've seen that absurd column in the Sphere. One man says that he would call up all of his friends and give them a farewell party. Another says that he would take the opportunity to pay off debts of gratitude.

"That's the column you mean, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"The idea is preposterous. I can't give you an interview on that subject."

The reporter looked dismayed.

"It means a lot to me, sir," he said. "It's too late for me to see any one else. I have to get the interview, Mr. Graham. I'll quote you accurately -"

A look of mild sympathy came over the millionaire's face as he saw the worried expression of the reporter. He arose from his chair, placed his hands behind his back, and strolled to the large open window. There he pressed one knee against the low sill, and looked out at the city.

Finally he turned and faced the reporter.

"I'll give you a short interview, my boy," he said, in a kindly tone. "I don't like the subject, and I would ignore it under ordinary circumstances.

"But I'll help you out. I'll tell you just what I would do if I had one hour to live."

Instinctively, the reporter glanced at his watch and saw that it registered exactly four o'clock.

"At this particular moment," said Jonathan Graham, "I have several letters to dictate. It is the wind-up of a day's routine. I shall be finished at exactly five o'clock. That's just about an hour from now, isn't it?"

The reporter nodded.

"Very well," continued the millionaire. "This coming hour is set and established in my mind. I expect to carry it to its normal conclusion.



"It matters not to me whether I have one hour, or one hundred years, of life ahead of me. That hour will be devoted to the work for which I have appointed it."

While Stevens jotted his notes, the millionaire walked a few steps; then turned and took his position facing the window.

The reporter looked up and spoke.

"What else, sir?" he questioned.

"That is all," replied the millionaire, resting his knee against the window sill.

"Nothing else, sir?" asked Stevens.

The millionaire retained his pose, which seemed to be a favorite position.

"Nothing else," he said. "Your interview is over. That will have to satisfy you. I have work to do, and you must go now."

SHORTLY before five o'clock, Stevens humbly submitted his story to the city editor. The result was a storm of sarcastic disapproval.

"Is this all you got!" exclaimed the city editor. "I wanted a column. You bring me a couple of sticks!"

"That's all he told me, sir," said Stevens.

"Didn't you ask him any questions?"

"No, sir. I told him what I wanted to know; and that's what he gave me."

The city editor glared at the copy.

"Stevens," he said, angrily, "you're the dumbest man I've ever had on the staff. Your work hasn't been worth a plugged nickel.

"I thought I'd give you a chance to-day. You flopped. This story is so punk that it can't even be rewritten."

He started to toss the copy into the wastebasket; then, changing his mind, he thrust it in a desk drawer.

"I'm keeping it, Stevens," he said gruffly, "so there will be no comeback if you kick because I fired you. Don't bother about any assignments to-night. You're through right now.

"I sent you out to find out what a man would do if he had one hour to live. You bring back a story that has nothing in it. Jonathan Graham simply ignored the whole idea, and you were too dumb to ask him questions that might get him started.

"The column won't appear in to-morrow's paper. Your copy is no good, and neither are you. That's final. Goodbye."

"It was very late when I saw Mr. Graham," pleaded the reporter. "Four o'clock, you know. I mentioned that in the story. He had a lot of work to do—I couldn't bother him too much -"

"Get out!" ordered the city editor.

Stevens was dejected when he left the newspaper building. He had counted a lot on his job as a reporter.

Now it was all over.

He stopped at a lunch wagon near his uptown rooming house, and ate a tasteless meal. Then he went to his lodging.

He sat mournfully in his room until nearly eight o'clock. His mind seemed unable to grasp the fact that his job was gone.

Some one knocked at his door. It was the landlady.

"Telephone call for you, Mr. Stevens," she said.

The young man walked slowly downstairs and answered the telephone. He recognized the voice of the city editor.

"Hello—Stevens?" came the question.

"Yes, sir," replied the ex-reporter.

"Get back here to the office, right away. I want to talk to you."

"But"—Stevens' voice was doubtful—"I thought you fired me, sir."

"I did. But I'm hiring you again. You're due for an increase in salary. I want to discuss it with you."

"But I don't understand," blurted Stevens. "You said -"

"Forget what I said. We've put your story on the front page in a two-column box. It's a scoop!"

The receiver clicked at the other end.

Stevens started for the subway. He stopped at a stand and bought a copy of the final edition of his paper. The big headlines on the front page brought a gasp of astonishment to his lips.

Jonathan Graham was dead! The millionaire had committed suicide by leaping from the window of his office on the thirty-eighth floor of the Farworth Building, at exactly five o'clock.

He had lived just one hour after his interview!

### **CHAPTER III. THE SHADOW KNOWS**

A CHUBBY-FACED man was seated at a desk in his office in the Grandville Building. Before him lay a pile of newspapers. Through his spectacles, he was studying clippings that he had cut from the journals.

Some one tapped at the door. The man arose and opened it, peering into the outer office. It was the stenographer who had knocked.

"It's nearly five o'clock, Mr. Fellows," said the girl. "My work is finished. Is it all right for me to leave?"

"Certainly," replied the round-faced man.

He closed the door and returned to his desk.

This man, despite his quiet and almost lethargic appearance, was in reality a very unusual person.

As Claude H. Fellows, the insurance broker, he had a wide circle of acquaintances, who looked upon

him as a prosaic business man. But Fellows' real work in life was more dramatic. He was the confidential agent of that mysterious personage called The Shadow.

The insurance broker was an important cog-wheel in the human mechanism that served The Shadow in his encounters with master criminals.

Fellows was a methodical man who had the ability to assemble facts and information. It was his duty to maintain contact with the unknown Shadow, and to pass instructions along to other workers.

To-day he had been busy all afternoon, clipping items that pertained to the suicide of Jonathan Graham, the millionaire importer. It was nearly twenty-four hours since Graham had died, and Fellows had gathered everything from all the newspapers.

The insurance broker went to the typewriter and prepared a synopsis that dealt accurately with the accounts of Jonathan Graham's death. It was his duty to prepare reports on such occurrences as this one.

Jonathan Graham gave an interview to a reporter at four o'clock, stating that if he had but one hour to live, he would go about his work in regular procedure.

He lived up to that statement. He called in his secretary, Berger, and a stenographer, Miss Smythe, and dictated a number of letters, which he signed.

At precisely five o'clock, Miss Smythe left the private office. Berger followed with the signed letters. Miss Smythe was halfway across the waiting room when Berger came out. She had forgotten a pad, and she returned to the inner office.

She was speaking to Berger as she opened the door. He had turned toward the door, and as the stenographer opened it, Berger could see directly across the private office.

He dropped the letters suddenly, and leaped forward, crying, "Mr. Graham! Stop! Don't! Don't!" Then he slumped against the wall, gasping in horror.

Miss Smythe rushed into the office and was surprised to find that Jonathan Graham was not there. There were two men in the waiting room: one ran to the private office; the other went to aid Berger.

The secretary pointed and gasped: "The window! He jumped—we were too late."

The man looked out the window, and saw a crowd gathering on the side street below. The explanation was obvious. Jonathan Graham had leaped to his death.

The newspapers have hinted various motives for suicide. No one was in the room when Berger saw Graham leap. No person could have escaped from the room.

FELLOWS ran down the margin of his report and inscribed certain numbers with a blue pencil. These corresponded to numbers on the newspaper clippings. When he had finished the work, the insurance broker folded the paper and clippings, and inserted them in a large manila envelope. He took the envelope with him when he left the office.

Hailing a cab, he rode to Twenty-third Street, and entered a dingy office building.

On the third floor he stopped in front of a door near the end of the hall. On the frosted glass appeared the name—B. Jonas.

The shadows of cobwebs appeared through the pane. Evidently the door had not been opened for many months. Thick dust on the glass was additional evidence to that effect.

Very little light came from the room within; evidently there was a single window that provided very little illumination.

There was a letter chute in the doorway, bearing the sign, "Leave Mail Here." Fellows dropped the envelope in the chute.

What lay behind that door was a mystery to Claude Fellows. Once he had wondered about it—long ago. He had questioned tenants in the building, and had learned that no one ever entered the room—not even the janitor, for the tenants paid for cleaning service and Jonas had never requested it.

So Fellows had come to accept the strange, closed office as a very ordinary matter. To-day he walked away without even giving it a second thought.

It was simply the place to which he brought or sent reports and messages intended for The Shadow.

Once Fellows thought he had identified The Shadow, but he had found that he was mistaken. So he continued his routine work, satisfied with his reward, which came in the form of a monthly payment from some unknown source.

Who and what The Shadow was no longer concerned Claude Fellows' mind.

The insurance broker remembered the envelope as he rode uptown. He thought of it lying beneath the mail chute; then he dismissed the matter.

But at the very moment that the thought of the envelope lingered in Fellows' mind, that same envelope was lying open on a table, and two long-fingered hands were drawing the clippings from it.

THOSE hands were working in a circle of light that came from a shaded lamp, directly above the table. They were amazing hands, white and supple.

On one finger of the left hand gleamed a mysterious gem—a glowing fire opal that shone with crimson hue, and seemed like a living coal.

Beyond the hands was darkness, amid which invisible eyes watched and directed the hands in their work. A pointed finger ran along the lines of Fellows' brief report.

Then the hands spread out the clippings. One by one they came under inspection of the invisible eyes; then all attention was directed to the front-page story that had appeared in the Sphere—the report of the last interview with Jonathan Graham.

The finger moved from word to word, as though ferreting the thoughts that had been in the mind of the millionaire when he had given the interview.

Had young Stevens been an experienced reporter, or one gifted with imagination, he might have presented a skillfully changed story, emphasizing certain details and subordinating others.

But as it was, his account was an accurate description of exactly what had transpired in Jonathan Graham's office at four o'clock the preceding afternoon.

The hands suddenly folded the clipping and thrust it, with the report, back in the envelope. The other clippings were also put away. Then the hands produced a sheet of paper and a pencil.

Slowly and carefully the right hand wrote, and the words were so carefully marked that they seemed like spoken thoughts as they came on the paper.

Jonathan Graham's death is classed as suicide. There are hints of motives. Every life has possible motives for suicide. Jonathan Graham did not contemplate suicide when he gave the interview. Nothing that occurred in the following hour could have made him decide to end his life.

Therefore Jonathan Graham was murdered. Only one man's testimony disputes that fact—the testimony of the secretary, Stanley Berger.

Berger claims that he saw Graham leap from the window.

Graham did not leap from the window.

Therefore Berger did not see him leap.

Why did he make his statement? To aid the murderer.

Why did he wish to aid the murderer?

Because he was the murderer.

The hand stopped writing. Then it began again, and the words that it inscribed came as a revelation that told exactly what had transpired in the office of Jonathan Graham.

It was a perfect reconstruction of the crime—formed by a master mind that had the uncanny ability to picture the thoughts and actions of another person.

Jonathan Graham had a habit of standing by the window, which had a low sill. This fact appeared in the account of his last interview.

Berger and Miss Smythe were in the office with Graham at five o'clock. Graham turned to look out of the open window, as Miss Smythe left. Berger was gathering a few letters. He was standing close to Graham as the door closed behind Miss Smythe.

It was an opportunity. Like a flash, Berger pushed Graham through the window, catching him off balance, sending him to his doom.

Berger left the room immediately. It was done so rapidly that he seemed to come out right behind Miss Smythe. That was to be his alibi. Yet he must have had qualms.

When Miss Smythe turned to go back to the private office, Berger gained a sudden opportunity. Staring directly into the office, he screamed a warning as the stenographer opened the door. Then he yielded to his shaking nerves.

The hand stopped writing. It began to tap the pencil against the paper, counting the seconds that were marked by a watch that lay on the table.

The brain in the darkness was going through the murder of Jonathan Graham, counting from the very instant when Berger pushed the millionaire through the window until the moment when the secretary screamed his warning.

Thirty taps. Then the hand wrote:

Half a minute at the most. No one knows the exact minute at which Jonathan Graham's body crashed to

the street. The time element is perfectly in Berger's favor.

Berger's alibi is now perfect—to the unthinking minds of those who were in the office—and to the minds of the police.

But to the deductive brain, Berger's action betrays his crime.

The right hand picked up the paper, and crumpled it into a ball. The hand disappeared and returned without the paper. Then on another sheet, it wrote:

Stanley Berger murdered Jonathan Graham.

The pencil remained still for two short seconds; then it moved again, and the hand inscribed these words:

The Shadow knows!

## **CHAPTER IV. THE RED ENVOY**

LATE that evening, a man entered an apartment house in upper Manhattan. He was short and heavy set, with a grim face that bore signs of ugliness. He walked abruptly through the hallway and took the automatic elevator to the third floor.

There he opened the door of an apartment and entered a darkened room. He pressed a switch on the wall. Then he turned toward the far corner of the room. A quick gasp came from his lips.

Behind a small desk sat a man in a dark-blue overcoat, who wore a crimson mask that covered the upper half of his face.

"The Red Envoy!" exclaimed the man who had entered the room.

The figure behind the desk did not reply. The man in the crimson mask was motionless. His hands lay upon the desk; they were hidden within thin red gloves.

The man who had come into the apartment recovered his composure. He glanced about the room, noticing that the shades were drawn. He deposited his hat on a chair, and approached the desk.

"I did not expect you to-night," he said respectfully.

"Why not?" asked the man who wore the crimson mask. His voice was low, and even-toned. "You have much to report, Comrade Prokop."

"That is correct." Prokop was speaking in English, his words slightly thickened by a trace of foreign accent. He drew up a chair and sat opposite the Red Envoy.

DESPITE his formidable appearance, the man called Prokop seemed nervous in the presence of the masked man who wore the red gloves.

Coming back to his apartment to find the Red Envoy awaiting him had been a startling experience. Prokop did not know how the mysterious man had entered the apartment; nor did he ask.

"What took place to-night?" questioned the Red Envoy.

"Reports," replied Prokop tersely. "Two enemies have been eliminated. Graham and Berchik are dead."

"Tell me about them."

"Berchik visited Prince Zuvor. He told him about the jewels. Agent K overheard everything."

"Who is Agent K? Zuvor's servant?"

"Yes. Fritz Bloch. A German. Zuvor has two servants. Fritz Bloch and a Russian named Ivan Shiskin. Ivan is loyal to Zuvor. We count on Fritz for information."

"Did Fritz learn the name of the man who received the wealth we seek?"

"Yes. His name is Bruce Duncan."

"What have you done about it?"

"I have notified Agent R to be ready. I already have a report concerning him. He is a wealthy young man, who lives alone with one servant. He must be handled tactfully. Agent R is the one to do that."

Prokop drew an envelope from his pocket. He handed it to the Red Envoy, who opened it with ease despite the red silk gloves, and read the report within.

"That will do," said the masked man tersely. "Let Agent R proceed. Your plan is quite suitable for the present."

"We need worry no longer about Berchik," said Prokop, with a leering smile. "He died quickly."

"How?"

"By the method we had arranged for Prince Zuvor. Agent K—Fritz— learned that Zuvor had a car in readiness in a garage up in Connecticut. I saw to it that a bomb was arranged in the automobile set to explode after the car had gone twenty miles.

"Zuvor instructed Berchik to use that car in his escape. The bomb exploded and the car toppled into a ravine."

"Did any one suspect the cause of the accident?"

"We think not."

The Red Envoy sat as silent as a statue. Prokop shifted uneasily. He felt that he was inferior to this strange person who came to visit him as the direct representative of a powerful organization...

Usually, Prokop received instructions to meet the Red Envoy in some unexpected place. This was the first time that his superior had ever come to the apartment.

"No one suspects who you are?" The Red Envoy's question came suddenly to Prokop's ears.

"No," replied Prokop. "I call myself Henry Propert."

"You take every precaution regarding our agents?" asked the Red Envoy.

"Every precaution. Even the agents do not know each other. Each one reports to me, individually, at the meeting place.

"I am always masked. I identify each agent before he goes into the meeting room. All are masked when they assemble."

"Good!" The Red Envoy's statement carried a tone of satisfaction. "You must keep your identity a secret

from your subordinate just as I keep my identity a secret from you."

Prokop nodded.

"You have done well," commended the Red Envoy. "I shall mention you in my report to Moscow.

"But you have not yet told me about the case of Jonathan Graham. I came here to learn about it."

PROKOP rubbed his chin nervously. He had expected this inquiry from the Red Envoy. After the commendation that he had received, he hesitated to supply the new information.

"Our agent did well," he said. "As you know, he had obtained a situation as Jonathan Graham's secretary -"

"He was in Graham's employ before he joined our cause, was he not?" interrupted the Red Envoy.

"Yes," answered Prokop. "We made him Agent J. He was just the man we required. Communistic in belief—yet he seldom expressed his opinions.

"One of our agents discovered him, and he became an excellent worker. He used his right name—Stanley Berger."

Prokop paused and glanced at the Red Envoy. The man in the mask betrayed no impatience, but he spoke tersely.

"I know all that, Prokop," he said. "Come to the point."

"Well," said Prokop quickly, "Berger did his best to discover Jonathan Graham's private correspondence. But he had no opportunity to read it. I ordered him to get results quickly. So he stole it all, and mailed it to me."

"When?"

"Yesterday morning. Then he must have feared that Graham would discover its loss. At five o'clock yesterday afternoon, Jonathan Graham fell from the window of his office -"

"Yes?" questioned the Red Envoy, as Prokop hesitated. "He fell, you say?"

"He fell from the window," continued Prokop, "but it is obvious that Berger had much to do with it. He must have done the job cleverly. Graham's death is regarded as an accident."

"I have read the newspapers," remarked the man with the red mask. "The death of Jonathan Graham may prove useful. He controlled various interests that will deteriorate under other management.

"But regarding the matter of his private correspondence -"

He pauses, awaiting a reply from Prokop.

"Berger was not at to-night's meeting," said Prokop. "I did not expect him to be there. I suspected what had happened, when I learned of Graham's death, last night. I sent a warning notice to Berger. After the meeting to-night, I mailed him his release."

"That was the correct procedure," replied the Red Envoy. "Cross his name from your list of agents.

"We can forget Berger, then. But the correspondence. Where is it?"



Prokop rose and went to a bookcase in the corner of the room. He took down a heavy volume of an encyclopedia, and opened the back of it.

The book was a secret box, from which Prokop produced a thick pile of papers. He brought the documents to the table, and laid them before the Red Envoy.

DELIBERATELY, the man in the mask examined the papers. Prokop watched him with an expression of anxiety. When the masked man had completed his examination, he quietly passed the papers back to Prokop.

"I understand your hesitation," he said, in cold, finely cut words. "You are capable, Prokop; but you are not subtle. You evaded the subject of these papers, because they do not contain what we want."

Prokop nodded his affirmation. A look of dread appeared upon his face. "We have gained nothing," continued the Red Envoy. "You may keep the papers. Destroy them if you wish. We want the plans. They are not there."

"I know that," said Prokop, in an apologetic voice. "But -"

"Ignorance," said the Red Envoy, "does not excuse you, Prokop. It was your work to see that Berger obtained new information.

"He was to steal the plans and working drawings. That would have completed our mission. It would have meant much to you, Prokop."

The heavy-set man nodded.

"However," resumed the Red Envoy, "we have other means of getting what we want. The death of Jonathan Graham was cleverly accomplished— even though Berger chanced to have good fortune.

"It will create no suspicion. It will not interfere with Whitburn's work. On the contrary, it allows him to go ahead without interference from Graham, who was becoming impatient.

"Whitburn has plenty of money. Graham paid him in advance. We must now concentrate upon Whitburn. Attend to that."

Despite the coldness of the masked man's tones, Prokop was reassured. He felt that he had not failed entirely.

"Are there any new instructions?" he asked.

"Not at present," replied the Red Envoy.

"None regarding Prince Zuvor?" questioned Prokop, with a shrewd glance at the man in the crimson mask.

"Has he caused you any difficulty?" asked the Red Envoy.

"None at all," said Prokop. "We are watching him closely.

"But the prince is a constant danger to our cause. He is a Russian, and an enemy of the government in Moscow. Our agents hate him. All would be glad of the opportunity to -"

The Red Envoy held up a red-gloved hand.

"Do not molest Prince Zuvor," he said. "Do not address a single threat to him. He is within our control. Should he attempt to elude us, then you may act.

"The bomb in his special automobile was a wise precaution. But while he is in New York, a single false step might betray our cause."

PROKOP nodded understandingly, but his black eyes shone with unrestrained animosity. His next words came from his lips in venomous tones.

"Prince Zuvor has wealth!" he exclaimed. "Wealth that belongs to us! Some day we shall regain it!"

"We can wait," said the Red Envoy quietly. "Remember, this is America, not Russia. Here they regard Prince Zuvor's money as his own.

"We have many important plans under way. We must not jeopardize them by seeking vengeance too soon."

"Prince Zuvor has friends," said Prokop. "He gives money to other Russians who supported the czar. He has adopted the name of Richard Albion. His American friends are wealthy. He urges them to help those who escaped from Russia. He -"

"Does he know of our activities?" interrupted the Red Envoy. "Has he attempted to discover our meeting place?"

"No. He suspects that we are watching him. He is cautious. He protects himself."

"Very well. So long as he does no more than that, he must be left alone. He is our decoy. He will lead others into our snares, as he brought Berchik into our power. Through him we will learn many things that we need to know."

Prokop nodded slowly. The truth of the Red Envoy's words was obvious, even to his prejudiced mind.

"Remember!" The masked man's voice was emphatic. "Prince Zuvor must be watched—but not harmed! One false step would mean ruin. If any agent fails to heed these orders -"

He held up a gloved hand, and made a mysterious sign which brought a shudder to Prokop's huge shoulders.

While Prokop still nodded his acknowledgment of these instructions, the masked man arose and walked from the table. He strode across the room, and stood with one hand upon the knob of the door.

"I leave now," he said, as Prokop watched him. "I shall visit you again in the near future. Be untiring. Be unfailing. Remember all that I have said."

He placed the forefingers of one gloved hand against the crimson mask that obscured his face. Prokop made a similar sign in acknowledgment.

It was the sign of the secret order which was directed by the controlling hands of those in Moscow.

The lights in the room were suddenly extinguished. The man at the door had pressed the switch. Prokop groped his way across the room, and turned on the lights. His visitor was no longer in the apartment.

## **CHAPTER V. VINCENT GOES ON DUTY**

TEN o'clock in the morning. The phone bell rang beside Harry Vincent's bed. Harry yawned as he

answered it.

He had only awakened a few minutes before. Living in New York, at the Hotel Metrolite, he was accustomed to retiring late at night and rising late in the morning.

"Messenger just brought a message for you, Mr. Vincent," came the voice over the phone.

"Send it up," replied Harry.

He hurriedly donned bath robe and slippers while he awaited the message. Harry knew what the note would mean. New action—new work—in behalf of the mysterious Shadow.

For Harry Vincent was a young man who had experienced many adventures. He had one occupation in life: to do The Shadow's bidding.

He lived a life of leisure, well supplied with money that came from an unknown source; but on occasion his idleness was interrupted by orders from The Shadow.

Then it was his duty to respond; to face unforeseen dangers; to aid The Shadow in his activities.

Who was The Shadow?

Harry Vincent did not know.

Time and again the hand of The Shadow had intervened to save him from danger or death. He had seen The Shadow in disguise; he had seen him as a tall, black-clad figure that appeared and vanished in the darkness of night; but he had never seen The Shadow's own face.

A bell boy arrived with the message. Harry dismissed the attendant; then he opened the envelope, and scanned the sheet of paper that it contained.

The letter was written in a simple code, known to Harry Vincent. By a form of letter substitution, Harry read it rapidly.

Watch Stanley Berger. If he meets any one, trail the man he meets. Your work is to discover his associates or those who are interested in his affairs.

The note was unsigned. Harry suspected that it had come from Claude Fellows. But the instructions were from The Shadow himself.

The writing began to fade while Harry was still staring at the paper. A few seconds later, the sheet was blank!

STANLEY BERGER! The name alone was sufficient. Harry Vincent had read the details of Jonathan Graham's death.

Like the police, he had regarded it simply as an unfortunate accident. Even now, it did not dawn on him that Berger might have been responsible for the millionaire's death.

Why did The Shadow desire information regarding Stanley Berger and his associates? That question was unanswered.

After all, it made no difference to Harry Vincent. His work was to watch Berger, and he must begin at once.

Harry dressed rapidly, and hurried down to the lobby. He ate a hasty breakfast in the hotel restaurant. Then he consulted a telephone book, and learned Berger's address.

He rode uptown in the subway, and found the place an old-fashioned apartment house. He located Berger's apartment. It was on the second floor, in a front corner of the building.

Harry went to a corner drug store, and called Berger's number. It would be easy enough to pretend that he had made a mistake, when Berger answered the phone. But there was no response.

Evidently Stanley Berger was not at home. So Harry lingered in the vicinity, while the day went by.

Working for The Shadow demanded patience. Long waits were not infrequent, but they were usually followed by moments of rapid action.

There was a hotel near the apartment house. Harry went there for lunch. In the lobby, he read the evening paper.

The death of Jonathan Graham now commanded very little space. This was the second day since the millionaire importer had plunged to doom from the window of his office in the Farworth Building. Suicide was the accepted verdict.

Harry called Stanley Berger's number three times during the afternoon. He received no answer.

But at five o'clock, while he was walking past the apartment house, Harry noticed a young man enter the building. Believing that it was Berger, he watched the second-story windows. He saw a hand adjust one of the shades.

A light appeared in the apartment, later on. Harry maintained his vigil until seven o'clock, carefully watching all who entered the apartment house.

At seven o'clock, the light went out. Harry waited until his man emerged from the door of the apartment house. Then he followed, at a considerable distance.

Stanley Berger went to the same hotel where Harry had had luncheon. The man went in alone, and entered the dining room. Harry followed.

Berger ordered diner; and Harry did the same. He was careful not to attract the notice of the man whom he was following.

It was nearly eight o'clock, when Berger, apparently unsuspecting, left the hotel. Harry trailed him, half a block behind. Then he noticed something of interest.

Another man appeared to be on Berger's trail, also.

The newcomer attracted Harry's attention very suddenly. He was only a few paces behind Stanley Berger.

Stanley Berger entered the subway. An express came along, and the three men entered the same car. From the corner of his eye, Harry observed both of the others.

Stanley Berger was a young man of quiet, unassuming appearance. His face seemed moody and meditative. He was well dressed, and his features were intelligent.

The other man was middle-aged. He had a somewhat rough appearance. His clothes were worn; his face was poorly shaven. His eyes were wandering, but keen; and Harry watched them as they became fixed

momentarily upon Stanley Berger.

Harry entertained doubts that the man was actually following Berger, until the train stopped at a transfer station. Then Berger left the car, and the rough-looking man followed.

Harry went along, and a few minutes later, the three were gathered together in a crowded car of a downtown local.

Every advantage was in Harry's favor. Berger, thoughtful, and apparently moody, was paying no attention whatever to those about him. The other man was watching Berger intently.

Harry smiled quietly in anticipation of what might occur.

When Stanley Berger left the car, the other man was close behind. Harry kept a reasonable distance in the rear, and had no difficulty whatever in keeping sight of both men while they made their way along a side street to Broadway.

Stanley Berger stopped at a theater. He called for a ticket which had evidently been reserved, and entered.

The other man did not follow. He pretended to be looking at the photographs displayed in the lobby. Harry did the same.

He felt sure that Berger was going to see the show. His trail could be picked up afterward.

Right now, it was most important to watch this man who seemed to be so interested in Berger's actions.

THE roughly-clad individual evidently had the same thoughts as Harry, so far as Berger was concerned. He left the theater lobby, and walked about uncertainly for a few minutes.

Then he fumbled in his pocket, and counted out some money. After this procedure, he walked up to a standing cab.

Harry heard the address that the man gave to the driver. After the cab pulled away, Harry hailed another taxi, and gave the same destination.

The cab rolled along side streets. Harry noted that they were reaching a district where the houses were old and dilapidated.

They were approaching that section of New York where gangsters convene; and Harry recognized places where he had been on previous missions for The Shadow.

Apparently, some one connected with the underworld was interested in what Stanley Berger was doing. Harry was eager to reach his destination; for he foresaw a meeting of those who were on Berger's trail.

The cab came to a stop, and Harry alighted. He paid the driver, and looked about him.

There were lights in the second story of the old building before which he stood. The upper floor was reached by a stairway that showed in a dimly lighted entrance. Over the door was a sign: "The Pink Rat."

Harry Vincent had heard of the place. He was not familiar with the dens frequented by gangsters, but he knew of this one. It was open to the public; but few persons other than the denizens of gangland entered it. He was positive that this was where the unknown man had gone.

Yet Harry hesitated before entering. He tried to formulate some plan; then decided that it would be best to trust to chance. Two men came along the street, and entered the doorway.

Harry Vincent followed them up the stairs to the Pink Rat.

## **CHAPTER VI. THE SHADOW INVESTIGATES**

ABOUT an hour after Stanley Berger had left his apartment—in fact, at the very time when Harry Vincent was riding to the Pink Rat—a man alighted from a taxicab not far from Berger's apartment house.

When he paid the driver of the cab, the man stood in the shadow of the vehicle so that his face was invisible in the darkness. The taximan looked back, as he drove away, and was surprised to see that his passenger had completely vanished.

"Wonder where that bird went, so quick?" mused the cab driver. "Just dropped out of sight all of a sudden."

The statement was not an exaggeration. The man on the street had disappeared as if the ground had swallowed him.

Had the taxi driver peered in the right direction, he would have observed a clew. For on the sidewalk appeared a long, thin shadow—a shadow that seemed to move of its own accord.

This fantastic shape flitted across the street, and melted into the blackness in front of the old apartment house.

It came into the light of the entry, and for an instant it seemed to assume human form. Then it had gone.

Two minutes later, the door of Stanley Berger's apartment opened as though the knob had been turned by some psychic power.

The window shades moved noiselessly downward. Then the beam of a flashlight appeared against the wall.

The flashlight was suddenly extinguished as the telephone bell began to ring. A form moved softly across the room; the ringing ceased as the receiver was lifted.

The man in the darkness listened, awaiting some statement from the other end of the line. The word came. Then a whispered voice spoke amid the silence of the dark apartment—a low, weird voice—the voice of The Shadow:

"Hello! Burbank?"

The Shadow received acknowledgment. Burbank was one of his trusted agents.

"Report!" came The Shadow's whisper.

The silence of the apartment was disturbed only by the clicking voice that came from the receiver. The sound ceased.

"Good!" said The Shadow. "I understand. You heard him order the theater ticket this morning. Downtown. Vincent trailed him to the theater. Where has Vincent gone?"

A short explanation clicked from the receiver.

"You did not recognize the man he followed?" The question came in The Shadow's whisper. "What address did he give the cab driver?"

Burbank's information came over the wire.

"Good work," commended The Shadow. "That is all for to-night, Burbank."

The receiver was replaced upon the hook. The flashlight beamed upon the desk. A hand appeared in the spot of glare, and the hand held a watch.

"Half an hour to work," came the almost inaudible whisper. "Then to the Pink Rat. There will be trouble there."

THE flashlight glowed constantly, now. It moved rapidly about the room. It stopped upon a table drawer.

A hand tested the drawer and found it locked. A small key glistened beneath the rays of the light. A moment later, the drawer was open.

From the drawer, the hand removed five blank cards. Three of the cards were black; one was gray; the other was white. The hand placed the cards upon the table.

The flashlight remained steadily upon the cards. The entire room had been searched quickly, but with amazing thoroughness.

These were the only objects that had been discovered. Yet the cards were blank. Apparently they meant nothing.

Still, the light was held upon them, as though a mind in the darkness above was studying them with concentrated thought.

The flashlight went out. The room remained black for a few short minutes. Then a lamp was turned on. It cast its illumination upon the table, and revealed the cloaked figure of The Shadow.

With the five cards before him, the mysterious personage produced a sheet of paper, and began to express his thoughts in writing. A column of short, terse statements appeared:

Stanley Berger killed Jonathan Graham.

Stanley Berger is being watched.

Why?

The pencil paused. Then it wrote words that answered the question:

Because certain persons must know that Berger murdered Graham.

Those persons do not want the crime to be discovered.

Those persons must be connected with the crime.

Another pause—a longer pause. Then:

Berger was directed by some one.

He possesses no written evidence.

He received instructions verbally.

Where?

The pencil hesitated a few seconds only. Then it inscribed these statements:

Instructions were given at some unknown meeting place.

Berger was summoned to that place.

Probably more than once.

The blank cards have special meanings.

The long, slender hand thrust the pencil out of sight in the folds of a dark coat. It reappeared, carrying a fountain pen. It wrote upon a black card, in red ink:

Come for instructions to-night.

The hand stacked the three black cards. The writing explained their meaning.

Stanley Berger had received them at different times. Each card was a summons to attend a meeting.

The pen poised above the gray card. Then it wrote:

Meeting to-night. Do not come unless absolutely safe.

The hand hesitated over the white card; then, as though controlled by a mind that could divine everything, it wrote, in words that had the vivid red of blood:

Your work is ended. No more meetings.

The revealing words told the meanings of the cards. They remained in view for more than a minute. Then the writing disappeared from the black card, as though some invisible hand had swept it away.

A few seconds later, the writing on the gray card began to fade. When it had obliterated itself, only the white card bore its writing. Then those blood-red words slowly vanished.

THE Shadow glanced at his watch. Half an hour had elapsed since the telephone call from Burbank. The man in black arose, and replaced the cards in the table drawer.

He extinguished the lamp. The flashlight gleamed toward the door; then it was suddenly turned off. To the keen ears of The Shadow had come the faint sound of a key being inserted in the lock of the door.

A man entered the room, and switched on the light. It was Stanley Berger!

His face was haggard and worried. He walked across the room to a small cupboard, and brought out a bottle and a glass. He filled the glass, holding it with a hand that shook unsteadily, and drank.

Then he began to look about the room. He saw no one there.

But the drawn window shades suddenly attracted Berger's attention. He began to mumble, as though talking in a delirium.

"Those shades were up when I went out," he said. "I ought to keep them up. Shades down—looks bad. Who put them down?"



He rubbed his hand across his forehead. Evidently Stanley Berger's mind was troubled. He appeared restless as he paced across the room.

"Too many people in the theater," he muttered. "Couldn't stay there. Bad place."

He walked over to raise the window shades; then he apparently changed his mind, for he stopped short, and stood by the table. He looked at the opposite wall of the room.

A bookcase was there, near the corner. The black shadow of the bookcase seemed to fascinate Berger. He became motionless, staring at the spot.

Then he detected a slight movement. Before his astonished eyes, the darkness of the corner seemed to alter.

There appeared a tall figure, clad in black, its shoulders shrouded in a cloak of sable hue.

Stanley Berger tried to speak; but no sound came from his lips. This amazing form that had come from nothingness seemed to transfix his gaze.

Berger's body began to tremble as The Shadow moved slowly forward and stood before him—tall, black, and ominous—a cloaked form, its face obscured by turned-down broad-brimmed hat.

"Who are you?" gasped Stanley Berger. "Who -"

The words died on his lips. A terrible fear came over the man. Perhaps this black being was a phantom from another world!

Ghostlike it had appeared before him. Now it stood, like a medieval inquisitor, waiting for him to speak words that would betray him.

THE figure became motionless. Stanley Berger still trembled.

"Why are you here?" he asked. "Who are you?"

"I am The Shadow!"

The low, sibilant whisper was more terrifying than the spectral form itself. Berger swayed; then gripped the edge of the table, and steadied himself.

"Sit down."

A long black arm extended toward the chair. Stanley Berger could not ignore the command. Automatically, he took the chair; but his eyes were still upon the weird being before him.

"Turn on the lamp."

Stanley Berger obeyed.

The Shadow seemed to glide across the floor. It reached the door, and the ceiling lamp went out.

Berger stared; he could no longer see the man in black. Then he choked and gasped as The Shadow appeared directly above him—looming like a monstrous creature of vengeance.

The man in the chair looked up. Below the broad-brimmed hat he could see two eyes that gleamed like living coals. Dark, burning eyes, that seemed to pry into the secrets of his mind.

"You killed Jonathan Graham!"

The whispered words were a statement—not a question.

"Answer me! You killed Jonathan Graham!"

Stanley Berger nodded. His personality seemed to have left him. His brain was under the domination of this unknown being. He could not withstand the power of The Shadow.

"Tell me why!"

The man in the chair made a great effort to fight off the controlling force that held him.

"I don't know!" he said. "I don't know!"

"Tell me why!"

"Because"—the admission came slowly from Stanley Berger's lips— "because I had stolen his private correspondence."

"To what did the correspondence refer?"

"I do not know."

The Shadow was silent. Berger's last statement had come with a spontaneous relief. It was obvious that he had spoken the truth.

"With whom did Jonathan Graham correspond?"

Stanley Berger could not overcome The Shadow's control. His lips seemed automatic as they framed the reply:

"With a man named Whitburn."

"Tell me his first name!"

"I do not know it."

The glowing eyes burned steadily before the entranced gaze of Stanley Berger. There was a sharp click, as though The Shadow had snapped his fingers. The man in the chair started, and rubbed his forehead.

"Look at the table," came the whispered voice.

Berger obeyed. A hand came before his eyes, carrying the five cards from the table drawer.

Upon the third finger of the hand was a ring with a large gem that glowed with crimson depths. It caught Stanley Berger's attention, fascinating him.

"Look at those cards," said The Shadow. "I shall tell you what they mean. Answer each statement that I make. Black signifies: 'There is a meeting to-night.' That is correct?"

"Yes."

"Gray signifies: 'Meeting to-night. Do not come unless absolutely safe.' Correct?"

"Yes."

"White signifies: 'Your work is ended. No more meetings!' Correct?"

"Yes."

"Where were the meetings held?"

The reply that was forming on Stanley Berger's lips suddenly died away. He fought against the control that held him in its merciless grip.

"No! No!" His exclamation came in short, nervous gasps. "I cannot tell! I must not tell!"

He fell forward on the table, and buried his head in his arms.

THERE was complete silence for a few tense minutes. Then a distant clock chimed ten times.

A low, fraughtful hiss came from The Shadow. It was well past the half hour that he had allotted. His voice whispered gentle, soothing words:

"Look up."

Berger raised his head.

The slender, white hand appeared before his eyes, and he found himself staring into the glowing depths of the crimson fire opal.

Then an envelope appeared beneath it. A pen was placed in Stanley Berger's hand.

"Write this address."

The sibilant voice carried a gentle persuasion, which came as balm to Stanley Berger's troubled mind. He was conscious of the envelope. But the burning fire opal held him beneath its spell. He placed the pen upon the paper to inscribe:

"Harry Vincent. Metrolite Hotel. New York City."

With automatic precision, Stanley Berger wrote the address. The envelope was drawn to one side. A sheet of paper took its place.

"Write your full story. Tell everything."

The voice, despite its uncanny whisper, seemed friendly and helpful.

"Sign your name beneath, when you have finished. Mail the letter. Then you can forget."

The man at the table placed the pen upon the paper. He seemed to be engaged in deep thought, his mind groping in the past.

The hand moved away. The fire opal was no longer before Stanley Berger's eyes. Yet its glow still persisted. He imagined that he saw the mysterious crimson gem upon the white paper in front of him.

As he slowly began to write, the fiery blotch followed the point of his pen.

Stanley Berger was a man in a trance, still governed by the dynamic presence of The Shadow, which he could feel beside him. He could do nothing other than obey the commands he had received.

Yet The Shadow was no longer there. Silently, noiselessly, like a phantom of the night, the man of

mystery had left the apartment.

## CHAPTER VII. AT THE PINK RAT

THE main room of the Pink Rat was a dingy, sordid place. It was dimly lighted, and was furnished with old tables, and cheap, unpainted benches.

Yet, despite its uninviting appearance, the Pink Rat was well patronized. Clustered about its tables were as many as twenty men, and a few women.

The bottles that stood on the tables were mute evidence of the Pink Rat's attraction. The den was a booze joint, run in open defiance of the law.

Harry Vincent saw all this at a single glance. He took his place in an obscure corner, and surveyed the crowd.

A sharp-eyed waiter spotted him, and came over to his table. Harry was in a quandary. He must make some pretense of being familiar with the den. Rather than betray himself by a mis-statement, he simply handed the waiter a five-dollar bill.

The man looked at him quizzically. Harry showed no concern.

The waiter went away and came back with a flask, a glass, and four dollars and twenty-five cents in change. Harry tipped him the quarter.

Mechanically, Harry poured out a glassful of the liquor. With his hand upon the glass, he looked about him.

The dimness of the room, which was thickly clouded with tobacco smoke, made it difficult to observe the persons present. But at last Harry spotted his man, talking with another at a corner table.

A full hour of waiting went by. Unobserved, Harry managed to empty the liquor into a cuspidor by the wall. This enabled him to order a second bottle when the waiter came his way again.

The Pink Rat was filled with men whose minds were swimming from the effects of bad liquor, and Harry, by maintaining his alertness, held a position of advantage.

His thoughts reverted to Stanley Berger, and he glanced at his watch. Not yet ten o'clock. It would be another hour before Berger would leave the theater —so Harry supposed.

He did not know that at that very moment, Berger was in his apartment.

WHO was this man who had followed Stanley Berger? Would he return to the theater to take up the trail again?

Harry could see the man's swarthy face—an ugly, frowning face. But he could not make out the features of the man's companion. The other individual had his back toward Harry.

Looking about him, Harry studied the other persons in the room.

The women who were with companions were talking loudly. They were evidently the associates of gangsters and racketeers.

There was one woman who sat alone. She was on the opposite side of the room, at a small table.

A bottle and a glass stood in front of her, but like Harry, she was not drinking. Her quietness of manner impressed Harry Vincent. Her head was slightly turned, so he could not well see her face, yet her general appearance was most attractive.

She seemed young, and Harry wondered what had brought her to this notorious den.

In studying the girl, Harry forgot all about the man whom he was following. Unconsciously he kept staring across the room, his eyes fixed upon the woman.

She was well dressed; and blond, bobbed hair showed beneath the small black hat that she wore.

As though suddenly conscious of Harry's gaze, the girl turned her face toward him. Harry could not repress a gasp of astonishment.

The girl was indeed young, and her features possessed beauty and charm. Her complexion was light and even in the dimness, Harry could tell that her eyes were blue.

The girl looked at Harry Vincent. Her eyes moved slightly as she appeared to study him with a keen glance. Harry was fascinated.

He still continued to stare, wondering more than before why this amazing creature should have come, unattended, to such a place as the Pink Rat.

Admiration must have expressed itself in Harry's glance, for the girl's eyes met his, and she smiled slightly. Harry was gripped by a strange emotion.

Women had not interested him for many months. Before he had met The Shadow, Harry had been in love; but the girl whom he adored had married another man. Since then he had been woman-proof.

But now—the quickened beating of his heart told him that he had found a new love.

The girl's eyes interested Harry. They held an expression that encouraged him. Somehow, he knew that his interest was reciprocated.

He felt that the girl was wondering why he was here—just as he had wondered why she had come to this place. They had something in common. Each seemed to know instinctively that the other was not a person of the underworld.

The girl turned away suddenly. She opened a hand bag, and began to look for something. She did not appear to be embarrassed, but Harry realized that she had sought to escape his fixed gaze.

He looked toward the corner of the room where the two men were engaged in conversation. But a moment later, he glanced back toward the girl, and smiled to himself. For he had detected her watching him from the corner of her eye.

Harry was hesitating between duty and desire. He had a mission here - to watch the man who had followed Stanley Berger. But he felt an irrepressible longing to meet the blond girl; to talk with her; to learn her name.

He kept his eyes fixed upon the men in the corner; but his thoughts were centered upon the young woman.

HARRY regained his alertness with a sudden start. The man in the corner had risen. Apparently he was about to leave the Pink Rat.

No; he was shaking hands with his companion. It was the other who was leaving.

Harry caught a glimpse of the second man's face, as the fellow left the place. The man looked like a gangster—hardened features, shrewd eyes, and a firm, unflinching stare.

The man whom Harry had followed now strolled across the room, and took a seat at a table directly in front of Harry. A man and a woman were at the table. They greeted the newcomer.

"Hello, Volovick."

Harry made a mental note of the name. He listened closely, hoping to catch some words of conversation.

At first the talk was fairly audible, but of no consequence. Volovick spoke with a foreign accent.

Then his words became low, and Harry could not understand them. He strained his ears intently.

Just as he seemed about to catch a few remarks, Volovick's voice became a little louder, but now he was talking in some unknown language.

Harry Vincent was no linguist. He could not even decide what tongue was being spoken. Suddenly Volovick's voice became low again; he drew a watch from his pocket, and leaning shrewdly forward, tapped his finger against the dial.

Evidently he was setting some time for an appointment. Harry was not sure.

Volovick leaned back in his chair. He replaced his watch in his pocket. Harry realized that he was displaying too much interest in the conversation. He relaxed also, and, inspired by a sudden recollection, glanced across the room toward the girl.

She had one elbow upon the table. Her small, slender hand rested against her cheek.

The girl caught Harry's glance. Her eyes were directly upon him. Her lips moved, forming a slow, distinct sentence. Harry did not catch the meaning. The girl repeated her silent words.

"Look in back."

The significance was fully evident now. A tense look appeared upon the girl's face. She seemed to express worry and alarm. Harry knew instinctively that danger threatened.

With a quick swing, he gained his feet, turning toward the rear. He was just in time.

Two men had been sitting behind him. One had risen and was coming toward Harry. The man's hand was moving from beneath his coat; Harry caught the gleam of a knife.

At that instant the lights were extinguished.

THE mind thinks rapidly in a moment of great danger. In the fraction of a second, the whole story was clear to Harry. While he had been watching Volovick, the man in back of him had prepared for the attack.

Another person had been stationed at the light switch. Both had acted simultaneously. One quick stab—and Harry Vincent would have been the victim.

This realization came to Harry while he swung into action. Fortunately, he had seen the man who was

approaching him. He swung instinctively in the darkness.

His blow was calculated to perfection. His fist encountered a face; there was a snarling gasp, and Harry heard the man crash to the floor.

Harry moved toward the center of the room. The door of the Pink Rat was straight ahead; but he realized that flight would be folly. Doubtless some one was stationed outside.

Harry stumbled against a bench, and held it with his hands.

Loud shouts echoed through the room. One woman was screaming.

Harry gripped the bench tensely, wondering what would happen next. He had only a moment to wait.

A flashlight was turned on at the table where Volovick was sitting. Its glare was directed toward the spot where Harry had been. Then it swung out across the room, and stopped, focused directly upon Harry.

Harry had turned toward the light; now he was staring straight into the blinding spot.

"There he is! Get him!"

The cry came from Volovick.

Lifting the bench, Harry flung it directly at the flashlight. At the same instant, two shots rang out.

As the bench left his grasp, Harry felt a stinging sensation in his left arm, above the elbow. He gripped the spot with his right hand.

The bench which he had flung found its mark. Volovick must have raised an arm to ward it off; but it was coming with terrific force. Harry heard the crash, as a table was overturned. Glasses broke.

The flashlight fell upon the floor, its gleam turned uselessly toward the rear wall.

Harry swayed as he gripped his wounded arm. Then a light hand was pressed against his right shoulder. As he was about to swing away, a soft, feminine whisper stayed him.

"Come with me. Quickly."

HARRY extended his right hand, and his wrist was grasped by a soft hand. Following the one who conducted him, Harry was drawn directly toward the table where the girl had been seated.

He could see nothing in the darkness; he caught himself as he stumbled against a bench. Then the hand left his wrist, and pressed against his shoulder.

He was pushed against the wall, and to his surprise it yielded. Harry was forced into a small compartment. A portion of the wall had turned on a pivot!

The girl was still with him. Her presence was soothing. Harry felt a solid wall beyond, and leaned there.

"You are wounded?"

The soft voice was genteel—no longer a whisper. It was quiet here in the secret room; the noise from the den outside seemed far away.

"Yes," replied Harry.

"Where?"

"Left arm. Above the elbow."

Harry's coat was gently eased from his shoulders. He twinged slightly as his left sleeve was slipped from his arm. Then his shirt sleeve was drawn back, and he felt the pressure of a handkerchief as it was bound about his muscle.

The makeshift bandage seemed to ease the pain.

"It's only a flesh wound," whispered Harry hoarsely. "I'll be all right. But tell me"—he seemed to forget that he was still in great danger—"who are you?"

"Sh-h!" The girl's hand was placed upon his cheek, and a finger pressed against his lips. The touch seemed caressing. "Ask no questions, now. Later— perhaps."

He could visualize the girl's lips, as they whispered, close to his ear.

"I must go. Wait here. Make no noise. Do not leave until I return."

The hand left his face. Harry stood motionless for a moment. Then he reached toward the girl. He wanted to hold her in his arms. He did not want her to leave.

But his hands encountered nothingness. As he moved forward, Harry reached the section of moving wall through which they had come.

It was solid now, some secret spring had locked it noiselessly. He was alone—a prisoner—in the pitch-dark compartment.

The mysterious girl had gone!

## **CHAPTER VIII. ANOTHER VISITOR**

STANLEY BERGER finished his laborious writing. Before him lay two sheets of paper, filled with carefully inscribed words. The young man's eyes did not see what he had written; they were upon the final word of his message.

Then he looked at the blank space at the bottom of the second page. His fixed stare saw something there—a spot of deep crimson that seemed to hold limitless depths.

It was the vision of The Shadow's fire opal, which still impressed Berger's dominated mind.

The young man sighed in relief as he affixed his signature below the message. He folded the two sheets of paper, and placed them in the envelope which he had addressed.

The envelope was stamped. Berger sealed it, and arose slowly from his chair.

It was all like a dream to Stanley Berger. His mind had been feverish and excited from the remembrance of the crime which he had committed.

The shock that had resulted from his meeting with the man in black; the soothing words that had been spoken to him; the mystic glow of the large fire opal—all these had caused his brain to yield. He had reached a hypnotic state, and was carrying out the suggestions that had been given to him.

Berger walked slowly toward the door of his apartment. There was a mail chute in the hall. That was his



destination. The letter seemed to burn his hand. Until it was safely on its way, he could feel no relief.

He opened the door; then stood stock-still. His path was blocked by a dark-clad figure, a form which Stanley Berger scarcely saw, yet could not pass.

The man who barred his way wore a red mask over his face. He extended two hands that were clad with thin red gloves. Slowly, but firmly, he pushed Stanley Berger back into the apartment.

The young man spoke, as though dreaming. His voice was thoughtful, and mechanical.

"I must mail this letter."

The man with the red mask looked keenly toward him. A red-gloved hand took the envelope from Berger's grasp.

"I shall mail the letter."

The masked man placed the envelope in his pocket as he spoke. Then he touched Berger's forehead with the fingers of one crimson glove. The pressure of his hand turned the young man's head from side to side.

"Wake up!"

With these words, the masked man struck Berger's forehead with his knuckles. Berger shook his head, and blinked his eyes. He gazed about him, in bewilderment; then stared at the man who stood before him.

"The Red Envoy!" he exclaimed.

The masked man nodded, and pointed to the chair by the table.

"Sit down," he commanded.

THE Red Envoy stood before him, his gloved hands resting upon the edge of the table. He seemed to be awaiting a statement.

"Why have you come to see me?" questioned Berger.

"To learn your story," said the Red Envoy quietly. His voice was firm and deliberate. It carried no threat, yet Stanley Berger shuddered.

"I killed Graham," said Berger moodily. "I killed him. I was afraid he would find out that I had taken his letters. I received the white card. I thought that my work was finished.

"I did not expect you to come here. I—I thought that none of us could see the Red Envoy."

"Your case is unusual," replied the masked man. "You acted effectively, but hastily. You are not suspected. But sometimes minds crack under imaginary strain."

"I have been worried," admitted Berger.

"I thought so," replied the Red Envoy. "I learned that you were going to the theater to-night. When a man seeks entertainment, alone, he is often trying to forget something. So I came here, to await your return.

"Why did you leave the theater early?"

"I was worried," said Berger. "I came away after the first act."

"After the first act?" There was a sharpness in the Red Envoy's question. "Where have you been since?"

"Here."

"You came directly here?"

"Yes."

"How long have you been here, then?"

"Only a few minutes."

Glancing toward his visitor, Stanley Berger saw a thin, faint smile appear upon the lips beneath the mask.

"What time do you think it is?"

"Nearly ten o'clock," was Berger's reply to the question.

"It is after eleven," said the Red Envoy quietly.

Stanley Berger ran his hand through his hair.

"Perhaps I have been dozing," he said doubtfully. "It seems as though I have been dreaming."

"What have you dreamed?"

"I can't remember." Berger closed his eyes thoughtfully. "Perhaps I imagined it—a man, all in black, who spoke to me. He seemed like— like a shadow. He came from there!"

Opening his eyes, Stanley Berger pointed to the dark spot beside the bookcase.

Moving across the room, the Red Envoy pressed the wall switch, to give more illumination than that provided by the table lamp. Berger blinked in the brightness.

"A man in black," he murmured.

"What did he say to you?"

"I can't remember. I was afraid of him, at first. Then his words seemed to quiet me.

"I remember a spot of deep red light—like a strange glowing gem" - Berger closed his eyes—"I can see it now. It shines like the embers of a fire."

"What did you do then?"

Berger reopened his eyes.

"It seems as though I wrote a letter," he said. "I don't remember what I wrote. I did it very slowly. It was important.

"Then I went to mail it"—he rubbed his forehead doubtfully—"I think I mailed it. I must have done so. No! I gave it to some one to mail for me!"

"To whom did you address the letter?"

"I don't know."

The Red Envoy drew the envelope from his pocket. He read the address aloud.

"Harry Vincent, Metrolite Hotel," he repeated. "Was that the man to whom you sent the letter?"

"Yes," exclaimed Berger. "I had forgotten. I remember now."

"Who is Harry Vincent?"

"I don't know."

"You are sure?"

"Positive. I never heard of him before. I don't know why I should have written him a letter."

The Red Envoy opened the envelope. He scanned the two pages, while Berger sat at the table, thinking.

"Is this your writing?"

Berger took the letter in response to the question. He nodded in acknowledgment.

"Read it," said the Red Envoy. "You wrote it. You signed it. Read it."

BERGER'S eyes ran along the carefully written lines. Before he had reached the end of the first page, his hands were shaking and his lips were twitching.

As he looked at the second page, and saw the signature at the bottom, he flung the letter to the floor, with a gasp of terror. Placing his hands to his forehead, he moaned in anguish.

"You have told everything," said the Red Envoy quietly.

"Why did I do it?" questioned Berger pleadingly. "Tell me why. I must be insane!"

"Some one has worked upon your mind," replied the Red Envoy. "You have betrayed yourself. More than that: you have betrayed our cause."

Stanley Berger became suddenly rigid; his eyes stared ahead. He clenched his fists.

"You have been released," said the Red Envoy, in even tones. "That is customary with those who have done their work for the cause. But you know the terms of that release. Silence. Absolute silence."

Berger nodded.

"You know what happens to those who betray the cause." The Red Envoy's voice came like the sound of doom. "They are our worst enemies. We may let other enemies wait; but not those who have betrayed us. We strike them quickly."

Again Berger nodded.

"I feared this," said the Red Envoy solemnly. "I feared that you would unwittingly betray the cause. I came to talk with you—to help you leave the country."

"I still offer you that opportunity. But you must first undo this work. Bring out paper, and another envelope. Are there stamps here?"

Berger nodded as he opened the table drawer and produced the required envelopes. The masked man extinguished the ceiling light. The room was illuminated only by the table lamp.

"Write this note," directed the Red Envoy. "Start it with 'Dear Sir,' as you began the letter to Harry Vincent."

Berger wrote the first words; then followed the masked man's dictation.

"The suicide of Jonathan Graham has left me miserable and unhappy. He was my friend and benefactor. My grief is overwhelming me.

"I do not feel that I can go on. I can work for no other man. The shock has left me helpless. Standing powerless, and watching the man I admired leap to his death, is something that I can never forget.

"When you receive this letter, I shall be gone."

Stanley Berger awaited further instructions.

"Sign the letter," said the Red Envoy. "Write two more like it. Sign all of them."

The young man obeyed, while the man in the crimson mask walked slowly back and forth across the room.

When the task was completed, the Red Envoy stopped beside the table.

"Now address three envelopes," he said. "One to Harry Vincent exactly like the envelope I opened. Address the others to any two persons whom you know. One of them—both if you wish—should be connected with Jonathan Graham's office."

Stanley Berger addressed the envelopes. The Red Envoy applied the stamps carefully; then folded the letters and put them in the envelopes. He pocketed the three messages.

"Stanley Berger," said the Red Envoy, in a quiet, solemn voice, "I have offered you help. You may leave to-morrow for South America.

"Instructions will be given you by telephone at exactly seven to-morrow morning. But remember"—the lips moved slowly beneath the crimson mask—"you would have betrayed our cause. You cannot control your future.

"While you live, you may again fail to preserve silence. Death is the punishment for those who betray. We do not accept excuses."

The Red Envoy thrust out an arm. In his gloved hand he held a small box. He opened it, and revealed three pills within. He laid the box upon the table and stepped away.

Stanley Berger's eyes grew large with horror. He stared at the box and its contents, and through his tortured brain flashed thoughts of doom.

Close by, a living menace, stood the Red Envoy, coldly watching the effect of his action. Then, satisfied that Berger understood, the masked man silently left the room.

Stanley Berger did not hear him go. Realization had dulled his senses.

His mind reverted to the letters that he had written.

"When you receive this letter, I shall be gone -"

Gone! He had not stated his destination. The words that the Red Envoy had dictated had held more than one meaning.

Gone! Berger knew that he must go—somewhere where he could never tell his true story. He thought of the confession that he had written; the letter which the Red Envoy had intercepted.

Berger's hand trembled as he reached for the little box.

The young man mumbled incoherent words; then suddenly his hand became steady as he lifted the box and poured the pills into his other hand.

When the distant clock struck twelve, all was silent in the apartment. The lamp still shone upon the table, and its rays, gleaming to the floor, revealed the dead body of Stanley Berger.

## **CHAPTER IX. HOW VINCENT ESCAPED**

HARRY VINCENT waited in darkness after the girl had gone. A multitude of thoughts overwhelmed his throbbing brain.

Who was the girl? Why had she saved him?

The first question was unanswerable. Harry felt that he could explain the second. He was sure that the girl had reciprocated the interest which he had felt for her. She had left him, alone, in a place that was virtually a prison; but he was positive that she had some plan for his escape.

A speck of light suddenly showed through the panel in front of him. Harry placed his eye to the spot.

Through a tiny hole in the revolving wall, he could see the large room of the Pink Rat, yet he was quite invisible in his compartment.

The lights had been turned on in the den, and the whole scene lay before him. The sudden attack had caused chaos.

The patrons of the Pink Rat were desperate crooks. The brief battle in the darkness had caused some to look for safety, while others had sought to participate in the fracas.

One man was sitting on a bench, rubbing the side of his face. He was the one whom Harry had punched in the dark.

Volovick was standing in the center of the room, uninjured. Evidently he had managed to ward off the bench which Harry had hurled upon him.

Broken bottles, and fragments of shattered glasses strewed the place. Two policemen were there. They had been attracted by the shots. But they seemed to be making a very halfhearted investigation.

A ruddy-faced, shrewd-nosed man was explaining matters to them. Harry decided that the fellow must be the proprietor of the Pink Rat. If so, the place was well-named. The man looked something like a pink rat himself.

Harry could not hear the discussion, but evidently the officers were satisfied that no one had been injured.

This upstairs den was protected through political influence. Nothing short of actual open murder could

have brought on a raid.

Murder had been attempted, it was true. Harry shuddered as he realized that he had been the intended victim. But it had been planned as a quick, quiet murder, with no noise.

Thanks to the unknown girl, the scheme had been frustrated.

For a moment, Harry was tempted to beat against the revolving wall, to attract the attention of the policemen. But on second thought he decided to wait.

There were a dozen persons in that room who would testify that he was the cause of the trouble. He could be framed with ease.

After all, he was safe here for the time being. Why should he invite more trouble?

The girl had promised to return, Harry had confidence in that promise.

He scanned the lighted room. There was not a woman in the place, let alone the one he sought. The feminine patrons had evidently been escorted out; the girl had probably slipped away in the darkness.

Two rough-looking waiters began to clear up the debris, and the policemen left. Quiet was restored. The few patrons who remained took their places at the tables, and the waiters brought them drinks.

Volovick remained. So did the man who had drawn the knife. The others— Harry could see nearly a dozen of them—were fit companions for those men.

It would be suicide to attempt an escape now. There was only one thing to do—wait until the gang had gone. Then, Harry hoped, the girl would return to release him.

Some of the men were engaged in discussion. Harry fancied that they were talking about him. Two men came in from the entrance. They talked with Volovick. They had probably been stationed outside to prevent Harry's escape.

This began to worry Harry. How long would it be before they began a search for his hiding place?

The proprietor must know of its existence. Would he suggest that they look behind the revolving panel?

These thoughts, and the constant throbbing of his wounded arm, made time pass slowly and feverishly for Harry Vincent.

The whole affair was unexplainable, with one exception. He knew that he had been tricked by Volovick.

The fellow had followed Stanley Berger openly; had called the address aloud to the cab driver—all so Harry would trail him to the Pink Rat.

Harry Vincent's conjecture that the proprietor knew of the hiding place behind the wall was quite correct. The ruddy-faced little man had planned that secret compartment himself, and he did not know that any other person knew of its existence. Hence he had no idea that Harry was hiding there.

The attack started by Volovick had been done without the proprietor's approval. He had not even seen the intended victim. He was satisfied because the police had gone.

New patrons began to enter the den. Harry could see them through the peephole. They were typical denizens of the underworld. One by one they strode in, gazing curiously about them, and making no comment.

They had heard of the fight. They were looking the place over. But they asked no questions.

The presence of these newcomers was not encouraging to Harry.

Some of them might be in league with Volovick. None of them were known to Harry. He did not see a single friendly face in the crowd.

One individual, in particular, was most ugly. He was dressed in a shabby, dirty sweater. An unlighted cigarette clung to his lower lip. His face was grimy, and marked with short scars.

The man attracted Harry's attention because of his sharp, knowing eyes. As he looked about him, he seemed to be ferreting out the thoughts of the others in the den.

Once or twice the man's eyes rested on the wall, and Harry instinctively drew away from the peephole.

Did this gangster know of the hiding place? His eyes were so penetrating that Harry imagined he could see through the panel itself.

Placing his ear to the hole in the wall, Harry tried to catch the mumbled conversation; but without success. So he abandoned the effort.

He knew that the fight was under discussion. The newcomers were listening in on the talk. Particularly the ugly brute in the dirty sweater.

Volovick had become the center of those about him. He was speaking, and gesticulating. He was telling what had happened, and he shook one fist in the air, as a threat of vengeance.

HALF an hour went by; a long, tense period. Thirty minutes of painful waiting for the man behind the revolving panel.

Harry felt that he could not wait much longer. His arm troubled him; his nerves were on edge. He seemed stifled in this cramped hole in the wall.

He thought of the girl. She must be thinking of him. Somewhere, outside this miserable place, she was planning a rescue. But could she help him?

Harry could not picture her as a woman of the underworld. Any friends whom she might bring could not hope to attack this crowd of gangsters. Yet the girl was his only hope.

It was while Harry's thoughts were dwelling on this subject that the unexpected happened.

Shifting his position, Harry leaned against the wall in front of him, and stretched his hand to one side. A feeling of hope came over him as he saw Volovick rise to leave the Pink Rat, while those around him seemed ready to depart.

In a few minutes his real enemies would be gone. The time for his deliverance would be at hand!

But as his thoughts took this trend, Harry's wrist struck against a small bar at the side of the wall.

The panel swung outward. Harry lost his balance.

Unknowingly, he had released the catch; now he was precipitated headlong into the room where the gangsters stood.

Harry's appearance was so unexpected that it took the mobsmen by surprise. They stood gaping at this

man who had plunged from the wall. But as Harry rose to his knees, and turned his face upward, Volovick recognized him.

"That's the man!" exclaimed Volovick. "Get him! Now!"

The first gangster to spring forward was the one who had been looking at the wall—the ugly man with the dirty sweater. He leaped straight at Harry, with a fiendish look upon his face.

Two others were coming from the side. Harry swung away from them, but he was directly in the path of the man who was coming toward them.

He put up his hands to ward off the man's attack. But the sweater-clad gangster ignored him.

Instead of falling upon Harry, he threw himself against the other two men. Harry saw his fists swing with short, murderous punches. The two men, taken by surprise, went down beneath his blows.

With a shout, Volovick hurled himself forward. The scar-faced gangster crouched low, and caught Volovick's wrist, hurling the man over his shoulder.

With his free hand he whipped a revolver from the fold of his sweater, and the staccato reports of the automatic reechoed through the room.

His shots were made with amazing precision. One crippled the wrist of a gunman, who had just drawn an automatic. Another clipped the hand of a man who was pulling a knife from beneath his coat.

Then, almost drowned by the echoes of the revolver shots, came the popping of electric light bulbs, as the scar-faced gangster used his unerring aim to plunge the room in semidarkness.

"Get to the door. Lie low against the wall."

Harry obeyed the terse command which his rescuer uttered in a low voice. Dodging behind a table, he escaped all notice. Crouching by the door, he watched the finish of the astounding conflict.

THE men in the Pink Rat were toughened fighters. Even those who were not with Volovick recognized an enemy in the scar-faced gangster.

They saw him as he shot the lights. They threw themselves into the fray. Six of them leaped to the same objective.

The man in the sweater no longer depended upon his automatic. Seizing one of the light benches, he used it as a mighty cudgel, striking out amid the gloom.

He handled his strange weapon as easily as if it had been a cane. He struck down one attacker at the side. Turning, he met the others head-on, and Harry could hear the thud of falling bodies.

Revolver shots flashed through the semidarkness. Men screamed as the bullets found their mark. But through it all, the solitary fighter seemed gifted with a charmed existence.

With a mighty effort, he flung the bench across the room, where it struck a man and deflected the aim of the fellow's automatic. Then the lone fighter was gone.

Curses and groans pervaded the room. Volovick's flashlight appeared, directed toward the spot where the scar-faced gangster had waged his terrific fight. But it revealed only the forms of wounded gangsters who had fallen in the attack.



A hand plucked Harry Vincent by the arm. It was the man who had rescued him. The sweater-clad gangster had slipped between the tables, and had reached the door.

Together, he and Harry reached the stairs and hurried downward. Their flight was just in time. Shots came from behind them, and they could hear the cries of the thwarted gangsters.

The battle had been short and rapid. The sound of the shots had not yet attracted people from the street. Harry's companion uttered a shrill whistle; a taxicab rolled up from a short distance away.

"Get in. Hurry!" commanded the gangster, in a low, weird voice. Harry obeyed.

The driver slammed the door.

Astonished. Harry looked for his companion. The man had disappeared.

But at that instant, Volovick arrived. The man staggered from the entrance to the Pink Rat, his eyes wild with vengeance. He saw Harry's face behind the open window of the cab.

With a cry of triumph, Volovick leveled an automatic. The driver was in his seat; but the cab had not yet started. Harry was staring into the muzzle of the revolver. He had no chance to drop behind the door of the cab.

But Volovick's finger never pressed the trigger. A strange, tall black figure emerged from the shadows beside the entrance to the building. A long arm swept downward, and struck the gun from Volovick's hand.

The cab shot forward. Harry looked back through the rear window. Volovick lay helpless upon the sidewalk. A policeman was running up the street from the corner.

The black-clad figure had disappeared in the night.

The true facts of his amazing rescue were now plain to Harry Vincent. The sweater-clad gangster had enveloped himself in a black cloak as Harry had entered the cab. It was he who had overpowered Volovick, when the latter had sought to fire the fatal shot.

Only one man could have performed these amazing deeds. Once again, Harry Vincent had been saved by The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER X. BRUCE DUNCAN'S FRIEND**

THE telephone bell awoke Harry Vincent in the morning. He sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes. He had slept late; for the grueling adventure of the preceding night had exhausted him.

As he reached for the phone, he felt a twinge in his left arm—a reminder of the bullet that had wounded him.

The voice on the wire was deliberate.

"Mr. Vincent?"

"Yes."

"Shall we send the shirts you ordered? We received your letter this morning. Hello! Can you hear me?"

"Yes," replied Harry.

There was a click from the other end. The speaker had apparently been cut off. Harry listened for a moment; then smiled as he hung up the receiver. The interrupted call had given him the full message.

"Send letter here."

That had been the meaning of the three emphasized words. It was a short, cryptic message.

Harry was used to such calls. He had heard them by phone; he had listened to them over the radio. A few words, stressed at intervals, could carry complete instructions.

It was obvious that the call had come from Claude Fellows. The insurance broker was the man through whom Harry communicated with The Shadow.

So he was to send the letter to Claude Fellows. What letter?

Harry called the hotel desk.

"Any messages for me?" he asked.

"A letter here, sir."

"Send it up."

When the letter arrived, Harry merely noted that it was addressed to him. He placed it in a long envelope, and addressed it to Claude Fellows.

It was after nine o'clock, so Harry dressed and went to the Grandville Building. There he left the letter with Fellows' stenographer. After that he went out for breakfast.

Evidently there were to be no immediate duties for him. Last night, Harry had congratulated himself upon his skill in trailing Volovick, the man who had been following Stanley Berger. But that had ended in a fiasco.

Harry had fallen into a simple snare; The Shadow had been forced to rescue him.

Last night had furnished plenty of excitement. But now it appeared that he had been dropped from the task of watching Stanley Berger. Harry felt somewhat piqued.

He went back to the hotel and read a newspaper. In the journal he saw the account of Stanley Berger's suicide.

Harry whistled softly. So that was why he had been relieved from duty!

He could not believe that Berger was dead. It was a strange, unexplainable sequel to the events of last night.

A MAN entered the lobby while Harry was still pondering over the demise of Stanley Berger. Spying Harry, the newcomer approached and slapped him on the back.

Harry was startled by the suddenness of the greeting.

"Bruce Duncan!" he exclaimed.

"None other," was the reply. "How's everything, Harry?"

"All right. Come on up to the room. We can talk a while."

When they reached Harry's room, the two men began a long conversation.

They had not seen each other for some time. Bruce Duncan had been abroad. He had just recently returned to America.

When Harry had last seen him, Duncan had been worried, and his appearance had shown it. Now he was the picture of health; a fine, clean-cut chap of powerful physique.

At first the talk was of Bruce Duncan's trip abroad. Finally Harry lowered his voice, and referred to events of the past.

"Has everything been all right?" he asked. "All right since the affair of the Russian jewels?"

Bruce Duncan nodded.

"You have told no one?" questioned Harry.

"No one," replied Duncan. "I have preserved absolute secrecy."

"Have you ever seen the messenger since -"

"Berchik? No. I have no idea what became of him."

"You are wise to keep your secret."

"I know it, Harry," said Bruce Duncan soberly. "You can be sure that I have kept silence. You know the secret of those jewels."

"They were the wealth of a Russian prince. My uncle was to receive them, and give shares to other people. But my uncle died before Berchik arrived, and the task fell upon me. I distributed the shares anonymously."

"There are only two men in America who know that I received the jewels. You and myself."

Harry Vincent shook his head.

"The Shadow knows," he corrected.

"That is true," agreed Duncan. "Of course The Shadow knows. Had it not been for The Shadow, you and I would be dead."

"He rescued me again, last night," said Harry, quietly. "Remember, Bruce, you must never mention The Shadow—to any one but myself."

"I understand. Your connection with The Shadow is as important a secret to you as the jewels are to me. Well, I have the jewels stowed safely away in a safe-deposit vault."

"I know where they are. But do you know where The Shadow is?"

"He seems to be everywhere, Bruce," laughed Harry. "I have had exciting adventures since I last saw you; and I appear to be on the verge of new experiences."

A ring from the telephone interrupted the conversation. Harry answered.

"Oh, yes," Duncan heard him say. "I forgot that the insurance policy ran out to-day. I'll stop over before five o'clock."

Harry hung up. He resumed conversation with Duncan.

THE subject changed; they discussed various unimportant matters, and finally Bruce Duncan reverted to the trip from which he had just returned.

"One makes many interesting acquaintances, traveling abroad," he said. "I met a German coming back on the boat. He has been living here in New York for several years.

"He invited me to a party, night before last. I was introduced to some very interesting people. One in particular -"

He smiled and looked at his watch.

"I have a luncheon engagement," he said. "Can't you come along with me? I'd like you to meet the person of whom I am speaking."

"Who. The German?"

"No. My new friend. The one to whom I was introduced."

"All right," agreed Harry. "I don't have anything to do until late this afternoon, when I have an appointment with an insurance man. I'll be glad to go along with you."

Harry was glad to have met Bruce Duncan again.

They continued their talk as they left the hotel. Harry learned that Bruce was living alone, in an old mansion which had belonged to his uncle.

Bruce's only attendant was a faithful Hindu servant, named Abdul. The Hindu had been abroad with Bruce.

"I couldn't get along without Abdul," remarked Bruce, as they walked down Broadway. "He's been with me for years. I brought him back from India, after a trip around the world.

"He's helped me out of some difficult places. He's not only a good bodyguard; he seems to have some instinctive power that enables him to see danger before it arrives. His only fault is that he talks very little. He keeps his knowledge to himself."

THE two men entered the lobby of a Broadway hotel. Bruce led the way to the hotel cafe. The head waiter recognized him.

"I have a table for you, Mr. Duncan," he said.

"There will be three of us," announced Bruce.

They sat at the table, and puffed at cigarettes. Bruce Duncan's eyes were toward the door. Suddenly he arose, and left the dining room.

He returned a minute later. Harry looked up to see him approaching with a young woman as his companion. Rising from the table, Harry turned to meet the new arrival. It had never occurred to him that Bruce Duncan's friend might be a girl!

"Miss DeLand, may I present Mr. Vincent -"

Harry was staring in amazement before Bruce Duncan had completed the introduction.

The young woman was the one who had come to his assistance last night, in the Pink Rat!

He had seen her at a distance then; now, at close vision, she appeared more beautiful than before. Harry was positive of her identity; and he fancied that he saw a gleam of recognition in the girl's eyes.

Harry quickly regained his composure.

"Haven't I met you before?" he questioned.

The girl shook her head. She no longer betrayed a look of recognition.

As they sat at the lunch table, Harry Vincent was thoughtful. The tone of the girl's voice, her smile, and her manner left no room for doubt.

She was the girl who had rescued him. Why did she pretend not to recognize him? What was her purpose with Bruce Duncan?

Was she a friend or an enemy of The Shadow?

## **CHAPTER XI. NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

IT was early in the evening. The old building on Twenty-third Street was dark. All the occupants of the dingy offices had gone home a few hours before.

A single light gleamed in a room on the second floor. But any one going through the building would not have observed it; for the room in which it appeared was thoroughly curtained. A black cloth hung over the glass door on which the name "B. Jonas" appeared.

Beneath the shaded light was a table, and there hands were at work. Like a creature of the night, The Shadow was going over the data which he had received from his agent, Claude Fellows.

The insurance broker's report was one of definite information. It referred in part to Harry Vincent:

Vincent called at five o'clock. Followed Berger last night. Left him at theater. Followed man who had been trailing Berger. Was lured to place known as Pink Rat. Learned name of man whom he followed. Volovick.

Vincent attacked by Volovick and gang. Rescued by a girl who helped him hide in secret compartment behind the wall of room. Girl disappeared. Vincent opened panel of wall by accident. Escaped through aid of an unknown man who fought Volovick and his gang.

Vincent received a letter to-day. Forwarded it unopened. Letter inclosed herewith. Vincent also met girl again. She was with Bruce Duncan. Has known Duncan only a few days. Her name is Arlette DeLand. Pretended she did not recognize Vincent. She lives at Hotel Paragon.

Data regarding Whitburn difficult to obtain. Have located several Whitburns. Professor Arthur Whitburn seems most probable. Formerly head of engineering department, Hornell University. Now retired. Lived on island in Lake Marrinack, Connecticut. Have traced inclosed advertisement to him.

A clipping lay on the table. The hands raised the slip of newspaper, which had been cut from the Morning Sphere. It read as follows:

WANTED: Young Man, single, college graduate, to assist in experimental work. State qualifications, age, et cetera. A. W., care of Sphere.

The moving hands discarded the newspaper clipping. Then they turned to another task. They lifted the envelope which Harry Vincent had received in the morning mail. It was addressed in the writing of Stanley Berger.

Slowly the hands opened the envelope, and spread the letter upon the table.

For two full minutes the hands remained motionless. The fire opal, glimmering beneath the brilliant light, sparkled as though it were alive; yet it seemed attached to a waxwork hand.

The message written by Stanley Berger was perplexing to the mind that was invisible in the surrounding darkness. It was in the suicide's writing, yet the facts which it stated were not what had been expected.

The simple announcements that Berger was "miserable and unhappy"; that the "shock had left him helpless"; and that when the letter was received he "would be gone" carried no semblance of a murderer's confession. Instead, these statements were ones which an innocent man might have written.

THE letter dropped to the table. The hand that wore the fire opal picked up the envelope. The fingers of the other hand carefully peeled the stamp from the corner where it was attached.

The envelope was discarded. Producing two sheets of paper, and two pencils, each hand poised as though ready to write. Finally the left hand inscribed these words:

Berger began to write a complete confession. His mind was directed to that channel.

The right hand took up the task, forming words that seemed to come from another mind:

The letter received by Vincent is not a confession. It was dictated by another person.

Then, right and left hand writing in rapid alternation, these sentences quickly filled the two papers:

Berger first addressed the envelope. Unknown to him, that envelope was marked in the corner. The stamp was placed over the mark.

There is no mark on the envelope received by Vincent. This is not the envelope which Berger originally addressed.

Berger's mind was directed to mail the original envelope. His mind, acting upon the suggestion given it, would not have remembered the address. Vincent's name would have been unknown.

Some one intercepted the letter of confession. That person now knows that Harry Vincent is connected with this matter.

The amazing hands held the two sheets of paper side by side; then crumpled them together.

Now the right hand, as though inspired by the comparative thoughts, began to write alone; and it showed that a master mind was at work, piecing together bits of evidence.

The words were scattered, and obscure in their meaning; but at last the hand became methodical, and compiled a list of names, with statements following them. The first was:

Stanley Berger. Member of a powerful organization. Attended meetings. Ordered to obtain correspondence between Jonathan Graham and man named Whitburn. Berger succeeded. Murdered Graham to cover up trail. Received notification to stay away from future meetings. Did not know exact nature of correspondence which he stole.

A second name appeared upon the list:

Volovick. Another member of the organization. Deputed to observe Berger. Saw Vincent. Led him into a trap. Sought to kill him.

The third name would have interested Harry Vincent:

Arlette DeLand. Saved Harry Vincent temporarily. Is a friend of Bruce Duncan. Now fails to recognize Vincent. Has some purpose in making Bruce Duncan's acquaintance.

The moving fingers became motionless. The directing brain was considering the next person on the list. Finally the hand wrote; but this time it inscribed no name. Instead, it used the letter X to denote an unknown factor.

X. A supervising power of the organization. The person who visited Stanley Berger. A keen, strong mind. Overcame the suggestion under which Berger was working. Gave him new directions. Induced him to commit suicide.

The forefinger of the right hand ran down the list, carefully checking every statement which had been written. Then, with precise care, it wrote a definite summary upon another sheet of paper:

Stanley Berger worked for an unknown purpose. Therefore he was inspired by a cause not governed by personal gain. Murder was too drastic an action to merely cover up his theft. He murdered Jonathan Graham because in him he saw an enemy to his cause.

Graham had no known personal enemies. He was a millionaire, and noteworthy as a capitalist. He was an outstanding opponent of communism. This would be sufficient cause for a fanatic to kill him. Berger was a fanatic. His suicide proves it.

Volovick has connection with gangsters. But he is not identified with major activities in the underworld. He is a Russian. A logical member of a Red organization.

The members of this organization do not know one another—except when deputed to watch a former member of the group; as Volovick watched Berger.

Arlette DeLand, as an agent of the organization, did not recognize Volovick; or was not recognized by him. Hence she did not know that Vincent was under observation as a supposed enemy.

Bruce Duncan is being tracked by the organization because he was the recipient of czarist wealth. That is the only reason why he would be investigated. Arlette DeLand is working for the group, to learn more about him.

The Shadow, invisible in the darkness, had summarized his facts. Now his hand wrote the details of his future plans. They were brief and definite:

X must be traced. Two methods. First, through Volovick. Second, by warning Bruce Duncan to watch Arlette DeLand.

Find connection between Whitburn and Graham. Danger may threaten Whitburn. He must be protected.

Vincent is now in danger. His name is known to X. Two in danger are safer together. Whitburn will be reached through Vincent.

The hand paused; then it used the pencil to underscore the last sentence. The hand produced a pen, and

wrote a brief note in ink. The message was quickly folded; the newspaper clipping of A. W. was dropped with it, into an envelope.

Using another pen—one which evidently contained permanent ink— The Shadow addressed the envelope to Claude H. Fellows, in the Grandville Building.

The light was turned out. Silence reigned amid the blackness. The mind of The Shadow had performed its work. Now the man had gone forth to act!

## **CHAPTER XII. AT THE COBALT CLUB**

THE death of Jonathan Graham was no longer a matter of front-page interest; but it was still a subject of discussion at the Cobalt Club. The importer had been a prominent member of that social organization. The Cobalt Club was reputed to be the most exclusive in New York.

To-night, a small group of members were seated in the luxurious lounge, and their conversation dealt with Jonathan Graham. While they were talking, a young man entered, attired in evening clothes. He nodded to various persons in the group, but took no part in the discussion.

After a short while the group dwindled away, until only a single individual remained. He was a tall, gray-haired man, whose face was firm and dignified. Not the slightest semblance of a smile appeared upon his features.

The young man in evening clothes was still there. He was seated a short distance away, and now his eyes fell upon the one man who remained.

"Unfortunate," observed the young man. "This death of Jonathan was most unfortunate. I knew him rather well. Splendid chap, Graham."

The gray-haired man nodded.

"I seldom come here to the club," he said, "although I have made rather frequent visits during the past few weeks. I had only a speaking acquaintance with Graham. He must have been highly esteemed."

"He was quite popular," replied the young man.

"I believe I have met you once or twice before," observed the gray-haired man. "Your name is Cranston, is it not?"

"Lamont Cranston," replied the other. "I have been away from town for several months; but I have seen you before that. I must confess, however, that your name has slipped my memory."

"I am Richard Albion."

"Oh, yes. Now I recollect. We once discussed Russia. Rather briefly, however. You told me that you had lived there, prior to the War."

Richard Albion became thoughtful.

"I have deep remembrances of Russia," he said. "Many of my friends belonged to the old regime. I have done much to aid them since the revolution. Some of them have come to America.

"It is a sad sight—persons of high station who have become virtually destitute through events over which they had no control."



"Some have not been so unfortunate," observed Lamont Cranston quietly.

"I know of none," replied Albion. "Sometimes the past seems wholly obliterated from my mind. I wish that I could forget the present—and let my thoughts revert to days gone by."

"That is not difficult," said Lamont Cranston. "Through concentration we can forget the present. I have done so, often."

"I should like to know your method."

LAMONT CRANSTON drew his left hand from behind the arm of the chair in which he was sitting. He extended his arm toward his companion.

Albion noted the long, white, tapering fingers, and his eyes were immediately attracted to a large gem, mounted on a heavy ring.

"An unusual stone," he said.

"Yes," answered Cranston. "It is a girasol, or fire opal. Look at it in the light. Do you see its deep red light, glowing like the embers of a fire?"

"I do," replied Albion. He was staring at the fire opal, as though suddenly fascinated by it.

"Focus your gaze upon it," suggested Cranston quietly. "Concentrate. Center your mind upon its reddish light. It produces a strange mental reaction. It brings back lost memories -"

Richard Albion's hands were twitching slightly. He seemed unconscious of their movement. He seemed lost in deep thought, as though the sight of the strange gem had awakened a great interest in his brain.

Lamont Cranston spoke slowly as he watched his companion.

"Perhaps you will recall some one who lived in Russia," he said. "A man who had great wealth—who still retains much of it. Perhaps his name will come to you. Does it?"

"No," answered Albion, his eyes still upon the fire opal.

"The name is in my mind," said Cranston. "It will be in yours, if you watch the gem. Listen. I shall reveal it."

As he ended the sentence, Cranston pressed his fingers tightly together. The fire opal sprang back upon a hinge.

Beneath it, in the base of the ring, was a gold surface, upon which was engraved a seven-pointed star.

"Prince Zuvor!" whispered Lamont Cranston.

RICHARD ALBION uttered a low exclamation. He gripped the arms of his chair, and, half rising, he cast a startled look at the man before him.

Then his eyes reverted to the ring on Lamont Cranston's hand. The fire opal had dropped back into place. The red gem now glowed where the seven-pointed star had been.

"Do you recognize the name?" questioned Lamont Cranston, with a slight smile.

Richard Albion stared fixedly.

"Prince Zuvor," he murmured. "I have heard of Prince Zuvor."

"You are Prince Zuvor."

The gray-haired man did not reply. His eyes met those of Lamont Cranston. For a few seconds the two men studied each other intently. Then Albion nodded slowly.

"I am Prince Zuvor," he admitted. His voice was almost inaudible. "Yet few men know my identity. How you discovered it is a mystery."

"Yet you possess the signet of the Seventh Star. That is a sign which I must acknowledge."

Reaching in his pocket, Prince Zuvor brought forth a small gold coin. Pressing it between his hands, he made a twisting motion. The coin came apart. Prince Zuvor revealed one portion in the hollow of his hand.

Engraved within the hollowed coin was a seven-pointed star, identical with the device that lay hidden beneath Cranston's fire opal.

"The Seventh Star," said Zuvor, looking intently at Cranston, "is an order of the old regime. It belongs to the years before the revolution. But you are so young -"

"My age," replied Cranston, with a slight smile, "is deceiving. Like you, prince, I have memories of Russia—as it was."

He placed his right hand against the bosom of his shirt. His fingers were apart. He closed his hand and extended two fingers.

His quick motion denoted the number seven. The action was observed by Zuvor. The man who called himself Richard Albion responded with the same sign.

Lamont Cranston uttered three words in Russian. Zuvor replied. Then in English, Cranston said:

"The stars are bright to-night."

"The brightest stars are the planets," replied Zuvor, in a low voice.

"And they are seven," whispered Cranston.

"The seven which shall rule," answered Zuvor.

The two men had exchanged the pass words of the Seventh Star—the secret order of Royalist Russia, which had numbered among its members only the most trusted nobles of the czarist regime.

Yet, despite Lamont Cranston's prompt responses, Prince Zuvor still eyed him with a remnant of doubt.

"Your age may be deceiving," he said. "Yet you are not a Russian."

"I was in Russia during the first months of the War," replied Cranston. "As the agent of another government, I became a member of the Seventh Star."

"Ah! Now I understand. You were one of the chosen few."

Lamont Cranston nodded.

PRINCE ZUVOR glanced anxiously about the room. He and Cranston were alone, isolated in the

spacious lounge of the Cobalt Club. Here they could not be overheard.

"We are not in Russia," he said softly. "Yet there are dangers even here. You, I hope, have not experienced them. But I am watched. There are Red agents in New York."

Lamont Cranston nodded.

"Yet they are slow to strike," continued Zuvor. "They hold no menace—to those who are careful. Still, we must not underestimate their power. They can kill."

"The case of Jonathan Graham stands as evidence of that," replied Lamont Cranston.

An expression of amazement came over Prince Zuvor's face. Then his eyes narrowed for an instant. He looked at Cranston sharply.

"You believe that?" he questioned.

"I do?"

"Why?"

"Graham was a millionaire. A capitalist."

Prince Zuvor indulged in a depreciating smile.

"There are many such in New York," he said.

"Graham was an importer," said Cranston. "He may have had dealings with Soviet agents."

"Perhaps;" Zuvor was still doubtful.

"Then again," suggested Cranston, "he may have had some private dealings, of which we do not know."

"Have you any evidence of such dealings?" questioned Zuvor.

"No," replied Cranston. "It is merely conjecture. I have long suspected that Red agents are at work in New York. They are subtle in their methods."

"Extremely subtle," agreed Zuvor, "but their activities are confined to narrow quarters. I, for instance, am under constant observation. It is not safe for any friend to visit me."

"Indeed." Cranston's tone denoted interest. "That intrigues me. I should like to visit you."

Prince Zuvor smiled in unfeigned admiration.

"You would be quite welcome," he said. He handed Cranston a card, bearing the name and address of Richard Albion. "But I warn you. If you come openly to my home, and leave openly, you will be a marked man from then on."

"They watch you that closely?"

"They do. But I can thwart them."

"How?"

"My house is one of mystery," explained Prince Zuvor. "One may be seen going in—yet not seen,

leaving.

"Not long ago"—he became reminiscent—"I had a visitor. He was the faithful servant of—of a Russian prince who is now dead. This man was under observation. He could not leave New York, because of the Red agents who were watching him. I enabled him to escape."

"How?"

"By one of my secret methods. I have several. I could leave New York to-night if I chose. But -"

Prince Zuvor frowned and made a motion with his hands. He had evidently decided that he had said enough. He glanced at his watch, and rose from his chair.

"I have many enemies," he said quietly. "But few friends, here in America. Most of them are dependent upon me. I am glad to know that you are one of us."

"Can I depend upon you, in time of stress?"

"You can," replied Cranston.

"Very well," remarked Zuvor. "I shall communicate with you here, when I need your assistance. We are of the old regime. I know that you are my friend."

"I shall visit you, some time."

"It will involve a risk."

"I enjoy risks."

Prince Zuvor bowed. Lamont Cranston rose and shook hands with him in parting. The Russian left the Cobalt Club.

Cranston was watching through the window, as the man who called himself Richard Albion drove away in a cab. The vehicle had not gone a hundred yards before a sedan pulled away from the opposite curb and followed.

Lamont Cranston took a chair in the corner of the lounge. He drew a pen from his pocket, laid a sheet of paper upon a magazine, and wrote:

Richard Albion is Prince Zuvor. He is being watched. Those who enter his home are watched. X can be traced through those who watch. This is another way of reaching X.

As Lamont Cranston reread the words which he had inscribed, the writing slowly faded away. The young man in evening dress smiled as he crumpled the paper and tossed it in a wastebasket.

### **CHAPTER XIII. THE RED MEETING**

PROKOP was seated at the desk in his apartment. He was busily engaged in writing. A clock on the desk showed half past ten. Prokop went to the bookcase and removed the encyclopedia which he used to conceal his important papers.

He removed a few documents. Then he looked puzzled. An envelope lay among them—an envelope which was addressed to him in bright-red ink. The color of the writing carried significance.

Prokop opened the envelope. He had not placed it there himself. He could not imagine how it had come

among his papers.

The letter was also in red ink; its characters had been carefully printed, and its words were short in their explanation:

You will not find this letter until just before the meeting. I have just been to see Berger. He will commit suicide. He was about to betray us. Watch Harry Vincent, who lives at the Hotel Metrolite. He is an enemy.

A strange, cryptic sign appeared at the bottom of the note. Prokop knew that it had come from the Red Envoy. That mysterious individual had come unknown to the apartment, last night and had left this message.

Prokop added it to the papers which he had just written. He thrust the entire lot into his pocket, and donned an overcoat. Then he left the apartment.

After walking several blocks, Prokop hailed a taxicab. It took him to a corner near an elevated station. He took the "L," and rode a few stops onward.

Reaching the street, he again utilized a cab for a distance of half a mile. He left it at the corner of a side street. After the vehicle had driven on, Prokop looked about him.

Then, sure that he was not being observed, he went down the street, and turned suddenly along a walk that led between two warehouses. He reached the back of an old house, and entered a basement door.

Moving through the darkness, the man arrived in a small room. There he lighted an oil lamp. The cellar room was windowless.

Prokop went to a corner, and removed a few boxes that were filled with tin cans and pieces of junk. Under them was an old box with a hinged top. He opened it, and drew out a dozen black hooded robes.

He donned one of these, and the masklike front fell before his face, leaving only two eye holes to see through.

With his identity thus concealed, Prokop reached under his robe, and drew a small red tag from his coat pocket. He pinned this to the left sleeve of the robe which enveloped him.

Then he sat upon a box which stood on end, and waited, motionless.

A FEW minutes later, there was a slight tap at the door. The man beneath the robe uttered a peculiar whistle, which was soft, yet clear. The door opened, and Volovick entered. He spoke a few words in Russian. Prokop replied.

"Agent F," said Volovick, in English.

"Correct," answered Prokop.

Volovick donned one of the black robes, and stood in an attitude of attention.

"Report," said Prokop.

Volovick spoke low and rapidly, in Russian. He was giving an account of last night's happenings. Prokop made no comment.

When Volovick had finished, Prokop made a single remark in Russian. Volovick obeyed it as a command. He opened a door on the far side of the room, and entered another compartment of the cellar.

A second visitor gave the signal outside. This one brought no report. While he was donning his robe, a third person tapped at the door.

Prokop hissed a different whistle. It signified that the person should wait. As soon as the second agent had completed his disguise, and had gone to join Volovick, Prokop admitted the third person.

One by one, the Red agents arrived. Each was submitted to a brief questioning by Prokop. Each gave his designated letter.

Seven of them had entered the inner chamber; yet Prokop still waited. A tap at the door. Prokop responded with the signal. A girl came in—she was the girl known as Arlette DeLand.

"Agent R," she announced.

"Correct," replied Prokop.

The girl donned one of the robes.

"Report," said Prokop.

"I have met Bruce Duncan," said the girl.

"What have you learned?"

"Nothing, as yet."

"You have had sufficient time."

"Not to work without suspicion. You ordered me to work slowly. It will require patient effort. I am anxious to let him mention the subject of the jewels of his own accord."

"That is best. You are right. Proceed cautiously. If you obtain unexpected results, give the usual signal. Stop in front of the Pink Rat, at eight o'clock. Wait there five minutes; but do not enter."

Prokop pointed to the inner room. The girl joined the others.

A few seconds later, there was another tap at the door. A ruddy-faced man with a short-clipped mustache was admitted by Prokop.

"Agent K," he said, in guttural tones.

"Correct."

The man appeared to be a German. He stepped methodically across the room, and garbed himself in one of the cowed robes.

"Report, Agent K."

The German spoke in English. His voice was low and thick. Prokop listened closely, intent upon every word.

"Zuvor was at the club to-night," he said. "He returned shortly before I came away."

"Do you think that he is planning any scheme?"

"I do not know."

"Watch him closely. You are sure that he has arranged no new methods of escape?"

"I am sure. The dictaphone is hidden in his room. I can hear all from the third floor."

"What about his other servant?"

"Ivan is the same as always. He knows nothing. He suspects nothing. He never leaves the place."

"Very good." Prokop motioned to the other room. Fritz, the German, left to join the others. Prokop bolted the door of the little room; then he, too, went to the meeting place.

THE black-robed group had assembled in a large, stone-walled room, where their forms seemed like spectral shapes, beneath the light of three lanterns that hung from the low ceiling.

Prokop stood at one end of the room, like a master of the inquisition. He alone knew the identities of the assembled agents. He had absolute control over the entire group.

He raised one hand above his head, and held it there. The others copied the action. Prokop lowered his hand. The agents did likewise.

Moving about the group, Prokop spoke to each one in turn— repeating a short, cryptic sentence. Each black-cowled person spoke in response. Having renewed their oaths of fealty, Prokop prepared to dismiss them.

He approached one agent and tapped him on the shoulder. The man went to the outer room. After a few minutes, Prokop dismissed another.

He allowed sufficient time for each to discard the robe in the outer room, and to leave the vicinity of the meeting place before another followed.

The agents maintained absolute silence during this procedure. No one ever spoke to another. One by one, they departed, until only four remained. Then Prokop left the group, and went to the outer room himself.

As he reached the door, he turned, and said:

"Agent M."

One of the gowned men followed. As soon as they were alone in the outer room, Agent M removed his disguise.

"You followed Prince Zuvor to-night?" questioned Prokop.

"Yes," replied the man.

"Where did he go?"

"To the Cobalt Club."

"How long was he there?"

"A few hours."

"Where did he go after that?"

"I followed him to his house."

"Good! Did you make arrangements to watch while you left?"

"Yes. The house is carefully guarded."

"Go back, then, and keep watching. Observe any one who may enter there. No further instructions."

The man left. Prokop went to the door of the inner room, and summoned Agent F. This was Volovick.

"I have been considering what happened last night," said Prokop. "You acted rashly. Nothing may come of it; but we must be safe."

He drew forth a yellow card, and gave it to Volovick.

"Keep this as a reminder," said Prokop.

Volovick nodded, and left.

Prokop called for Agent F. The man appeared, and removed his robe. He was a short, wiry individual, with a cunning face.

"I have work for you," said Prokop, in a low voice. "Go to the Hotel Metrolite. Stay there. Watch a man named Harry Vincent.

"Learn everything that you can about him. Use the name that you used before—Ernest Manion. Go where Vincent goes. Report as usual."

The short man nodded. He departed, and Prokop called the single agent who remained.

"Agent R."

THE girl entered the outer room. She had been standing near the door, awaiting her call. She slipped the robe from her shoulders, and looked quizzically at the hooded man who spoke to her.

"You have your instructions," said Prokop.

"Yes," replied Arlette. "Are there any further orders?"

"None."

"Then I shall go."

"Wait!"—Prokop spoke commandingly. "There is something I wish to tell you."

A puzzled expression appeared upon the girl's face.

"Arlette," said Prokop, in a low voice. "there is no reason why you should be content with being a mere worker for our cause. I have a plan by which you can be much more important."

The girl shrugged her shoulders.

"I am perfectly content," she said.



"Perhaps," replied Prokop, in soft, insinuating tones, "but that is because you do not look to the future.

"I have power. My position is important. If you will follow my suggestions, you will gain anything you desire."

"You have talked this way before," said the girl tersely. "But at that time there were others in the meeting room. I see your purpose to-night.

"We are alone; but I do not fear you. Again, I tell you that I am not interested in any plan which you may make."

"Be careful what you say," warned Prokop. "Remember, my word is law. You cannot oppose my will."

"Your word is not law," replied Arlette. "You have no power of your own. The real power belongs with the one who directs you. You cannot deceive me with false promises."

She turned to leave the room. Prokop stepped forward and seized her wrist. The girl turned; her eyes were furious as she stared at the mask which covered the man's face.

"Listen to me," said Prokop grimly. "I have chosen you to be mine. You cannot oppose me."

With his free hand, he lifted the cloth that hung over his face. The girl recoiled as she saw, for the first time, the evil look on Prokop's features.

The man quickly dropped the mask, and gripped Arlette's wrist more tightly, as she struggled to free herself. He clutched her other arm, and drew her toward him. The girl did not attempt to scream. She fought fiercely in her efforts to escape.

PROKOP'S strength was overpowering her. Then, suddenly, his grip relaxed. Gasping from exertion, Arlette staggered to the wall, and leaned there. For a few seconds she could not understand why the man had released her.

Prokop was standing motionless, facing directly toward the door. Arlette looked in the direction of his gaze. She gasped in astonishment.

The door had opened, and a man was standing there. He was tall and slender, and he wore a close-fitting suit of dark blue. His face was hidden behind a crimson mask. His hands, which rested upon his hips, were covered with red gloves.

"So!" The soft exclamation came from the man who wore the crimson mask. "I have interrupted. Perhaps it is well that I came here to-night."

Prokop still stood rigid, and motionless.

The red-masked man looked at Arlette.

"Who is the lady?" he questioned suavely.

"Agent R," mumbled Prokop.

The man with the crimson mask approached Arlette, and bowed. The girl stared in bewilderment. The masked man spoke slowly, uttering each word with careful pronunciation.

"I am the Red Envoy," said the strange man. "Have you received your instructions?"

The girl nodded.

"You will forget what has occurred. I can assure you that it will not happen again."

Arlette nodded again. The Red Envoy made another bow.

"You may go," he said.

Arlette walked slowly toward the door.

The sudden interruption had left her dazed. She had really believed Prokop when he had told her that he was the controlling power of the organization. The appearance of the Red Envoy had startled and amazed her.

When the girl had gone, the Red Envoy turned to Prokop. He made no reference to the incident which he had just interrupted. He spoke as though it had all been forgotten.

"Give me your report," said the Red Envoy.

## **CHAPTER XIV. HARRY RECEIVES A WARNING**

HARRY VINCENT stopped at the desk in the lobby of the Hotel Metrolite, and received a letter which the clerk handed him. He went to a chair that was set against a pillar, and opened the envelope. The note was in code, from Claude Fellows:

Call at my office at three o'clock. Be careful. Some one may be following you. Make sure that your destination is not known.

Responding instinctively to the warning, Harry glanced about him. As he gazed to the left, he noted a man sitting in a chair backed against the adjoining side of the pillar.

The man was looking in his direction. He had a newspaper spread out before him, and his head bobbed back to read it, but he was too late to avoid Harry's questioning gaze.

Pretending that he had not seen the man's action, Harry crumpled the note into a ball, and carried it over to the side of the lobby, where he dropped it in a wastebasket. The ink had already faded.

Harry lounged about the lobby, anxious to see if the man who had been watching him would go to investigate the wastebasket.

It was one o'clock now. Two hours to wait. Perhaps there would be important action ahead.

The last few days had been idle ones for Harry Vincent. Since he had left Bruce Duncan and Arlette DeLand, after they had lunched together, three days ago, he had found time passing slowly and tediously.

He had seen Fellows that afternoon, three days ago. Since then, no word whatever, until this letter that had arrived to-day.

He had been utterly unable to locate Bruce Duncan since. He had also called the Hotel Paragon a dozen times, and had asked for Arlette DeLand. She had not been there.

So far, Harry was entirely in the dark regarding any unusual events which might be transpiring.

He had received no explanation regarding the episode at the Pink Rat. He only knew that The Shadow

had rescued him.

Perhaps his coming interview with Claude Fellows would carry some enlightenment.

"Some one may be following you"—that statement had appeared in the note from the insurance broker. With two hours ahead of him, Harry would have plenty of opportunity to shake the man off his tracks.

He glanced toward the pillar, and made a quick inspection of the individual in the chair. He was a clever-looking chap, who was apparently paying no attention to what was going on about him.

Harry smiled. Here was an excellent opportunity for a get-away. The paper which he had tossed in the wastebasket was bait.

Harry strolled across the lobby, and entered the dining room. He was sure that the man would wait until he was gone; and would then obtain the letter that had been thrown away.

There was a street entrance to the dining room. Harry walked straight through, reached the street, and hailed a cab. A few minutes later he was riding along Broadway.

PICTURING himself in the other man's place, Harry was positive that his tracker would have preferred obtaining the letter to following him into the dining room, especially as it was lunch time. There was only one danger: that the man might have a companion. So Harry occupied his time with a series of maneuvers that would have thrown the most skillful sleuth from his trail.

He left the taxicab, walked half a block, and took another cab in the opposite direction. He left that cab in the middle of a block, and walked slowly along the street toward an elevated station, loitering occasionally.

Seeing an elevated train approaching from a distance, Harry made a mad dash for the steps. He mounted them two at a time, and caught the train just before the guard closed the gates.

He smiled at the effectiveness of the trick. He was the last person on the train; if another man had followed him up the steps, he would have betrayed himself.

Harry alighted a few stations up the line, and had lunch in a restaurant on a side street. Then he called a cab, and went directly to the Grandville Building.

It was shortly before three o'clock when he arrived at the office of Claude Fellows, on the fifteenth floor. He was ushered into the inner office.

Fellows was unusually congenial. He seemed satisfied with something that he had accomplished. He fairly beamed upon Harry.

"I have a job for you," he said.

"That's welcome news," replied Harry.

Fellows read from a sheet of paper.

"Remember this?" he said. "Professor Arthur Whitburn. Lake Marrinack, Connecticut. He wants a young man—single—college graduate—to assist him in some experimental work. He was greatly pleased with the letter which you wrote him."

"Which I wrote him?"

"I attended to that detail for you. I added a letter of recommendation from one of the officials of the Vesuvius Insurance Company. Mr. James Stohlmeyer, one of the vice presidents, had some very nice things to say about you."

"Did you write that letter, too?" asked Harry, in admiration of the insurance broker's versatility.

"No," replied Fellows, with a smile. "Mr. Stohlmeyer sent the letter himself, at my suggestion by long distance. He had never met you, but he knows me well, and he accepted my statement that you were a reliable young man."

"The Vesuvius Company is located in Connecticut, isn't it?" asked Harry.

"Yes," answered Fellows. "That's why a recommendation from that quarter was of value."

"When shall I leave for Lake Marrinack?"

"Early to-morrow morning. Your car is ready at the garage on Long Island. You can take the ferry across the Sound to Bridgeport.

"Report to Professor Whitburn in the afternoon. Remember that you are acquainted with Mr. Stohlmeyer of the Vesuvius Insurance Company."

Fellows handed Harry a newspaper clipping.

"This is the advertisement you answered," he explained.

HARRY grinned. This was interesting. He had obtained a job by proxy, and had probably been selected in preference to a great number of applicants.

"I wonder," he said, "what Professor Whitburn is doing in the way of experiments."

"That is for you to discover," said Fellows, folding his hands and leaning back in his chair. "I have been instructed to find out as much as possible regarding a man named Whitburn, and to see that he is protected against danger. You have been delegated to the mission.

"You, yourself, are in some danger. You may have suspected that from the note which I sent you this afternoon. If this man is the Whitburn who I believe he is—namely, the one who is in danger—you will have plenty of action ahead of you.

"If he is not the Whitburn whom I have been instructed to protect, you will be out of danger entirely—provided, of course, that you use discretion, and are not followed to Lake Marrinack.

"For if you are in the wrong place, and your presence there is not known, you will be quite safe."

"I prefer danger to inaction," remarked Harry.

"Every man to his choice," said Fellows, with a smile. "For my part, I prefer inaction to danger. But we get a taste of both, in this business; and we have to take whichever comes along."

Harry nodded in agreement.

"It may be difficult to communicate with us from Lake Marrinack," observed Claude Fellows. "Your car carries its usual radio equipment. But you may not have a chance to use it.

"If necessary, write a letter, and send it to me; but be careful. A long distance call—only in case of

absolute necessity. You have my home phone number. But on this trip, you may receive assistance. A messenger may come to see you."

"How shall I know him?"

"When he first speaks to you, he will glance at his watch. He will appear to note that the time is wrong. He will ask you the correct time; he will set his watch five minutes in advance of yours."

Harry waited silently for further instructions.

"Tune in on Station WNX at six and nine—if a radio set is available, and you find it possible. Notify me if you are able to do that, when you send your first report. It may prove valuable later on.

"Find out all you can about Professor Whitburn. Study the personnel of his establishment. Learn who is there, and why they are there. You have a real job ahead of you."

HARRY made mental notes of all that Fellows had told him. Some of his instructions were familiar because of his previous work in the service of The Shadow.

"Have you seen Bruce Duncan?" questioned the insurance broker. "That is, since the day when you had lunch with him?"

"No. I have not."

"We must communicate with him. It would be inadvisable for you to see him. I shall attend to the matter. He is at his country home, I suppose?"

"I have called him there, but have received no answer. I suppose he was in the city, and his servant was not at home. You should be able to reach him there. How is he concerned in this matter?"

Fellows shrugged his shoulders.

"I do not know," he replied. "I have instructions to communicate with him. That is all."

"Could it involve—Arlette?" Harry's question was involuntary. It was not addressed to Claude Fellows; but the insurance broker heard it. He studied Harry carefully.

"The girl interests you," he said.

"She does," admitted Harry. "I told you how she helped me—that night, in the Pink Rat."

"You still feel sure that she was the same girl that you saw with Bruce Duncan, the next day."

"I am certain of it."

Claude Fellows spread his hands, to indicate that the whole matter was a mystery to him.

"It would be best to forget the girl," he said. Then, he added, with a smile: "Forget her—as much as possible. Your own work is more important. I told you that you may have been watched lately. Have you observed anything that would indicate that fact?"

Harry mentioned the matter of the man in the lobby of the Hotel Metrolite. The insurance broker made a note of it.

"Why go back to the hotel?" he asked. "You are away now. Stay somewhere else to-night. Go to Long

Island in the morning."

"Good idea," replied Harry. "I'll follow that suggestion."

After leaving the office, Harry visited several stores, and purchased a new wardrobe, as well as a traveling bag.

He registered at the Baronet Hotel, some squares away from the Metrolite. He went to the theater in the evening, and returned to his room shortly before midnight.

Harry had just fallen asleep, when the telephone rang in his room. He sat upright in bed. Who could it be?

He had told no one that he was stopping at the Baronet Hotel. Perhaps they had rung his room by mistake. Harry let the phone ring for fully a minute. Then, more curious than startled, he answered the call.

"Mr. Vincent?" It was the voice of the hotel operator. "We have a call for you."

Harry acknowledged his name. He had thought of using another name when he had registered, but had finally, signed his own.

Another voice came over the wire. It was a woman's voice, also; but he did not recognize it for a moment. Then he suddenly realized that Arlette DeLand was speaking to him!

"Mr. Vincent?"

"Yes."

"I have something important to tell you -"

"Who is calling?" interrupted Harry abruptly.

"Do not ask my name. I cannot tell it to you. Listen, please -"

"Is this Miss DeLand?" questioned Harry.

"I cannot give you my name," the girl insisted. "You met me once— four nights ago in a place called the Pink Rat -"

"I should like to know your name," interrupted Harry.

"Please let me give you my message." The girl's voice was hurried, and her tones were pleading. "It is very important. Do not leave town to-morrow. Do not go to Lake Marrinack. Promise me that you will not go."

"I can't promise -" Harry began.

"You must not go," came the insistent voice. "Promise me, Harry."

The girl's voice seemed choking from emotion. She seemed unable to continue. Then there came a sudden interruption. The connection was broken; and the voice of the operator intervened.

Harry endeavored to have the connection restored; but without success.

LONG after he had put aside the telephone, Harry Vincent lay awake, wondering. He was positive that

Arlette DeLand had called him; that she was the girl whom he had seen at the Pink Rat.

But he could not understand how she had learned that he was at the Baronet Hotel. Nor could he explain her connection with these strange events that were developing.

Who was she? What was her part in the mystery?

If a friend, why did she try to conceal her identity?

If an enemy, why had she saved him four nights ago, and warned him to-night?

It was all beyond Harry Vincent's comprehension. Yet he was now sure of one important fact.

Lake Marrinack was a place where danger lay in store!

Mystery, excitement, and adventure. These three factors were intriguing to Harry's mind. The warning that had come in the night had assured him that they were ahead.

Harry phoned the room clerk to call him at six in the morning.

He was anxious to start for Lake Marrinack.

## **CHAPTER XV. DEATH ISLAND**

IT was late in the afternoon when Harry Vincent approached the vicinity of Lake Marrinack. Certain events had caused him to delay.

In the lobby of the Baronet Hotel, he had been sure that some one was watching him, even though he could not discover the invisible observer.

On that account he had taken a taxicab to the Grand Central Station; and on the way, he had noticed that another cab was following.

Losing himself in the labyrinth of passages leading to the subway, Harry eventually had taken the shuttle to the West Side subway, and had thus reached the Pennsylvania Station, where he had boarded a train for Long Island.

All this had meant delay; he had missed the Bridgeport Ferry, and had been forced to wait idly in his car. Detours in Connecticut had further retarded his trip. But now the road map showed Lake Marrinack was near by.

Harry pulled the car to the side of the road, and took another glance at the map. He had studied it on the ferry; but he had forgotten certain details.

There was a town called Marrinack, a short distance from the lake. The road continued past the town, and skirted the shore of the lake. Harry decided that the town was the proper place to make inquiries.

His instructions were simply to report to Professor Arthur Whitburn. Harry had made no phone call to Claude Fellows, to-day; yet he felt that he already had certain information.

The message from the mysterious woman was a sure indication that he was going to meet the right Whitburn.

This expedition promised danger. Harry pondered over the circumstances as he drove easily along the narrow, winding highway.

He remembered the last journey of this sort that he had made in behalf of The Shadow. That had been an eventful trip.

It was then that he had met Vic Marquette, the secret-service agent. He and Marquette had been captured by counterfeiters, and rescued by The Shadow. Harry wondered what had become of Vic Marquette, for the secret-service agent was a man of mystery himself. Even his associates could not keep track of him. Marquette was a man who played a lone hand. Harry had met him on that one occasion only; since then he had never heard of Vic Marquette.

The houses of the town of Marrinack appeared in the distance as Harry reached the top of a small hill. Unconsciously, Harry increased the speed of the car.

He was nearing his destination. He suddenly felt the urge of adventure.

THE town proved to be a tiny hamlet. Harry stopped before the general store, and alighted from his car. He entered, and spoke to the proprietor, a middle-aged man, who replied with a broad New England accent.

"I am looking for the home of Professor Whitburn," explained Harry. "I understand that he lives on an island in the lake near here. Is that correct?"

The storekeeper nodded.

"Yeah," he answered. "You mean the old professor. He lives on Death Island."

"Death Island?" Harry's question showed surprise.

"That's the name of the place," said the storekeeper tersely. "You can't drive out to the island, though. The professor has a telephone. Call him up, if you want. He has a motor boat on the island."

Harry went to the telephone. It was an obsolete contrivance, with a handle on the side, to ring for the operator. It took him several minutes to obtain the connection with Professor Whitburn's house.

A gruff voice answered.

"I'd like to speak to Professor Whitburn," said Harry.

"Professor is busy," came the reply. "Who is calling him?"

"My name is Harry Vincent -"

"Oh, you're the man he's expecting. Where are you now?"

"Down in the village."

"Come up to Harvey's Wharf. They'll tell you where it is. The motor boat will be there to meet you -"

"What shall I do with my car?" questioned Harry.

"You'll have to leave it in the village garage," was the reply. "Get a man to drive up with you. Let him take the car back. There's no place to keep it up here."

Concluding the conversation, Harry turned to question the storekeeper. He noted that the proprietor was talking with two old men, both of whom appeared to be natives of the district. Their conversation ceased when Harry approached.



"Where's the village garage?" asked Harry.

"Across the street," said the proprietor.

"Guess I'll have to leave my car there," Harry remarked. "I'm going out to visit Professor Whitburn."

One of the old men removed his clay pipe from his mouth, and advanced a question.

"You know the old professor, eh?" he asked. "Been out there before?"

"If I had been out there before," smiled Harry, "I wouldn't be asking the way to the place."

The old man laughed; but he shot a significant glance at the storekeeper, who made a quick motion indicating silence. Harry detected this, and was too curious to let the matter pass.

"What's the island like?" he questioned.

The proprietor did not reply; but the old man took advantage of the opening wedge in the conversation.

"They call it 'Death Island,'" he replied.

"Why?"

"I don't just know. It's always been called Death Island. But lately it's been kinda livin' up to the name they give it."

"How's that?"

"They say two men have died there in the past six months. Ain't nobody seems absolutely sure about it; the coroner knows, I s'pose. He's been out to see the professor. But it's been kept kinda hushed."

"So Professor Whitburn does not live alone?"

"No, sir. He's got three or four men out there with him. Don't know none of 'em. All strangers round here. That's what we can't just figger.

"S'pose he needs work done. Why don't he hire some of the folks here in town? 'Stead of that, he brings in strangers.

"Well, they're welcome. There ain't none of the boys round here wants to work for Whitburn, now, though lots of 'em would ha' taken a job when first he come here."

The old man ended his excited sentences by replacing his clay pipe in his mouth. He puffed furiously; then gazed questioningly past Harry and blinked his eyes.

Harry sensed that the storekeeper was signaling to the old fellow, prompting him to be quiet. Evidently the conjecture was correct; for the native became suddenly thoughtful.

"How long has Professor Whitburn lived on Death Island?" asked Harry.

The old man shook his head.

"I can't just recollect," he said.

"Did he come here alone?"

"Don't believe I recollect that, either."

HARRY left the store, and went across the road to the garage. The building was a converted stable. It had space for several cars. Harry arranged to leave his coupe there.

The garage owner was away; but the man on duty, who did mechanical work and attended to the small filling station, volunteered to drive him to Harvey's Wharf.

The fellow expressed mild surprise, when Harry stated where he was going. Then he climbed into the coupe, and Harry drove along the road.

"You goin' over to see Professor Whitburn?" asked the man.

"Yes," replied Harry.

"Ain't many goes over to see him."

"Why not?"

"The old man don't seem to like visitors."

"They call his place Death Island. Why?"

"It's always been called that," said the man. "Folks say that there was an Indian massacre there—back before the Revolution. Lot of white people killed. The place has been kinda jinxed ever since."

Harry looked at the man, encouraging him to say more.

"There's only one house on the island," the garage man stated. "Built more than a hundred years ago. They say highwaymen used to hide their stuff there. When I was a kid, we used to go over and dig around. We never found nothing, though."

"Then some fellow from the city bought the place—fifteen years ago, I reckon. Lived there in the summer. Only a couple of years, though. He was murdered there."

"After that, nobody went around the place, until this here professor took it, last year. Queer old duck, he is. Well, he's welcome to the place. I wouldn't take it if it was given to me."

"Why not?" questioned Harry.

"Well, for one thing," the man replied, "folks say it's haunted. I ain't no believer in ghosts—but if ghosts would hang out anywhere, it would be on Death Island."

"Some folks say it was ghosts killed the fellow who come there fifteen years ago. An' lately—well, I've heard things said by people who ain't superstitious."

"What, for instance?"

"Strange kinds o' noises out over the lake. Little blinkin' lights, up over the island."

"One fellow—I ain't sayin' who—tells me he was out in a rowboat, one cloudy night. Somethin' come right up outa the water, an' hissed over his head. Then it plopped in again."

"It might have been a large fish."

"No fish woulda acted the way he says. He was scared right, I tell you. He... Whoa, boy! Turn left here

for the wharf."

Harry applied the brakes, and turned the car into a dirt road, that led through a thick woods. The sun had nearly set, and it was dark beneath the trees. Harry turned on the bright headlights.

His companion was silent. The car moved almost noiselessly, as Harry steered it slowly along the narrow, winding road. Following his companion's talk of ghosts and eerie happenings, the woods seemed filled with spectral stillness.

Suddenly they turned into a clearing. The road ended on the shore of a lake, where the waters sparkled beneath the rays of the setting sun.

In front of them was a small wharf; beyond—a mile out in the lake - towered a tree-clad island. A thin wisp of smoke curled upward from the trees, indicating the presence of a house.

"See them rocks?"

Harry's companion pointed to the headland of the island, which was a solid mass of stone, rising to a height of thirty feet. Blackened flaws in the rocky front gave it a peculiar appearance.

"Looks like a big skull, don't it? Some folks say that's why it's called Death Island."

HARRY noted the resemblance. In the mysterious, dulling light which now hung over the lake, the rocky headland looked amazingly like a monstrous death's head, its sightless eyes directed toward the wharf. Harry felt a creepy feeling come over him.

The features of the huge skull seemed more pronounced in the settling gloom. They were intensified as Harry watched.

Neither he nor his companion spoke. Death Island seemed to hold a fascinating spell that cast its influence over them.

The chugging of a motor brought Harry from his reverie. A boat had appeared in front of the island. It was speeding across the water toward the wharf.

"Comin' for you," observed his companion.

Harry repressed a shudder. The man's words, spoken suddenly in the semidarkness, seemed to carry a hidden significance.

The boat grew larger; then it neared the wharf. Harry clambered from the coupe, and took out his traveling bag.

The garage man backed the car, and turned toward the road. In a few seconds he was gone.

The boat docked at the wharf. Harry approached and eyed its single occupant.

The man grunted in greeting. His appearance was well-suited to the environment. He was stockily built, and roughly dressed. His face was covered with a heavy beard, of pronounced blackness.

Harry entered the boat; the man turned it from the wharf, and they chugged across the lake.

Death Island loomed more formidably than before. The skull-like features of the rock seemed to increase in size, until they were almost beneath the overhanging bluff.

The man turned off the motor. The boat coasted along, and passed the rocky headland. As they glided through the still water, Harry could not detect a single sound.

A small dock shone white as they came into the darkness of overhanging trees. The boat came to a stop; Harry stepped on the dock, and the man tossed his bag after him.

While he waited for his strange companion to tie up the boat and conduct him to the house, Harry Vincent tried to study his surroundings.

But, this was now impossible. Daylight had faded; all that was visible before Harry's eyes was the beginning of a path that led up a steep hill.

Strange, gloomy, and forbidding, Death Island was as silent as death itself.

## **CHAPTER XVI. PROFESSOR WHITBURN**

THE bearded man led Harry Vincent up the path on the island. After a few hundred feet they came to a large house that loomed black in the darkness.

The hill had been short and abrupt. Harry estimated that they were not more than fifteen or twenty feet above the shore of the lake.

The man knocked at the side door of the building. It was opened, and Harry was ushered in. The house was lighted by electricity, but the room into which Harry came was gloomy because of sparse illumination.

The man who had admitted them was as unusual a character as the individual with the beard. He was clean-shaven, but sallow-faced, and his features had a peculiar twist that Harry instinctively disliked.

Without a word the man pointed to a chair on the other side of the room. Harry sat down. The bearded man disappeared; the fellow with the twisted face knocked at a door and entered a moment later.

This room in which Harry sat alone could hardly have been termed a living room; yet that appeared to be its purpose. It had very little furniture; and the single table and few chairs were plain and of cheap construction. The only inviting feature of the place was a large fireplace in one wall. But there was no fire burning.

A clock ticked away on the mantel above the fireplace, but the light was so poor that Harry could not see the time.

His enthusiasm to reach Death Island had cooled somewhat during the journey across the lake. Now, Harry found himself wishing that he had followed the advice of the girl who had phoned him at the Baronet Hotel.

Adventure was a real part of Harry Vincent's existence; but he preferred bright lights to gloom. Without companionship, he was a moody individual; and so far he had met with no signs of friendship on Death Island.

Silence, broken only by the ticking of the clock, became annoying. Harry seemed to have been deserted.

He found a magazine lying on the table; when he had drawn his chair near to one of the lights, he discovered that the periodical was three months old.

Evidently the men who lived on Death Island were interested in something other than current literature.

The clock being obscured in the darkness, Harry looked at his watch, and noted that time had slipped by. It was after seven o'clock.

He began to read the magazine; for a while he forgot his surroundings. Then, glancing at his watch again, he saw that it was quarter of eight.

Yet he was still alone. He felt the oppressive gloom of this strange house. He decided to walk about the room.

After a few paces, he was tempted to open one of the doors and look about; but he desisted, and it was well that he did, for at that moment the man with the twisted face suddenly reappeared.

HE approached Harry, and pointed to the nearest door. Harry took this as a signal to enter. He stepped forward alone.

The door opened into a small hallway. There was a door opposite. It was ajar, and rays of light were visible.

Harry pushed the door open, and stepped into a lighted room. Then he stood still in astonishment at his surroundings.

The room was in great disorder. One wall was a huge bookcase, but the shelves were only half filled. The missing volumes were piled about the room; some on chairs and tables; others on the floor, which was also strewn with papers.

Among the books were glass jars, and bits of mechanism. A shelf in the corner was piled with bottles and tubes of varicolored liquids.

A large tiger cat sat upon a window sill, nestled in the midst of papers. The animal seemed to have chosen that place as the only vacant spot.

In the midst of this chaos, behind a desk that was completely covered with books, papers, and odd contrivances, sat the strangest looking man whom Harry Vincent had ever encountered.

He was old, stooped, and thin. His hair was a mass of untrimmed white. He wore a huge white mustache, with long drooping ends.

He was muttering to himself as he wrote upon a sheet of paper which lay upon an opened book. He seemed totally unconscious of Harry's arrival.

The objects in the room were interesting; and Harry took advantage of the man's preoccupation to study his surroundings. Everywhere he looked he saw something which seemed to no apparent purpose.

He forgot all about the man at the desk for a few minutes. When his eyes returned to that spot, the white-haired individual was staring at him with a strange, fixed gaze.

Harry uttered a slight exclamation; then bowed to the old man.

"You are Professor Whitburn?" he questioned.

"Yes," replied the old man, in a raspy voice. "What is your name?"

"Harry Vincent."

"Ah, yes. I had forgotten it. You are the new man. Sit down. I would like to talk to you."

Harry carefully removed books and papers from the nearest chair, and deposited them upon a table. He drew the chair to the side of the desk, directly opposite Professor Whitburn.

The desk lamp shone upon the old man's features. Harry seemed to detect an unusual gleam in the professor's eyes.

"I chose you after much consideration," said Professor Whitburn, in a slow voice. His tones were almost accusing. "You studied engineering, did you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you put your learning into practical experience?"

"Not very long, sir. I had an opportunity in another business. I must confess that my technical training is no longer what it used to be."

"Good!" asserted Professor Whitburn. "Good!"

Harry was surprised at the man's tone of approval. He had imagined that his inactivity in engineering would have been to his disadvantage.

"Training!" exclaimed Professor Whitburn. "Bah! There is only one real training experience, and that must be of the right sort, mind you. Not the kind of experience that most young men get. I am glad you have had little of it."

He brought his thin fists up from beneath the desk, and thomped them simultaneously upon the wood in front of him.

"Young men tell me what to do!" he said, in apparent fury. "I have had them tell me what to do! They think that their parrot learning is knowledge! They find out differently, when they have worked with me! I demand more than a few simple facts tucked away up here!"

He tapped his forehead as he spoke. Then he became quiet, and looked intently at Harry. The old man's hands went beneath the desk.

His eyes became wild and staring; then suddenly he whipped out an automatic revolver and leveled it at Harry. His lips broke forth with an insane laugh.

HARRY instinctively raised himself from his chair. But he caught himself as he was about to leap forward. His better judgment dominated his mind.

While the professor still flourished the automatic, Harry settled back in his chair, and smiled indulgently.

Professor Whitburn thrust the gun in a desk drawer, without removing his eyes from Harry's countenance. Then the old man's lips formed a sour smile.

"I have demonstrated my point," said the professor, in his rasping voice. "That is a test which I frequently use. Some men jump at me, and I toss the gun aside. Others plead, or throw up their hands. A very few behave as you have done.

"Young man, I observed every emotion that passed through your mind. First you were startled. Then came the desire for action, coupled with fear—natural fear. Then reason withheld you. You thought you were dealing with a lunatic; you sought to outwit me."

He wagged a long, thin forefinger toward Harry.

"Study cannot teach a man to behave as you did," he said. "Your actions were the result of a mind that is both quick and experienced.

"You knew how to encounter danger. Therefore you would be willing to face danger. You are the type of man I need."

The old man became silent. He was speculating upon something. Harry did not disturb his thoughts, although he wondered what new surprise might be in store.

"This island is a strange place," remarked Professor Whitburn. "A strange place, with a bad reputation. That is why I chose the place.

"I like to be alone—assisted only by those whom I have chosen to help me in my labors. In a place like this, I am left alone.

"I am a man with great vision"—the professor's voice became less raspy, and his eyes seemed to glow in reminiscence—"but few have been able to appreciate it. One man became interested in my plans; but I would not work for him, until he made me financially independent.

"Even then, the desire for material gain dominated him. He constantly annoyed me, demanding action and results. Now he is dead, for which I am truly sorry; but it has left me free to develop my work without troublesome interruption.

"I have chosen rather unusual men to be here with me. They know how to keep silence. They do not talk—even among themselves. They realize that reward lies in the future; but they devote their efforts to the present. Are you willing to do the same?"

"The present always interests me more than the future," replied Harry.

"Good! Then you shall work for me," said the professor. "But wait— there is one more point. Your work will involve danger. Will you assume it at your own risk?"

"Certainly."

"The reason that I ask," said Professor Whitburn, in warning tones, "is because two men have died in my service. They suffered because of their own carelessness. I was able to prove that fact.

"I regret that they died. They were valuable men. But my work must go on— it is more important than human life, although I have never demanded a sacrifice."

"I am willing," answered Harry.

The professor rummaged in the drawer of the desk. He brought out a typewritten sheet of paper, and passed it across to Harry.

The document proved to be an agreement, stating that the undersigned contracted to work for Professor Whitburn, and assumed all responsibility for any accidents that might befall in the course of his labors.

While Harry was reading the paper, the professor pressed a buzzer once; then twice. Just as Harry had completed his perusal of the agreement, two men entered the room. They were the same men whom Harry had seen before.

Professor Whitburn pointed to Harry, and then to the man with the beard.

"Vincent," he said, "this is Crawford."

The bearded man nodded.

"Vincent, this is Stokes."

Without further ado, he handed a pen across the desk. Harry took it and signed the document. Stokes and Crawford applied their names as witnesses.

"Have you eaten dinner?" questioned the professor.

"No, sir," replied Harry.

"Crawford will cook you something. Go with him. He will introduce you to Marsh—my other man.

"We have no formalities here, Vincent. If you wish to see me, knock at the outer door; then enter. If I do not hear you, that is my mistake.

"The buzzer on my desk can be heard in all parts of the house even a short distance outside. Four is your signal."

He turned to the side of the desk, and made a note on a pad.

"Crawford, one; Stokes, two; Marsh, three; Vincent, four," he muttered.

The professor again faced Harry.

"Do not leave the island without my permission," he stated. "That is important. Answer every summons promptly. Is there anything else?"

"What are the salary arrangements?" questioned Harry.

"Ah! I had forgotten," answered the old man. "Your first term of service will be three months. After that, you may expect an advance. Will two hundred dollars a month be satisfactory? Remember, you have no living expenses here."

"Two hundred a month will be quite satisfactory," replied Harry.

"Very good," said the professor, with his peculiar smile. "I want you to be satisfied. So your salary will be two hundred and fifty, instead of two hundred."

Professor Whitburn was busy with his papers. He had become totally oblivious to Harry's presence; Crawford tapped Harry on the shoulder, and pointed significantly toward the door, showing that the interview was ended.

Rising, he followed the other two men from the room. As he left, Harry glanced back. The old professor was still engrossed in his work.

## **CHAPTER XVII. A VISIT TO PRINCE ZUVOR**

LAMONT CRANSTON strolled into the Cobalt Club, and took his place in a comfortable chair. He looked about him, as though expecting to see some one. Then he languidly tapped a cigarette on a gold case, and leaned back in his chair.

A week had passed since Lamont Cranston's chat with Prince Zuvor—the Russian who called himself Richard Albion. During that week, Cranston had been at the Cobalt Club infrequently; and then only for short stays. On his last visit, he had left a brief note for Richard Albion.



"Telephone, sir," said an attendant, who approached the chair where Lamont Cranston was seated.

The millionaire arose slowly, and went to the private telephone room. He displayed no enthusiasm whatever. Even when he answered the phone, in a place free from observation, he acted in a most disinterested manner.

"This is Burbank," came a voice over the wire. "Shall I talk to you now?"

"Everything all right at your end?"

"Yes, sir."

"Go ahead then."

"I have been watching Volovick -"

"Never mind the name, Burbank."

"All right, sir. I have been watching the man. I have talked with him. I have learned nothing of importance except one very small detail."

"Which is -"

"When he opened his wallet to take out some money, he pulled out a yellow card. It was a blank card; I saw both sides of it. But he put it away so quickly that I thought it might have some significance."

"A yellow card, Burbank? Are you sure it was not a white one?"

"Positive, sir. I thought it was white for a moment; but when he held it in his hand, I noted that it was yellow. A pale yellow—almost white."

"Where is the man now?"

"At the Pink Rat. He has been drinking a great deal."

"All right, Burbank. Let him stay there. Go off duty. I'll let you know when you are needed."

Lamont Cranston sat in thought for a few minutes after he had hung up the receiver. Then he smiled.

"A yellow card," he murmured. "Yellow—almost white. Volovick has been drinking. Rather a bad practice if he is engaged in active work."

He drew a pad from his pocket, and wrote:

Black—A meeting to-night.

Gray—Meeting: do not come if in danger.

White—Work ended. No more meetings.

He paused momentarily; then added:

Yellow—No work or meetings until specially notified.

LAMONT CRANSTON laughed. The matter of Volovick had troubled him during the past few days. Now he understood that the man was temporarily inactive.

The millionaire left the telephone room. When he arrived in the lobby of the club, the doorman accosted him.

"Note just came for you, Mr. Cranston."

Mr. Cranston opened the envelope and read the message. It was from Prince Zuvor. It bore the letterhead of a New York hotel. Lamont Cranston read it at a glance.

I shall be unable to meet you at the club as I had hoped. I do not expect to be there until the end of the week. But I am at home to-night. If you choose to call, you are welcome. But remember—

The abrupt termination of the message was a reminder of the previous conversation, when Zuvor had mentioned the dangers which surrounded him. The note was signed "Richard Albion."

Lamont Cranston left the Cobalt Club. He summoned a taxicab. He drove directly to the home of Prince Zuvor.

When he reached his destination, he stood looking at the house, from the street. He did not appear to notice a large sedan that was parked opposite the house. He went up the steps and rang the bell.

He was admitted by the Russian servant, who conducted him upstairs, as soon as he gave his name. He was ushered into the front room, where the wolfhound walked silently over to greet him.

Prince Zuvor appeared.

"This is a pleasure," exclaimed the prince, in a tone of welcome. "I had not expected you to accept my invitation."

Lamont Cranston rose leisurely, and grasped Prince Zuvor's hand.

"You did not expect me?" he asked.

"I did not," replied the prince. "You recall, of course, the dangers that I mentioned. I had supposed that you would rely on your better judgment, after you had considered the matter."

"This house is watched. Those thick curtains are evidence of that fact. They are not merely ornaments."

Lamont Cranston shrugged his shoulders.

"The danger does not worry me," he said. "I would even welcome a bit of danger. My life is one of leisure. It grows monotonous at times."

Prince Zuvor looked toward the large dog that was standing by Cranston. He snapped his fingers as a command for the wolfhound to retire to the corner. Then his gaze became fixed upon the floor, and Cranston detected a look of surprise upon his face.

"What is it?" asked the millionaire.

"Nothing," replied Zuvor, lifting his head. "I was perplexed for a moment, that was all. Your shadow—here on the floor. It seems grotesque, when I look at it."

Lamont Cranston smiled as he sat down.

"It must be the arrangement of the lights," observed Prince Zuvor, glancing about the room. "It actually startled me for a moment."

He looked toward the floor again, then added: "It is different now, when you are sitting down."

"A shadow," observed Cranston, "is a very unimportant thing. It has no life; in fact, it has no existence. It is, actually, nothingness."

"Perhaps," returned Zuvor, "but when one has undergone the experiences that I have, even a shadow can seem very real. Often I have seen shadows that were indications of living men. A shadow may betray the person who owns it, my friend."

HE took a chair opposite the millionaire, and looked at Cranston thoughtfully.

"I have heard," said Zuvor, "that there is a man whom they call The Shadow. He is a being who comes and goes, in the darkness of night."

"Interesting, if true," remarked Cranston. "I should be pleased to meet the fellow."

"The Shadow;" mused Prince Zuvor, "is considered a reality by men of the criminal class. They mention his name with awe. They know that he exists—yet they have never managed to trace him.

"Even his purpose in life is a mystery. Some claim that he is a detective; others, that he is an archcriminal who thwarts the schemes of other crooks, and profits through them."

"Even more interesting," laughed Cranston. "Where did you learn of this mysterious person?"

"Through refugees whom I have aided," replied Prince Zuvor. "Some of the unfortunates from Russia have been forced to mingle with low associates. Whenever they appeal to me for aid, I learn all about their actions. Two or three have mentioned The Shadow.

"My knowledge of criminal activities in New York is by no means small. I could give the police important information if I chose to do so. But criminals mean nothing in my life. Thieves—robbers—burglars—I fear none of them. Those who oppose me are more than criminals. They are agents of Moscow."

"They are watching you now?" questioned Cranston.

"They are watching me always. You have told me very little of your past life, friend Cranston; but I know that you were familiar to some extent with the espionage system of the czarist government. It was considered to be an organization of clever men; was it not?"

Lamont Cranston nodded.

"The czar's agents," said Zuvor, "were children compared to the men who now receive their orders from Moscow. Why? Because the Red agents can find a haven in any country.

"Here in America, they are received by communist organizations. They are protected.

"Silent, and unseen, they hide behind a perfect smoke screen. They let the American radicals blurt and fume; they remain silent, and direct the work. No man can cope with them."

"Not even The Shadow that you mentioned?"

"The Shadow? He may be a power among criminals. Faced by the Red organization, he would be helpless. His cloak of mystery would prove a thin, ineffective disguise. Whether he works alone, or depends upon other men, he would be utterly unable to combat the agents of Moscow."

"Who directs them?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Prince Zuvor. "That in itself is a mystery. It is said that they work in groups, and that the leaders—men of nerve and cunning— receive their instructions from one higher up, a Red Envoy, whose power is greater than that of a government ambassador.

"These are facts which I have heard; but I cannot say that they are thoroughly reliable. My own knowledge is imperfect. I only know that the Moscow government pretends to have no connection with the Red Envoy."

"He must be more remarkable than The Shadow," observed Lamont Cranston, with enthusiasm. "Have you ever encountered him?"

"No!" exclaimed Prince Zuvor. "May I never do so! Those who are watching me are his agents. That is why I exercise great caution.

"I do not know when they may decide to strike. My life is a defensive one. I am not afflicted by fear—if that emotion should dominate me, I would go insane. My one controlling power is caution. Constant caution."

"Your Russian servant. Can you trust him?"

"Ivan? He is a relic of the czarist time. Faithful and honest. He obeys my commands implicitly. He would sacrifice his life if he thought for an instant that I was in danger."

"Why do you stay here?"

"I have work to do. While I still possess sufficient freedom to aid those friends of the old regime, I shall stay.

"The invisible meshwork of the Red organization has been growing closer. Soon it will close—threatening to ensnare me. Then I shall leave—as Berchik left; by a way known only to myself."

"In the meantime," said Lamont Cranston thoughtfully, "you must remember that I am your friend. While it would be inadvisable for me to become entangled in the snare of which you speak, still, I may be able to help you."

Prince Zuvor bowed in appreciation.

"Those words are welcome, sir," he said. "Our acquaintance has been a short one; but the emblem which you carry beneath your ring is a token that I recognize. Perhaps, when we meet again, I shall propose certain plans which -"

"Very good. You can always reach me by a message to the Cobalt Club. At present I am staying away from my home; in fact, I am constantly in and out of New York during the daytime."

LAMONT CRANSTON rose, as though about to leave. Prince Zuvor stopped him with an upraised hand.

"The danger does not lie in coming here," he said. "The real risk is in departing. You will be watched, to-night, if you leave this house as you came in -"

"I shall assume that risk," replied Cranston.

"I can provide a certain means of departure," offered the Russian. "A method whereby you can escape followers -"

Cranston shook his head.

"I do not fear them," he said. "I doubt that these men will trail me very far. It is worth the experience, at least."

The prince rang for Ivan, and the Russian servant escorted the millionaire to the front door.

Lamont Cranston stepped forth into the darkness of the night. He walked a few paces; then observed a taxicab, and hailed it. As he rode away, the millionaire glanced up at the house of Prince Zuvor. The front of the building was totally dark.

But the curtains were no longer drawn on the second floor, although that fact was not discernible from the street.

Prince Zuvor had extinguished the light in his room. He was watching the departing cab; and as it went into motion, he saw a car move from the opposite curb, swerving outward, as though in pursuit.

Prince Zuvor closed the curtains. He turned on a light in the room. His face was grim, and his lips moved as though he was talking to himself. Ivan entered. The prince's face assumed its accustomed calm.

"Ivan," said Zuvor in Russian, "that man is our friend. You must receive him as a friend—when he comes here again."

Then, as an afterthought, he added, in English:

"If he comes here again."

## **CHAPTER XVIII. THOSE WHO FOLLOWED**

LAMONT CRANSTON'S cab sped westward across New York. The driver had been given a destination more than a mile away. But now he received new instructions. The man in the back seat leaned forward through the window, and exhibited a ten-dollar bill.

"Turn quickly," he said. "Left at the next corner. Double back. Go by the house which I just left."

The cab wheeled around the corner. The driver made another quick turn to the left, down a narrow street. Realizing that his passenger had some plan afoot, the man at the wheel chose an unfrequented byway.

But before he had reached the avenue beyond, he was aware that another car was roaring down the narrow street. The cab driver mumbled to himself, as he realized that he was being followed.

A taxicab is not a vehicle for speed; but it is designed for quick turn and prompt control. Lamont Cranston, calmly smoking a cigarette in the back seat, smiled as he felt the cab swerve around another corner.

Lamont Cranston leaned into the front seat.

"When you come to the house I left, stop there," he said. "I am going back."

"Oh," exclaimed the driver. For a moment he thought that the pursuing car was imaginary. "Shall I go slower, sir?"

"On the contrary," replied Cranston calmly, "I would appreciate it if you would go faster."

The cab whirled along the avenue. It was approaching the corner where it must turn to reach Zuvor's house. Cranston again spoke through the window.

"Take this one corner slowly," he remarked. "It is rather dangerous."

The driver nodded approvingly. The avenue turned at an angle at the point mentioned. The corner was indeed a bad one. The cab was nearing it now.

The driver applied his brakes with a jolt. The cab skidded slightly, as it came to a standstill; then the taximan swung the wheel, and the cab leaped forward like a living creature.

As it shot down the street, a sedan turned from the avenue, in close pursuit.

THE driver stopped his cab suddenly in front of Prince Zuvor's house. Leaping from his seat, he opened the door. At that instant, the sedan came up behind.

The taximan stepped back in amazement. Then he reached in, and turned on the light. To his utter astonishment, the back of the cab was empty!

The man's bewilderment was observed from the sedan. A tall, broad-shouldered fellow stepped to the sidewalk, and approached the cab.

"What's the matter, bud?" he asked.

"The matter!" ejaculated the cab driver, forgetting all about the recent pursuit. "I had a passenger in here a minute ago. Now he's gone!"

With an oath, the other man dashed back to the sedan. The big car swung around, and climbed the curb on the opposite side of the street, making its turn with the greatest possible speed.

It shot up toward the avenue; and just as it arrived, a cab left the corner. A man was staring through the back window. The sedan moved in immediate pursuit.

Lamont Cranston laughed slightly, as he rolled along in the new cab. A freak of fate had spoiled his little game.

He had left the first cab, when it had stopped so suddenly at the corner of Prince Zuvor's street. He had cleverly avoided observation of those in the sedan. He had led them back to Prince Zuvor's house—to the end of a blind trail.

But he had reckoned on another cab at the corner; and none had been there. It had been more than a minute before a cab had come along; and in that space of time, the occupants of the sedan had learned their mistake, and had taken up the chase anew.

The driver of this cab was as reckless as the other. He displayed a marvelous knowledge of upper New York. Picking streets with remarkable precision, he seemed always to arrive at a corner while a green light was burning.

Once, he left the sedan confronting a light which turned red as the taxi passed; but Lamont Cranston, glancing backward, saw that the pursuers paid no attention to the stop signal at the crossing.

The taximan knew it, too; and he tried the plan again; this time to better avail. He shot over a crossing as the light was changing.

There was a traffic officer here, and the cab driver chuckled at the plight of the sedan. Now he was

earning his ten-spot. They would get away this time!

"Well done," complimented Cranston. "Now drive slowly. Take it quite easily, until you have passed the next corner."

The driver was completely bewildered. This man who had seemed so anxious to get away was now deliberately enticing and aiding the pursuing car!

IN fact, the sedan was close behind, when the cab resumed its speed. The driver, catching a slight advantage, put a half a block between himself and the pursuers.

A few blocks later, the cab stopped. It was well ahead of the sedan; yet the passenger seemed in no hurry to leave. He stepped slowly from the cab; gave the driver another bill, and watched him pull away.

Then, as the sedan whirled up the street toward him, Lamont Cranston calmly stepped into a limousine that was parked a few feet away. The chauffeur, dozing at the wheel, woke up instantly as he heard the door close. He looked back with a startled expression.

"Take me to the Landis Club," said Lamont Cranston, in a deep voice. "Hurry, Wilkes. Move along."

"Yes, sir," replied the chauffeur.

He turned the limousine into the traffic, skimming the front of the pursuing sedan as he did. Lamont Cranston was scarcely visible in the back seat. But he was moving in the darkness. His hands were lifting a package from the floor.

Ten minutes later, the limousine rolled grandly up to the entrance of the Landis Club, which was fronted by a canopy that stretched across the sidewalk. The sedan pulled into a vacant space behind, and waited there.

THE car starter was busy at the moment; then he saw the limousine, and hurried to open the door. No one stepped out. The starter spoke to the chauffeur.

"Have you come for some one?" he questioned.

The chauffeur looked bewildered.

"I'm bringing Mr. Krause," he said. "Didn't he get out?"

"There's no one in the car," replied the starter.

The chauffeur alighted, and looked into the back of the limousine, with unbelieving eyes. At the same time, a man emerged from the inconspicuous sedan, and strolled up toward the limousine.

"Blame me," said the chauffeur. "I've been dreamin', that's what! I would ha' swore that Mr. Krause was in the car there. You're sure he didn't get out?"

"Positive!" snapped the starter. "He's not there now, that's certain."

The chauffeur looked at his watch.

"Early for him at that," he said. "Just the same, I can't figger it. He got out where he always leaves me, an' left me waitin' there. Funny thing, too; just after he left, I thought he came back, but it wasn't nobody at all."

"Then I went to sleep; couple hours. Then he gets in the car, wakes me up, an' tells me to bring him here.

"Blame me, it's funny. Yet it ain't time for the theater to be out. Guess I'd better be goin' back."

He took a last look in the back of the limousine; his eyes saw a piece of wrapping paper. He brought it out; looked at it, and dropped it on the street.

"Looks like somebody had a package in there," he said. "They must ha' opened it, an' left the wrappin'."

His final remarks were addressed to a few bystanders; the starter had left.

"It sounded like Mr. Krause, all right," continued the chauffeur. "'Take me to the Landis Club. Hurry, Wilkes,' he says. I ought to know his voice when I hears it. Yet it must ha' been me dreamin'."

The chauffeur returned to the limousine, and drove away, still shaking his head in bewilderment. Yet he had propounded one theory which was correct.

There had been a package in the car; it had been placed there early in the evening, just after Mr. Krause had left the limousine. That same package had been opened—while the chauffeur was driving to the Landis Club.

Its contents had been a black cloak, and that cloak had been donned by the man who had ridden in the car. Lamont Cranston had slipped from the door opposite the curb, just as the limousine had pulled up to the Landis Club.

He had been nothing more than a shape of the night—a shadowy, sable figure, that seemed clothed with a garment of invisibility.

THE sedan remained a while after the limousine had gone. The man who had left it had returned. He watched the street on both sides.

He saw a cab pull up on the other side; it discharged two passengers, who argued about who should have the privilege of paying the driver.

The cab pulled away; and the man watching it from the sedan never detected the blotch of blackness that flitted into the back seat just before the driver closed the door.

The taxi driver did not see it either. In fact, he was stupefied, a short while later, when a head appeared from the interior of the cab, and he was given an address by a passenger whose presence he had not suspected.

The cabman was somewhat in a quandary about how to regulate the meter; for he did not know when his passenger had arrived. But the man in back settled that matter, by handing him more than sufficient payment.

The sedan pulled away not long after the cab. It wended its way uptown, again, and stopped for nearly an hour in front of Prince Zuvor's house. Then one of the occupants alighted, and walked along the street, while the other drove away.

The man who was on foot was an observant fellow; but he did not see the peculiar shadow that had suddenly detached itself from the house that he had been watching.

He stopped at a restaurant, and his companion joined him. The other had put the car in a garage. The two men sat and talked.



They scarcely observed a quiet, black-clad individual, who sat in a corner, eating alone.

Leaving the restaurant, the men walked along a street, and their shadows moved with them, by the curb.

Had they looked behind, they would have seen a third shadow, not far in the rear; a strange, uncanny shadow—one that apparently had no right to exist; for no human being was visible beside it.

The men reached a house, and entered. When they had gone in, the shadow that had kept pace with them suddenly disappeared. It melted into the shadow of the house, and its presence was no longer evident.

Those who followed had, in turn, been followed.

They had been traced by The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER XIX. THE GHOSTS OF DEATH ISLAND**

THE first three days at Death Island had been uneventful ones for Harry Vincent. His strange introduction to the men who lived there had been followed by very prosaic reality.

He was lodged in an upstairs room on the second floor; and it appeared to be a typical room of the house.

The downstairs portion of the building was quite ordinary—with the exception of Professor Whitburn's study, which was simply the working room of a very eccentric man.

Harry had quickly become accustomed to the routine of the place. He had met the other member of the group—Marsh—and had found him to be quite as unusual as Crawford and Stokes. In fact, Marsh was more unusual.

He was a pale, gawky fellow, more than six feet tall, who walked with a pronounced stoop, as though accustomed to ceilings that were too low for him.

Each man seemed to have certain duties to perform, which were his own particular business. There must be some tasks that they shared in common, for occasionally Harry saw two together; but usually they were alone.

Crawford handled the cooking, and the men helped themselves to the food. Professor Whitburn seemed to eat very little, and Crawford attended to his meager wants.

Harry's work proved to be the accumulation of knowledge. Professor Whitburn had supplied him with numerous textbooks on engineering, and had marked certain passages which he proposed that Harry should read.

The motor boat was seldom used. Sometimes Crawford operated it; sometimes Stokes. One or the other went to get supplies or mail. The former appeared to be Crawford's job; the latter was the duty of Stokes.

Wandering about the island, between his studies, Harry found it to be of small acreage, and thickly wooded; yet precisely the sort of island one might expect to find in a Connecticut lake.

There was no chance to obtain the radio equipment that he had in his car. Harry decided to wait, and save the radio as a later advantage, if he should happen to need it.

In the daytime, Death Island was quiet and pleasant; but, strangely enough, it was avoided by the

loud-crying birds that seemed to be plentiful on the main land. Outside of the men who had accepted this isle as their residence, Professor Whitburn's cat seemed to be the only living thing on Death Island.

This fact was hardly significant; yet it fitted in with the ominous name of the place.

Harry had noticed that the house was equipped with a towerlike third floor. There was a bolted door on the second story that appeared to be an entrance to the tower.

It seemed to be the only part of the house that held a semblance of mystery—unless the basement, which was reached through a door in the kitchen, might hold some unknown secret.

Harry's observations were confined chiefly to the men with whom he was associated.

He had already formed a definite impression of Professor Whitburn. He had talked with the old man several times, and classed him as a genius who preferred to work undisturbed.

But the other three were difficult to analyze. Harry was with them during meals, and he did his best to formulate opinions regarding them.

None of them impressed Harry. They all seemed undesirable: Marsh, less than the others. The stoop-shouldered man had an expressionless face, but he did not appear to be a troublemaker.

Stokes, whose twisted features made one unconsciously prejudiced against him, seemed to possess a native cleverness. At the same time, he had traits of agreeability that showed themselves on rare occasions.

Crawford, with his heavy, unkempt beard, was more repulsive in daylight than at night; and Harry made no effort whatever to become friendly with him.

These men reminded Harry of volcanoes—hard, unyielding and rugged. He wondered what they would be like if aroused to action.

He believed that any one of them could burst forth with a dangerous eruption. In fact, he realized that he had classed them as he would enemies. Marsh—a man who would fight, but who could be outwitted. Stokes—a dangerous foe, who could combine power with cleverness. Crawford—a fellow who could plot, battle, and use any means to gain his ends.

These mental observations had convinced Harry that the warning of the girl should not be forgotten. Danger lay here on Death Island.

There were three men who could be dangerous if they chose. Yet they all seemed governed by the dynamic mind of Professor Whitburn. They discussed nothing among themselves. Each went to headquarters for instructions.

Now another day was drawing to its close. Harry sat in the plainly furnished living room, and let his mind wander from the books before him. It was after six o'clock. Dinner would soon be ready.

Marsh entered. He did not speak to Harry. He went across the room, and pushed aside a sliding panel in the wall. He revealed a radio set - something which Harry had not known was here.

Marsh adjusted the dials, and listened for a few minutes to a New England station. Then, as though he had refreshed his mind sufficiently with entertainment, he turned off the switch, and closed the panel.

Dinner was ready shortly after that. During the meal, Marsh made a few remarks, addressed chiefly to

Stokes, who grunted brief replies. When the men had finished eating, it was dark outside. The night was cloudy, and a wind was gathering.

Harry went back to his books. He concentrated a while; then his mind turned from his work, and he found it very boring, alone in the living room, which was dim, except in the one corner where he sat. He noted that it was nearly nine o'clock; and he sensed an immediate opportunity.

Here was his chance to tune in on Station WNX. Now that he knew of the existence of the radio set, he might receive a message.

THE idea was a good one. Harry opened the sliding panel, and obtained WNX just as a program was ending. The theme song of the nine-o'clock program came softly over the air. Harry kept the sound as low as possible.

He listened intently to the words of the announcer. At first they were of no significance; then came a sentence which held an important meaning.

"Once again I meet my radio audience," were the words of the announcer. "I introduce a man who will speak to you now; but who also has other things in store for you. He will be with us again, to-morrow night -"

This portion of the sentence brought its all-important message. The emphasized words were few, but plain in meaning:

"Meet man in store to-morrow night."

The man must be the messenger through whom Harry could report. The store was unquestionably the general store in the village. But now another portion of the announcement carried additional information:

"At least half of those who have written us during the past month have requested additional copies of our booklet: 'Nine Problems of Modern Business.'"

"At half past nine."

Harry added this to his mental notations.

Suddenly the clatter of static drowned out the program. The noise became loud and whining. Harry moved the dials; the sound increased.

Stokes suddenly entered the room; he hurried to the radio, and turned off the switch. Then he spoke, somewhat angrily.

"Leave it off after this."

Harry was annoyed by the man's abruptness. He was on the point of challenging the fellow's authority, when Stokes added a testy explanation.

"No radio after eight o'clock. It disturbs Professor Whitburn. All right before then."

Before Harry could reply, the man was gone. Harry went back to the table; then, still ill-disposed toward Stokes because of his undiplomatic manner, Harry laid his work aside, and strolled to the door that led outside.

PROFESSOR WHITBURN had suggested that he remain in the room and work during the evening. There had been no direct order not to go outside.

At that particular moment, Harry would not have worried about disobeying instructions. So he took the suggestion with reservations, and went out into the night.

The wind was sighing through the trees. A slight drizzle had arrived; and the air was chilly. Nevertheless, Harry went down the path toward the lake. He stumbled a bit on the path; regained his footing; and looked back toward the house. The building was a shapeless mass of black.

Even the tower was invisible in the night. But as Harry's eyes went upward, he saw something that startled him. First a little twinkle; like a firefly. That itself was not astonishing; but it was followed by a truly uncanny phenomenon.

A strange, ghostlike shape came flitting from the tower; it seemed to hover over the trees. Then the phantom form reappeared, like some grim spirit from the world beyond, seeking mortal prey.

The weird form reached the spot where Harry knew the house must be. Then it disappeared.

Harry watched intently. He began to feel a creepy sensation. Then he imagined that some one was in back of him. He turned, and his eyes were directed toward the lake.

Off above the water he detected a twinkle—that same light that appeared like a firefly. It came again—closer. Then it seemed high above, as though rising before a downward swoop.

Harry looked toward the house. Here it came! Another spirit form, a shape with spreading arms that bore the appearance of a living creature.

Thoughts of ghosts and huge vampires dominated Harry's brain. The creatures were too large for bats; their visibility in the darkness gave them an eerie quality.

Harry laughed, rather mirthlessly. The sound of his own laugh seemed melancholy. Then came the sigh of the wind, through the trees.

But was it the sound of the wind? For with it came another soaring phantom, that seemed to flit toward the black tower. Its ghostlike arms were extended, as though reaching toward an unseen object. Like the others, it vanished in the gloom.

Ghosts?

Harry had always laughed away the thought. But here was grim reality. Silent, creepy, clutching creatures that floated with spectral motion.

LITTLE wonder that strange tales had been carried to the village. The natives of this region were hard-headed individuals. They were not easily convinced by groundless reports.

Harry realized that he should have listened more closely to the stories which he had heard.

Death Island!

Harry thought of the massacred whites; of the murdered man who had died in that house. Was it because of those events that these monstrous creatures had chosen this place as their habitation?

Again, Harry gazed toward the lake. He strained his eyes, watching for distant twinkles that might presage the approach of another trio of fantastic, glowing shapes.

Then came the most weird apparition of all.

Before Harry's transfixed eyes, a weird form shot upward from the lake. Luminous in the darkness, the figure emerged from the waters, spreading its arms as it reached the air.

For an instant, it seemed to unfold itself for flight; then it wavered, and dove sideways, disappearing as mysteriously as it had come.

Harry remembered the story of the man who had seen that very same event. This last appearance of a ghostlike form was unnerving.

Harry knew that he must return to the house; but his knees seemed weak as he started up the path; and maddened instinct told him to look behind, lest some grotesque image might arise and fall upon him.

He sincerely wished that he might be anywhere in the world but Death Island. He had been warned of danger; but he had expected it to come in physical form—not in the person of an apparition.

Never before in his life had he seen the demonstration of an apparent occult force. Even now, he could not believe that his eyes had performed their proper functions. Yet those unhuman forms had held a realism which could not be forgotten.

Groping for an explanation, Harry's mind seized upon vain theories. Reason told him that there must be a natural cause for what he had seen.

Had Professor Whitburn developed some new form of science? Perhaps - but what could it be?

Did ghosts exist, and had the white-haired old man found some way of attracting them?

Harry tried to make light of this absurd thought. He entered the house, and found himself alone in the living room. He sat in the corner with his books, and sought to control his mind with tangible, material ideas.

Yet as he resumed his study of the books before him, perplexity kept creeping to his brain. Whatever the cause of the strange events might be, it was certain that Death Island was a place of fantastic happenings.

For Harry had seen the ghosts of Death Island!

## **CHAPTER XX. THE MESSENGER**

MORNING came as a relief to Harry Vincent's troubled mind. He had stayed late at his work; yet he had found it difficult to go to sleep. Tired though he was, he could not push away disturbing thoughts.

All during the night the creaking of the old house, and the whistling of the wind amid the trees were annoying. To his imagination they had seemed as tokens of some spectral forces.

He had been unable to dismiss the thoughts of long, eager phantoms, approaching through the darkness.

But with dawn, Death Island had lost its gloom. It was a beautiful day. Harry rested a while after the sun had risen; then came downstairs to find the others were finishing their breakfast.

While he ate alone, Harry tried to summarize his facts.

First: a messenger was due that night. That, at least was tangible.

Second: one could not use the radio here after eight o'clock. Why?

He remembered that static had disturbed the program; yet he had no idea what the cause might have been.

Some mystery lay in the tower of this house. Beings—or whatever they were—emerged from the lake and came to the tower.

The tower demanded investigation. Yet Harry knew that he must proceed with utmost caution. For Professor Whitburn had told him emphatically that he must not go anywhere in the house without specific instructions. That definitely eliminated the tower.

Now, as he considered everything in the sober light of day, Harry wondered what had happened in the house while he had been outside, watching the strange events.

Had his absence been noted?

That was quite probable. He had stepped out merely for a breath of air. He had been gone at least half an hour. Any one of the three men might have entered the living room while he had been gone.

Harry had not noted the time at which the phenomena had occurred; but he knew that it must have been considerably after nine o'clock. Probably along about ten thirty.

If these spectral forms would appear again to-night, Harry would be able to see them when returning to the island. For he had determined to find some excuse to keep that nine-thirty appointment with the messenger.

After breakfast, Harry took a short stroll down to the lake. There he looked out and tried to figure the spot from which the phantom form had arisen.

He picked a place for observation; he sighted carefully beyond the dock. Then he turned and looked up at the tower.

It was apparently a single room, shaped square, with a small lookout window in each wall. Certainly a good place for observations.

As Harry turned to walk closer to the lake, he saw Marsh standing on the dock. The man turned away suddenly.

He had seen Harry's actions. That was evident. But the man said nothing when Harry approached. He had come to make repairs on the dock; and a few minutes later, Crawford arrived from the house.

The bearded man stepped into the motor boat, and started for the mainland.

HARRY went back to the living room. He had been there only a few minutes, when he heard the buzzer four times. It was his signal to meet Professor Whitburn. Answering the summons, Harry knocked at the door of the study; then entered.

Stokes was in the room with the professor.

Professor Whitburn pointed to a chair; Harry sat down to await instructions.

"How is the work coming?" questioned the old man.

"Slowly," replied Harry.

"Very good," responded the professor warmly. "That's an excellent sign. I did not expect that you would

take much interest in textbooks that had no apparent purpose. You are a man who likes active duties. You will begin them soon."

The old man was about to turn away, when Harry interrupted.

He was sorry that Stokes was in the room. Ordinarily, Professor Whitburn spoke with each man individually. To-day his instructions had been so slight that he had evidently not bothered to dismiss Stokes.

Yet Harry knew that it was essential to take advantage of this opportunity, if he wished to go ashore that night.

"Professor Whitburn," said Harry, "I think it will be necessary for me to run down to the town of Lake Marrinack."

"Why?" questioned the old man sharply.

"On account of my car," explained Harry. "I left it at the garage there. I had expected to make other arrangements. Since I shall be here for three months, at least, I think it would be wise for me to make some definite agreement with the garage man."

"Can Stokes attend to it when he goes for the mail?"

"Hardly, sir. I have the licenses, and the title; I think it would be best for me, as owner, to attend to the matter myself."

"Very well. You can go with Stokes this afternoon."

"There's just one objection," replied Harry. "The garage owner is not there during the day. He does not arrive until after eight or nine o'clock. I believe that shortly after nine would be the best time to see him."

"All right. Stokes will take you over to Harvey's Wharf when you wish to go. You can walk down to the village—there is a short cut, I believe. Isn't that so, Stokes?"

Harry's gaze turned toward the man with the twisted face. Stokes grunted an affirmative reply. His eyes were fixed on Harry; yet his features betrayed no suspicion.

The professor made a notation on a pad:

"Vincent out at nine o'clock," he muttered. Then, speaking aloud, he said to Harry:

"Did I remind you, Vincent, that I would like you to stay in the house after eight o'clock, unless you notify me beforehand?"

"Very well, sir. I didn't know that."

"Ah!" The professor's exclamation showed the quickness of his mind. "Did you go out last night, Vincent?"

"Yes," answered Harry promptly. "I walked down to the lake to obtain a breath of air. It was chilly out; I did not remain there long."

"I see," replied the professor. "Notify me in the future, Vincent. We have certain rules here which every one obeys. I have told you some of them."

"One is to remain quiet after eight o'clock; for I often do important work in the evening. No radio. No going out. Each man must be on hand—except, of course, when he notifies me and receives my permission to be away."

"Very good, sir."

"Let me remind you," said the professor, "that you must be careful in this house. I have chemicals and mechanical appliances which are dangerous."

"Doors that are locked are kept that way with a purpose. Those that are unlocked may have been left open through negligence."

"If anything occurs that seems to demand investigation, notify me before you proceed. You will learn everything by degrees. So be patient."

WITH this admonition, the old man dropped the subject, and immediately became engrossed in his work.

Harry threw a hasty look in the direction of Stokes. He wondered if the man had suspected the extent of his visit outdoors, last night.

Professor Whitburn had given the matter no special consideration. He had not questioned if Harry had seen anything unusual. But perhaps Stokes was thinking on the subject.

The man was looking at Harry, but his twisted face showed nothing. Whatever Stokes might have in mind was not revealed to Harry Vincent.

Taking the books that the professor had pointed out, Harry left the study.

When six o'clock arrived, he tuned in on Station WNX; but no message came to-night. This was his last opportunity to listen in; for the taboo on the radio began at eight.

During dinner, Harry reminded Stokes that he was going to the village. He suggested that they leave shortly before nine o'clock. Stokes gruffly replied that that suited him.

The brief exchange of conversation made no visible impression on Marsh; but Harry was sure that Crawford had made note of it.

The bearded man was a difficult fellow to analyze. Harry still regarded him as the real menace on Death Island—if the menace there was a human one.

At ten minutes of nine, Stokes entered the living room. Harry looked up from his book. The man poked his thumb over his shoulder, indicating that the motor boat was ready.

As they neared the dock, Harry took advantage of the fact that Stokes was ahead of him. He shot a quick glance toward the tower. It was visible in the pale light of the sky—a strange, boxlike addition to the top of the oddly-shaped house.

Harry could barely discern the windows. There was no illumination in the tower.

Harry stumbled against a stone. When he regained his footing, he found Stokes looking at him. The man's face could scarcely be seen in the darkness beneath the trees.

"Watch where you're going."



Stokes did not speak unpleasantly; yet there was something in his tone that made Harry suspect that the man had caught the reason for the stumble.

THEY entered the motor boat. Across the lake they chugged, swinging in front of the formidable cliff that loomed like a grisly skull.

The resemblance was hard to observe at night. Harry looked back at the cliff as they shot along through the water. Death Island was merely a shapeless mass that became indistinguishable as they neared Harvey's Wharf.

Stokes handed Harry his flashlight, when they had docked. Then he gave definite instructions for reaching the village.

"Go right," he said gruffly. "Walk along the little path. When it meets the side road, turn left. That will take you to the crossroads at the village. Much shorter than going by the road through the woods."

"How long will it take me?" asked Harry.

"Five or six minutes."

"It's pretty near nine thirty now. Suppose I get back at ten thirty."

"All right then," agreed Stokes. "Make it ten thirty, or a little after. I may go back to the island. If I'm not here, wait for me."

Harry went along the path. It was only quarter past nine. He had purposely declared it to be nine thirty in order to gain more time. He did not hear the motor boat begin to chug. Perhaps Stokes had decided to wait, after all.

Harry went directly to the garage. The proprietor was there, and he began to discuss the matter of the car. Then suddenly Harry excused himself.

"I'm going to make a phone call," he said. "You'll be here a while, won't you?"

"Until midnight," replied the garage man, "and if you're late, I'll wait for you a while."

There were a few persons in the general store. Harry did not look at any of them. He went to the cigar counter; and while he was making a purchase, some one approached him.

"Can you tell me the exact time?" asked a voice.

Harry glanced at his watch without looking at the questioner.

"Nine thirty-two," he said.

He saw the other man's hands, as the fellow removed his watch and set it, placing the hands so that they indicated nine thirty-seven.

There was something about the man's actions that Harry recognized. He looked up quickly, and found himself gazing into the face of Bruce Duncan.

Harry repressed an exclamation of greeting. So Duncan was the messenger! That was why Fellows had wanted to see him.

Harry said nothing. He completed his purchase, and left the store. He turned to the right; and walked up

a path that led away from the road. Bruce Duncan joined him a few minutes later.

"What's the dope?" asked Bruce.

"Rather meager," whispered Harry. "Four men on the island, besides myself. Old Professor Whitburn—he's strange enough. But the others are tough babies."

He had been thinking over his information, and now he gave Bruce a terse account of all that had transpired.

He prefaced his remarks of last night's events by explaining that the natives believed the island to be haunted. This brought a snort from Duncan; but as Harry told of the weird beings that had flitted to the tower, and ended with a vivid description of the apparition that had risen from the lake, Bruce whistled in surprise.

"I wouldn't believe that junk, Harry," he said, "if it came from any one but you. It's the craziest story I've ever heard—and the strangest. I can't figure what's going on over there."

"Maybe I'll have a chance to watch from a distance. Not to-night, though, because I have to cut out for Hartford."

"Just how do you enter in, Bruce?" asked Harry. He knew that Duncan was not an agent of The Shadow, although the young man had once served in that capacity.

"Well," explained Bruce, "I've been let in on a few things, and have been told to keep my mouth shut—for my own good. So I'm helping out."

"I received a phone call from your friend Claude Fellows. I went to his office. He told me that I was in danger."

"What sort of danger?"

"Something to do with those jewels that I got from Russia, the time you and The Shadow helped me. Some one has wised up to the fact that I have them. The result is that I'm under observation. So Fellows advised me to get out, and do it neatly. I wouldn't."

"Why not?"

Bruce Duncan laughed.

"When there's trouble, I like to be around," he said. "Fellows insisted that I go away, and tell no one where I was. I said I had no place to go. He told me come back to see him later, which I did. Then he offered me a plan."

"Which was -"

"To serve as a messenger. He said that you were in danger up here; that it wouldn't do you any harm if I should be seen in the vicinity."

"I slid out of New York, and here I am. I was instructed to notify Fellows from Hartford, whether or not you kept the appointment. So I'm going back there to-night. Perhaps I'll be over again."

"I don't see where you are in danger, Bruce," said Harry slowly. "There's no connection between the jewels and Professor Whitburn. There hasn't been anything happen that indicates the jewels are involved."

"Yes, there has," whispered Bruce Duncan excitedly. "Something has happened; and I am the only man who knows it. I discovered it on my way up here; I'm going to notify Fellows when I report."

Something in Duncan's voice told Harry that an unusual discovery had been made. He listened intently for a further explanation.

## **CHAPTER XXI. THE ROOM IN THE TOWER**

DUNCAN spoke in a low voice. "On the way from New York I stopped in a small town in Connecticut. While talking with a garage man, I learned that there was a dangerous curve a few miles farther on. A car had gone over the edge—into a precipice.

"The driver of the car had been killed. Yet the cause of the accident had not been ascertained. I saw the car; it was there in the town; and the broken rear axle made me believe that something had smashed it before the accident.

"Who was driving the car?" I asked.

"The fellow hasn't been identified," I was told. "The New York license was a phony. They brought the man's body in; it's in the morgue now."

"There must be a morbid streak in my nature. I decided to go over and view the body. It was in the back room of a local undertaking establishment. When I saw the face, I recognized the man immediately."

"Who was it?" questioned Harry.

"Berchik," replied Duncan. "The man who brought the jewels from Russia. They got him—because he knew. Do you wonder why I'm in danger?"

"You are in danger, Bruce," replied Harry soberly. "Be sure to give that information to Fellows, so it will \_"

"So it will reach The Shadow." Bruce Duncan supplied the ending of the sentence with promptness. "I'm going to do that, Harry."

"Have you seen any danger threatening yourself?" questioned Harry.

"None," replied Bruce. "Only -"

"Only what?"

"I can't understand why this girl—Arlette DeLand—took such sudden interest in me. I was introduced to her by a German whom I met coming back on the boat from Europe. I knew nothing about the man's history. I am wondering if Arlette could be -"

"Arlette is all right," interposed Harry. He could feel indignation sweeping over him. "She saved me once—the night before I met her with you. Got me out of a bad jam -"

"She didn't recognize you when she met you!" exclaimed Bruce.

"I know that," admitted Harry. "But she was the same girl. She called me up, before I came here—to warn me against the place—which proves -"

"Which proves that she's mixed up in the affair," interrupted Duncan calmly.

THESE words stunned Harry Vincent.

He realized that Bruce Duncan had clearly summed up the situation. Arlette must be a factor in the events which had transpired. Her presence at the Pink Rat had been no accident. Her acquaintance with Bruce Duncan; her mysterious phone call—

"You're right, Bruce," admitted Harry thoughtfully. "She's in it; but somehow, I trust her."

"While I'm staying clear of her," replied Duncan. "Maybe she fell for you, Harry. At the same time, take my advice, and be careful."

Harry suddenly realized that they had been talking for a long time. Their meeting had served its purpose. It was not wise to remain here longer.

"When will I see you again?" he asked Bruce.

"I don't know. You will be notified, I suppose—just as you were before."

"Don't forget to mention the radio in your report, then. That is important. I can't listen to WNX after eight o'clock."

Harry left his friend, and went cautiously back to the store. He did not enter the building; instead, he went across the road to the garage, and talked with the proprietor. He made arrangements for his car to be kept there until further notice. Then he started back to the wharf.

There was no sign of the motor boat. Evidently Stokes had returned to Death Island. It was not yet half past ten. But as Harry stood on the wharf, he heard the chugging of the motor—and the boat suddenly appeared around a point in the lake.

If Stokes was coming from the island, he had chosen a roundabout way. Harry thought quickly; then ducked back into the woods. He had a hunch that Stokes had docked the boat farther down the lake and had visited the village.

Waiting until the boat had pulled up at Harvey's Wharf, Harry advanced along the path, whistling as he approached. He noticed the boat, and clambered aboard, without even greeting the man who was at the helm.

That seemed to suit Stokes. He gave no sign of welcome. He piloted the boat directly back to Death Island. Harry handed him the flashlight, with the single word: "Thanks."

DEATH ISLAND was black and silent as the boat approached. No twinkling lights to-night; no phantom shapes. There was no sign that anything out of the ordinary existed in that tract of land that loomed from the center of Lake Marrinack.

Stokes went in to Professor Whitburn's study, when they had reached the house. Harry took it that he was reporting their return.

After a half hour of reading, Harry decided to go to bed. He went upstairs, and as he passed, he noted that the door that led to the tower was ajar.

Harry's room was under a corner of the tower. He had been conscious of that fact the night before. It had troubled him; yet it had indicated nothing. But to-night, he seemed to detect a faint tapping on the ceiling of his room. It continued intermittently; then stopped.

The sound was peculiar, yet methodical. The taps came in rhythmic beats. They could not be made by any one working, for they changed their rhythm too often.

Finally the sound ceased. Five minutes passed. It began again; then stopped. Another interval, of perhaps five minutes. Again a short series of taps.

This was enough for Harry. He had felt that the tower demanded investigation. Now he was sure of it. The door that stood ajar was a temptation.

Opening his door, Harry stepped into the darkness of the hallway. He slipped silently along, until he found the door of the tower. It was still ajar.

Wearing soft slippers, Harry crept up the stairs. He moved with the utmost caution; the creaky stairs groaned very slightly.

The stairway was a winding one. As Harry turned a bend, he noted a faint light from the room above. The light was so insignificant that it could not be observable outside.

His steps becoming slower, Harry reached the top. There he could discern the objects in the room; for faint moonlight penetrated the apartment, through a skylight.

Each corner of the room accommodated a black machine. These metal contrivances, which seemed fitted to the wall, were hardly distinguishable.

But in the center of the room was an object which immediately attracted Harry's attention, especially as it accounted for the dim light which he had just noticed.

Standing on a pedestal was a huge globe of bright metal, that reflected the moonbeams. The massive sphere had a highly polished surface, and it fascinated Harry's eyes.

He stood looking at it in wonderment.

What could its purpose be?

The big machines in the corner indicated material inventions; but the shining globe brought thoughts of the supernatural. Harry had heard that bright objects, particularly spheres, of crystal or polished metal, could be used to induce hypnosis.

Was this huge ball the object that had attracted those spectral forms to the tower of the house on Death Island?

HARRY'S tense mind was too strained to reject the theory. Fantastic though it seemed, he was ready to believe it. For as he looked at the bright metal, he felt a strange influence creep over him.

He seemed to forget where he was; to have no further thought of his surroundings. He was in a dream world, and his imagination wandered.

There was no repetition of the tapping. Harry had forgotten it. His brain was centered on the shining sphere. He stepped a few paces closer. He wondered what would happen if he stayed here looking at the mystic globe.

For an instant, he was tempted to go away. Yet the lure held him. Again he moved closer. The great ball, flashing its sparkling light, was almost within his reach.

Harry hesitated as he slowly extended his arms. He wanted to touch that brilliant surface—to learn if it

were really simple metal.

But before his fingers had reached the silver globe, Harry was jerked suddenly backward. His arms were pinned behind him. He was twisted to the floor by a powerful man who had caught him unawares. A hand was clapped to his mouth.

The young man had no chance against his captor. He had been taken totally unawares; and his mind had been so occupied with other thoughts that he did not realize what had happened.

It seemed like the fraction of a second to Harry Vincent. One instant he was reaching for the shining sphere; the next, he was lying on his back, staring upward into a bearded face.

Crawford was the man who had trapped him. Harry had no opportunity to fight or to make an outcry. He sensed that he was in great danger; yet he was helpless. His captor had been too swift and thorough in his work.

Crawford, his mind had told him, was the one man to avoid. Yet Harry had failed to rely upon his better judgment.

Harry made one last effort to struggle. The bearded man tightened his grip, and Harry winced with pain. Then Crawford leaned forward, and spoke in a low, whispering voice.

## **CHAPTER XXII. THE SECRET OF THE TOWER**

"LIE still," hissed the bearded man. "Make no effort to move, or -"

The threat was implied. Harry lay motionless.

"Listen," continued Crawford. "Listen carefully, and obey. Do as I tell you, or it will mean your death. Do you understand?"

Harry tried to nod, notwithstanding the fact that one of the bearded man's hands was pressed over his face.

"Go back to your room," came the whispered command. "Go so quietly that none can hear. Leave the door ajar. Wait there until I come."

The instructions were amazing. Was his captor going to release him? This thought came as an unexpected hope to Harry Vincent.

"Do you understand?"

The huge hand was lifted from Harry's mouth.

"Yes," whispered Harry, in response.

"Will you obey my orders if I release you?"

"Yes," was Harry's reply.

"Then go."

Crawford arose, but stood hovering above, ready for immediate action if Harry should change his mind. But the mere fact of his release impressed Harry.

If Crawford was a real enemy, he would not be granting this favor. Harry was free to go to his room. He

had pledged his word to his captor.

He moved unsteadily down the stairs that led to safety. Reaching the hall, he gained his usual composure, and moved by the closed doors, until he reached his own room. There he left the door ajar.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Harry awaited the arrival of Crawford.

THE bearded man appeared some minutes later. He came through the door with the stealthiness of a cat, and closed the entrance behind him.

"Do not raise your voice," he whispered. "Keep absolute silence. Do you know who I am?"

Harry shook his head.

"I didn't think you recognized me," said the man with the beard. "So I did not reveal my identity upstairs. I was afraid that you might not believe me."

He leaned forward, and his voice sank to an almost imperceptible whisper, as he announced:

"I am Vic Marquette."

"Of the secret service!" gasped Harry.

"Hush! You remember the time we worked together -"

"Yes," replied Harry, "but I would never have recognized you."

"I know it. This beard is a perfect disguise; for it is a real growth. I knew you the minute I saw you, when you came to Harvey's Wharf."

"Why didn't you tell me who you were then?"

"That's not my policy, Vincent. Those who have been friends once may be enemies later. I wanted to know your purpose here."

"I do not know it, myself," admitted Harry. "I have been told to report what goes on -"

"To The Shadow, I suppose," interrupted Marquette.

"Yes," replied Harry. "To The Shadow. I know that there is danger here— that Professor Whitburn is involved—but that is all."

"What have you seen to date?"

"Nothing that I can explain. Last night—strange shapes appeared above the house. Something arose from the lake—like a phantom. To-night, I heard a tapping in the tower—I went up to see what was happening there."

Vic Marquette laughed silently.

"Vincent," he said, "you would have been dead this minute, if I hadn't been watching you. Perhaps you do not know what this place is all about—but I suspect that The Shadow knows more than you.

"I am going to rely on you. I need your help. The Shadow saved my life once, and nabbed a bunch of counterfeiters for me. I believe he is on the square. I'm going to chance it."

He rose from his chair, and looked at Harry steadily. Then he asked:

"Those things that you saw last night—in the darkness above the house. Tell me. What did they look like?"

"Ghosts," admitted Harry.

The secret-service agent chuckled.

"They were aerial torpedoes," he said. "The results of Professor Whitburn's long experiments."

"But they shone like phantoms -"

"Of course. Listen, Vincent. Professor Whitburn has made a remarkable contribution to scientific warfare. His aerial torpedoes are under perfect control.

"Last night, he sent them out from the big machines in the corners of the tower. They were ejected shortly after nine o'clock -"

"That's why the static came in on the radio!" exclaimed Harry.

"Of course," replied Marquette. "The torpedoes are under electrical control. Then they came back.

"The little lights were set to twinkle so that they could be observed from the tower. Then, when they were near by, they shone, for they are coated with a luminous paint, so we can observe their approach."

"But what came out of the lake?"

"I was responsible for that," said Marquette. "The professor believes that he can invent a torpedo which may be shot from a submarine, yet which will take to flight when it reaches the surface of the water.

"There is a torpedo tube beneath the house—in a room deep in the basement. I was there. When I received his signal, I shot the torpedo through an under-water cave, out into the lake.

"It rose, but failed to soar. The professor was watching from the tower."

THE eerie events of the preceding night were now clear. But Marquette had further explanations.

"I shall start at the beginning," he said. "Much has happened here. Originally, Professor Whitburn believed that he could revolutionize modern warfare by the invention of an aerial torpedo. He interested a man named Jonathan Graham."

"Graham is dead," said Harry.

"What? How?"

"Suicide, it is said. He fell from his office window."

"That looks bad," remarked the secret-service man. "When did it happen?"

After a moment's thought, Harry gave the approximate date.

"Hm-m-m," said Marquette. "So that's why Stokes lost the newspapers, two days in a row. Whitburn may have learned it by letter - but I didn't know about it.

"But we can discuss that some other time. Let me tell the important story.



"Graham made Whitburn financially independent. The professor took this place. The secret service learned what was going on—in part. I found out the rest.

"When I obtained a job here, Whitburn had one helper—a man named Blades. Then Stokes came along.

"Each one of us has different experimental work, and duties to perform. None of us could learn enough to be of value.

"If Whitburn has drawings—which seems likely—he makes them himself, and stows them away somewhere.

"Just as the torpedo was developing well, Blades was killed. A fly-wheel came off a machine which he was using in the cellar workshop.

"I wondered about it at the time. But the coroner called the death accidental. I had tipped off the secret service to stop any proceedings; but they never began.

"Marsh had been hired just before the death of Blades. That left three of us. A number of men applied; a fellow named Barrows got the vacant job. He was killed, too. He was working in a room where we keep chemicals.

"He made a mixture that formed a poison gas. It struck me as funny that he made the mistake he did; and I couldn't figure why he didn't get out the door in time.

"Then I had my experience. The old motor boat sank in the middle of the lake. Started to fill as I got away from the point of the island; I didn't see it until it was too late.

"I had told the professor that I couldn't swim, but didn't mind running the boat. I meant that I was a poor swimmer—not that I was totally incapable. I managed to paddle the half mile to shore; the longest swim I ever made in my life."

"Whew!" exclaimed Harry, as Marquette paused. "Looks like some one is out to get all of us. Who's the man—Stokes?"

"Yes."

"What about Marsh. Has he run into trouble?"

"Marsh," replied Marquette, "is a different case. I think that Stokes has reached him. I believe that the object of these murders is twofold.

"First, to dispose of those who are not plotting against Whitburn; second, to install substitutes who are confederates of Stokes.

"Marsh may be one of them. If not, Stokes has worked on him, and has gained his cooperation."

"Then my job was to have been taken by some other person?"

"That's it, Vincent. But Professor Whitburn preferred your application to that of the man who was to work with Stokes. I haven't been able to look at the list of applicants. That's the trouble, here. I can't cross the old man.

"As soon as you arrived, I knew that you had a purpose. I doubted that you were the man Stokes wanted. But I was afraid to reveal my hand until I was sure. Stokes must have known that you were

looking at the tower last night because -"

"Marsh saw me inspecting it this morning," said Harry.

"Ah! That explains it. Where did you go to-night?"

"To meet a man in the village," said Harry. "I wanted to send a report to The—to headquarters."

"To The Shadow." Marquette supplied the name that had been upon Harry's lips. "Perhaps Stokes followed you. He did not come back here."

"I suspect that he followed me."

"Whether or not he saw the man you met," said Marquette, "he at least decided that you were playing some game of your own. That necessitated immediate action."

"When I came upstairs to-night, I noticed that the tower door was ajar. So I watched from my own room. Stokes sneaked up into the tower. He came down after a while -"

"He was tapping up there! That's the noise I heard. Trying to attract my attention."

"I heard nothing in my room; but Stokes went up again, and came down immediately. Five minutes went by; then he did it again -"

"Getting me interested," interposed Harry. "What a sucker I was!"

"I watched you come out of your room," said Marquette. "I waited a minute or two, thinking that Stokes might be observing you. Then I realized his plan. There was no time to lose. I followed you up to the tower."

"But, why did you land on me so suddenly? Couldn't you have spoken to me?"

"It would have been too late," replied Marquette solemnly.

"Too late?"

"Yes. Within a few seconds you would have died as Stokes had planned."

"How?"

"By contact with the metal sphere. It is the controller of the aerial torpedoes. There is a switch at the bottom. It is usually turned off. That sphere contained a powerful electric current, that would have killed you instantly."

"The switch was on?"

"It was. I turned it off before I came down."

"But wouldn't Professor Whitburn have known; wouldn't he have suspected that -"

"He would have suspected nothing. He would have believed that you had switched on the current yourself. You had no right in the tower. You went there on your own responsibility."

Harry shuddered as he realized the truth of Marquette's words. He had escaped death by the fraction of a second.

The secret-service man moved silently toward the door.

"Remember," he said. "Silence. Speak of me as Crawford. I rely upon your aid; there are two of us now. Two against two."

The bearded man left the room. Harry still sat upon the edge of the bed, pondering over the strange facts which had been revealed to him.

## **CHAPTER XXIII. THE REDS MEET**

THE next afternoon, Claude Fellows received a report from Bruce Duncan. He did not read it; he inclosed it in another envelope and sent it to the office on Twenty-third Street.

Early in the evening, Duncan's report came beneath the glare of the shaded light, and the fire opal gleamed like the eye of a monster while the slender hands held the written page.

The information which Harry Vincent had forwarded through Bruce Duncan was not highly illuminating. Had the message been sent a few hours later, it might have included the amazing revelations made by Vic Marquette. As it was, Harry Vincent's impressions were of ghosts— not aerial torpedoes.

But in his report, Duncan had included his own experience—how he had recognized the dead body of Berchik. A hand that held a pencil underscored this passage.

Then the light was extinguished. Silence reigned in the darkened room. The presence that had inhabited the place was gone. The Shadow had left on some new mission.

An hour later, the watching sedan was parked across the street from Prince Zuvor's residence. One of the men stepped from the car, and walked up toward the corner of the avenue. A taxi chanced to come along the street; the man hailed it, and gave his destination.

He left the cab later, walked a block, and took a second cab. This cab was immediately followed by the one which the rider had deserted.

The pursuing vehicle kept well behind, but the driver did not lose his trail. When the leading cab stopped in the middle of a dark block, the second cab also stopped.

The passenger in the first cab walked a few paces; then suddenly turned into a passage between two warehouses. Still, the second cab remained, inconspicuous on the street.

Another person arrived and took the same path between the buildings.

The driver of the waiting cab alighted and stepped into the back of his vehicle. One might have seen him go in, he was scarcely visible when he came out. The only evidence of his departure was a blot that appeared momentarily beside the cab.

Another person entered the space between the warehouses. This man walked cautiously through the shadowless darkness.

Occasionally he looked behind him; but he saw nothing. How could he observe anything in a place where shadows were invisible?

The man entered a basement door. As the dim light from the room cast its rays upon the ground outside the door, a blotch appeared there.

But it was unnoticed. The door was closed.

OTHERS arrived for the meeting, feeling their way through the darkness of the basement. After all had gone in, the door that led to the little room opened gently, and a tall, shadowy form slipped into the antechamber.

It crossed the room, and listened at the door of the meeting room. It remained there—motionless.

After some minutes, the door to the meeting room was opened, and a hooded man stepped into the antechamber.

He was too late to detect the presence that was standing there; for when the knob of the door had turned, the strange, waiting figure moved away, and became a heavy shadow in the opposite corner of the room.

Prokop—masked beyond recognition—was the man who had entered. One by one he summoned his agents and dismissed them. This was a rapid procedure, until he came to Agent M.

Prokop talked with this man, in the outer room.

"You are still watching Zuvor?" he questioned.

"Yes," replied the agent. "Some one visited him a few nights ago."

"Did you follow the stranger when he left?"

"Yes; but he eluded us."

"You were negligent," exclaimed Prokop angrily.

"The man must have been the devil, himself," was the agent's reply. "We kept on his trail; but somehow, he slipped away while we were watching."

"Do not let it happen again," said Prokop.

The agent left. Prokop muttered half aloud.

"That will count against Zuvor," he said. "Perhaps now we may strike."

He called for Agent K. In a minute, Fritz Bloch, Zuvor's German servant, was standing before Prokop.

"A visitor came to Zuvor's house?" questioned the leader of the agents.

"Yes," replied Fritz, in his thick tones. "His name was Lamont Cranston."

"Who is he?"

"A wealthy man."

"Why did he visit Zuvor?"

"To talk about Russia. He is to come again."

"How did he leave?"

"By the front door."

"Did Zuvor offer to conduct him to safety?" There was a sarcastic note to Prokop's voice.

"Yes," said Fritz, "but he refused. Zuvor told him that enemies were waiting outside. But he refused to listen."

"Watch for him in the future," advised Prokop.

WHEN Fritz had gone, Prokop called for Agent C. This fellow was a quiet-faced man, who looked steadily at the hooded form of his chief.

"You have come from the island?" questioned Prokop.

"Yes," replied the agent. "I spoke with Agent E this morning.

"Good! What progress is he making?"

"He has been unable to find the plans. He has hopes; but asks you to be patient. He has fraternized with the man named Marsh. He has gained his support."

"What of the other?"

"Crawford is a danger. Agent E has sought to remove him; but without success. Two have been eliminated: Blades and Barrows. Crawford remains; also the new man, Vincent."

"What has been done in his case?"

"Our agent planned to remove him last night. The method was a good one, yet it failed, he says."

"He should not fail."

"He cannot always be successful. Remember that his plots are subtle. He cannot betray himself. He told me that he must be cautious. One death should not occur too soon after another, without a good reason."

"That is true."

"The new man—Vincent—held communication with some one in the town of Lake Marrinack."

"When?"

"Last night. That is why our agent acted immediately to remove Vincent -"

Prokop was thoughtful.

"Can't he arrange to send one of the torpedoes to us? That might do instead of the plans."

"I questioned him regarding that," replied Agent C. "I was watching from the shore, two nights ago. I saw a torpedo fall in the lake.

"Crawford came out in the boat, two hours later, and removed it. But it would have been no good to us. The secret lies in the projecting mechanism; not in the torpedo."

"Has our agent examined the mechanism?"

"Yes; but there are unknown attachments which the professor applies, alone. He possesses knowledge which none of the others have received."

"Then how will we know if the correct plans are found?"

"Our agent knows sufficient to identify them if he sees them. He needs only a few clues in the form of diagrams. But those are essential."

Prokop made a motion as if to dismiss the agent; then he called the man back.

"The new man, Vincent," he said. "Instruct Agent E to remove him as soon as possible."

"I shall do so."

"Let Crawford remain—for a while. He is evidently of importance in the work. We have managed to move along without interference from him. But as for Vincent—there is only one order. Strike!"

The agent bowed, and left the room. Prokop suddenly opened the door that led to the meeting place.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here, listening by the door?"

A small, robed figure entered. The last agent removed the disguise, and Arlette DeLand faced Prokop.

"Agent R," said Prokop sternly, "I had you remain because I suspected that you were hearing the instructions which I gave to others.

"You have been failing in your work for the cause. Now you may tell me what you heard—while you were listening there."

"You are seeking an excuse," replied the girl. "You kept me until the others had gone so you could resume your talk—which was interrupted the other night. Unless you have instructions for me, I shall go."

Prokop caught the girl's wrist as she stepped toward the door.

"You shall remain," he hissed.

"Do not forget the Red Envoy," returned Arlette. "Remember: he is your master."

Prokop released her for a moment; then he suddenly leaped past her, and blocked the way to the door.

The girl stepped away, and retreated toward a corner—the very corner in which the shadow obscured the wall.

Arlette cowered, as Prokop advanced. The man loomed above the girl as she neared the corner.

"Now!" exclaimed Prokop. "Now!"

A hand appeared from the shadow—a white hand that hung above the head of the cowering girl.

She did not see the hand; it extended over her. Nor did Prokop see it, for his eyes were upon Arlette.

Upon the thumb and finger of the hand were splotches of dark powder. The fingers snapped. There was a flash of light—a puff of smoke, and a hissing noise.

Prokop cried out as he staggered backward, his hands clawing at his hooded face. He had been momentarily blinded by the sudden flash.

The pungent fumes of the powder had entered his nostrils. He was totally incapacitated for the moment.

The girl darted from the room. She could not explain what had happened. She had seen nothing, other

than the bright flash above her head. The strange occurrence was the advantage that she had needed to make her escape.

WHEN Prokop had recovered from the unexpected shock, he removed his hooded robe, and stood blinking, as he gazed toward the corner.

His vision had returned; yet he could see nothing there. For the mysterious shadowy form had flitted from the room immediately after Arlette's escape.

Prokop snarled as he hid the black garments in the corner. He could not understand what had happened. He decided that the girl had been responsible for the powder flash; that she had come prepared for this emergency.

It was true that he had detected her, apparently listening to the instructions that he had given Agent C; at the same time, it was also true that he had used that fact as a pretext to cover his real designs.

He had attempted to disobey the orders of the Red Envoy. Prokop decided to say nothing of this occurrence. Hereafter he would ignore the woman, Agent R.

The leader of the Red group left the building, and made his way to the street. He walked to a corner, and turned down a block. There he looked about for a cab. One appeared. Prokop did not know that it had been following him.

He left the cab at an elevated station. He went up the steps on the northbound side, and caught a train a few minutes later.

When that train arrived at the next station, the taxicab awaited it. Prokop did not descend the steps.

The cab sped on, and arrived at the second station just after the train had left. Still Prokop was not there.

Whirling madly onward, disregarding crossings, the cab reached the third station just as the train was leaving. As it pulled up to the steps, Prokop descended.

"Cab, sir?" called the driver.

Prokop stepped aboard. It never occurred to him that he was riding in the same cab that he had left. One does not observe the distinctive features of a taxicab.

Prokop left the cab after a short ride, and walked briskly toward the apartment house where he lived. He entered the door, and let it close behind him.

He glanced back as he did so; but saw nothing but the deep shadows of the entrance. He rode up in the automatic elevator.

It was not on the ground floor when he pushed the button. Prokop did not see the shadowy form that moved silently up the stairway to the second floor.

When the elevator stopped at the third floor, Prokop was in no hurry. He went slowly down the hall, not looking behind him; hence he did not see the motion that occurred in the shadowy landing at the top of the stairway.

A few minutes later, a taxi driver was standing in the entrance to the apartment house. He checked the number of Prokop's apartment with the name that appeared beside it—Henry Propert.

Then the cabman left the building. He turned the corner, and reached his cab. He stepped in back, and placed a black bundle beneath the seat. Then he drove toward the center of Manhattan.

He picked up a passenger on the way, and left the man at his destination, near Forty-second Street and Broadway. The passenger paid very little notice to the driver when he paid his fare.

He had not the slightest suspicion that the man who had driven him was the most mysterious personage in New York—that master of detection whose name carried fear to the hordes of gangland—The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER XXIV. LATER THAT NIGHT**

THE meeting of the Reds had been held early in the evening. Hence it was not yet midnight when the mysterious cab driver rode northward in another cab.

But now he was a totally different personage. He sat in the back of a cab; he was faultlessly attired in expensive tailored clothes; and he appeared as a young and well-groomed man—Lamont Cranston, the millionaire.

The cab stopped in front of the home of Prince Zuvor, and Lamont Cranston alighted. He rang the doorbell and Ivan admitted him. With a profound bow, the Russian servant conducted the guest to the room on the second floor.

Prince Zuvor smiled when he stepped through the curtains. He seemed greatly pleased at Cranston's arrival, and his first words carried a question.

"What transpired the other night?" he asked. "Did any one appear to be following you?"

"Perhaps it was my imagination," replied Cranston speculatively. "I did fancy that some one was on my trail. So I changed cabs, and finally borrowed a limousine of a friend of mine—which chanced to be parked near Forty-second Street. I left it at the Landis Club, and I had no difficulty after that."

"I am surprised that you risked another visit here," remarked Prince Zuvor, with a slight smile. "I told Ivan to welcome you when you came again—and I changed that remark to 'if you came again.' For I feared that you would be followed, and I imagined that it might discourage you."

"Indeed not," said the millionaire. "In fact, I merely dropped in for a few minutes, to-night."

"I have a matter which I should like to discuss with you—not now, but at some later date. When would be convenient to you?"

Prince Zuvor considered. His mind seemed to be formulating a plan, as though he was anxious to suit both Lamont Cranston and himself.

"Suppose," he said, "we set it one week from to-night. At precisely nine o'clock! Would that be satisfactory?"

"That would be excellent," said Lamont Cranston. "You will find that I am punctual in my engagements."

"But let us consider to-night," said Prince Zuvor. "It was unwise of you to come so soon after your previous visit. That is why I suggested an interval of a week before you come again. I think that to-night you should leave more secretly."

Prince Zuvor glanced at his watch; it was nearly midnight.



"Have you an appointment anywhere?" questioned Cranston.

"Oh, no," replied the prince quickly. "I seldom leave this house, as you know. I stay here almost all the time—I and my servant"—he corrected his last statement—"I should say servants."

"You have more than one?"

"Yes. Ivan Shiskin; the one who admitted you. The other is a German named Fritz Bloch. He is not here at present."

"Is it wise for him to go out?"

"There is no reason why he should not. He is simply a menial; he is not a Russian; hence he is not under surveillance of the Red agents."

"He might be approached by them," observed Cranston casually. "I should think you would be suspicious of him."

"Fritz is all right," replied Prince Zuvor carelessly. "He is reliable. I watch him a bit—so does Ivan."

"I don't think I shall keep him much longer—not more than a month. He has very little to do, and he is out much more often than he is in."

It was well after one o'clock when Cranston finally arose to say good night. Zuvor, suave and courteous, reminded him of the danger that lurked outside the house.

"Would you like to try my private exit?" he asked. "It is a way that never fails. I have used it on several occasions."

Lamont Cranston expressed immediate interest.

"You mean the way by which the man you spoke of escaped?" he questioned. "You know the one I mean. Er—er—his name slips my mind."

"Berchik?"

"Yes. Berchik."

"Berchik had a long way to go," said Zuvor. "He is now en route to Australia. So I enabled him to leave New York entirely."

"I assume that you wish to remain here in the city. So I shall explain to you the route which I have used myself, and which I reserve for my special friends."

Prince Zuvor rang a bell; Ivan Shiskin appeared. The man's face was expressionless. Zuvor spoke to him in Russian. The import of the words was clear to Lamont Cranston, who understood the language perfectly.

The prince explained that the millionaire was a friend of the late czar. When he added that Cranston carried the token of the Seventh Star, Ivan's face lighted up in genuine admiration.

Prince Zuvor drew Cranston aside, and explained the method of escape.

"You will enter the side door of a house in back of this one. Go up to the third floor—the house is empty. There you will find a ladder, leading to a hatch door in the roof."

"Next door to the building is a warehouse; a flight of steps will take you into the top of the warehouse—the fifth floor. There you will find the entrance to an elevator. Ride down to the first floor.

"Turn left, and the passage will lead you to a garage beyond the warehouse. There are taxicabs in the garage. You will have no difficulty in obtaining one. They go in and out, all hours of the night.

"Those who watch this house have no suspicion of my secret means of exit. The elevator is so designed that it cannot be brought up to the fifth floor by any one who is in it.

"It is an automatic elevator; and the button marked '5' is useless. But you can bring up the elevator by pressing the button on the fifth floor; and you can take it down with no difficulty whatever."

"How do you return?" asked Cranston. "You cannot ride up in the elevator."

"I have usually returned by another route," replied Zuvor. "But should I desire to return through the warehouse; or to bring any one here by that method, Ivan can be on hand at the appointed time, to operate from the fifth floor."

"Your plan is a good one," said the millionaire. "You are sure that the Red agents do not suspect it?"

Prince Zuvor shrugged his shoulders.

"That is possible," he said. "Yet so far, up until a few weeks ago, I am sure that they knew nothing. That is why I have reserved this plan for leaving, only. It would be unwise to come back the same way.

"Now, I suggest that you go with Ivan. He will conduct you—in fact, he will disguise you so that you cannot be recognized, if seen."

Cranston looked at the Russian servant.

"Ivan was connected with the Imperial Theater, in Petrograd," explained Zuvor. "He is exceedingly clever at make-up. I should advise you to test his skill."

"Very well."

Cranston bowed to the prince; then he followed Ivan Shiskin. The servant led him downstairs to the basement. In a back room, Ivan brought out some make-up boxes.

"Just a mustache," said Cranston, in fluent Russian. "Place it here, with a twist on the ends."

Ivan was expressionless as he followed the instructions. Then he bowed, and pointed to the door. Cranston stepped into the alleyway; he followed it to the side door of the house in back. He entered the house, and closed the door behind him.

The millionaire moved cautiously up the stairs. His footsteps were quiet, and careful. He reached the third floor, and found the ladder to the roof.

He crouched low, after he had emerged; he replaced the hatchway, and moved toward the warehouse. His coat was drawn closely about him; his hat was held tightly on his head. He suddenly became almost invisible in the darkness.

The steps to the warehouse were painted white. They went up the outside of the building, which connected with the adjoining house.

Cranston reached the top, and opened the door. He found himself in a large room, which had large

windows. It was fairly luminous because of lights that shone from the avenue beyond.

The millionaire pressed the button beside the entrance to the elevator. It was a small elevator, evidently used by those who had business in the warehouse.

Cranston listened intently, as he heard the elevator ascend. His ear was pressed to the door; the sound of the mechanism seemed to have a meaning to him.

The elevator reached the fifth floor, and stopped with a jolt, followed by a slight click. Lamont Cranston did not open the door. Instead, he moved across the floor to another door, that appeared to be an entrance.

Lamont Cranston had become The Shadow. His evolution had begun as he had entered the house in back of Zuvor's residence.

A small steel tool entered the keyhole of the locked door. It probed the interior, and turned the lock. The door seemed to open of its own accord. It led to a stairway, down into the warehouse.

The being that descended the steps was totally invisible. The Shadow had closed and locked the door behind him; now he was bound for the first floor, using the stairway instead of the elevator.

His form arrived at the elevator door on the ground floor—the car did not appear there.

An invisible hand came from the darkness. The Shadow pressed the control button that would bring the elevator down from the fifth floor.

A snapping sound resulted—far above. With a grinding whirl, the elevator carriage dropped from its lofty height.

A terrific burst of air came through the wide crack of the door on the first floor; then the falling elevator whizzed past, and crashed at the bottom of the shaft, below the basement.

Some one had fixed the mechanism. The Red agents had planned a certain death for whoever might leave Prince Zuvor's house by this secret route. When the elevator had arrived at the unused fifth floor, it had set the mechanism automatically.

A few minutes later, a man appeared in the garage adjoining the warehouse. He appeared to have come in from the street, along with a few others who had heard the muffled crash of the falling elevator. This man was well dressed; his face was adorned with a turned-up mustache.

After a short survey of his surroundings, the man stepped into the street, and entered a taxi that was standing outside the garage. The driver had intended to put his car away; but this opportunity for a late passenger was too good to miss.

"Times Square," said the man in back.

Once again, The Shadow had foiled those who had sought his life!

## **CHAPTER XXV. THE SHADOW HEARS**

PROKOP sat sullenly in his apartment. He was seated in an armchair, his eyes gazing at the opposite wall. He was a shrewd and capable man; even though he was neither subtle nor tactful. He disliked work that took too long to finish. That was why he was in an ugly humor.

It was nearly twenty-four hours since the last meeting, at which he had been foiled in his efforts to seize

Arlette. Prokop had set the meeting early, in hopes that the Red Envoy would not put in an appearance.

He had also expected that the Red Envoy would visit his apartment; in fact, he had waited up until after one o'clock. But the man of mystery had not arrived.

At this particular moment, Prokop was wondering about the Red Envoy. The man who came from Moscow was amazingly well-informed. He seemed to possess some access to the secrets of the gang.

Prokop resented this surveillance; at the same time, he feared the Red Envoy. Prokop was the type of man who respected only those whom he feared.

Prokop had learned one fact of interest during the day. An elevator had fallen in a warehouse near the home of Prince Zuvor. He had gained this news through the papers—not from one of his agents.

The fact that the elevator had crashed was interesting; that no one had been found in the wreckage was disappointing.

For Prokop had recently learned all about that elevator, through his agent, Fritz Bloch, the man who posed as Prince Zuvor's servant.

The elevator had been adjusted for a catastrophe. But Prokop had hoped that some one would have been in it.

A slight sound interrupted Prokop's musings. He looked up to see the Red Envoy standing before him.

The mysterious personage had arrived unseen. He had entered Prokop's apartment unannounced. Now he was looking at Prokop; and his lips formed a straight, firm line beneath the crimson mask.

The Red Envoy did not speak. His expression appeared to be one of inquiry. He awaited a statement from Prokop.

When the latter had recovered from his astonishment, he went to the bookcase, and brought out his reports. When he turned around, he saw the Red Envoy sitting in a chair.

"I have very little progress to report," said Prokop, in a reluctant voice.

"So I expected," replied the Red Envoy dryly. "That is one reason why I did not visit you last night."

PROKOP became a trifle nervous. The Red Envoy was between him and the door. As he looked at the man in the crimson mask, he fancied he saw something, beyond—a strange, dark shadow that rested just inside the door.

He stared for a moment; then, believing that the sudden arrival of the Red Envoy had started his imagination, he turned his attention back to the reports.

"Regarding Whitburn," he said slowly. "I received word through Agent C, who was present at last night's meeting. He says that Agent E is slowly getting results. He is afraid to make too sudden a step."

"What have you done about this man Vincent—the one who was to be watched at the Metrolite Hotel?"

"I shall read you the complete report," said Prokop. "Agent F registered at the Metrolite Hotel, under the name of Ernest Manion. He watched Vincent.

"The man received a letter. Manion obtained it. It proved to be a blank sheet of paper. We have tested it with chemicals. No writing appears.

"The letter was evidently a blind; for while Agent F was obtaining it, Vincent left the hotel. Agent F sent a message to that effect.

"In the meantime I received a message from Agent E, the man who is with Whitburn—under the name of Stokes. He had learned that Whitburn intended to hire Vincent to fill the vacancy on his staff."

Prokop looked at the Red Envoy, expecting some token of approval; but the masked man made no sign.

"Agent F reported later that he had picked up Vincent's trail. Vincent had entered a theater. F awaited instructions.

"I notified him that Vincent was going to Lake Marrinack. I told F to trail him, if possible. Vincent did not return to the Metrolite Hotel; F followed him to the Baronet Hotel.

"The next morning, Vincent managed to elude Agent F; but he turned up, as we had expected, at Lake Marrinack."

"Is he there now?" asked the Red Envoy.

"Yes. Agent E tried to eliminate him by what would have appeared to be accidental death. Vincent escaped the trap.

"Before that, he communicated with some one in the village."

"He must be eliminated immediately."

"I sent word to that effect to Agent E. I told him to act quickly."

"Send him further instructions. He must obtain the plans as quickly as possible. You have accomplished results in the past, Prokop. This is your greatest work. We can delay no longer."

Prokop made notes; then he brought up the next subject.

"Report on Bruce Duncan," he said. "Agent R has made no progress. Duncan has left town; she does not know where he has gone. Agent R is negligent."

"You speak from malice, Prokop."

"I am telling you a fact!" Prokop suddenly restrained his anger, as he noted the sternness of the Red Envoy's countenance. "My report is correct," he added, less bitterly. "Agent R has accomplished nothing."

"Put another agent on the case. Immediate results are not necessary, even though they are desirable. This matter of Whitburn is most important."

Prokop nodded. The Red Envoy made no further statement. That subject was closed. Prokop continued with his report.

"This refers to Prince Zuvor," he said, with a shrewd gleam in his eyes. "I told you that the prince was dangerous.

"A man has called to see him. The man is a millionaire—his name is Lamont Cranston." Prokop's voice became suddenly triumphant.

"This man Cranston," he added, "carries the sign of the Seventh Star."

This time Prokop believed that he caught an expression of astonishment upon the Red Envoy's lips.

"That means plotting," said Prokop emphatically. "Prince Zuvor is a menace. He will make trouble for our cause. We should make an example of him."

"You are anxious to dispose of Prince Zuvor?"

"I am," admitted Prokop. "While he lives, my agents wonder why I do not strike him. Three of our men are detailed to watch him."

"Long vigil without result injures their morale. I have a plan which will surely dispose of him. I ask your permission to use it."

"What is your plan?"

"Fritz Bloch," said Prokop, in a low voice, "is our Agent K. He is posing as Prince Zuvor's servant. He, above all others, desires the death of Zuvor. He has heard so much said in Zuvor's home—so many statements denouncing our cause -"

"I understand," interrupted the Red Envoy quietly. "Go on with your scheme."

"My plan is this," explained Prokop. "I shall give Agent K one of the new bombs—with the time-clock attachment. He can plant it in Zuvor's house. Then pouf! It will be the end of the Zuvor and his czarist servant, Ivan Shiskin."

THE Red Envoy was thoughtful. He seemed to be considering the merits of Prokop's scheme.

"I shall do this at the meeting," continued Prokop. "In the presence of all our agents, I shall delegate Agent K to the work. They will be exuberant -"

The Red Envoy held up a crimson-clad hand.

"What happened at Prince Zuvor's house last night?" he questioned.

"I have not heard," admitted Prokop.

"There was an elevator accident near there -" began the Red Envoy.

Prokop smiled as he interrupted. He admired the insight of the Red Envoy.

The masked man knew that the accident had been the work of the Red agents, even though Prokop had not revealed the fact that his men had tampered with the elevator.

"That," said Prokop, "was one of Prince Zuvor's safe ways of leaving his house. A man should have died in that crash—somehow, he must have escaped."

"Who was the man who escaped?" came the Red Envoy's question.

"Cranston, perhaps," answered Prokop. "I have not yet called Agent G, to learn if a report has come from Fritz Bloch."

"Make the call immediately."

Prokop went to the telephone. He gave a number.

Prokop had an ingenious method of communicating with his agents. At each meeting, an announcement was made of a new telephone number, where one of the agents—usually Agent G—would be stationed. Any messages were phoned by agents to that number.

By calling the number himself, Prokop could learn what the agents were doing, and could leave instructions for them.

To-night, he inquired if Agent K had phoned. Receiving an affirmative reply, Prokop began to take down words that were given him over the telephone, by Agent G. Fritz Bloch had sent a report in code.

The verbal message made no sense when Prokop had copied it. By referring to a code list among his papers, Prokop translated the message, and quickly told Fritz Bloch's message to the Red Envoy.

"It was Cranston who came to Zuvor's last night," said Prokop. "The prince sent him away by the secret method. Something must have gone wrong. I imagine that the elevator broke before Cranston had a chance to enter it."

"What else does Fritz say?"

"He tells me that Cranston made an appointment to meet Prince Zuvor at his home, one week from last night. The appointment will be at nine o'clock. They will then discuss important matters."

The Red Envoy was thoughtful. Prokop, staring past the masked man, again observed that blackness that seemed so thick by the door. He became a trifle worried.

He was about to make a remark, when the Red Envoy spoke. This time the lips were expressive. They indicated the cunning thoughts that were in the man's brain.

"I agree with you," said the Red Envoy. "Zuvor is a menace. He must be destroyed. But you must be patient—for six days, at least."

"Our one great task is to obtain Whitburn's plans and diagrams. Until we have them, any other action would be unwise."

"However, I am confident that we shall obtain the plans, within a few days. So I shall now tell you what I propose should be done with Zuvor. My scheme will enable us to dispose of two enemies instead of one."

Prokop sensed that the masked man had thought out an ingenious arrangement. The next words of the Red Envoy proved that fact.

"Call a meeting," said the Red Envoy. "Make it the night before Cranston is to come to see Zuvor. Give the bomb to the proper agent. Have it timed for ten minutes after nine. Place it in Zuvor's house. The explosion will kill both our enemies."

"And Ivan Shiskin, also," added Prokop, in a pleased voice. "I shall give the bomb to Fritz Bloch—Agent K."

"No," said the Red Envoy thoughtfully. "Send Fritz a gray card. We do not want him at the meeting, if there is any danger that Prince Zuvor might suspect."

"Should Fritz come to the meeting, give him the bomb. If he is not present, send him a green card—which will tell him to leave immediately, because of threatening danger. Then he will be away."

"Agents B and M—those who are now watching Zuvor's house—can attend to the planting of the bomb."

"Very good," replied Prokop. "I shall summon both of them to the meeting. How about Agent F—Volovick? I sent him a yellow card, you remember."

"Bring him to the meeting. He has been away long enough. Send him a black card."

Prokop could not control his delight, as he carefully wrote down the Red Envoy's instructions. The spectacle of both Prince Zuvor and Lamont Cranston being blown to eternity was most pleasing to his imagination.

"But remember," interposed the Red Envoy, "this must not go into effect unless we have managed to obtain Whitburn's plans. But I expect to have them—very soon. I myself am going to Lake Marrinack."

This prospect surprised Prokop. He had not expected action on the Red Envoy's part. For a moment, he was tempted to object to this usurping of his power; then he realized that the Red Envoy was master.

"I shall go there," declared the Red Envoy. "Notify your agent to expect me. I shall gain the plans. When I do—you will receive a telephone call—by long distance. It will give you time to make immediate arrangements.

"After making such arrangements, either remain here or leave a note, telling me where to call for the tickets—and just what my schedule will be. I have the passports."

Prokop bowed in acknowledgment.

The Red Agent rose from his chair. As he did so, the shadow behind him seemed to grow. Prokop saw it, and uttered a startled cry. The Red Envoy, turning toward the door, obscured Prokop's view.

"What is the matter?" questioned the masked man.

"Nothing," said Prokop. He could see the door now—the blotch of darkness was no longer there. "I must be excited; I thought I saw something behind you."

The Red Envoy made no reply. He walked to the door, opened it, and was gone. Prokop watched from his window, standing at the side, and peering through the crack of a shade. He did not see the Red Envoy in the street.

There was a reason. The Red Envoy took off his mask and gloves as he went down the dark stairs, and obscured his face in the collar of his coat.

When he left the door of the apartment house, he kept close to the wall, and was scarcely visible as he moved rapidly away.

People who were passing him did not see him; had they looked closely, they would have noticed his tall form, as it went along beside the dark wall.

But even the keenest observer would not have detected the shape which appeared a moment later.

For this second figure was nothing more than a shadow, which virtually grew from the darkness. It seemed to flit along the sidewalk, as it took up the trail of the Red Envoy.

## **CHAPTER XXVI. HARRY MAKES A CAPTURE**



"VINCENT!"

Harry Vincent sat up in bed when he heard the hissed exclamation close beside him. He had been half asleep when the summons had come; now he wondered if he was dreaming. A voice spoke softly, a few feet away.

"Sh!" came the warning. "This is Marquette!"

"What's the matter?" whispered Harry.

"Stokes and Marsh are planning something," replied Marquette. "That's why I tipped you off to go to bed early. I went to my room; then sneaked downstairs. I overheard them, in the kitchen."

"What did they say?"

"They are going somewhere. I suspected it this afternoon, when I came upon them unexpectedly at the dock. Now they have waited until we went upstairs."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going with them. Stokes came back from the mainland, an hour ago, in the motor boat. He brought back a lot of empty sacks that Professor Whitburn ordered. They're still in the boat. I'm going to hide under them."

"What shall I do?"

"Stay here. Get dressed and watch. I don't know what the game is; and we've got to watch everything. Be on the job. Come down to the lake when the boat pulls away, and try to trace the direction in which it goes. Then you may know where I am."

The secret-service man slipped from the room. Harry dressed hurriedly, his mind in chaos.

It was the third night since the episode in the tower room. He had talked with Marquette during the interim.

They had agreed that trouble might begin at any time; but they had expected it on the island. Yet here were Stokes and Marsh planning to leave.

What did it mean?

Professor Whitburn had announced that he would not require the services of any one during the evening. He had important work to do in his study. His four assistants were off duty.

Stokes and Marsh—the two secret enemies—were taking advantage of the opportunity; but Harry could not guess their purpose.

When he came downstairs, the living room was deserted. The men had gone; Marquette had followed them; at least, so Harry supposed.

But he was wrong; he heard a noise outside, and had barely time to slip back to the stairs.

Harry stole softly to his room, and crawled into the bed. He listened intently. He heard a slight sound in the hallway. He figured it was either Stokes or Marsh; coming up to see if he was asleep.

Harry breathed a trifle heavily; just sufficiently so that the sound could reach the ears of the unseen

listener. He fancied that he heard footsteps steal away down the hall.

A SUDDEN desire for action prompted Harry. He moved across the floor to the window. The sash was already open; silently, he went through.

There was a roof beneath, to one side a narrow projection that extended from the doorway which the men must use to leave the house. Harry clung there, and a moment later he heard Stokes and Marsh come outside. They stood directly beneath him.

"He's asleep." Harry could make out the words spoken by Marsh. "No need to worry about him."

"All right," replied Stokes, in an audible whisper. "Let's go."

The men started toward the path. Harry heard Marsh question Stokes, and he caught the reply:

"Let him stay there. We won't bother him unless he makes trouble."

A slight laugh came from Marsh.

Harry wondered about the last remark. He wondered while he still clung to the roof; he wondered while he was dropping to the ground.

As he started along the path, far behind the others, the import of the words suddenly dawned upon him.

Stokes and Marsh knew that Marquette—or Crawford, as they knew him—was hiding in the motor boat!

The sacks had been left there purposely. They must have detected Marquette during the afternoon. They let him listen in during the evening; they were taking Marquette away from the island. That was their only scheme.

Harry hurried toward the dock. He was unable to prepare a plan. There would be risk in attempting to warn Marquette. It was too late now. Harry realized that as he neared the shore of the lake.

Marsh and Stokes had pushed the boat away from the wharf, and had paddled it a hundred yards. The motor was chugging slowly when Harry arrived.

Sitting near the dock, Harry puzzled over the situation. Gradually, he evolved a theory.

Some one was coming to the island to-night. That could be the only solution; for any activities directed against Professor Whitburn must necessarily take place here.

Stokes and Marsh had evidently intended to be present. Then the difficulty had arisen. They had attracted the attention of the man they called Crawford.

They knew that he would be alert and watchful. To attack him might injure their plans. So they had chosen the simple course of luring him away by this expedition in the motor boat.

Harry noted that the boat had headed up the lake, and that it was moving quite slowly. It would require more than an hour for them to reach the head of the lake; there they might linger a while, as though attending to some secret business.

One thing was certain: if Marquette tried to surprise them, he would run into trouble; for they knew of his presence. Harry hoped that Marquette would keep in hiding.

It was up to Harry to handle the situation on Death Island. Stokes and Marsh had ignored him in their plans. They believed that he was asleep.

They had no suspicion that he had been in communication with the fellow they knew as Crawford. Everything was set for the arrival of the third party.

Marquette had put himself in a ridiculous position; at the same time, Stokes and Marsh had made a grave mistake.

Their confederate was coming with the assurance that he had to deal with none but Professor Whitburn—an old man, absent-mindedly engrossed in his work. Instead, this unknown arrival would encounter Harry Vincent—aroused and ready for action.

HARRY turned to the path toward the house. He had gone only a few steps when he stopped to consider.

There was no good landing place on Death Island, except this spot near the dock. The person who was coming must necessarily choose this place. Here, in the darkness, Harry could wait, and surprise the intruder.

Choosing a shadowy spot beneath a tree, Harry sat down, and listened. A few minutes went by; he began to be doubtful. Then he was sure that he had heard a slight sound on the lake.

He listened, and the noise occurred again. Some one was coming in a canoe. Despite the paddler's care, slight splashes had been made.

The sound was not repeated, and Harry fancied that he had been mistaken. Then came a grating sound, not more than a few rods distant. The canoe had been beached on the pebbled water front; but it was invisible in the darkness.

Harry waited expectantly. At last he detected a light footfall; and in another moment, a figure was silhouetted against the clearing toward the dock.

Before Harry had time to observe it carefully, the person was gone. Then came slight sounds from the path. Harry rose, and followed softly.

It was a tense experience, in the darkness of the path. Harry knew that he was following some one who was not more than twenty feet in advance. Yet that person was moving stealthily, and he was forced to do likewise. At times he sensed that the other had stopped to listen. He did the same.

They were nearing the house now. The slope of the path had ended. Harry had neared a very slight bend, and he was sure that the other person would have stopped because of the proximity of the house.

Abandoning caution, he leaped forward, and came upon a person in the darkness. His approach had been heard; his enemy had tried to slip away from the path, but too late. Harry seized the person quickly, fearing a revolver shot.

To his surprise, there was no resistance. His opponent collapsed, and was instantly overpowered.

He thought for a second that he was being duped; that the other was pretending unconsciousness. He drew his flashlight from his pocket, and turned the light on the form that lay helpless before him.

The beam of the flashlight showed the face of Arlette DeLand!

## **CHAPTER XXVII. INTO THE SNARE**

It was two or three minutes before the girl regained consciousness. She opened her eyes, and blinked as she saw the flashlight.

Her head was resting on Harry's shoulder; she gasped as she realized that she had been captured. Then her worried expression changed to a smile as she recognized Harry.

"Are you all right?" questioned Harry.

"Yes," replied the girl. Then her expression became solemn. "But are you safe—Harry?"

"What do you mean?" Harry's voice became suddenly severe. "Tell me. What are you doing here?"

"I have come to warn you."

"To warn me? I can hardly believe that—after what Bruce Duncan has told me."

"Bruce Duncan!" The girl's exclamation was involuntary.

"Yes," replied Harry. "Bruce Duncan. Do not pretend that you do not know him. You are the girl I met in the Pink Rat. You are also Arlette DeLand. Do you admit it?"

"Yes."

"Why did you try to mislead me, then?"

"I couldn't help it," said the girl. "Please believe me. We must not waste time here. I can tell you everything, later."

"But now you are in danger. That is why I came—to warn you. I tried to tell you over the phone one night -"

Her voice broke. Then her expression changed to one of terror.

"Please," she said, in a pleading voice. "Believe me now. You must act at once. There are dangerous men here. They may attack at any moment -"

"The men have left," said Harry sternly. "Both of them went away a few -"

"But there is another," interrupted the girl. "He is most dangerous of all. He came here an hour ago—one man met him, and took him in the motor boat -"

A sudden realization dawned on Harry, as he gazed at the girl's eyes, and listened to her beseeching words. He knew now that she was speaking the truth.

The enemy was already on Death Island! Stokes had brought back more than empty sacks; he had transported a man from the mainland!

"I saw him from the woods," explained Arlette. "Believe me, when I say that the man is here. He is powerful; he is superhuman -"

"Sh," warned Harry. Rising, he helped the girl to her feet.

"I trust you," he whispered. "I believe you, Arlette. I understand everything—now. You must help me."

"I am here to protect an old man—Professor Whitburn. He is alone in the house. Our enemy may be there now. Come!"

HE guided the girl to the door; and they entered the living room. The house was silent as a tomb. The ticking of the clock on the mantel was audible.

"Have you a revolver?" questioned Harry.

Arlette shook her head.

"My only thought was to warn you," she whispered. "I found a canoe, after the motor boat had gone. Harry, I have been here two nights, watching across the lake."

Harry produced a revolver from his pocket, and gave it to the girl. He had slipped two automatics in his coat when he had left his room.

For an instant he had qualms. Suppose Arlette was deceiving him! Then his doubts vanished. The girl would not have saved him once, and warned him again unless she intended to be his friend.

Harry conducted Arlette to the kitchen. There she would not be seen by any one entering the house.

There was only one course to follow. He must search the premises, carefully watching for any traps that might have been laid for him. The enemy might already be in the house.

It was more likely that he was still outside. In that case, Arlette could watch the door while Harry searched. But first there was an important duty to make sure that Professor Whitburn was safe.

Harry stationed Arlette so that she could see the outer door, looking into the living room from the kitchen.

"Be ready," he whispered. "If any one enters the house, shoot. Not too quickly; be sure it is an enemy -"

"I shall recognize the man who came here," replied Arlette. "He has never injured me; in fact, he once saved me from harm. But your life is at stake, Harry, and—and -"

Harry pressed the girl's hand in the darkness. Then he left the room.

Harry crossed the living room, and knocked at the door opposite. Then he entered through the passage.

Professor Whitburn was at his desk, drawing diagrams on a sheet of paper. Harry stood a moment, in silence; then, realizing that time was precious, he coughed to attract the old man's attention. The professor looked up.

"Ah, Vincent," he said. "What do you wish?"

"Nothing, sir," said Harry. "That is, nothing for myself. I was about to retire, and I wondered if you might have some late instructions -"

"None at all," replied the professor brusquely. "I would have called you before this, Vincent."

A tiny alarm clock began to ring. It was on the desk, close by the professor.

"There is my reminder," said the professor. "I always have it set when I intend to work late."

He turned off the alarm.

"Now I know that it is getting late," he said. "Also that it is time for me to take my pills. Where are they now? Marsh set them out for me -"

He spied a bottle under some papers. He uncorked it, and took three tiny white tablets.

"Medicine is a nuisance," remarked Professor Whitburn. "Good night, Vincent."

Harry had learned all that he desired to know.

The enemy had not yet arrived; at least he had not invaded the professor's study. The next task was to search the house.

He went back to find Arlette.

To his surprise, the girl was not in the kitchen. Why had she left her post? Had she decided to search the house? That was not in the arrangement.

Arlette would have remained here as she promised. There was only one possible explanation of her disappearance. She had been surprised and captured!

The enemy could not have come from the outside, nor from upstairs; Arlette had commanded both the door, and the steps which led to the second floor.

She must have been seized by some one lurking in the kitchen.

Harry thought of the stairs that led to the basement. He turned on his flashlight, and saw that the cellar door was open. It was a heavy door, and had usually been shut and locked.

The gleam of his light revealed a small object on the floor. It was Arlette's hat. Her captor had carried her to the cellar.

It required only a few minutes for Harry to investigate the cellar. There were several rooms; but all the doors were open. His flashlight showed him the chemical laboratory, a workroom, and a storeroom; then he came upon an archway.

Winding stone steps led downward.

The submarine chamber!

Harry remembered what Marquette had told him about that experimental room, below the level of the lake. It was the only outlet from the cellar. Arlette must be down there.

Without a moment's hesitation, Harry descended the steps.

He came upon a huge metal door, located on a landing; the door was opened toward him. Beyond it were more steps, that led into a small, stonewalled room.

Harry's flashlight showed a mechanical device opposite the steps—presumably the torpedo tube. Then he saw the torpedoes themselves, standing against the wall—heavy, metal shells, more than six feet in length.

Now his light revealed something on the floor. There lay Arlette, pitifully helpless—bound and gagged.

Harry drew his revolver, and rushed down the stone steps. He flashed the light in every direction.

There was no one else in the room. The man who had captured Arlette had gone.

Harry quickly cut the cords that bound the girl. He released the gag. Arlette had fainted; now she revived

and tried to speak. Harry watched her lips; then saw that they framed a warning.

"Look out!" was her feeble exclamation. "He is here!"

A SOUND came from above, up by the stone stairs. Harry swung his flashlight in that direction, and leveled his revolver. The gleam of the light revealed the form of a man—a man who wore a brilliant red mask across his face.

The roar of Harry's revolver was cannonlike in the little room; but his shots were too late.

Just as his finger sought the trigger, Harry saw a crimson-clad hand against the edge of the metal door. The huge barrier swung shut; the bullets from Harry's gun were deflected by the sheet of steel.

"He was behind the door," gasped Arlette. "I saw him there, Harry."

The door was not entirely shut. Harry noted a width of a few inches. He dashed for the steps; but as he approached, the muzzle of a revolver was pressed through the opening.

The red hand that clutched it pressed the trigger. Harry collapsed as the bullet struck his shoulder. He tripped from the steps, rolled over, and lay motionless upon the stone floor.

A few seconds passed; then the door was pressed shut from the other side. A loud click followed, as an automatic lock was fastened.

Arlette turned to Harry. The man groaned, as she pressed a handkerchief against his wound. His head had struck the floor, and he had been momentarily stunned. He recovered his senses, and looked about him.

"We are trapped," said Arlette. "But perhaps we may escape. Some one may -"

She stopped, her attention attracted by a sound in the room. She looked toward the wall, away from the stairs.

Two sluice gates had opened, one on each side of the torpedo tube. Water was pouring into the room.

The girl knew that she and her companion were doomed. From the cellar above, the Red Envoy had released the switch that controlled the sluices. Harry and Arlette were helpless, in the midst of an increasing flood that was sweeping in from the lake.

## **CHAPTER XXVIII. MASTER MINDS MEET**

ON this particular night, a strange effect came over the professor within a few minutes after he had taken his medicine.

Harry Vincent had scarcely left the room, when the white-haired old man began to gasp. Then he leaned forward upon the desk. His eyes closed, and he was still.

The door opened, and a figure entered. It came with amazing silence, and Professor Whitburn would not have observed it, had his eyes been open.

The Shadow leaned over Professor Whitburn. He pressed the old man's forehead; then felt his pulse.

The old inventor was not dead; he was simply the victim of a powerful opiate. The wrong pills had been left on his desk by Marsh; and the action had been performed with the definite purpose of rendering Professor Whitburn unconscious.

The Shadow moved away from the desk, and stood motionless. He was a strange figure, this mysterious man, as he stood there.

His broad-brimmed hat was pulled low, and his cloak obscured the lower part of his face. Only his eyes showed from the dark depths that hid his features.

Those eyes were searching. They looked keenly in every direction, as though trying to discover some secret of the professor's study. They were looking for a hiding place; and they sought it in some unusual location.

They stopped upon a bookcase. There were several shelves in the bookcase, and above them was a thick molding that ran the entire length. It was ornamented with carved sections.

The Shadow stepped to the bookcase, and ran his hand along the molding. His hands appeared for the first time; they were thin, well-formed hands, with sensitive fingers that moved as though filled with a life of their own.

The fingers stopped on one spot; they pressed; then moved to the left. A portion of the molding went inward, and slid beneath the next section. The opening showed a strip of metal, with a tiny keyhole.

The Shadow went back to the desk. He carefully raised the old professor, and leaned him back in his chair.

The hands of The Shadow found the professor's watch chain. There were keys on one end; but none of the keys were suited to the little lock. The Shadow removed the professor's watch.

Now the black-cloaked man became suddenly intent. He was holding the watch in his right hand. His left was poised above.

THE SHADOW was listening. His keen ears had caught a slight sound. His left hand moved beneath his cloak. Then it reappeared, and held a peculiar position, the fingers slightly apart. The right hand skillfully removed the watch from the chain, and laid it on the desk.

The Shadow stepped back, his eyes still intent upon the professor. He turned toward the door, and as he did, the door swung inward noiselessly.

A man stood there; a man whose face was obscured by a crimson mask. His hands wore red gloves; and one of them held a leveled automatic.

"Hands up!" came the command from the door.

The Shadow slowly raised his arms. He had apparently been caught unawares. The eyes beneath the mask were watching the figure in black; but they also seemed to look beyond; for they saw the opened molding of the bookcase.

"Do you know me?" questioned the masked man, in a harsh, sarcastic voice.

The Shadow did not reply.

"I am the Red Envoy," said the man with the crimson mask. "You did not expect me."

Still no reply.

"So you are The Shadow?" The Red Envoy's tones carried bitter irony. "The Shadow—whose identity no one knows. I see that you have aided me.



"One of my agents told me to-night that he suspected the bookcase as the hiding place of Professor Whitburn's papers; but he had not located the exact spot. I must thank you for your work."

The masked man inclined his head in a short, quick bow. Still The Shadow was silent and unmoving, both his hands raised, slightly forward.

"A key is needed," said the Red Envoy. "Where is it?" Receiving no reply, he added:

"Come. You would not have it said that The Shadow failed in his last experiment in master detection, would you?"

"You have done half the work; finish the rest. For this"—the harsh voice spoke slowly and emphatically—"this is the last work you will ever do."

The figure in the black cloak maintained its fixed position. It seemed to sway slightly, and the Red Envoy moved closer. His eyes were watching from beneath the crimson mask.

He knew that The Shadow was noted for his ability to dodge away from gunfire. But the range was short, now; there could be no escape.

"Ah!" The Red Envoy's tone was one of triumph. "I see I have underestimated your ability. The professor's watch is on the table. You placed it there. You have not yet opened it. Very well, I shall do that later.

"I know where the key is, now: between the back of the watch and an inner surface! Excellent. That enables me to do my work more quickly. A thin, flat key, within the watch."

The Red Envoy was now gazing directly at The Shadow. He spoke again, and there was a note of finality in his voice.

"I do not know your purpose," he said, "but it conflicts with mine. Therefore I intend to kill you. After I do so, I may take the trouble to learn who you are. But I may mention that I already have a very good idea of your identity.

"But before you die, let me inform you that I have detected the presence of your influence in many ways. I have looked forward to this meeting with you. I have also made excellent arrangements for just such a time.

"I expected that you would be here. My agents prepared for it. I myself have found time to accomplish several things before you came here.

"Your accomplice, Harry Vincent, was in the way. He interfered, and I deal quickly with those who seek to put themselves in my way.

"Beneath the cellar of this building is a room known as the submarine chamber. It is barred by a steel door, that opens with a combination. The only man living who knows that combination is Professor Whitburn, who lies there unconscious.

"Your friend—Harry Vincent—is in the submarine chamber. He has pleasant companionship in the person of a young lady who was formerly one of my agents, but who came here to warn him against me. I do not deal kindly with those who prove false to me.

"No power alive can save them; for water is pouring in upon them. They will live thirty minutes longer, perhaps."

THE Red Envoy stopped abruptly. He was close to The Shadow now— not more than four feet away. The man in the black cloak had slumped; he seemed shorter than before. His upraised arms were drooping. His fingers were slowly closing.

"They will live thirty minutes longer," said the Red Envoy. His words became very slow and distinct. "But they will outlive The Shadow by just thirty min -"

The left hand of The Shadow made a movement; the thumb and third finger snapped together. There was a flash of flame, and a sharp explosion, like a pistol shot, directly in front of the Red Envoy's eyes.

The man staggered back, and threw his left arm across his face. Like Prokop, he had been momentarily stunned by the unexpected burst of flame.

(Note: When he recounted this portion of his chronicle, The Shadow raised his hand, snapped his fingers, and produced the very effect that I have described.

He informed me that it was an astonishing trick, known as "The Devil's Whisper," produced by the instantaneous action of two chemical compounds—one on the thumb; the other on the finger. The Shadow stated that he had improved the experiment, so that he was able to produce a most startling effect.

I have access to the chemical formula that will cause this amazing result; but I have refrained from publishing it because of its danger.

An inexperienced person runs great chance of serious injury when attempting this experiment.—Maxwell Grant.)

The crimson mask served as a partial protection against the blinding flare. The Red Envoy caught himself, as he encountered the edge of the desk, and promptly fired two shots at the spot where The Shadow had been.

But the man in black was no longer there. He had started toward the door as his opponent pressed the trigger.

Wheeling, the Red Envoy discharged two more bullets in the direction of the departing Shadow. But his eyes blinked beneath the red mask and the shots went wild.

The masked man closed the door of the study, and turned the key. Then he chuckled triumphantly. He knew where to find The Shadow, if he wanted him; and the man in black had gone to attempt the rescue of those who were in the submarine chamber.

It would be a futile attempt; yet it gave the Red Envoy the very opportunity he required. He had come to find the plans; they were now within his reach.

He had foiled The Shadow, even though that remarkable man had made a miraculous escape from certain death.

Working quickly, the Red Envoy pried open the back of the professor's watch. He found the key, and unlocked the drawer. Reaching within, he seized a large envelope that lay there.

One minute later, the only person in the study was Professor Whitburn. The old professor still reclined in his chair, with the semblance of death upon his features.

## **CHAPTER XXIX. IN THE SUBMARINE CHAMBER**

THE water had risen in the submarine chamber. Arlette had dragged Harry from the floor, and had laid him against the steps that led up to the steel door.

Harry Vincent opened his eyes, and gazed about him. His senses slowly came back; little by little he realized the danger of the situation.

The water, already four feet deep, was still rising. It had reached the base of the high-set machine which Professor Whitburn had designed as a torpedo tube.

Arlette was momentarily elated at Harry's recovery. Then the hopelessness of the situation impressed itself upon her; and she broke down utterly.

She collapsed, limp and helpless, upon the stone steps. The flashlight rolled toward the rising water. Harry caught it just in time.

Harry watched the water pour in; he tried to estimate how long it would be before the room was entirely submerged. He had been half unconscious for several minutes. He had no way of judging the time.

A sound came from above. Harry groped toward the door. He was sure that he heard some one tapping. He listened. Single taps came at intervals. Harry tapped in return.

A quick, short message arrived in telegraphic code: "Hold out. Am working on lock."

Harry replied: "The water is rising. Hurry."

He did not know who his intended rescuer might be. It seemed improbable that Marquette could have returned. Possibly Professor Whitburn had discovered the situation.

He waited, and heard slight clicks from the other side of the door. He looked toward Arlette. The girl lay exhausted, her eyes closed.

Harry tapped: "Must save girl here with me."

There was no reply. Then a sudden thought occurred to Harry. He tapped another message:

"Water coming through open sluices. They were opened after door closed. Must be controlled outside of this room.

The clicking sounds ended abruptly. Harry's last piece of information had evidently given the rescuer an idea.

"Will seek sluice control," came the message. "You can save girl."

THE final statement dumfounded Harry. How could he save Arlette? They were both prisoners here; if one could be rescued why not the other? He must discover what was meant. He quickly tapped back a single word:

"How?"

The response was immediate.

"Through tube."

The meaning dawned on Harry. This was the room from which Marquette had shot the torpedoes! Would it be possible to send a human being the same way?

Harry remembered that there was an underground channel that led to the lake. It must be a hundred yards in length. Such a trip under water would be impossible.

He turned his lamp toward the torpedo tube. He saw one of the torpedoes standing by the wall. Part of it still extended from the water.

Harry descended the steps, and found that the water nearly reached his armpits. He walked to where the torpedo stood, and managed to hoist it into the carriage that stood in front of the tube.

He unscrewed the metal end of the torpedo. It was hollow, and contained ample room for a person. There were no wing attachments to the shell; evidently those were put on when the experiments were made.

How long could a person live, within that container? Not long, Harry thought. At the same time, one could not live long in this submerged chamber.

Then he noted a peculiarity in the cap of the experimental torpedo. It had slots, which were backed with metal strips that could be moved away.

Harry did not know the exact purpose of these; they probably had to do with some invention planned by Professor Whitburn; but they would solve the problem that was now involved.

Harry seemed to have gained new strength. He lifted Arlette, resting her on his good arm, and carried her to the torpedo tube. She did not realize what he was about until he had slipped her into the shell. Then she gazed at him in bewilderment.

"What—what are you doing?" she asked.

Harry smiled reassuringly. He was shoulder-deep in water now. The high-set tube was just barely free of the rising flood.

"Sending you to safety," he replied. He lifted the cap of the torpedo. "Do you see these movable metal pieces in the cap?"

"Yes," replied Arlette.

"Wait until the torpedo is floating steadily," said Harry. "Then open the one that is above you. It will let in air."

"But Harry!" exclaimed Arlette, as she began to understand. "I can't leave you here -"

Harry had expected to hear her say that. He smiled grimly, as he was about to lower the cap of the torpedo.

"I'll be along later," he said.

He closed the cap, and shoved the torpedo into the tube. During the past two days, he had been studying the projection of torpedoes from submarines, from textbooks which the professor had marked for him. He recognized the mechanism of this tube.

Harry hung close to the wall and gripped the apparatus. He released the torpedo; it was discharged from the tube.

Arlette was off on her journey!

HARRY was forced to swim as he made his way back to the steps. By standing on the uppermost place, he could last a little longer.

He watched the gaining flood, as it seemed to swirl upward. He was in the highest possible position; yet it was coming almost to his shoulders.

He knew that he must meet death alone; but he was willing. He had saved Arlette.

It was impossible for him to leave by the same route. He could not have entered a torpedo and also have discharged it. So he must die alone—here beneath the surface of Death Island—unless—unless—

The water was up to his neck. He could see it swirl on the level with his eyes. It still continued to swirl, but it rose no more.

There was a clicking behind him. Some one was again working at the steel door. Harry tried to tap a message, but his hands were numb, and his efforts were feeble.

"Hold on -"

The reply was encouraging, yet time seemed endless. Harry knew now that the water was no longer rising. His rescuer had found the hidden switch that controlled the sluices.

It must have been a long, heart-rending search. Stokes had probably fixed that secret control somewhere—arranged it so that he could drown any who were trapped within this den of death.

The steel door swung open. A flashlight gleamed into the dark chamber. A black form stooped quickly, and a powerful hand seized Harry Vincent as he was about to topple into the flood beneath.

WHEN Harry opened his eyes, he found himself lying in the bed of his room on the second floor. Two persons were beside him. One was Vic Marquette; the other was Arlette DeLand.

"Arlette," said Harry feebly. "Tell me -"

"The torpedo floated to the shore," explained Arlette. "I managed to open the cap and get out. Then this man, Mr. -" she looked at Vic Marquette.

"Crawford's my name," said Marquette calmly. "Those scoundrels rode me all over the lake, Vincent. Then they ditched the motor boat at Harvey's Wharf.

"By that time I knew where I was; and I figured they knew that I was with them. I popped out on them, before they had a chance to plug me under the sacks. They were on the wharf; but they skipped before I had a chance to shoot at them."

"Professor Whitburn," said Harry. "Is he—all right?"

"He's groggy," replied Marquette. "Somebody must have doped him. He was half out when I found him. I've got to go back to him now."

"But the man who -"

"The fellow who trapped you and the girl downstairs? He's gone. Must have taken the little motor boat we keep under the dock. I've heard all about him. This young lady told me the story.

"I saw the torpedo floating over to the shore, I went over to investigate, and found her. But what I'm trying to figure is who doped out that combination and opened the door to let you out of -"

"There's only one man who could have done that," said Harry weakly. "Only one man -"

"The Shadow!" exclaimed Marquette.

Harry Vincent nodded.

## **CHAPTER XXX. BEFORE THE MEETING**

FOUR days had passed since the eventful happenings at Death Island.

Vic Marquette had revealed his identity to Professor Whitburn, as soon as the old man had recovered, the next morning.

The loss of the plans had been discovered.

Professor Whitburn had decided to rest from his labors. He had wired his sister to come and take care of his house, while he recuperated.

Harry Vincent and Arlette DeLand had remained as his guests. Now that the enemy had left, the island was a safe place for Arlette, and the best spot for Harry Vincent to recover from his injuries.

Marquette had taken charge of affairs long enough to arrange for one of the men from the village to take a job as handy man; and he had also obtained some other servants.

The house was transformed from an experimental laboratory to a country home.

But Marquette had left immediately afterward. He had received a message brought by Bruce Duncan. When he had read its contents, he had started immediately for New York, leaving Duncan to keep Harry Vincent company.

No one but the secret-service man knew the contents of that note. It had come, indirectly, from The Shadow, and it had proposed certain plans that pleased Vic Marquette.

The message had disclosed facts which the government man had not known; and he was raised from the depths of gloom. He had promised to cooperate by following the instructions which were given him.

It was now the night set for the Red meeting. A man, alone in a dark room, was working at a table above which hung a shaded lamp. His hands were sorting papers of various sorts, in an effort to find the solution to pressing perplexities.

Chief among these papers were reports from Vic Marquette. The secret-service agent had made every effort to trace the man who had vanished with the important plans of Professor Whitburn's inventions. Marquette had been informed that the man had probably left the country; but with all the power that he had at his disposal, he had been unable to track the mysterious thief.

Another report was from Burbank. This man, a valuable worker for The Shadow, had been watching Prokop's apartment. He had seen Prokop leave the apartment; he had observed another man enter and leave, a few hours later. Those events had taken place on the same night that the Red Envoy had appeared at Death Island. Since then, Prokop had not returned home.

The hands began to write beneath the light:

Prokop left a note for the Red Envoy. It was the Red Envoy who entered and left the apartment, a few hours later. He must have flown from Connecticut by plane.

Despite the fact that Marquette has obtained no results, the inference is obvious. The Red Envoy sailed for Europe on the Dresden. He will reach Cherbourg day after to-morrow.

Prokop had all passage arrangements in readiness. He left the apartment after receiving a long-distance call from the Red Envoy.

When the latter reached New York, he went to Prokop's to pick up the information. Burbank saw him arrive and leave.

Prokop is playing a safe game. He is hiding until the meeting to-night. He is the only man who knows the Red Envoy's plans. He took all incriminating documents from his apartment. A brief search has revealed nothing.

There is one sure way to trace the Red Envoy's route. Once in Europe, he will be comparatively safe. Prokop made the arrangements. Prokop must be made to tell them, unless—

The hand paused, then added:

Unless a final search unearths a clew.

The hands opened a large envelope, and brought out time-tables of European railways. These came under a careful perusal. Then the hand wrote:

Air routes are quickest across Europe; but passengers are too easily observed. Red Envoy will probably travel by rail. This must be confirmed. Taking Prokop alone is bad enough; raid on meeting would be worse. Might not get all.

Then came a few vague suggestions, written, crumpled, and tossed away, as though the brain behind the hands was searching for tangible ideas.

Finally the hand prepared a schedule, compiled from the railway guides. The single word: "Confirm" was written at the top. The paper was folded between the hands. The light was extinguished.

Approximately one-half hour later, a man walked leisurely up the street by the apartment house where Prokop lived. He disappeared outside the building.

A few minutes later he was in Prokop's apartment. He was invisible there; only his flashlight betrayed his presence. He was searching, with infinite care.

His hand showed white beneath the light, as it discovered a small pad wedged behind a desk drawer.

The ray of the flashlight was centered on the pad. The fingers of the hand touched the surface of the top sheet of paper. Then the hand disappeared.

It came back, holding a small phial, filled with a black powder. It sprinkled the powder on the paper, and rubbed it into the surface.

Faint traces of writing appeared when the powder had been brushed away. The letters were followed by numbers. They gave the names and times of railway trains. The hand appeared with a folded sheet of paper, and opened it. A careful comparison was made.

The schedule which The Shadow had prepared by careful reasoning corresponded exactly with the one that he had found.

Prokop had written the list on the pad. He had torn off the top sheet. The impression had remained on

the pad, which had dropped behind the desk drawer, when Prokop had put it away.

The Envoy had taken the actual list; the clew had remained.

The hand wrote on the list which had been prepared by deduction. It inscribed a single word: "Correct." The figure disappeared from Prokop's apartment.

SOME thirty minutes later, a shadowy form approached the front door of Prince Zuvor's residence. The shape was invisible in the darkness. It seemed to melt against the shadow of the door; then the door opened slowly and closed again.

The hallway was dark within. Persons on the street could not have seen the strange action of the door.

Shortly after that, Ivan Shiskin was attracted by a light in the front room on the second floor. He came in softly; as he did, the curtains parted at the side of the room, and Prince Zuvor appeared.

"Master!" exclaimed Ivan, in Russian. "I did not hear you enter the house."

"I came in quietly, little one," was the reply in Russian.

"I did not expect you to-night, master. You said that you would not return until to-morrow."

"What instructions did I give you?"

"You said this, master. When he who carries the sign of the Seventh Circle comes at eight o'clock -"

"To-morrow night."

"Yes, master. To-morrow night. You said that I shall tell him, 'My master will be here soon.' Then you said that I should tell him to wait in this room."

"Very good, Ivan."

"Master." The servant's voice was humble. "You seem different, to-night. You seem -"

"I am worried, Ivan. That is why I have returned. I have been gone for several days, and I have been in danger. To-night, I have work to do. Work for you. Come."

Ivan followed Prince Zuvor.

They reached the basement. The prince went to the place where Ivan kept the make-up boxes, and removed them.

"Master," said Ivan. "Let me form your disguise."

Prince Zuvor shook his head.

"No, Ivan. I am not going out. It is you who will go out to-night. You will be Fritz. You will go in my place."

"Where, master?"

"To a meeting, little one. Listen closely -"

BRIEFLY, the prince explained that Ivan was to be Agent K. He told how the Red meeting was held. He gave Ivan the signs, and all the necessary instructions.



The only fact that he subtly omitted was the most important one— that these men who would meet were Reds. Ivan noted the instructions; he did not ask their purpose.

"Remember, Ivan," admonished the prince, as he carefully arranged the servant's face to resemble that of the pretended Fritz Bloch, "we must protect the cause of the czar."

"Aye, master."

The disguise was completed. Ivan stared in wonderment as Prince Zuvor held a mirror before his eyes.

"Your work, master," he said, "is more skillful than mine. I cannot understand."

"You have prepared my disguise so often," explained the prince. "I have remembered every movement. You make as good a Fritz as I do. Now speak."

Ivan Shiskin uttered a few words in guttural English.

"Now go," said Zuvor. He raised his hand. "Go. Remember all that happens. Go, in the name of the czar."

After the servant had left by the front door, Prince Zuvor returned to the room on the second floor. He passed through the curtains, and did not return. Instead, a strange, mysterious figure emerged.

It was that of a man clad in black, wearing a black cloak and a black hat. He laughed as he stood in the center of the room, and his laugh echoed weirdly from the walls.

Shortly afterward, the same figure came from the front door of Prince Zuvor's house. There was no sedan outside to-night; yet the figure kept to the shadows. Reaching the corner of the avenue, the man became less stealthy. He stepped into a taxicab, and gave an address to the driver.

The cab arrived a short time later in front of a hotel near Times Square. The passenger alighted and entered the hotel. He stopped at the desk, and gave the number of a room. The clerk made the call.

"Mr. Marquette?" he asked. "Yes? A gentleman to see you."

He turned to the man in black, who was looking in the opposite direction.

"Go right up, sir," said the clerk.

## **CHAPTER XXXI. AT THE MEETING**

ONE by one the Red agents had assembled at their meeting place. They had been scrutinized and admitted by Prokop.

To-night he had questioned none of them. He was anxious to begin the meeting. He had been particularly pleased when Fritz Bloch had appeared.

When all had gathered in the large room, Prokop entered and stood before them. He surveyed the entire group. Then he began to speak.

"Comrades," he said, "I have important news to give you. One of our number has sought to betray us. What is the answer?"

"Death!" came a hiss from the group of dark-robed agents. "Death!"

"Death is the verdict," repeated Prokop. "We shall act as one. Any who may encounter the betrayer must

strike. Is it agreed?"

"Agreed!" came the murmur of voices.

"This agent is a woman," continued Prokop. "Her name is Arlette DeLand. Seek her out. She must die. I shall show her picture to each of you as you leave."

A low murmur ran through the group; it died away immediately. Prokop held up his hand for silence.

"There is work for one of us," he said. "Great work. One of our number shall strike a glorious blow for our cause. To-morrow night, two men meet. One of them I shall not name—save to mention that he is an enemy to our cause. He intends to meet our archenemy, Prince Zuvor."

An angry rumble surged through the crowd.

"Death!" hissed a voice, and another repeated the cry.

"Silence," ordered Prokop. "I have chosen one man as best suited for this work."

"Some of you have watched Prince Zuvor. This one has constantly been on guard. He has served for months as Zuvor's servant. His ears have been stung with remarks that he has heard—remarks belittling our cause."

"He has done much for us. Through him we have discovered many facts pertaining to Prince Zuvor. So to this man I give the privilege of destroying three enemies: Prince Zuvor, his friend; and his Royalist servant, Ivan Shiskin."

There was an impressive silence. Then:

"Agent K. Step forward."

For a moment no one responded. Then there was a stir, and a hooded figure advanced slowly toward Prokop.

The leader of the Reds conducted him to the end of the room. There he lifted a spherical object from a box. He carried the object carefully, and showed it beneath the light.

"This bomb," he said, "is of our newest pattern. When the dial is set, and the clockwork is put in motion, it will explode at the exact minute."

"You will use it to-morrow night, Comrade K. Use it for our cause. Destroy our enemy—your enemy—Prince Zuvor!"

THE man designated as Agent K received the bomb. Prokop explained the mechanism, in a matter-of-fact manner, as though taking it for granted that the agent understood.

Then he let the man join the others, while he proceeded with another announcement.

"A great victory has been won for our cause," he said. "I cannot tell you its exact nature; but among us are those who worked long. They are here to-night, after a long absence."

"I welcome them, in the name of the cause. Before this week is ended, our leaders in Russia will have plans that will enable them to defeat their enemies in aerial warfare."

This news was received with acclamation, whispered remarks expressing the sentiments of the group.

Then Prokop spoke his final words.

"Remember, Agent K," he said, singling out that individual. "You must not fail. Should you fail, others will carry out your work. If you fear that you may fail, say so now.

"You are the one that I have chosen. I rely on you to destroy the enemies to the cause which you represent.

"Remember: Destroy, even though it may mean your own life. We are willing to die for our cause."

"We are willing to die," responded the members of the group.

The man who held the bomb stood motionless. The others crowded about him for a few minutes, while they looked at the piece of mechanism in his hands.

A brain was working within the black hood which Ivan Shiskin wore. It was groping for the truth, and its efforts were only partly successful.

It had taken Ivan a while to realize that he was in the midst of Red Agents. When he had fully understood that fact, he had been suddenly summoned, and the bomb had been placed in his possession.

This was where his master came, when he left his home disguised as Fritz Bloch! For months, Ivan had aided Prince Zuvor to disguise himself.

He had wondered why his master had been able to leave the house in safety under that disguise, while the house was being so closely watched.

It never occurred to his loyal mind that Prince Zuvor could be one of these. He was sure that he understood the exact circumstances. His master had been spying on these Reds, through clever use of the disguise.

He had told them that he was a servant of the Russian prince. They had believed him.

Ivan was filled with admiration for his master.

But why had he been sent to-night? Prince Zuvor could have come himself. What were the last words that the prince had told him?

"Go, in the name of the czar!"

That sentence kept repeating itself over and over in his mind; then it became identified with a statement made by the leader of this gang.

"We are willing to die for our cause."

HIS cause was greater than theirs! To Ivan, the name of the czar meant more than life. He began to believe that Prince Zuvor had sent him here for a great purpose.

His master had been different to-night. He had himself enabled Ivan to arrange his disguise. Princely hands had formed the features of the mythical Fritz Bloch upon the countenance of a Russian servant.

In all his thoughts, Ivan exaggerated.

He did not know that it was not his master who had sent him here, but another, a pretended Prince Zuvor.

He did not realize that the purpose of his mission was simply to bring back the bomb, that it might be obtained as evidence against the Reds.

All that his brain could grasp was that these men had threatened the death of Prince Zuvor; that he had been delegated to that task; that if he failed, others would assume the duty.

His loyalty to Prince Zuvor; his mission in the name of the czar. These beliefs dominated Ivan's mind.

He suddenly realized that he was standing alone; that the members of the group had drawn apart. The meeting would soon be over.

It was then that Ivan Shiskin sprang to mental action. Slowly and deliberately, he turned toward the wall, and adjusted the dial on the bomb.

He put the mechanism in motion. He glanced up, and noted that the leader was turning to leave the room. Ivan made one more adjustment of the dial, and with a cry of triumph he flung the bomb toward the door.

The heavy object struck the floor. The bomb exploded instantly. The walls shook, and the house collapsed. The cellar was filled with a mass of smoke. All who stood there were buried in the debris.

Not one of the Red agents survived the horrible catastrophe. They died, still clad in the robes that concealed their identities. Most of them were killed instantly.

Ivan Shiskin had gone—gone in the service of the czar! He had died to save his master, Prince Zuvor, in whom he believed, and to whom he was loyal. He was willing to die for his cause, and in dying, he brought his enemies to their doom.

## **CHAPTER XXXII. THE SILVER COMET**

VIC MARQUETTE was thinking—thinking in the silence of his hotel room— thinking in total darkness. That darkness had existed ever since his visitor had arrived.

Marquette had left the door ajar; a hand had come through the opening, and had turned off the light.

Then an invisible form had entered, and had seated itself in a chair. A voice had spoken from the blackness—a voice that was no louder than a whisper. For half an hour it had held Vic Marquette spellbound.

For the secret-service man had known the identity of his unknown visitor. That personage had been The Shadow; and he had calmly proposed a scheme that had proven bewildering.

The Shadow had explained facts to Vic Marquette—terse, pointed facts; and when he had finished speaking, he had left but one solution - a single plan of action, to which Marquette could do nothing other than agree.

Yet it was fully fifteen minutes after his visitor had gone when Marquette aroused himself to action.

The Shadow's plan was a remarkable one—it depended upon chance to a great degree. Yet Marquette had faith in The Shadow. He knew that the man performed seeming miracles.

The plan which he had proposed demanded courage and ability; one important detail depended upon Marquette. Yet Marquette was to assume no risk whatever.

The secret-service man turned on the light. He picked up his hat, and left the room. He went to the street

and called for a cab. He gave the driver the name of a hotel on Sixty-second Street.

Reaching his destination, Marquette told the man at the desk that he wished to speak to Lieutenant Branson.

The room clerk shook his head.

"Orders not to disturb," he said. "He is asleep."

"I must see him," replied Marquette firmly.

"You can talk to his friend, Mr. Peterson," said the clerk. "The gentleman over there in the corner of the lobby."

Marquette walked over and stepped up to a man who was writing at a desk.

"Mr. Peterson?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I must see Lieutenant Raymond Branson immediately."

Peterson smiled as he shook his head.

"It's all set for to-morrow," he said. "Looks like we'll have the break he's been waiting for. He's asleep now. Can't be disturbed." He noted the firm look on Marquette's face. "Who are you, anyway?" he asked.

The secret-service man drew back the lapel of his coat, and revealed a badge. A surprised look came over Peterson's face.

"What's up?" he questioned anxiously. "Nothing the matter, is there? No trouble for Branson? I can't figure this, at all -" He rose from the desk as he spoke.

"No trouble at all," said Marquette quietly. "I want to see Branson in private. That's all. He'll understand when he talks to me."

"I'll take you to his room," agreed Peterson. "Come on. I'll get the key."

FIVE minutes later, Lieutenant Raymond Branson was aroused from sleep. He was indignant for a moment, as he sat up in bed; then Marquette's badge proved a talisman that quieted him.

Peterson was dismissed. Marquette talked to the man alone.

It was half an hour before the secret-service man had concluded his conversation with the lieutenant. As Marquette rose to leave, Branson smiled rather bitterly.

"I hadn't figured on this," he said. "It's very sudden, and I can't quite realize it. But -"

"It may mean a lot to your country," replied Marquette.

Lieutenant Branson arose from his chair. He walked to the window, and stood with his back toward the room.

"All right," he said. "You'll arrange everything?"

"I shall," replied Marquette. "Get up early as you planned; meet me, and I'll take care of the rest. You will sail on the Colonia to-morrow morning."

"What if this fellow fails -"

"We can worry about that later. I'm figuring that he'll make it. You had no particular destination, did you?"

"Anywhere on the other side," replied Branson. "But can he play the part?"

"He can play any part," replied Marquette. "I'm going with you on the Colonia; we'll fix everything up. Count on me. Don't be discouraged, old man. You'll get another chance at it."

Vic Marquette received a phone call shortly after he reached his hotel.

A quiet voice asked him if everything had been satisfactorily arranged. Marquette gave an affirmative reply.

A LARGE crowd was assembled at a Long Island flying field early the next morning. The dim light of a new day shone on the wings of a glistening monoplane, which gleamed like burnished silver.

An automobile rolled up, and four men stepped out. Among them was one dressed in an aviator's costume.

"It's Branson!"

A cheer went up from the crowd. The man did not appear to notice it. He walked over to inspect the plane.

Another aviator joined him; the two shook hands, while photographers sought to obtain shots.

"Branson's in great shape, isn't he?" said one of the men who had driven up in the car.

"Never saw him looking better." It was Peterson who spoke. "He had a good rest last night. I saw to that."

The men entered the plane; the one whom the crowd had acclaimed as Branson took the pilot's seat. The propeller whirled; the plane rolled heavily along the ground.

As it gained speed, it slowly rose in the air, and its wings, flashing in the dawn, gave it the appearance of a graceful bird.

The Silver Comet, it was called, and as it headed toward the northeast, it ascended higher and sped onward, until it became a silver speck in the clear sky.

The crowd broke into little groups; then disbanded. A solemnity had fallen over the people gathered at the flying field.

Two men had left America. They were matching their man-made bird against the mighty pitfalls of the great Atlantic. They were attempting a transoceanic flight.

That afternoon the papers reported that the plane flown by Lieutenant Raymond Branson had been sighted off the Maine coast. Later reports stated that it had been seen near Newfoundland.

All touch with the aviators had been lost. Hours passed with no report of their progress. The flight had

been delayed by head winds; it was certain that the aviators were behind their anticipated schedule.

Some thirty-six hours after the take-off, there was a rumor that the plane had been seen above Ireland.

It was believed that the fliers were keeping on to continental Europe. They had run into night, and it was impossible to trace them.

This report was received by radio, aboard the Steamship Colonia outward bound from New York. It was discussed by a group of men, in the salon.

"Well," said one man, "there's another pair lost in the Atlantic. Take it from me, young fellow, you'll never hear anything of this man Branson, again."

The person to whom the speaker chanced to address his remark was none other than Lieutenant Raymond Branson, in person.

Vic Marquette smiled as he heard the statement. To the world, it was Branson who was flying the Silver Comet. No one even suspected that the actual pilot was The Shadow!

### **CHAPTER XXXIII. ON THE TRAIN DE LUXE**

A MAN came down the corridor of a car on the train de luxe that was moving swiftly toward Berlin. He reached a compartment, and entered. He closed the door, and seated himself with a quiet chuckle.

He glanced at a newspaper, and noted that two Americans were attempting to fly the Atlantic.

"Americans," he muttered in English. "Bah! I have seen enough of Americans and America."

The man noted an account of an explosion in New York City. His eyes lighted as he looked for details; but the report was meager. Even the time was not given. Twenty people were reported killed. A building had collapsed.

The man folded the paper, and leaned back in his seat. He began to doze. The train rolled steadily onward. It had made a stop half an hour before; the next station would be reached in another half hour.

The wind began to sweep against the window, and rain appeared there. The window was totally black; darkness held sway. The train passed through a tunnel; smoke poured by the window.

The man in the compartment had fallen asleep.

The knob of the door began to turn. The door opened slowly. As it swung inward, nothing was revealed except a blackness in the corridor. Then that blackness assumed a human form. A man stepped in and closed the door.

The sleeper stirred, but did not awaken. The man who had entered began a close search of the compartment. He came to the man who dozed.

The sleeper was a man of middle age with aristocratic features. His hair was gray; he wore a close-clipped mustache, apparently of recent growth.

The mysterious visitor leaned over the occupant of the compartment. His black cloak seemed to envelop the sleeper, as it obscured him from view. When the man in black stepped away, his hand held a thin package of folded papers.

He stood there, studying the man before him. The man in black seemed to have no face; it was entirely

hidden by his upturned collar, and by the brim of his dark hat. His form cast a huge, fantastic shadow. The mysterious man laughed softly.

The sound awakened the sleeper. The man of aristocratic appearance was leaning with his head turned to one side.

As he opened his eyes, he saw the shadow on the seat beside him. He looked up quickly. His face paled; his arms dropped helplessly. An expression of complete astonishment came over him.

"The Shadow!" he exclaimed.

The figure in black bowed.

"I am pleased to meet you, Prince Zuvor," he said, in a sinister whisper. "I am surprised to find you here in Germany."

THE seated man bit his lips. He raised himself, as he regained his composure. He watched the figure as it moved backward toward the door.

"The Shadow," said Prince Zuvor musingly. "Strange that I should think of that name. I discussed The Shadow once, with a friend of mine - a gentleman named Cranston. Do you chance to know him—Lamont Cranston?"

There was a suave calmness in the man's voice. Completely recovered from his first surprise, he was endeavoring to cover his mistake.

"Prince Zuvor," said The Shadow, in the same uncanny whisper, "we have met in various places, under different identities.

"Perhaps you believe that you know who I am. I can assure you that you are wrong.

"Perhaps you believe that I did not recognize you the last time we met. If so, you are wrong again. The crimson mask that disguised your face was not sufficient—especially when I tell you that I had previously learned that Prince Zuvor and the Red Envoy were one individual."

The Russian smiled.

"I suspected you each time I met you," said The Shadow tersely. "I was suspicious at the Cobalt Club, when you invited me to come to your house—at my own risk.

"When I did call to see you, your suggestion that I leave by your secret exit was just a bit overdone. So I came again, to take advantage of your suggestion.

"Of course, I was prepared. I had learned of Berchik's death."

The smile faded from Prince Zuvor's countenance. The Shadow spoke as though he was about to reveal new discoveries.

"Strange," whispered The Shadow. "Strange, was it not, that your servant, Fritz Bloch, was never at your house? I suspected why.

"Fritz did not exist. He was a pretense—you—in disguise. Prince Zuvor never stood face to face, with Fritz, until a few nights ago. Then two of us had other personalities.

"I was Prince Zuvor. Ivan Shiskin became Fritz Bloch."



Bewilderment registered itself on the Russian's features. Then his expression became one of silent anger.

"That is how Ivan happened to attend the Red meeting," said The Shadow. "Of course Prokop gave him the bomb. You had arranged the gray card, so that Prokop would not be surprised when Fritz did not appear; but Fritz did appear.

"He used the bomb, too, for which I am very sorry; because he lost his life. The fact that Prokop and all his agents also died does not lessen my grief for Ivan."

Prince Zuvor could not believe his ears. Twenty killed in an explosion! It was not an exaggeration, after all. His eyes turned unconsciously toward the newspaper.

"Ah!" The Shadow's tone expressed approval. "I see that you are interested in my transatlantic flight.

"It was on your account that I made that journey. I had to make up for lost time. Lieutenant Branson will receive credit for it, even though I took his place. I could easily have reached Berlin; but I preferred to complete my trip on this train de luxe."

THE Russian could not restrain the gasp that escaped his lips. He stared at the man before him, and his hopes fell, as he realized the superhuman ability of his opponent.

"Your game was a clever one, Prince Zuvor," said The Shadow. "I do not care whether you played it by choice, or whether it was forced upon you. The result was the same.

"It was pleasant to live in New York, as a representative of the former aristocracy of Russia, and to hold the position of Red Envoy, also. One protected the other.

"You could trap your czarist friends without suspicion. As Fritz Bloch, you reported Prince Zuvor's doings. As the Red Envoy, you could prevent Prokop from molesting Prince Zuvor. And through it all, Ivan was faithful to his master."

The Shadow ceased speaking, and stood silent, his black cloak swaying with the motion of the train. It seemed almost as though he was lost in admiration of Prince Zuvor's cleverness. His next remark carried that thought.

"So now you return to Russia, Prince Zuvor. Very well; return if you wish. But first you will hand over to me the plans which you stole from Professor Whitburn. Where are they?"

Prince Zuvor quietly folded his arms in front of his body. He could feel the pressure of a thick envelope beneath his coat.

"They are in the lining of my traveling bag," he said. "Open it, and take them. You deserve some reward for your efforts."

The Shadow ignored the sarcastic tone. He leaned forward, and carefully opened the bag. His back was partly turned. Prince Zuvor whipped his right hand from beneath his coat, and swung an automatic toward the leaning man.

But The Shadow was alert. He caught the Russian's wrist with a grip of steel. A twist, and the revolver dropped to the floor.

The Shadow removed the papers from the lining of the bag. He examined them, at the same time watching Prince Zuvor. The Russian's face flamed with intense anger and suppressed rage.

"These are Professor Whitburn's plans," said The Shadow. "I appreciate your willingness in delivering them to me.

"I shall leave you now. You are going back to Russia"—his voice became a total whisper—"to Russia—the land where failure means death!"

The door of the compartment swung inward, as The Shadow released it. The black form seemed to melt into the darkness of the dim corridor.

The door was drawn shut; The Shadow was gone. But as he disappeared, a laugh came from his invisible lips—a taunting laugh.

Prince Zuvor snatched the revolver from the floor. He stood in the center of the compartment, watching the door. Then he resumed his seat.

He smiled, as he held the gun in readiness, while he thrust his other hand deep in the lining of his coat, and drew forth a long envelope.

As though to enjoy the triumph which he felt, Prince Zuvor opened the envelope, in which he carried exact duplicates of Professor Whitburn's plans—copies which he had made on the Dresden. Still watching the door, the Russian spread the papers in his lap.

"Fool!" he hissed. "Fool, called The Shadow! You thought because I drew a revolver that I was fighting to keep my only set of plans. You are welcome to those you took. These will serve me every bit as well!"

He looked at the papers in his lap. They were blank!

HE turned them over—both sides were blank. Nervously, the Russian dropped his revolver, and it clattered to the floor. As Zuvor spread the blank sheets, he heard a laugh that came from the other side of the closed door.

The truth dawned on Prince Zuvor. The Shadow had entered without awakening him, and had taken the duplicate plans from his coat, substituting these blank papers instead.

The Red Envoy had been tricked into delivering up the original plans. He had given them with a pretense of reluctance; he had even made a gesture to recover them.

For he had felt the packet in his coat, and had been sure that the duplicates were safe.

By his subtle methods, The Shadow had led Zuvor to reveal the set of plans that were in the traveling bag, and now the Red Envoy held nothing. The man in the compartment groaned.

The details of Professor Whitburn's invention were too complicated to be remembered without the plans themselves, he could not rely upon his memory.

He had stolen the plans; he had brought them with him. He had reached Germany, where he was beyond the reach of the agents of the United States government.

But he had not escaped The Shadow—that man who could span an ocean when he set out in pursuit.

The Russian leaped to the door of the compartment. He unlocked the door, and stared up and down the corridor. There was no sign of the man who had emitted that uncanny laugh. Yet the sound of the taunting merriment still echoed through Prince Zuvor's maddened brain.

He closed the door, and slumped into his seat.

"To Russia—the land where failure means death!"

The Shadow's words were true. Even the Red Envoy must report to one higher up, exactly as the agents had reported to Prokop, and Prokop to the Red Envoy.

The situation was terrifying to Prince Zuvor. As a renegade royalist, he had worked long to obtain his position of immunity. In order to maintain his security against enemies, he had promised to bring the plans of Professor Whitburn's invention, that his superiors might make use of it before it had reached the American government.

The train was slowing as it neared a station. Prince Zuvor did not notice the slackening speed. He sat motionless, dazed and staring. He knew that he had failed; he realized that no excuse would be accepted.

When the train de luxe reached Berlin, a startling discovery was made.

The body of a man—a Russian—was found in a compartment. The dead man was identified as Prince Zuvor, a member of the old regime.

His death was pronounced suicide. He had swallowed poison. The bottle which had contained the death-dealing fluid was lying on the seat beside the body.

## **CHAPTER XXXIV. THE DEPARTURE**

THE successful nonstop flight of the Silver Comet was a front-page sensation in the American newspapers. The fact that the Transatlantic plane had been given up as lost added to the interest of the story.

Furthermore, Lieutenant Raymond Branson had disappeared after his successful landing in Germany, and his whereabouts had been unknown for several days.

Berlin had been the pilot's objective. He had confided that fact to his companion in the plane, early in the flight.

Everything had gone well until they had reached Germany; then, for some unknown reason, Branson had been forced to make a landing. He had brought the ship to earth not far from a large town, and had immediately left the plane.

When his weary companion had climbed from the ship, Branson was nowhere around.

The man who had accompanied Branson had been completely bewildered by the disappearance of his chief. He was unable to speak German. It had been some hours before he had been able to convince people that this was a plane from America, and that the pilot had vanished.

Branson's picture had been printed on the front pages of thousands of newspapers. Then, while wild theories were being advanced to account for his absence, the missing man revealed himself in Berlin.

The strain of the flight had told on him, he said. His failure to reach Berlin had made him frantic. He had hastened from the plane, and had gone to the town near which he had landed.

From there he had taken a train to Berlin. He had gone to a hotel, and had slept intermittently for three days and nights.

Then he had realized that his disappearance might have caused consternation. In this he was entirely correct. It had.

WHILE Raymond Branson was being idolized in Berlin, two men were traveling to America on an ocean liner. They were inconspicuous passengers on the boat, and they saw each other only occasionally during the voyage.

One of these men was a wealthy New Yorker named Lamont Cranston. The other was registered on the passenger list as Victor Marquette.

Although these men appeared to be merely acquaintances, they had held a very short though important conference in Marquette's stateroom, the night the boat had left Cherbourg.

During the course of that brief meeting, Lamont Cranston had delivered two envelopes into the hands of Vic Marquette.

The same day that the liner reached New York, Harry Vincent came downstairs from his room on the second floor of Professor Whitburn's house. He walked outdoors rather unsteadily, and reached a steamer chair that had been prepared for him. There he sat looking at the lake.

Death Island was a beautiful place to-day. The aspect of gloom had left it.

Some one approached. Harry turned and saw Arlette. The girl seated herself beside him.

"Arlette," said Harry, "you promised to tell me your story -"

The girl nodded.

"My father was an American," she said. "He died in Russia. My mother, who was a Russian, brought me to New York to escape the revolution. Her health weakened and she went to California. I remained in New York, sending her most of the money that I earned.

"I met one of the Red agents. He promised me better work. It was not until I had accepted his offer that I realized how insidious it was. I could not turn back; but, to protect myself, I tried to learn the identities of the other agents.

"Volovick was one. I used to go to the Pink Rat to report. One night I saw the proprietor open the secret panel. The night you were in danger, I led you there. I came back later, but you were gone. I had been instructed to watch Bruce Duncan, to whom I had been introduced on the boat. I purposely neglected my duty to let him leave New York unfollowed.

"I followed a Red Agent who called himself Ernest Manion. He watched you at the Metrolite Hotel. I overheard him repeating instructions on the telephone. I warned you. When I knew the attack was to begin, I came here."

Professor Whitburn appeared. He held a telegram.

"Crawford will be here to-night," he said. "I mean Marquette not Crawford. He is bringing my plans. My invention is saved for the United States government!"

Harry gave his congratulations. When he turned to speak to Arlette, the girl was gone.

Bruce Duncan appeared an hour later. He handed Harry an envelope.

"I met Arlette DeLand in the village," he explained. "She asked me to give you this."

Harry opened the envelope and found a note.

I love you, Harry, and I know that you love me. You are willing to forget my past; but I cannot forget. It would not be fair of me to accept your love, now. I must wait—wait until you are sure that I am worthy of your love. So I am leaving. I am going out West. I shall begin a new life. If I can forget the past, I shall return. You will hear from me, Harry, when I feel that I have the right to accept your love.

ARLETTE.

Harry's eyes were fixed on the single word that formed the signature.

"Arlette!" He repeated the name again, and again.

But while Arlette was forgetting, Harry must remember. His love for Arlette could rightfully remain; but he owed loyalty to the man in whose cause he had worked.

"I shall remember," said Harry, in whispered tones. "I shall be loyal. Loyal to The Shadow!"

THE END