



# SHIWAN KHAN RETURNS

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- ? [CHAPTER I. WORD TO THE SHADOW](#)
- ? [CHAPTER II. SEVEN O'CLOCK](#)
- ? [CHAPTER III. KHYBER KILLERS](#)
- ? [CHAPTER IV. MEN OF THE DARK](#)
- ? [CHAPTER V. THE MAN FROM PERSIA](#)
- ? [CHAPTER VI. BAIT FOR THE SHADOW](#)
- ? [CHAPTER VII. FRIENDS OF SHIWAN KHAN](#)
- ? [CHAPTER VIII. DEATH BY DESIGN](#)
- ? [CHAPTER IX. MOVES IN THE DARK](#)
- ? [CHAPTER X. THE SCARED MAN](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XI. A TRAGEDY OF ERRORS](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XII. THE VANISHED TRAIL](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XIII. STRANGE SNARES](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XIV. THE MISSING SHADOW](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XV. INTO THE PAST](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XVI. PATHS UNSHADOWED](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XVII. SCHEME OF DEATH](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XVIII. DEATH ON THE LOOSE](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XIX. MARQUETTE'S MISSION](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XX. CRIME'S GREAT STROKE](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XXI. BLOCKED VICTORY](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XXII. CRIME'S FLIGHT](#)

## CHAPTER I. WORD TO THE SHADOW

THE thing that stood in the center of the old garage looked like a crazed man's dream. It was intended to be an automobile, that much was certain; but it looked like a flashback to the experimental days of motor cars, rather than anything that belonged to the present century.

In the center of a short, broad-beamed chassis, the mechanical brainstorm had a squatty V-type motor hung low in a metal square. From each corner of the motor, a shaft ran to a wheel. In their turn, the wheels were pointed at different angles, giving the whole contrivance a wobbly, disjointed appearance.

Beside the distorted device stood a man whose expression marked him as mad as his creation. He was dressed in good clothes, but they were rumpled, soiled with grime and grease. His face, though youthful, had a haggard look that went with age. He was unshaven and his face, like his light-brown hair, was streaked with the same grime that ruined his clothes.

Few of the man's many acquaintances would have recognized him as Howard Felber, recently heralded as the most promising of young automotive engineers.

Near Felber stood two men in overalls: his mechanics, Casey and Jim. They, alone, had been allowed to join Felber in this squalid old garage. Located in a rundown section of Manhattan, the place was the only workshop that Felber could afford. He had exhausted most of his accumulated earnings buying the expensive materials that now lay discarded along the walls.

Felber trusted his two mechanics, and from their solemn expressions, they regarded the trust as a heavy burden. It wasn't just a case of sharing the secret of a new invention. Jim and Casey felt that they were looking out for Felber, keeping his madness a thing unknown to the world.

Watching him steadily, they finally turned to exchange hopeful glances. Felber looked tired, ready to quit. Perhaps his mood had passed.

Then came an outside roar: the approaching rattle of an elevated train. It rumbled overhead, above the street that fronted the garage. Felber's sudden triumphant shriek was drowned by the train's tumult, but his actions told that his mind had taken another of its crazy spurts.

Frantically, he set to work with a huge monkey wrench, detaching one of the shafts that ran from the motor to a wheel. Once the rod was loose, it slid into three sections. It consisted of a solid shaft inside a hollow tube, with a still larger tube girdling the inner portions.

Felber spent the next few minutes rearranging those tubes, turning them end over end. He was trying unsuccessfully to fit them back in place, when a light rap sounded at the small rear door of the garage.

"It's Miss Cragg," whispered Casey. "She must have come down on the el train."

"Better let her in," undertoned Jim. "She's the only person who can reason with him."

CASEY opened the door. A slender, dark-haired girl stepped into the garage. Gowned in light blue, she brightened the dull setting, though her face turned solemn the moment that she noticed Felber.

It was a lovely face, though, well-rounded and perfect of profile. Forcing a smile, the girl managed to make it look genuine as she approached Felber and in a beautiful contralto voice said:

"Hello, Howard."

"Hello, Marjorie," returned Felber, seriously. "I'm coming along finely with my four-wheel drive. See those shafts along the wall? The ones of different lengths?"

Marjorie nodded.

"I made them work," affirmed Felber. "But not as well as I wanted. I'm testing shorter ones on the motor. Three shafts for each wheel" - he was sliding rod and tubes as he spoke - "and each shaft handles a different speed. A new idea in gears. This car will do anything, when I've finished with it!"

Another el train came crashing by, out front. Felber clapped his hand to his forehead; his blue eyes took a half-crazed gleam. Darting from the chassis, he reached the wall and began to tinker with the rods of assorted lengths.

Joining Jim and Casey, Marjorie requested their opinions. Both shook their heads.

"It's those el trains," argued Casey. "Every now and then one bangs by and jars him from his senses."

"We can't help it, Miss Cragg," added Jim. "We tried to get Mr. Felber settled in a quiet place, but he wouldn't stand for it."

"He just ranted around," added Casey. "He kept telling what his new car would do if he could get the right man to test it. He kept saying it would go anywhere, if he could get back here to finish it."

Slowly, Marjorie nodded. She was familiar with Felber's obsession. Knowing his genius for invention, she was in a quandary. Jim and Casey, earnest though they were, might be lacking in the imagination necessary to understand Felber's final goal.

From her purse, the girl drew a letter; she opened it, let the mechanics read it. Careful not to touch the letter with their grimy fingers, the men noted its brief lines. The letter was addressed to a Mr. Lamont Cranston; it was simply a request, on Marjorie's part, for an interview on a subject that might prove of importance to him.

"Mr. Cranston is wealthy," explained the girl, "and he is an explorer. If anyone needs a type of vehicle that would travel anywhere, he is the person. Would it be all right for me to send him this letter?"

For answer, Jim thrust a clean glove on his dirty hand, took the envelope after the girl had replaced the note in it. Jim gave a solemn nod to Casey.

"I'll mail it," said Jim, starting for the door. "I'm going uptown to get those special tires, though I can't figure why Mr. Felber needs them. You talk to Miss Cragg awhile, Casey."

Casey did talk, after Jim had left. He used a guarded undertone, so that Felber couldn't hear him, though the precaution was scarcely necessary. Felber was rattling rods and other gadgets at a great rate, muttering, sometimes loudly, as he passed back and forth from his invention to the wall.

Only when an elevated train went by did he pause. On those occasions, he stood with wide eyes fixed in a far-away gaze, as though the discordant rumbles were music to his whirling brain.

"All those parts cost like blazes," confided Casey, solemnly. "They're made of some alloy that's lighter than aluminum and tougher than steel, so Mr. Felber says. I wouldn't have believed him, if I hadn't hefted those rods myself and watched the way he whacks them."

Mentally, Marjorie decided that the information would be a sales argument with Cranston. Her mechanical knowledge was very meager, but she could at least declare that Felber used costly materials.

"Maybe the thing's too deep for me," admitted Casey, "but I'd say that if Mr. Felber got over this three-shaft idea of his, he might get somewhere. He hasn't figured yet how he's going to steer the car or brake it. But you can't argue with him."

"Do you think he'd welcome a visit from Mr. Cranston?"

"If you brought Mr. Cranston here - yes," decided Casey, after considering Marjorie's question. "Mr. Felber trusts you, just like he trusts Jim and me."

GLANCING at her wrist watch, Marjorie decided that it was time to leave. She broached another subject to Casey, speaking very firmly.

"I'm going to talk to Dr. Buffton," said Marjorie, as they were walking to the door. "I've mentioned Howard's case to him and he is quite willing to help us. Howard's mental condition may be the whole trouble, you know."

Casey nodded his agreement.

"Mr. Cranston should receive my note this afternoon," added the girl, "so I can hope to hear from him this

evening. I'm all booked for a cruise; I am supposed to go on the boat this evening. But if anything can be done for Howard, I shall cancel the trip."

Outside the garage, Marjorie saw a dingy cigar store across the little street. Pausing, she looked inside the place and observed a telephone. After a quick glance about her, the girl entered the store. Marjorie had gained the momentary impression that eyes were watching her.

They were. Dark eyes that belonged to darkish faces. Two men, crouched in a parked coupe, had noticed the girl leave the garage. They held muttered conversation in a foreign dialect. One slid from the car and entered the cigar store.

In peculiar broken English, the darkish man was asking for cigarettes at the counter when Marjorie made her call at the open phone. He understood English better than he could speak it, for the fellow's saffron lips showed a smile beneath his smudge-black mustache, as he listened.

"Dr. Buffton is not there?" Marjorie was saying. "Yes, this is Miss Cragg... Not until seven o'clock, you say... Very well, I shall expect a call from him then... Yes, at my apartment..."

The darkish man was back in the car when Marjorie came out to the street. He and his companion were exchanging guttural mutters, as they watched the girl walk toward the elevated station. The glitter of their ugly eyes, the fangish expressions of their leering mouths, were those that hunters might give when sighting a choice and helpless prey.

Savages both, despite their ability to travel freely in New York, the villainous pair were confident that they could wait for an easier opportunity to pluck Marjorie Cragg from circulation. Their calculations told that they had until seven o'clock that evening, at which time darkness would favor them.

The men waited, motionless, in their car, until they heard the heavy roar of an elevated train. Their faces firmed, their eyes glistened like fireballs, bulging in a sightless stare.

When the clatter had faded, the two strange men relaxed. The one at the wheel started the car, while the other gazed curiously from the window, much interested in observing the peculiar customs of Manhattan dwellers that they passed.

With all their vigilance, the spies had failed to notice the letter that Jim carried when he left the old garage. Coming out through the door, the mechanic had thrust the small envelope into one pocket, his glove in the other. Marjorie's letter, slight though the facts it gave, was on the way to Mr. Lamont Cranston.

A girl in danger, as Marjorie Cragg definitely was, could have chosen no better person with whom to correspond. Though noted for his remarkable experiences in many foreign lands, Cranston had a habit of finding still greater adventures in New York. Any shred of mystery or intrigue became his cue for action.

On those occasions, Lamont Cranston frequently disappeared. In his place, there roved a singular being known as The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER II. SEVEN O'CLOCK**

MARJORIE CRAGG was punctual, when it came to keeping appointments. She had to be; otherwise, her profession would have suffered. Marjorie wasn't really famous as a vocalist, but she had made some fairly profitable concert tours through the Middle West.

Certain persons had enthused quite highly, regarding the merits of Marjorie's contralto voice. One was Howard Felber, but Marjorie had long ago decided that his opinions were not based on her voice alone.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have traveled many miles to see her, on nights when he couldn't arrive until the concert was over.

Howard Felber was ambitious, and so was Marjorie Cragg. Perhaps that was why they had never really talked of love. Each recognized that the other had a career ahead; that not until success had been individually attained would they talk of sharing it together.

Pure coincidence had brought them to New York. Howard had come to discuss the commercial possibilities of new automotive developments, while Marjorie had been attracted by a short-term radio contract.

Once in New York, they had stayed on - Howard, to work on a new invention; Marjorie, to accept a singing engagement on a cruise ship. Then Marjorie had learned of Howard's strange mental turn.

How it began, and why, she did not know; but it perturbed her. She hoped that his brain, and his invention, both, would prove sound; that Buffton, the physician, would certify one, and Cranston, the financier, would approve the other.

She was willing, in the emergency, to sacrifice her future for Howard. All day, she went about her shopping, pretending that she was going to take the cruise; but she made it a point to dine early, and reach her little apartment ahead of seven o'clock.

She knew she would hear from Buffton, perhaps from Cranston. If either insisted that she remain in town to further Howard's welfare, the cruise ship could leave without her.

The apartment looked quite pathetic when Marjorie reached it. Her luggage formed an unsightly stack, featured by the huge but almost empty trunk that was to hold the many costumes which were being sent to the boat.

With an entertainment scheduled for nearly every night of the three-week cruise, Marjorie had decided to vary her performances. With the aid of costumes. In fact, she was being advertised as the "International Songstress," and there would probably be considerable speculation regarding her actual nationality.

Around the trunk lay suitcases; one was open for last-minute packing. Though she was tense with worry about Howard, Marjorie decided to pack the articles that she had brought back from her shopping tour. She was piling bundles on the trunk, studying the suitcase to see if all would fit in it, when she gave a sudden gasp.

The aeolian harp was gone!

Of all articles that Marjorie prized, the aeolian harp rated first. She had obtained it literally for a song. Someone who liked her radio singing had sent it to the studio, as a token of appreciation. The harp was a ten-stringed instrument, shaped like a long, shallow box; but no skill was required to play it.

That was, no skill except nature's own. When the harp was placed in a breeze, the air currents themselves would play it, sometimes producing most remarkable harmonies.

HER hand pressed to her forehead, Marjorie tried to think clearly. Her head was aching from worry over Howard; she wondered if she could have put the wind harp in the trunk or in another suitcase.

Not wanting to unlock and open all the luggage, she was hoping for some clue to the missing instrument when the harp itself supplied one.

Vaguely at first, then with gusts of sweeping melody, the tunes of the rare instrument reached Marjorie's

ears.

She turned to the window, gave a happy sigh. The aeolian harp was on the window sill, where she must have left it. The window, too, was open, though she thought that she had closed it when she left the apartment before noon. Outside, a night breeze was stirring, its fitful impulse gaining a steady strength.

The spirit of the breeze was registered by the harp. The twang of the strings came louder. They faded into a fairylike pianissimo, to which Marjorie's fancy could add the tinkle of sylvan bells. Then, to the accompaniment of a powerful gust, the harp produced an imposing forte that strengthened the girl's fiber.

From the window, Marjorie saw the lights of Manhattan - a myriad array of forceful glow that seemed in keeping with the harp's proud melody. Then they were gnome lights dancing in the distance, as the easing breeze swept lighter music.

Eyes half closed, Marjorie caught the dreamy lilt of vague and distant song. It faded; she listened, intent, hoping it would return.

Then came the voice.

It was a voice that spoke, each word tuned to a twang of a harp string. A tone that was at moments kind; at, others, commanding. It spoke her name, ordering her to listen; then its gentle words soothed her, much like the cooling breeze.

The voice spoke thought-words.

They were in no language, yet she understood them. The voice was telling her to wait, to let her problems rest. Should other things distract her, she was to pause and contemplate. The voice would answer.

Into that lovely mental harmony came a discord: the ringing of the telephone bell. It grated on Marjorie; she drew her body taut and clenched her fists. She wanted to hear the voice again. It came. Striking a mighty beat from the harp, it said:

"Answer!"

Marjorie found the telephone, lifted the receiver and gave a detached hello. Over the wire came a precise tone that she recognized as belonging to Dr. Buffton. He was asking about Howard Felber. He had to repeat the question, for Marjorie didn't answer.

Letting her lips relax, Marjorie waited for the mental voice to tell her what to do. Almost before she realized, she was speaking into the telephone.

"Howard Felber?" Marjorie gave a musical laugh, that she caught from the rippling harp strings. "He's quite all right, doctor. I called you to tell you so."

Came more questions, that Marjorie heard but did not weigh. Some other mind had taken command of hers. Its vibrant music gave her words to say - words that she echoed in a tone not quite her own.

"I'm leaving tonight on the cruise ship," said Marjorie. "We can see Howard together, when I return. Thank you so much, doctor, for offering to help."

There were other words, that Marjorie answered; then the click of a receiver that she did not hear. Her hand drifted downward to place her own receiver on the hook. The telephone was like a weightless plume as she rested it lightly on the table.

From the harp came a happy melody of triumph, which Marjorie felt she shared. The music seemed to inspire the breeze, rather than be governed by it. Under the fascination of complete hypnosis, Marjorie waited dreamily for the next command.

The telephone bell began to ring again. The girl did not even notice it. A lighter sound, however, attracted her full attention. It was a slow, repeated rap at the door. Automatically, Marjorie spoke the word:

"Come!"

The door opened in a drifting fashion. On the threshold stood a tall, darkish man, who bowed.

"We are ready, Miss Cragg," he announced in choppy tone. "The cab is waiting downstairs, to take you to the ship."

THOUGHTS of the luggage did not bother Marjorie. Her only reluctance was that of leaving the music behind her.

Curiously, the harp faded of its own accord. Trying to catch some haunting recollection of the melody, Marjorie walked mechanically from the room and toward the stairway.

She passed other men that she did not notice. They waited, while the one who had entered leaned above the aeolian harp in the window. The strings were twanging jerkily, its tones as jarring as the telephone bell, which kept up its persistent ringing. The dark man at the window spoke, in English:

"It is I - Suji. I have word, Kha Khan."

His gleamy eyes fixed in a rigid stare, as if his brain were ejecting full news of Marjorie's departure and the unanswered telephone call. Then the dark face lighted, as if receiving answer. Curling lips announced:

"It shall be done, Kha Khan!"

To his darkish fellows, Suji gave orders in a guttural tongue. They finished packing the baggage, adding the aeolian harp. To the accompaniment of the telephone bell's jangle, they cleared the room of luggage in a single trip.

Only Suji waited; his lips formed a satisfied sneer as the ringing ceased. Extinguishing the lights, he departed.

In a cab that she had found awaiting her, Marjorie had begun a trip that seemed to carry her through circular paths of light and darkness. She had no way to judge the time it took, for she was solely concerned with humming the last bars of a strange melody that she did not want to lose.

She lost count of the times she hummed it. Still singing softly to herself, the girl alighted when the cab stopped. A dark-faced driver guided her into an obscure doorway, which, to Marjorie, in her present mental state, might have represented anything, even the gangway of an ocean liner.

Next, she was on an elevator, trying to fit its constant thrum-thrum to the haunting tune that she hoped never to lose. Exiting from the elevator, she followed a corridor, lured by the tone of the harp itself!

Ahead was an open doorway, a maid waiting beside it, but Marjorie did not notice her. Entering, Marjorie merely realized that the door had closed behind her and that she was alone.

The harp was on the window sill; the sash was slightly raised, to admit the wafting breeze that strummed the strings. All about was Marjorie's baggage, carefully arranged. Some of her things had been

unpacked; the bed was turned down, and her pajamas were lying on a chair, along with slippers and dressing gown.

Marjorie decided that she had been assigned to a very lovely stateroom.

Her voice vibrating softly to the lilt of the aeolian harp, she undressed. She didn't notice her wrist watch as she removed it. Much had happened in a very short space of time. Dr. Buffton had phoned the apartment at seven o'clock, and the watch, still running, registered only quarter past that hour!

Nor did Marjorie realize that she was retiring at a surprisingly early time. She was intrigued by the way her clothes seemed to float away as she touched them, until they were all gone. She drifted into the pajamas, then found herself in bed. Her hand found the lamp above her head, extinguished it with a lazy touch.

With the lulling notes of the harp, Marjorie heard the deep moan of a steamship whistle. It was distant, but her impressions of space were as vague as those of time.

Totally unaware of the fantastic experience that had overtaken her, Marjorie sank into a deep, comfortable sleep, undisturbed by any dreams that might have furnished an inkling of her plight.

### **CHAPTER III. KHYBER KILLERS**

RIDING in the rear seat of his luxurious limousine, Lamont Cranston again studied the letter that he had received from Marjorie Cragg. The passing lights of the avenue showed Cranston's features to be masklike, but of a singularly hawkish mold.

His eyes were suited to his profile. Sharp orbs of burning power, they scanned each line of the letter, as if ferreting out some hidden meaning from the penmanship alone.

The letter was unusual. In stating little, it said much. A simple request for an interview, from a young lady named Marjorie Cragg, was slight in itself; but the reference to a "matter that might prove of importance" meant much when written by the girl in question.

Though Cranston had never met Marjorie, he recognized that the matter which she mentioned could be vitally important to some third person, whose name was not stated. Unwittingly, Marjorie Cragg had written her own personality into the letter.

The rounded curves of the writing, with wide margins at the ends of the lines, were clues to an artistic temperament. Slight separations in the midst of words were signs of intuition, produced by lifting pauses of the hand. There was sincerity in the vertical formation of the letters. Whatever favor that writer might request, it would not be for herself.

More than that, if some risk should be involved, Marjorie would be willing to share it. Whether or not the risk already existed was a fact unrevealed, but there was a circumstance that made it seem most likely.

The letter had been addressed to the Cobalt Club; arriving there at seven, Cranston had received it and had promptly called Marjorie's telephone number.

The line had given a busy signal; when it cleared, Cranston's call had remained unanswered. Obviously, some sudden occurrence had been responsible. After a second attempted call had failed, Cranston had promptly left the club and ordered his chauffeur to take him to Marjorie's address.

As the big car swung from the avenue, Cranston reached beneath the rear seat, drew out a hidden drawer that was fitted under it. From the drawer he brought a black cloak, a slouch hat, and a pair of



.45-caliber automatics.

He was attired in the black garb, his guns were beneath his cloak, when he reached for the speaking tube and spoke in calm, leisurely tone:

"This will do, Stanley. Wait here five minutes, then return to the club."

Those words were the final token of Cranston. The figure that glided from the limousine was not the dinner-jacketed form of the jaunty clubman. It was a blot of blackness - a strange, sinister shape that had the ability to blend with gloom.

Lamont Cranston had become The Shadow!

THE apartment house where Marjorie Cragg lived was in a secluded neighborhood, about two blocks from where the limousine had stopped. The path that The Shadow followed to reach his destination was untraceable.

Avoiding the front entrance, he entered a rear courtyard, scaled to a hallway window on the high first floor. Finding the stairway gloomy, he ascended it.

Marjorie's apartment was number 3C. Past the doorway, merged with blackness at the end of the hall, The Shadow stretched a gloved hand to the knob, found the door latched. His next move was to produce a small tool shaped like a gimlet. Its shaft no thicker than a needle, The Shadow bored the point straight through the old woodwork, slanting pressure against the latch.

The door slid open from the jogging pressure of a black-cloaked elbow. After a dozen seconds of absolute silence, The Shadow entered, closing the door behind him. He used a flashlight guardedly, keeping its beam shrouded in the folds of his cloak.

Brief inspection showed the tiny apartment to be furnished, but untenanted. The only sign of recent occupancy was the open window. Above a roof on the opposite side of the courtyard - the roof was on a level with this window - The Shadow could see a considerable portion of Manhattan's skyline.

Superficially, the situation could represent either a hoax or a trap. More careful consideration indicated that it was neither. Marjorie's letter was neither a jest nor a lure; not with the sober, troubled indications that The Shadow had observed in it. If someone else had taken a hand in the matter, it was too trivial to be a hoax. As for a trap -

The Shadow interrupted a rapid chain of thought. He had just about decided on the verdict that a trap, to be worthy of the name, would have some features to occupy his full attention. This apartment lacked any such; yet it was a trap. The Shadow had seen the proof of it.

A thin slice of light had disappeared. It was the dim streak of glow that showed beneath the doorway from the hall. Blocked partly by a rug, the disappearance of that faint token would not have been noticed by anyone standing in the apartment. It happened that The Shadow, in making his rounds, was keeping to a crouched position below the window level.

The question was: how had The Shadow's entry been detected? No one had seen him enter the building; there had been no lurkers in the hallway when he opened the apartment door. Chances favored the supposition that the arrivals did not know their prey had arrived. They might be coming here to put the place up to the standard of a proper trap.

Before The Shadow could carry the question further, the door was opened. The Shadow sensed the fact from the slight breeze that stirred in from the window, only to cease as promptly as it had begun.

Whoever these entrants, they had closed the door behind them, and they were experts in ways of stealth.

Two of them. The Shadow sensed that, also, as he worked toward the door. Their breathing was barely audible, yet more pronounced than The Shadow's. He was shoulder to shoulder - first with one, then with the other.

Crouched low, they were working inward from the door, yet taking turns at crossing the path to that outlet. They acted as if they expected to find someone. The Shadow decided to let them.

With a quick sweep, he drove toward the man on his right, expecting to floor him, then whirl on the other. The Shadow shot one hand for an invisible throat; in the other fist, he clenched an automatic, prepared to use it as a cudgel. The swiftness of his surge took his opponent almost off guard; not quite.

The result was a real surprise.

Instead of striking a rising human form, The Shadow struck a thing that whirled. Hands sliced in past his own; The Shadow's gun stroke overreached. Hoisting shoulders came up in corkscrew fashion, aided by a twisting, butting head.

Lifted from his feet, The Shadow was hurled into a sideward fling as if recoiled from a cannon!

IN the midst of that half sprawl, he recognized the mode of battle; one that belonged to a clime far different from Manhattan. Coming to one hand and knee, The Shadow made a quick spin of his own to meet the second foe, in whose direction he had been tossed.

The clash came instantly; this time, it was equalized. As The Shadow's whirling figure met that of a revolving opponent, they locked like two jamming cogwheels out of gear. Lashing arms hooked tight, but The Shadow's spin was the one that carried the greater power.

Twisting his foeman with him, The Shadow drove straight for the man who had supplied the first fling. Fresh arms grappled; all three were in the struggle.

The Shadow recognized the breed of his enemies. They were Afghans, killers of the sort that stalked the Khyber Pass. They used these twisty tactics not only for attack, but as a means of wriggling free when outnumbered. Holding the odds, they weren't thinking of getting loose. They were working hands free merely to draw their favorite weapons: knives.

They were depending too much on their own game. It didn't work for them. It took two arms to hold The Shadow's one. His free fist was slashing with its heavy gun, making the Afghans duck, striking down the hands that tried to haul out long-bladed knives.

They were snarling in their native language, Pukhtu, and The Shadow understood the jargon. The pair wanted to get their troublesome foe over by the window.

Apparently, they were afraid of knifing each other by mistake. Their butting tactics, too, would serve them better if they could ever combine beside the window, for in that case The Shadow would go out across the sill.

Each was calling the other by name: one was Suji; his pal was Kuli. In the midst of the whirl, The Shadow soon lost track of which was which.

He was letting them swing him toward the window. He knew that when they reached it, they would think to trap him unawares. A swing, half across the ledge, would give The Shadow a backhand sweep at their

heads. It would be tough for either Afghan who tried to hoist his shoulders or draw a knife. In either case, the fellow would have to straighten, which was what The Shadow wanted.

The whirl reached the window; The Shadow feinted with a tricky lunge. Again, the Afghans did the unexpected. Kuli used both hands to hang onto the one cloaked arm that they already had. Suji made a high, sweeping grab for The Shadow's gun wrist and caught it. They were hauling him back, trying to pin his arms behind him, keeping his cloaked form directly toward the window.

As they made that effort, the pair raised an outcry, far louder than their former babble. Together, they shouted a name:

"Ahmed!"

Faced toward the window, The Shadow saw a figure rise from the low parapet of the opposite roof. It was the tall, lithe figure of an Afghan warrior, lifting himself from ambush as coolly as if he had sprung from a mountain rock on his native soil. It was the way such Afghans rose when they felt that their prey was sure.

Usually, their targets were visible. In this case, Ahmed was simply picking the blackened square of a window, confident that Suji and Kuli would perform their part.

Ahmed's lifting hand raised high above his head, drew back, clutching the most formidable of Afghan weapons, a war spear.

His limber figure poised, then slung forward. From his fist, with all the power that could score a bull's-eye shot at fifty yards or more, Ahmed launched the mighty shaft straight for the square black target that held a waiting victim, The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER IV. MEN OF THE DARK**

DESPITE the power of his arm and the accuracy of his aim, Ahmed the Afghan had overlooked one factor regarding an invisible mark. He had forgotten the time element, or perhaps he had never known that such a thing existed.

In aiming spears from mountain passes, at men or beasts that he could see, Ahmed, like all others of his ilk, instinctively sped their aim, or deviated it, according to the chance movement of the prey.

This was the first time that Ahmed had ever depended upon a blind hurl. In pausing for a straight, hard thrust at short range, he had left too much to Suji and Kuli.

The Shadow had seen Ahmed, the instant that the spearman rose. He, too, had gone on the move, in a fashion that neither of his grapplers expected. Braced between their forward-shoving arms, The Shadow had flung his feet ahead of him, against the window sill. Timed to the lift of Ahmed's spear, The Shadow supplied a mighty recoil.

Three figures were slashing backward in the dark, as Ahmed made his poise. Wildly, Suji and Kuli were trying to keep The Shadow in the spear path as the shaft whizzed toward the window. They were slashing with their knives, to force The Shadow to his feet, a thing in which they succeeded; but they couldn't stop his whirl.

Whipping at an inward angle, The Shadow struck the inner wall of the room just as the spear arrived there.

It skimmed him as it struck; then, burrowing like a mighty arrow, the weapon finished deep in the wall,

quivering its full length.

Hearing the challenge of a sinister laugh, the closer Afghans knew the thrust had failed. They dived for obscure corners of the room, to be away from the threat of The Shadow's gun. Their scramble was unnecessary; the automatic wasn't pointed their way.

Dropping his arm along the spear that ran beneath it, The Shadow aimed his .45 along the rooted shaft. The weight of the automatic brought the wooden brace to level as he fired. This time, the targets were reversed, as were the conditions. The Shadow was picking Ahmed, a target that he could see.

Half over the edge of the opposite parapet, Ahmed jerked upright with the spurt of The Shadow's gun. The impact of the bullet jarred him as it struck his chest; then, his balance thrusting forward, Ahmed toppled from the brink. His throat voiced a shrill, meaningless shriek as he made that nonstop journey to the cement courtyard.

In dropping Ahmed, The Shadow settled the riddle of the trap. Ahmed had served as watchman, prior to taking over a murderer's task. He had seen a slight light from the doorway, when The Shadow had entered the apartment. By a signal to Suji and Kuli, lurking somewhere below, Ahmed had brought up the two who were to bring The Shadow into his range of power.

WITH Ahmed gone, the others were thinking only of escape. They hurled their knives wildly as they flung themselves for the door, thinking to balk The Shadow's aim.

Shots blasted after them, but did not score. They had dead Ahmed to thank for that luck. His spear had done them one favor.

Skimming The Shadow's ribs, the pointed shaft had bundled the black-clad fighter's coat along with his cloak, actually pinning him to the wall. The Shadow's side had received a painful gouge, but that was a minor problem. With garments skewered to the wall, he had managed his straight aim at Ahmed; but twists to reach the others were impossible.

The Shadow's shots were meant to spur their flight, no more. As the slamming door told of the double exit, The Shadow set to work to free himself.

Grabbing the spear, he tried to loosen it, but failed for lack of leverage. Trying opposite tactics, he kept his grip and made a powerful sideward twist, that brought him free at the sacrifice of coat and cloak.

Ripped from sleeve to hem, the cloak gave the effect of a wide-spreading V, as it caught the breeze when The Shadow yanked open the door to start below. The hallway was dark, as the Afghans had left it, and there was no sign of the two fugitives.

Sidling rapidly across to the stairway, The Shadow took up a position there. He knew the tricky ways of these Khyber killers. Having identified them for what they were, he used the proper tactics to offset them.

On the chance that they had dodged into hiding places on the third floor, he waited, keeping his gun moving in a slow, sweeping arc. Then, when no sounds stirred the hallway, The Shadow began a slow descent by the stairs.

Stealth masked his departure. So did blackness, until he reached the second floor. From there downward, it was a case of watching all doorways and other hiding spots. On journeys to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, The Shadow had often watched wary natives dodge from sight, vanishing into spots that seemed no larger than big rabbit holes.

If either Suji or Kuli tried such methods hereabouts, they would be due for trouble when The Shadow neared them. His probing gaze picked out every cranny along the second floor.

Starting down the final flight of stairs, The Shadow was prepared to repeat his stalking process, when a clatter from the front street told him of a new development.

Reaching the first floor, The Shadow sighted men in uniform hammering at the front door. Someone in an apartment pushed a buzzer to admit them.

The noise of The Shadow's gunfire had alarmed the tenants. They had summoned the police.

One officer must have caught a glimpse of The Shadow whisking to the window at the rear of the hallway, for a shout came from the front door. Vaulting through the open window, The Shadow landed lightly in the courtyard, just as bullets began to whiz through the space above.

Knowing that the bark of the police guns would rouse any lurkers, The Shadow came to a crouch and began a rapid spin. The move was opportune. In from darkened spots about the gloomy court came a surge of whirling attackers: reserve Afghans, who had crept into this vantage spot, to remain while others went upstairs.

THE SHADOW'S free hand was plucking wrists that swung through the air, warding away the strokes of slashing knives. His gun was spouting return thrusts more dangerous than the slashes that the Afghans attempted.

Twisty as ever, the darkish men scattered. Their own rapid thrusts had failed, but they were quick enough to scoot away amid the first blind shots that The Shadow fired.

The cloaked fighter had revolved across the courtyard. Back to the farther wall, he drew his second gun and made three fan-spread jabs in the darkness, to spur the flight of his routed opponents. With the echo of the last shot, The Shadow caught a sound from above. He pointed his gun toward a dark window and fired.

There was a scream: Kuli's. He and Suji had lurked on the third floor and returned to the apartment. Hearing the gunfire below, Kuli had yanked Ahmed's spear from the wall and leaped to the window. Spotting the three jabs from The Shadow's gun, Kuli had tried to make amends for Ahmed's miss.

The Shadow's shot clipped Kuli in the midst of his throw. It jolted him backward, giving his arm an upward jerk. The spear struck the wall above The Shadow's head, took an angled bounce and clattered across the courtyard.

Vague light showed the window empty. Kuli was out of harm's way, dragged back to safety by his sidekick, Suji.

Other weapons were in action. Guns were talking from the window in the lower hall. Bullets from Police Positives flattened against the wall where The Shadow had been. The cops had seen the cloaked fighter's final shot. Taking him for an invisible foe, they were trying to drop him in the darkness. But The Shadow hadn't waited for that mistaken attack.

He was out, through the mouth of a narrow alley by which the Afghan mob had fled. Brief seconds, though, had changed the nature of that route. It was no longer clear. A trio of patrolmen was surging in, with flashlights. As one gleam took a sweep, The Shadow saw a fourth officer picking himself up from the curb.

Evidently one cop had encountered a twisty, fleeing Afghan, so all were coming through to look for more.

The Shadow decided to let them think that they had found one. Before the first flashlight revealed him, he hurdled forward, smothering its glow. Guns cloaked, he went into a dervish spin, flinging his arms for the man with the flashlight.

The Shadow cut a tornado path right through the converging officers. Their flashlights went clattering, their guns spouted off at angles. They were grabbing for him one-handed, too late. Ripping from fingers that clawed his cloak, The Shadow stumbled across the curb, found his footing, and dodged away in darkness.

He had won his escape, but he was serving the Afghans as well as himself. Four vengeful cops were spreading, spattering wild shots, in an effort to flank the swift fugitive that they had scarcely seen. Attracted by the fire, the police in the apartment house dropped out through the window and joined in the chase.

The next ten minutes were strained ones for The Shadow. He couldn't seem to shake the trailing police.

They didn't see him, but they heard him. There were times when he had to reach for fire escapes and climb upward, to get across the blocking ends of blind alleys. The neighborhood was full of cul-de-sacs, that afforded all sorts of complications.

Once, The Shadow was momentarily spotted by an arriving police car, as he sped across the street in the path of its approaching lights. A siren's wail brought pursuers in that direction, forcing The Shadow to a roundabout change of course.

He was trying to pick up the path of the scattered Afghans, but it couldn't be done. Like The Shadow, they were men of the dark. Given a scant head start, they were able to veer their own course away from the sounds of pursuit.

PICKING an opportunity that at last came his way, The Shadow dropped from a fire escape, cut across a street at an angle. Waiting in a doorway as a police car rolled by, he took another angle back across the street and sped through a narrow passage that he remembered.

Another crossing, a quick path in the dark - he was back in the courtyard behind Marjorie's apartment house.

That scene of rapid battle had become a quiet center in the midst of a storm of circling police. It had been that way ever since The Shadow's flight had begun, fully ten minutes ago. All was silent when The Shadow snapped on his flashlight, keeping its glow close to the ground.

The sweeping beam showed vacancy. Ahmed's body was gone; so was the Kafir spear that had twice been flung The Shadow's way. Three floors above, The Shadow saw the glint of a closed window in Marjorie's apartment. The grim silence mocked The Shadow.

It meant that the tricky Afghans had reversed their own course during the ten minutes that The Shadow had wasted dodging the police. Bobbing back, they had removed Ahmed and his weapon; probably, they had also helped Suji take away the wounded Kuli. They had covered their tracks in skillful style, but at last The Shadow's laugh came whispered in the darkness.

In the outlet from the courtyard, he had found a trail: slight blobs of blood, that showed at intervals under the flashlight's probing gleam. He traced that course across the street, through an opposite alleyway, along a zigzag path of a hundred yards, before he realized what it really meant.

The trail was The Shadow's own!

For the first time, he felt the painful gash that Ahmed's scraping spear had given him. His energetic progress had caused the wound to bleed; the torn edges of the cloak were well stained with blood. At present, the flow from the gash had lessened and could be easily stanchd.

Sounds told that disgruntled police were returning to the source of their chase. Silently, The Shadow worked out through the loosely closing cordon. On his way, off into darkness, he issued a low, sinister laugh, its tone repressed.

Crime lay behind the vanished Afghans. Hidden crime, that involved the disappearance of a girl named Marjorie Cragg, who, like dark-faced fighters, had left no trail. An arduous campaign awaited The Shadow; one in which he would have to mask every move, since many lives - like Marjorie's - might be at stake.

Behind this mystery, involving the fighters imported from Afghanistan, The Shadow could picture the machinations of an insidious brain. It belonged to a master criminal of gigantic mental prowess; one that the world thought dead.

The Shadow, however, had never agreed with that view. He had long been alert to the prospect of a returning menace, in the person of a master plotter known as Shiwan Khan.

When last they had met, The Shadow had won victory over the genius of evil; had seen his vicious foe disappear beneath the waters of New York Bay. But that event had been no proof that Shiwan Khan had died.

The ways of the master mind were devious; his followers were many. Even self-destruction could be a sham with Shiwan Khan: a scheme of pretended death to throw trackers off his trail. Nor was Shiwan Khan, monstrous creature of the Orient, a person who would ever admit defeat.

Shiwan Khan was the sort whose taste of failure would whet his appetite for success. His schemes might change, when he discarded old for new, but Shiwan Khan would never lose his urge to acquire mighty power.

The Shadow knew!

## **CHAPTER V. THE MAN FROM PERSIA**

WHEN Marjorie Cragg awakened in the morning, she found herself quite bewildered. The room in which she had slept was not part of her apartment, nor could it be a steamship cabin.

Looking from the window, she recognized the New York skyline; then, from the position of the landmarks, she suddenly realized that she was only a few blocks from her own apartment.

Her present room was much higher up, certainly thirty stories above the street. That fact, and the absence of a building that reared quite close to her apartment house, enabled her to realize where she was. She happened to be in the missing building, the Hotel Monolith.

Marjorie wondered if there had been a fire in her apartment, or if she had missed the boat. Either catastrophe could be a reason why she had come to the nearby Hotel Monolith. Somehow, the events of the previous evening were a blank. Marjorie decided to get dressed and go back to the apartment.

She looked for her clothes; they were gone. In their place she found a Persian costume, much finer than any of the theatrical apparel that she had sent to the boat.

It consisted chiefly of long silk pantaloons, a jeweled girdle, and a gorgeously embroidered jacket, which

Marjorie later learned was called a caftan. In addition, the girl found a pair of slippers with upward-curving points.

Purple was the predominating hue of the colorful gear. Discarding her pajamas, Marjorie attired herself in the Persian trappings, then surveyed the effect in a full-length mirror. The jeweled costume was gorgeous, but it simply wouldn't do for street wear in New York. Not even when Marjorie added a golden sash that she found hanging from the chair back.

The sash made up for the high cut of the caftan; but portions of the costume were thin, like gossamer, producing a peekaboo effect. Though preferable to slippers and dressing gown, the Persian attire would still be too conspicuous for a daylight venture through Manhattan.

Nevertheless, the costume pleased her. Its silk had a shimmery flow, that made it comfortable as well as beautiful. Time floated dreamily, as Marjorie posed before the mirror; then an enchanting melody gripped her.

The tune came from the widow, where a light breeze had plucked the strings of the aeolian harp. Her thoughts tuned to the mood of the previous evening, Marjorie turned toward a connecting door. Responding to a mental command, she opened the door and stepped into the adjoining apartment.

The room that she entered was lavish in Oriental splendor. Persian rugs overlapped themselves upon the floor. Gorgeous tapestries hung from the walls. It was a palace chamber from old Persia, transferred to America. In the room was a bowing dark-skinned maid, dressed in a costume similar to Marjorie's, but of a plainer sort.

A soft rap came from another door. Responding to the command that accompanied the harp's thrum, Marjorie spoke: "Come!" The door opened, a man stood on the threshold.

Bowing, he swept his hand toward a rug-decorated divan. With a gracious smile, Marjorie draped herself upon the Oriental coach and watched the visitor enter.

HE was the most singular man that Marjorie had ever met. Wide at the forehead, his face tapered toward a pointed chin. The center of that triangular visage was a straight-marked nose, as definite as a ruled line. His eyebrows were thin curves of black that ran almost to his temples. His lips formed a thin, straight streak of brown, set against a saffron background. There were also a thin mustache and a dab of chin whisker, in the Oriental style.

Most amazing of all his features were his eyes. They were green, catlike in their glow. Yet, to Marjorie, as her own gaze met them, those eyes had the deep gleam of emeralds. When the man's lips opened, words seemed to drip from them, like the tone of the aeolian harp.

"I am Shah Nikwan," he stated. "You are welcome here, Princess Dunyazad."

Marjorie smiled. She was sure that Shah Nikwan was a Persian. He was wearing a golden tunic, with a tight-fitting turban of the same hue. In the center of the turban glistened a star composed of diamonds, evidently the symbol of high rank. But she thought that his reference to her as a princess was merely a jest.

Shah Nikwan observed the girl's smile. He spoke again, in his musical tone.

"You are to be the Princess Dunyazad," he declared, "when you have learned the language of my country. Later, you shall be known as the Persian nightingale, most beautiful of all song makers! Come!"

He led Marjorie along the corridor. Ahead, the girl could hear the muffled thump of the elevator; its



mechanism seemed constantly in motion. They passed long rows of doors; when they reached the elevator, Shah Nikwan pressed a button. Soon, the elevator stopped.

They entered it and went one story up, but the elevator mechanism continued to run after they had left it.

They were on the top floor of the hotel, and there Marjorie saw a huge room with a dome-shaped roof, painted dark blue, with tiny white bulbs for stars, and an artificial moon. Below the center of the vaulted ceiling was a square platform, raised a few feet from the floor.

A recollection came to Marjorie; perhaps the thoughts of Shah Nikwan inspired it.

"Why, this is the Moonlight Cafe!" exclaimed the girl. "It was all built and ready to open, when the owner of the Hotel Monolith committed suicide because of financial troubles."

Shah Nikwan bowed acknowledgment of the statement.

"I begin to understand," added Marjorie. "You intend to open the Moonlight Cafe, don't you, Shah Nikwan? This is where you will want me to sing."

"Your discernment is excellent," returned Shah Nikwan. "I have decided upon such a venture. But this room" - he indicated it with the sweep of a long-fingered hand - "will not be the Moonlight Cafe. It will be styled the Garden of Omar."

Marjorie's eyes brightened. She could picture herself, as Princess Dunyazad, singing Oriental melodies in a room resembling a Persian garden, with artificial moonlight overhead. Unquestionably, Shah Nikwan had heard of her as the "International Songstress," and had chosen her as the star attraction for his future night club.

It did not surprise her that this man from the Orient should be entering a commercial venture. Such things occurred frequently in New York.

Shah Nikwan stated that the decorations of the forthcoming garden would arrive in a few days. In a few weeks, the place would open; meanwhile, Marjorie could learn new lyrics, and from her maid acquire a smattering of Persian.

"We shall call you Princess Dunyazad," he said, smiling wisely as he spoke. "You must try to believe that you are Princess Dunyazad. It will be helpful to us both. Very shortly, I shall announce your arrival in America. After that, there will be interviews."

Marjorie nodded. It was all good showmanship, a thing which she approved as legitimate in the theatrical business. Shah Nikwan was offering her a chance to become famous; it would be her part to cooperate.

As they left the domed roof garden, the girl kept repeating her new name to herself.

THEY stopped at Shah Nikwan's apartments, which occupied most of the floor below. Dark-faced men were there, as servants, and Marjorie was delighted by the magnificence of the place. As they passed an end room where the door was open, Marjorie had a view off through an opened window.

She saw an elevated train and heard vaguely its approaching rumble. She felt a sudden surge of jarring memories; then Shah Nikwan spoke a harsh order to a servant. The fellow promptly closed the door, to cut off the sound.

A sudden mistrust had gripped Marjorie. It ended as they reached another room. There, a window was open, facing in another direction. On the sill was an aeolian harp, exactly matching Marjorie's. The strum

of the wind-plucked strings soothed her. She smiled again, as she gazed toward Shah Nikwan.

"Our thoughts are in tune, Princess Dunyazad," he said smoothly. "We must let such harmony continue. My servants will conduct you to your own quarters, which are even more lavish than these."

Marjorie was pleased. What Shah Nikwan said was true. His own apartment, of many rooms, was done in Oriental style; but none of its furnishings were so distinctly Persian as those of her own new abode. Shah Nikwan had reserved the best for Princess Dunyazad.

It was strange, how the new name gripped her. Repeating it, the girl actually felt that it was her own. By the time she reached her suite, where the maid waited, she couldn't quite remember what her former name had been.

Then, pleased with her costume and the luxurious surroundings, Marjorie sank to the divan and decided to forget that she had ever had another name.

Back in his own maze of rooms, Shah Nikwan stopped at a door and listened to the sound of a steady buzz that came from beyond it. His green eyes glistened; at moments, they showed a brilliant flash. Thoughts were passing from the brain of Shah Nikwan, to be picked up by some distant person whose mind had tuned to that vibrating buzz.

Farther along the inner hallway, Shah Nikwan paused again. He was catching the steady pounding of the elevator, that kept running up and down its shaft. His saffron face darkened. He could not gain the mental contact that he wanted. Clapping his hands, Shah Nikwan gave a sharp call:

"Hulagu!"

The man who responded was a giant Mongol, compared to whom the tall Afghan servants looked puny. Towering close to seven feet, he had to stoop almost to his knees as he came through the doorway. Proportionately wide, Hulagu was forced to make a sidewise twist, to work his shoulders through the opening.

"Order them to stop the elevator," commanded Shah Nikwan, in English. "It is useless to keep running it, at present."

Bowing, the giant Hulagu boomed the reply: "It shall be done, Kha Khan."

His lips curving into a slitted smile, Shah Nikwan stepped into the room that opened toward the elevator. He took a chair beside the window; leaning back, he closed his eyes and entered a state of powerful concentration.

That face, with its vicious smile - a curve of brown, etched upon yellow - was one that The Shadow would have recognized, could he have viewed it. But its owner was not titled Shah Nikwan. The name, like the man's promises, was a sham. This strange man from the Orient was Shiwan Khan. His ways were unfathomable, even to those persons that he controlled. When Shiwan Khan plotted evil, innocent persons became his tools. From this lair, high in Manhattan, he was at work upon a mysterious scheme involving many helpless dupes.

For, like his ancestor, Genghis Khan, it was Shiwan Khan's desire to rule the world!

His brain could work afar, as he had demonstrated. Howard Felber, like other deluded persons, was swayed by his mental control. Should persons interfere with his machinations, as Marjorie Cragg had unwittingly done, Shiwan Khan knew how to rule them and make them useful to his plans.

It was all part of a gigantic game, gauged to a final purpose that would eventually be revealed. During the process, Shiwan Khan intended to deal with human beings as puny pawns, discarding them when he was through with them.

The smile that was fixed to Shiwan Khan's saffron face was proof that he feared opposition from no one.

Not even from The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER VI. BAIT FOR THE SHADOW**

FROM a single fact, The Shadow had decided that Shiwan Khan was again in New York; namely, because of the Afghan fighters who had invaded Marjorie's apartment. The last time that Shiwan Khan had come to America he had brought Mongol warriors, letting some of them reside in Chinatown, which had enabled The Shadow to trace them. (Note: See "The Golden Master." Vol. XXXI, No. 2.)

Profiting from that mistake, Shiwan Khan had produced a different breed of tribesmen, and was probably keeping them at his own headquarters. The fact that the Afghans roamed at large in New York was of very little help to The Shadow.

If seen, they would simply pass as unusual foreigners; but Afghans had a habit of not being seen at all. To them, the alleyways and buildings of New York were a happy hunting ground, compared to the rocks and ravines in their own land. Clever as well as murderous, the Afghans could hold their own in any terrain.

Working from the assumption that he had to deal with Shiwan Khan, The Shadow analyzed Marjorie's disappearance. Another girl had vanished during Shiwan Khan's previous sojourn in Manhattan. Posing as a Chinese maiden, Beatrice Chadbury had unwittingly served as Shiwan Khan's messenger.

A similar situation could exist in Marjorie's case. There was also a strong possibility - as in the other instance - that Marjorie had some connection with a person who had become the prey of Shiwan Khan. The Shadow's belief that Marjorie had the interests of a friend at heart was something to strengthen the theory.

It was all part of Shiwan Khan's craft; his game of turning people against the very ones they sought to aid. The secret of his strange ability was his power of thought transference, or telepathy, which he had learned while living in Tibet.

The Shadow was also skilled in that line. Like Shiwan Khan, he worked from hypnotism as a basis, having learned that thoughts passed more readily from mind to mind when both were under a mesmeric influence. Knowledge of such principles, however, was not enough to accomplish the gigantic marvels of which Shiwan Khan was capable.

While The Shadow had been spending years in training himself to physical combat against crime, his rival had devoted that same period to a system of continued mental concentration. Thus, each was equipped in a different way for the warfare that they had actually resumed.

Just as The Shadow could baffle the fighting skill of Shiwan Khan's Afghan warriors, so could Shiwan Khan snatch victims like Marjorie Cragg from The Shadow's protection, leaving no clue to tell where they had gone. In Marjorie's case, The Shadow felt sure the girl would be safe until Shiwan Khan's purposes were gained, but after that there would be no guarantee.

Why had Shiwan Khan returned to America?

There lay a mystery in itself. On his previous visit, he had tried to acquire huge supplies, chiefly bombs and airplanes, to start a world-wide conquest from his base in the heart of Asia, the underground city of Xanadu.

Defeated in that effort by The Shadow, Shiwan Khan had become a known menace. Every factory that turned out military equipment was keeping close watch on its workers, to see that none developed peculiar mental symptoms.

As for military secrets and the men who devised them, such things were already under surveillance of the Feds. Spies were prevalent in America, and many ways had been designed to thwart them. It seemed a certainty that any thrust by Shiwan Khan would at least be detected and reported.

Yet The Shadow felt that such was Shiwan Khan's most likely move. Merely to spread a warning would be worse than useless. It would simply tip off Shiwan Khan and cause him to switch to some alternative measure. Under such circumstances, The Shadow's only course was first to learn exactly what Shiwan Khan intended, then give the real alarm.

FROM his own headquarters, a hidden sanctum in the heart of Manhattan that even Shiwan Khan could not locate, The Shadow sent orders to various of his secret agents, through his contact man, Burbank. They were to learn all that they could concerning Marjorie Cragg, taking care to keep their investigations covered. The Shadow, alone, was impervious to Shiwan Khan's measures of remote hypnotic suggestion; no one else could be regarded as safe.

During two days the agents had investigated, and brought back certain facts. Their reports included data concerning Marjorie's career as a singer, as well as photographs of the girl herself.

She was supposed to be cruising the Caribbean on the steamship Atlantis; but radio messages to that liner, guised as offers of future concert engagements, brought back the news that Marjorie was not on board the ship.

Such information proved that Marjorie had been abducted, but that was all. As for her acquaintances in New York, it appeared that Marjorie had none, except some professional friends, who could not be targets of Shiwan Khan. Nevertheless, The Shadow had instructed his agents to keep on checking facts regarding Marjorie Cragg.

For news of the vanished Afghans, The Shadow was depending on the police - with little luck.

The law had gone blank on that score. No one had been able to describe the missing trouble makers, nor even guess why they had entered the apartment house. In fact, the people who reported the gunfire did not know in which apartment it had begun.

Dining at the Cobalt Club in the guise of Lamont Cranston, with his friend Ralph Weston, The Shadow had sought shreds of information. Since Weston happened to be New York's police commissioner, he was the one man who should have been able to supply any news of roving Afghans. But Weston was merely annoyed by Cranston's occasional references to the mystery of two nights ago.

"There's no mystery to it!" insisted Weston, brusquely, as they sipped their coffee in the grillroom. "I've told you that a dozen times, Cranston. If we tried to investigate every minor mob skirmish, the department would have no time for handling important matters."

"Odd how those chaps disappeared," mused The Shadow in Cranston's leisurely style. "Right from the center of a police cordon, so I understand."

"Bah! You've been reading the Classic!" snapped Weston. "I'm glad the club doesn't allow that scurvy scandal sheet to be among the newspapers in the library."

Cranston smiled. The Classic, a tabloid newspaper dealing in sensational and exaggerated news, was a constant thorn to the self-important police commissioner.

While they were finishing their coffee, Weston continued to look annoyed. Finally, he clashed his empty cup into its saucer and exclaimed:

"Your persistence has won out, Cranston! I still think there's no mystery in the case, but I can't get it out of my head. Wait here while I call Inspector Cardona and get him to repeat the details of his report."

The Shadow waited willingly. It was more than persistence that had won for him. He had been using Shiwan Khan's tactics of mental concentration, constantly keeping his mind fixed on one point while he gazed at Weston. The influence had finally taken full effect. It was to produce results, too.

Returning, the commissioner announced:

"The thing has been bothering Cardona, too. He admits that he has been having patrolmen question everyone along their beats, regarding persons seen near that apartment house."

"What have they learned?"

"A lot of hodgepodge." Weston tossed some notations to his friend. "Not a thing of any consequence."

THE list did appear to be a drab one. It included such items as a shoemaker giving a two-dollar bill as change, in mistake for a one; an argument between two boys over ownership of a stray dog; a geranium pot falling from a window and smashing the derby hat of a patron entering a barber shop.

Nearly a dozen items in all - but among them one that interested The Shadow, though it meant nothing to the police commissioner. Someone had called headquarters to report that a truck belonging to the Integrity Transfer Co. had been seen in the neighborhood of the apartment house shortly before seven o'clock.

Inasmuch as no trouble had begun until after seven, at which time the truck had been gone, Cardona had considered that item the most foolish of them all. Nothing had been reported stolen from the apartment house; no truck had figured in the flight of the men who had indulged in gunfire. Weston's mind, therefore, was at ease; he hoped that Cranston's would become the same.

It did. Soon afterward, Cranston left the Cobalt Club. Riding to Times Square in his limousine, he alighted and sent the big car home. Picking a taxi that stood on a side street, he gave low-voiced instructions to the driver. The cab headed eastward.

From a drawer beneath the rear seat, Cranston produced black garments, identical with those that he carried in the limousine. Putting on the cloak and hat, he became The Shadow. This cab was his own; its driver, Moe Shrevnitz, one of his secret agents.

Two blocks from a squarish garage that belonged to the Integrity Transfer Co., The Shadow left the cab. As he approached the garage under sheltering darkness, he suspected the presence of watching eyes that could have been in any one of several cars parked along the street.

The garage was well filled with cars; dropping his cloak and hat between two light trucks, The Shadow strolled into a room marked "Office." A beefy man looked up from a battered desk. Sight of a well-dressed visitor like Cranston rather surprised him. His eyes took on a sudden squint when The

Shadow quietly asked if the company rented trucks.

"Yeah, we do," the man admitted. "Only when business gets slack, though. There's one we rented out on the streets right now. What did it do" - his tone was anxious - "run into your car somewhere?"

"My chauffeur had an argument with the driver," was Cranston's reply. "Nothing more. Only, the fellow seemed rather surly. He was a dark, scowling fellow who talked broken English."

The beefy man nodded.

"That's one of them, all right," he said. "Anyway, the truck is insured, and they paid a good price for the rental. I'm sorry, mister -"

"You've had other trouble?"

The beefy man looked startled; then, caught off guard, he forced a nod. The eyes that met his were persuasive. He said more.

"They were loading the truck at this address" - the beefy man shoved a slip of paper across the desk - "and they must have bashed some fellow's fender. He called up a while ago and made a squawk. Wouldn't give his name; just said we'd hear from him later."

Assuring the man that his own complaint was merely a minor one, The Shadow left, picking up his cloak and hat when he passed the parked trucks. Skirting the garage, he noted the light in the little office. The beefy man's desk was away from the window, but the fellow's silhouette showed plainly against the wall.

Evidently, The Shadow's own profile had been outlined, too, in shaded form. Any outside observers could have seen it. From the circumstances that The Shadow had learned, it was quite possible that spies had been on lookout duty, to check on persons visiting the garage.

It was impossible, though, that they could have overheard his chat with the garage man. Nor could they have observed his entry and departure. Apparently, the address mentioned by the garage man was one where the truck had been, and would not return - another place like Marjorie's apartment.

Reaching the cab, The Shadow told the driver, Moe Shrevnitz, to follow a roundabout course to the neighborhood of the new address, which was on the West Side. As they rode, The Shadow kept on the lookout for trailers. There were none.

Within the cab, The Shadow voiced a laugh. It was a whispered tone, mocking in its mirth, though it denoted only partial satisfaction. At least, The Shadow had gotten another trail to the Afghan followers who served Shiwan Khan.

Perhaps it might prove a dead trail, like the one of two nights ago. Yet, in this case, there had been no tumult; therefore, darkish departers might have been less careful in covering their tracks. Until he investigated it, The Shadow could not pronounce the present trail as useless.

Anything might develop, when dealing with Shiwan Khan. The Shadow had learned that in the past. He was to find it out again in the very immediate future!

## **CHAPTER VII. FRIENDS OF SHIWAN KHAN**

MOE'S cab stopped in an old-fashioned neighborhood, where great, grim brownstone houses etched their misshapen roofs against the glow of Manhattan's sky. It was one of those districts where progress had marked time since the beginning of the present century.

Built to last for many years, the houses had fulfilled expectations, but their original owners had long since abandoned them as antiquated. With rentals cheapening, the area had become shabby. Its only future lay in the removal of the out-of-date structures, which no one had as yet attempted.

The address given by the garage man lay near the middle of a block that was suited precisely to The Shadow's needs. He reached the house, found it quite as dark as the gloomy walls that had hidden his advance. The windows had no boardings, however, which indicated the house was occupied.

Choosing the basement as the best place to enter, The Shadow picked the lock on an old door that was sheltered beneath the brownstone steps. Inside the house, he locked the door behind him and began a probing tour. The basement was poorly furnished, but the first floor was better.

The rooms showed fairly modern furniture, and a considerable amount of it; but silence stayed complete. Keeping the rays of his flashlight guarded, The Shadow started for the second floor. He was halfway up the stairs when he detected the first tokens of life in the place.

From high above, somewhere on the third floor, came a steady whirring sound that formed a peculiar buzz. It seemed like the mingling of several sounds, all in concert, yet very much alike.

Passing closed doors, The Shadow crept toward the third floor, extinguishing his light completely. The buzz was louder; he could tell where it came from. A quick glimmer of the flashlight showed him the right door.

Quite different from the other doors in the house, this one was new and closely fitted. It was made of heavy wood and there was no crack beneath it to emit light from the room within. Reaching the door, The Shadow tried it, found it tightly bolted.

He tried to analyze the buzzing sound. There were at least twenty variations of the hum, though the average listener would have detected only a half dozen. The Shadow's ears were trained to pick up sounds, particularly in complete darkness, which again existed, for he had turned off the flashlight.

Moreover, The Shadow was skilled at noting remote sounds, even when those close by attracted him. That was why he caught the slight, shuffling noises that came from the lower floors that he had left.

Swinging about, The Shadow descended to the second floor. At the head of the stairway leading down to the first floor he heard the sounds more clearly, the scrape of many feet.

Someone began pressing light switches. The cavernous hallways glowed. Men faced toward the stairway and looking upward, saw The Shadow. They raised a shout as he wheeled away. There was a rear stairway; the cloaked intruder made for it, only to be blocked by other oncoming trappers.

Diving for an open room, The Shadow ducked from sight just as his first pursuers saw him. They were shouting for him to halt; when he didn't, they blasted loose with guns.

Flashlights burned into the room, showed an open window, with a cloaked form wedging through. Again, revolvers barked - too late. The Shadow was dropping when his trappers fired.

He took a hard fall into a cement passage; one that brought a sharp pang to his ribs, healing from the spear wound. Diving for the rear street, The Shadow reached it while men above were blazing shots from the window. Their fire was useless in one sense, important in another. No bullets came anywhere near The Shadow, but the shots served as an alarm.

Big-beamed flashlights swept the rear street, coming from half a dozen spots. Caught in the glare, The Shadow became an actual target as he zigzagged across the street. The playing flashlights made his

running form grotesque - a long, warped streak of blackness that might have been anything from man to monster.

The Shadow had encountered friends of Shiwan Khan; the same friends whose aid the world empire builder had enlisted two nights before. Again, The Shadow was dodging the police!

CRAFTILY, Shiwan Khan had kept his precious Afghans out of it. He had no need to sacrifice them, or clutter the battleground with men who might divert the trail. Shiwan Khan had simply arranged matters to put The Shadow at temporary odds with the law. Odds which might prove fatal to The Shadow.

Firing as he whirled from doorway to doorway, The Shadow was looking for some path to safety. He was shooting over the heads of the police, even though every man he spared might be the one to drop him. The Shadow's shots were close, for he wanted his assailants to duck - which they did, as their bad aim proved.

But this street, of all streets in Manhattan, was about the worst when it came to finding an exit. On both sides, the old buildings reared for an unbroken block.

Smashing a basement window, The Shadow dived through, disregarding the glass that slashed his cloak. Speeding through, he came to a rear courtyard, the hue and cry right after him, interspersed with gunshots. Flashlights appeared with the pursuing cops; again, The Shadow was ducking beams, some of which flickered away when he whistled shots above them.

This would prove a worse trap than the street - a fatal one, if he did not leave it in a hurry. But The Shadow was sure that the courtyard had some outlet. He found one, on the opposite side. With bullets thudding against the brick walls about him, The Shadow made for the next street.

A mad dash for the corner brought him to a secluded avenue, with bullets buzzing about like hornets. Zigzagging across the avenue, The Shadow hoped that Moe would hear the shots and head in their direction.

Making for the next side street, he dropped to a sheltering doorway, to let the first police go by. Others were in the distance, coming from the opposite direction.

When they met, they would know that they had been tricked. Meanwhile, The Shadow would merely encounter trouble if he reversed his course. Peering past the corner, he saw police spreading across the avenue. He heard them shout, and knew the answer. It was Moe's cab, wheeling through.

Moe took the corner, rather than stop to argue with the cops. He took it on two wheels, and the tilt of the cab found The Shadow just beneath it. With a quick-paced stride, the black-cloaked fugitive caught the door handle. Flipping the door open, The Shadow rolled inside, letting the cab slam the door itself, as its wheels jounced back to normal.

Seeing police ahead blaring their whistles at him, Moe decided to stop. He had slackened speed and officers were almost to the running board when a whispered voice stabbed a command in Moe's ear.

His foot jamming the accelerator pedal, Moe whipped away from the astonished cluster of cops, took the next corner on the other pair of wheels, just as revolvers began to blast.

The Shadow saw the front of the old house as they roared past the corner beyond it. A lot of cars were drawn up in front, and plenty of flashlights were sweeping the street. Moe didn't notice the house; he was looking straight ahead along the avenue that they followed. Turning his peaked face, he gave bad news.

Patrol cars were looming up ahead. The mirror showed another in the rear. Maybe a side street would



offer some chance at a getaway; but, from all appearances, the cab would soon be boxed.

From then on, The Shadow directed things. Moe simply handled the wheel, but he did his part well.

It was a cat-and-mouse chase that seemed more hopeless to Moe the farther they went with it. They were circling the same blocks over and over, in a sort of pretzel course, that took them away from trouble and got them back into it. Spying a straight route, The Shadow at last gave orders to take it. The cab was out of one mess, but Moe knew that they would find another.

They did, a few blocks ahead. As The Shadow called for Moe to turn a corner, a police car whined into sight, spotting them just after they made the swing.

Whistles shrilled from the next block, were answered from a side street. The cab had found the opposite side of the cordon, which the police had rapidly been forming, ever since the start of gunfire in the old house.

THE SHADOW called for Moe to wheel back toward the center of the net. Moe obliged; but, for once, he couldn't see how his chief intended to get out of it.

If they crossed the encircled area, they would only be back with their old friends, who were still looking for them. But it wasn't The Shadow's intention to let two groups of pursuers meet.

He guided Moe along a zigzag route, with the chase getting hotter every moment. Then, of a sudden, they wheeled right into the thick of things, along the street in front of the old house where all the cars stood outside!

Police were leaping out into the street, shouting, brandishing revolvers. Moe dropped low behind the wheel, knowing that this might be the last blockade that they would ever try to run. Then, before a single shot was fired, he heard The Shadow's calm command:

"Pull up!"

Moe swung to a stop beside a large official car. The pursuing patrol cars arrived; their occupants leaped out, to join the officers who were already on the cab's running board.

Cops were dragging Moe away from the wheel, hauling him out by the collar. Others were thrusting revolvers in through the windows, growling for all passengers to surrender.

A brawny police sergeant yanked open the door on the curb side. He was waiting with his gun, when a lone passenger came out, smiling, with upraised hands. Straightening, he made a tall figure, immaculately clad in evening clothes.

Ignoring the police who were frisking him for guns, he looked up toward the house steps and called out in leisurely voice:

"Good evening again, commissioner!"

From the steps, Commissioner Weston blinked; then, in an astounded voice, he exclaimed:

"Why, it's Cranston!"

Then Weston was down the steps, bawling orders at the officers who were in the cab, searching it. They came out empty-handed, for The Shadow's cloak and hat were safely stowed beneath the trick rear seat, along with his guns.

Their looks turned sheepish, as they saw the irate commissioner gesturing with both hands. On the steps was the man that they had captured, free of covering guns. There, The Shadow, transformed into Lamont Cranston, was shaking hands with a swarthy, stocky man: Inspector Joe Cardona.

Explanations were in order, along with apologies. Weston took it that Cranston had returned to the Cobalt Club, and had come here from there. Since Cranston was busy talking to Cardona, the commissioner accepted his own theory and added to it.

Cranston's cab had tangled with the cordon while entering it. Being a friend of the commissioner, Cranston had done the right thing in keeping right on to his destination. The only men to blame for this commotion were the officers themselves.

In that surmise, Commissioner Weston was completely mistaken. The police had played a part in the disturbance; so had Lamont Cranston, while guised as The Shadow. But the fault for the whole affair belonged with a crafty plotter who had not appeared in it at all.

Only The Shadow could have named him: Shiwan Khan!

## **CHAPTER VIII. DEATH BY DESIGN**

WITH matters nicely smoothed, Commissioner Weston gave heed to the whimpers of a pasty-faced man who stood beside the house steps. The fellow was repeating a plea to "Remember poor Mr. Maybrell." Weston nodded, then said to the whimpering man:

"All right, Jennings. Lead the way."

They started up into the house, The Shadow hearing details from Joe Cardona. The house belonged to an old inventor named Clifford Maybrell, who had gained some repute in designing air-cooling systems.

"Tonight," declared Cardona, in a matter-of-fact tone, "Maybrell went nuts. He began yelling that there were burglars around the place, and he locked himself in the fan room."

Cranston's eyebrows lifted in query, as he asked where the fan room was.

"On the third floor," stated Cardona. "Maybrell kept howling through the door at Jennings, his servant, telling him to get the police and bring a lot of them."

"By that time, Jennings was pretty near nuts himself. He ran out and got to a telephone - it's two blocks to the nearest one around here - and kicked up such a holler when he talked to me that I thought the whole neighborhood must be going to pot."

"So I sent a squad to pick up Jennings and let him take them to the house. I'd just been talking to the commissioner, a little while before. Since he was at the club, I called him up, figuring he'd want to be here."

They were at the second floor. Up ahead, Jennings was volubly insisting that there had been burglars in the house. Cardona turned to Cranston, spoke in a confidential tone.

"The squad did run into somebody," he said, "and lost their heads about it. But, from all reports, it wasn't a bunch of burglars, but just one person. He got away - and all for the better, because" - Cardona was speaking close to Cranston's ear - "my hunch is that the guy was The Shadow!"

From experience, Inspector Cardona knew that The Shadow was more than a figure of mystery; that the black-cloaked investigator had more than once turned results in the law's favor, when the scales were

balancing heavily toward crime.

But Commissioner Weston still tried to class The Shadow as a myth, from the official standpoint, so Cardona had to be careful what he said within the hearing of his superior.

Headquarters men were waiting on the third floor, outside the room that produced the incessant buzz. Jennings was explaining that Maybrell had started the fans for another test, which proved that he must have been suffering mentally.

"He shipped the new fans this afternoon," declared the servant. "They were the important ones, made of the special metal. I can't understand why he started the old ones going, all of them at once!"

Men were hammering at the door, but getting no response. Jennings produced a fire ax; fearful of fires, Maybrell had it in the house, along with fire extinguishers. Using the ax, Cardona hewed a hole through the stout door, then thrust his hand inside, to reach the bolt.

The door swung open. The sight within halted everyone upon the threshold. The room was shuttered tightly, so as to allow no light to leave it. Bright bulbs were glowing in sockets on the walls. Everywhere were fans, dozens of them, swift-spinning blades propelled by electricity. They covered walls and ceiling, except for a hollow gap above: a trapdoor that led to a small attic.

Below that space lay Clifford Maybrell, an aged man with wrinkled face and smooth bald head. His hands were stretched beside him, the clawlike fingers clenched. His lips wore a fearful, frenzied grin, which had become a fixture on his face, like the pallid bulbous eyes that projected from their sockets.

Clifford Maybrell was quite dead.

GAZING suspiciously at the gap in the ceiling, Inspector Cardona reached for his gun. It was Cranston who stopped him. In calm tone, he offered Joe a suggestion.

"Step to the center of the room," said The Shadow. "Stand right beside the body, then look toward the ceiling."

Joe did as directed. They watched him squinting upward, pointing his gun. His swarthy face began to tighten, particularly at the lips. As Cardona winced, his eyes bulged. Weston gave a sharp cry as the police inspector wavered.

The Shadow swung to the wall, pressed a row of switches that he saw there. Cardona had caught himself; he took deep breaths of air, as the whirling fans ceased their combined humming and dwindled their speed to a silent stop.

"I couldn't breathe!" gasped Cardona. "Do you know what those fans did? They sucked the air right up into the attic! Maybrell suffocated himself in this air-tight room! Being off his nut, I guess he didn't realize what would happen."

With death on actual display, Commissioner Weston decided to sift all details in the case. He asked for facts, and Jennings gave them, very earnestly. According to the servant, Maybrell had been acting oddly for weeks. Even his experiments had indicated the workings of a deluded mind.

It had all begun one day while Maybrell was in the workshop testing an air-conditioning appliance. There were only two fans in the place at that time; both had been running steadily, as Jennings remembered it. Then, Maybrell had been seized with a brainstorm. He wanted more fans, dozens of them.

Jennings ordered them, fans of all sorts and sizes, and helped his master install them. Maybrell kept

running them in shifts; never was there a time when all were stopped. He termed the workshop the fan room, and declared that with new principles of alternating air currents he would revolutionize the science of air conditioning.

Experts had come to the house, at Maybrell's request; all had left shaking their heads. Their doubts of Maybrell's theory had egged him on further. He needed speedier fans, he claimed, so he ordered them, made specially of light-weight metal.

"They sang with a high pitch, those fans," specified Jennings, soberly. "A maddening tone, that reminded me of gnats. Mr. Maybrell developed the speed he wanted; then became dissatisfied. He began replacing the light fans with the heavy ones."

Weston asked if the lighter fans were the ones that had left the house that afternoon. Jennings said that they were. Angered because they had not suited his expectations, Maybrell had disposed of them as junk, at a fraction of their original cost.

"He was starting all over again," declared Jennings, wearily. "As fast as he put the old fans up, he turned on the switches that controlled them. He kept shrieking that he would succeed, but that he would have to hurry. He liked the drone of the heavy fans, and wanted it louder - louder - louder -"

Jennings was lifting his hands, clenching them, as if his own nerves were shattered. Finally gaining control of himself, he relaxed and completed his story.

"Every fan was in operation," said Jennings. "It was the first time that Mr. Maybrell ever ran all of them at once. The noise seemed to craze him, for he drove me from the room, telling me to search the house for burglars.

"When I came back, the door was bolted. I knocked, and Mr. Maybrell heard me. He kept screaming to get the police before the burglars found him. Before I knew it" - the servant's tone was earnest - "I was hearing sounds myself. By the time I had gone downstairs again, they were creeping all around me!"

No one doubted the testimony. It wasn't surprising that the servant's own nerves should have cracked. Besides, as Commissioner Weston reminded, there actually had been someone in the house when the police arrived.

The commissioner had just one question: he wanted to know why Jennings had not foreseen that the fans would suck the air from the closed room.

"They never did before," explained Jennings. "Of course, Mr. Maybrell never operated all of them at once, until tonight. Besides, he always alternated the fans."

Stepping to the wall, the servant pressed one switch upward, the next one downward. Fans began to spin in opposite directions, forming a cross current of air. Gesturing along the row of switches, Jennings kept moving his finger up and down.

"That's how they were when I left, commissioner," he said. "The fans were alternating their currents, as they always did. Mr. Maybrell must have changed the odd switches, after he bolted himself in here."

Commissioner Weston pondered. He was wondering whether the tragedy was the result of some new idea that had occurred to Maybrell, or an actual attempt at suicide on the part of the inventor. In either case, the demented condition of Maybrell's mind could be held responsible.

"Death through misadventure," was Weston's verdict. "A case for the medical examiner to worry about. We'll investigate the burglary angle, but it can scarcely have a bearing on Maybrell's death. If he wouldn't

open the door to admit Jennings, it is unlikely that he would have responded to the knock of an intruder.

"Besides, Maybrell would have had to bolt the door again himself, if he let anyone in or out. The blame for Maybrell's death lay with his own mental state."

What Weston said was true, but it was only half the story. The Shadow considered the other half of it, while he was riding back to the Cobalt Club. He knew where the real blame rested: with Shiwan Khan. It was that genius of supercrime who had inspired Maybrell's death.

Shiwan Khan could thrust his mighty will into remote and guarded spots, forcing persons to follow his commands, even to their own destruction. Provided only that he could attune the victim's mind to his, through some vibratory influence that would produce the same mental wave.

In Maybrell's case, Shiwan Khan had controlled the inventor's mind, forcing Maybrell to unwitting suicide. But that was merely the climax of a well-planned purpose. Shiwan Khan had wanted more than Maybrell's death, and had gained all that he sought.

To trace the details that lay behind the tragedy was The Shadow's present and most pressing problem.

## **CHAPTER IX. MOVES IN THE DARK**

LATE that same night, Lamont Cranston played chess with a friend named Rutledge Mann. They formed a serious, but contrasting, pair as they sat above the chessboard in a secluded nook of the Cobalt Club.

Cranston's hawkish, masklike countenance was one of absolute calm that hid an adventurous personality. Mann, a round-faced man with owlsh expression, was exactly what he appeared to be: a man deliberate in everything, precise in all affairs, yet fond of ease and comfort.

As a person of reputed wealth, it was logical that Cranston should be acquainted with Mann. Cranston needed someone to watch the fluctuations of the stock market, and Mann was an investment broker by profession. Yet, behind that business acquaintance lay a stronger friendship.

Behind the guise of Cranston lay the personality of The Shadow, and Mann was one of The Shadow's trusted secret agents.

There were moments when the chess game was forgotten. During those intervals, The Shadow spoke. His tone had Cranston's calmness, yet it was reduced to a singular whisper. The Shadow was piecing facts that he wanted Mann to know.

"You will remember," said The Shadow, "that Shiwan Khan exerted hypnotic influence upon his victims, when first we encountered him. His previous method involved the use of lights. Persons saw them flashing, in the exact fashion of duplicate lights at Shiwan Khan's hidden headquarters."

Mann nodded very soberly. This business of mutual hypnotism between Shiwan Khan and victims rather awed him. It meant that the stronger mind would dominate, as Shiwan Khan had consistently demonstrated.

"Shiwan Khan has chosen another method," continued The Shadow. "He is using sound, instead of light. Not only is the process more difficult to uncover; it enables him to reach remote places, such as Maybrell's workshop."

"We can trace the case back to the day when Maybrell first became inspired with a mania for new invention. Jennings said that fans were running in the workshop on that day. We may assume that Shiwan Khan had reproduced the same sound elsewhere. Finally catching the right pitch, he projected his

thoughts to Maybrell."

Again, Mann nodded. Weighing other details that Cranston had told him regarding Maybrell's death, Mann remarked:

"If Shiwan Khan merely intended to dispose of Maybrell, he took a long while doing it. I would say -"

Mann paused, observing Cranston's smile. He realized that The Shadow had already figured out the answer.

"Shiwan Khan first wanted Maybrell to complete certain experiments," declared The Shadow. "Of all Maybrell's crazy whims, his purchase of light-weight electric fans and the high-speed tests he gave them seem to be the maddest. His disposal of those special fans, as junk, has been classed as another quirk of his demented mind.

"Peculiarly, tragedy reached Maybrell soon after those discarded fans had been shipped away. In that fact lies our answer. Maybrell designed those special fans at the bidding of Shiwan Khan; he disposed of them at the bidding of his mental master.

"Wherever Shiwan Khan may be" - The Shadow's gaze was piercing, as though seeking to view some hidden, distant scene - "he has received the products of Maybrell's creative workmanship.

"For some reason, Shiwan Khan requires high-speed fans of lightweight metal. He chose Maybrell as the man to design them. The work done, Shiwan Khan disposed of Maybrell."

There was silence. Like The Shadow, Mann was picturing the ways of Shiwan Khan. Tonight, Shiwan Khan had baited The Shadow into visiting Maybrell's house. The inventor's howl about burglars, a fever which Jennings had caught, had come from the projected thoughts of Shiwan Khan. It explained how the master plotter had brought in the police, as trappers of The Shadow.

The trail of the truck would be useless in the future. Taking it once, The Shadow had almost met disaster. From now on, he would use his own leads in seeking Shiwan Khan.

"One mad invention," remarked The Shadow, "may mean others. Our next move is to find more men like Maybrell. I have already started a campaign that may bring results."

EARLY the next afternoon, Mann saw evidence of The Shadow's campaign. It appeared in the New York Classic, where a story appeared under the by-line of Clyde Burke. Though Clyde worked as a reporter on the Classic, he was also an agent of The Shadow. In making news, Clyde often served his chief.

This was one such instance. Where other newspapers treated Maybrell's death as a strange accident, the Classic played it up as the result of a madman's crazed disappointment. With a story was a picture of Jennings, his pasty face distorted with alarm.

Clyde got that shot with the aid of a photographer, who puffed a flash bulb within a few feet of Jennings while the servant was staring at the camera. The picture gave every evidence of terror, the sort that might come from living with a madman.

There were two men who pondered over that copy of the Classic: Jim and Casey, the mechanics who worked for Howard Felber. It worried both of them.

Alone, either man might have decided that Felber's mania for inventing a car with a four-wheel, triple-shafted drive ought to be reported to the authorities before Felber went off his nut like Maybrell.

However, since they were two to Felber's one, the mechanics decided to wait awhile, keeping careful watch over their afflicted employer.

In his headquarters high in the Hotel Monolith, Shiwan Khan studied a copy of the Classic. It was dusk, yet fading light from the window showed the glower that came to Shiwan Khan's saffron face. There was no evidence to connect the Classic story with The Shadow; nevertheless, Shiwan Khan did not like it.

Shiwan Khan laid the newspaper aside. Concentrating, he waited by the window while an elevated train rumbled by below. Brown lips were slitted in a smile as the mental master left that isolated room. Stopping by the door that had formerly emitted a steady buzz, Shiwan Khan smirked again.

The buzz from that room was ended, no longer needed. But Shiwan Khan found reason for annoyance when he stopped near the shaft of the ever-moving elevator. Though his eyes focused into a fixed, distant stare, Shiwan Khan was unable to pick up thoughts accompanying the pounding thump-thump of the elevator.

Placing the starred turban on his head, he adopted the bland pose of Shah Nikwan. Passing patrolling Afghans, he left his spacious apartment, to knock at the door of Marjorie's suite. The girl's musical voice invited him to enter; the words were spoken in Persian.

Marjorie had progressed as Princess Dunyazad. She appeared quite as Persian as the maid, Hayat, who attended her. Greeting Shah Nikwan in phrases that she had learned from Hayat, the girl waited for his reply.

Shiwan Khan spoke in English, using the smooth, bland tone that suited the polite Shah Nikwan.

"There is a mission, princess," he stated, "which I trust you can accomplish. A message must be carried to a certain man. I cannot visit him; therefore, I must rely upon someone, like yourself, to meet him and return with his reply."

The prospect pleased Marjorie. She liked being Princess Dunyazad, but it was rather boring, having no one to chat with except Hayat. Her nod showed her acceptance.

Beside the divan was a narghile, a Persian pipe consisting of a bowl above a water jar, with a stemmed hose attached. Placing the hose to her lips, Marjorie puffed tobacco smoke that passed through cool-scented rose water.

Gazing into the emerald eyes of Shah Nikwan, she heard the instructions that he spoke. His voice, like his gaze, had a hypnotic force. Resplendent in her jeweled Persian costume, Marjorie arose from the divan and walked toward the door.

Hayat pushed a Persian cat from the divan and picked up the caftan jacket which was lying there. She saw Shah Nikwan shake his head. Hayat hung the jacket in the closet, along with some of Marjorie's American clothes.

From the doorway, Shiwan Khan watched Marjorie walk toward the elevator. She seemed a character from the "Arabian Nights"; her appearance would probably impress the whirling, bewildered brain of the man who was to receive her message.

Shiwan Khan, alias Shah Nikwan, was depending upon Marjorie Cragg - otherwise Princess Dunyazad - to smooth an unanticipated difficulty that threatened his important plans.

DOWNSTAIRS, a car was waiting at the secluded side door of the hotel. Its darkish driver opened the door for Princess Dunyazad, and began a twisty trip through darkened streets.

The Persian-garbed passenger sat motionless. Her eyes fixed straight ahead, Marjorie's lips were repeating the instructions given her by Shah Nikwan.

It was an hour before the girl returned. She had hardly entered her suite before Shah Nikwan appeared.

The eyes that met the greenish gaze were blank. The princess had delivered the message, but had received no reply.

Snapping his fingers, Shah Nikwan brought Princess Dunyazad from the depths of her trance. Purring a polite good night, he departed.

Reaching his own apartment, Shiwan Khan flung away the turban that went with his Persian masquerade. He clapped his hands, to summon Hulagu. The big Mongol was the one man in whom Shiwan Khan confided; therefore, Hulagu seemed to understand the trouble.

"I must have contact!" declared Shiwan Khan, in a harsh tone. "The girl took the message, but apparently Orlio would not listen. I shall send you next time, Hulagu."

The giant Mongol looked pleased.

"Tomorrow night," decided Shiwan Khan. "We shall wait until an hour after sundown. If contact is not restored by then -"

Shiwan Khan saw no need to complete his statement. Hulagu's vast leer told that the giant understood.

## **CHAPTER X. THE SCARED MAN**

ONE day's story had created such a sensation that the New York Classic decided to run a second article pertaining to the Maybrell case. It was Clyde Burke who supplied the new material, at the suggestion of The Shadow.

The story was wild, yet plausible.

In his article, Clyde maintained that some forms of mania occurred like epidemics, and that men of genius - and particularly inventors - were peculiarly susceptible to such plagues.

He cited statistics to prove it: facts from the files of the Classic. Reviewing old cases of suicide and startling instances of violent insanity, Clyde showed that they had come in clusters.

When the afternoon editions of the Classic reached the street, they were bought as quickly as people could grab them. It wasn't until late in the afternoon, when the furor was lessening, that Commissioner Weston saw a copy of the tabloid.

The person who supplied it was Cranston. He had smuggled one of the banned scandal sheets into the sanctimonious preserves of the Cobalt Club.

"Outrageous!" stormed Weston. "Do you know what this ridiculous stuff will do? It will bring dozens of people to headquarters, claiming that they know crazy inventors who have been bitten by the bug!"

The Shadow smiled. That was exactly what he hoped would occur. But there was something else he wanted. His expression became serious.

"I think you are right, commissioner," he agreed, in Cranston's most solemn style. "Therefore, this is your chance to prove just how much harm a ridiculous newspaper story can produce."



"How can I manage that?" asked Weston, eagerly.

"Have all complaints sent directly to Inspector Cardona," returned The Shadow. "Instruct him to communicate with you whenever anyone comes in with a report of a mad inventor. Make it a point to interview the persons yourself."

"A great deal of trouble, Cranston -"

"But trouble well worthwhile, commissioner. Every time you run down a rumor and show it empty, you will add a spike to the indictment that you are building against the Classic."

Intrigued by the prospect, the commissioner decided to concentrate on the suggested plan. No other business was pressing him, and Cranston's suggestion offered a chance to silence pesky tabloid newspapers like the Classic.

In fact, if it worked out as well as Weston began to hope, there might be a chance for the police to take legal action against the owners of the Classic.

Weston was further pleased when Cranston declared that he would stay on hand, to see how the plan developed. The commissioner didn't realize that his friend was expecting real kernels in the chaff.

THE one man who didn't like the idea at all was Inspector Joe Cardona. He received word of his new appointment just as he was leaving his office for the day. Slamming the telephone on his desk, Cardona stared from the window and glowered at the sunset.

Then he took it out on Markham, who was unlucky enough to be present. Markham was the detective sergeant who had yanked Cranston from the cab, up at Maybrell's house.

"I'm slated for twenty-four-hour duty," stormed Joe, "so you're elected, too, Markham! One of us has got to get some sleep between times."

Hearing what the job was to be, Markham couldn't understand why a constant vigil was necessary. He asked if the commissioner had ordered it.

"No, he didn't," returned Cardona, "but people don't pick reasonable hours when they go screwy. From the way the commish talked, people are liable to barge in here any time of the day or night, yelling that they've found some whacky inventor.

"Even the precincts will be steering them our way, because a general order has been sent out. Where would I stand, if the commish got wind of a case before I reported it? That's why we're going to stick right here, one or the other of us."

With that, Joe sent Markham out to get supper and bring back sandwiches and coffee. Calming as he sat at his desk, the ace inspector began to hope that things would happen at odd hours of the night. Joe relished the thought of waking the commissioner with frequent calls from midnight until dawn.

It was dusk when Markham returned with sandwiches and coffee. Cardona had a mouthful of ham on rye when the telephone bell rang. He gestured for Markham to answer the call.

"First customer," stated Markham, as he hung up. "A guy named Truman dropped in at Smitty's precinct. Says he can tell us all about a batty inventor. They're sending Truman down here. He ought to show up in about five minutes."

Arriving with two uniformed policemen, Truman proved to be a tall, drab-faced man, who looked

somewhat nervous every time he tried to smile.

Cardona invited him to make himself comfortable. After the drab man had begun to smoke a cigarette, Joe remarked:

"Who's this inventor that you're worried about? Will we find him so dangerous that we ought to take along a net?"

Truman gave a genuine grin.

"He's Professor Orlio," he said. "Richard Orlio. He invents diving equipment. He's crawled into his bathysphere and won't come out of it."

"The bathy-which?"

"The bathysphere." Truman gave a circling gesture with his arms.

"It's a big ball, ten feet in diameter. They use it to go down to the bottom of the ocean."

"Where has Orlio got the thing?" queried Cardona. "In a drydock?"

Truman shook his head.

"It's upstairs in a storeroom," he said. "Over a printing shop."

Cardona had heard of cranks who built boats in their back yards, and then couldn't get them to the water. Orlio's case sounded similar. After making a few notes, Joe commented:

"I guess this Orlio is nuts, all right."

"You bet he's nuts!" exclaimed Truman, eagerly. "Do you know what he made the bathysphere out of? Beryllium!"

Cardona had heard the term before, but couldn't quite place it. Truman explained that beryllium was the lightest of all metals, including aluminum.

"Orlio made it light," snorted Truman, "so it could be transported easily. But it's got to be heavy, so it will sink. How do you think he intends to manage that? I'll tell you. He's got four holes in the top of the sphere, and he's going to pump compressed air into it, to give it weight!"

"Won't there be people in the thing?"

"Of course there will," returned Truman. "But old Orlio hasn't thought of what's going to happen to them. That's just another proof that he's gone nuts."

Cardona completed his notations. He was reaching for the telephone, to call the commissioner. Pausing, he asked in afterthought:

"Anything else?"

"Plenty!" assured Truman. "I told you that Orlio is in the bathysphere. Well, he's been in there four days. He crawled into the thing because the printers went on strike. He won't come out until they get back to work."

CARDONA shot a look at Truman, as the fellow paused to light a second cigarette from the first.

Glancing at Markham, Joe saw the burly detective sergeant rub his chin. Both Joe and Markham were swinging to the same idea: that perhaps Truman was a bit crazy himself.

"Tell me some more about Orlio," suggested Cardona. "Didn't you try to reason with him?"

"Yes, but it wasn't any use," returned Truman. "He wouldn't even listen to the princess, when she came around last night."

"What princess?"

"The Persian princess. Boy, was she something! She pleaded with old Orlio, begging him to finish his work. He just dug deeper into the bathysphere. If the thing had a cellar, he'd have headed for it."

Cardona's face was solemn, almost sympathetic, as he nodded. Then, soothingly, he remarked:

"Tell me some more about this Persian princess. Have you seen a lot of her?"

"Pretty near all of her," chortled Truman. "She was wearing a skirt with purple leggings, about as thick as cobwebs. She had strings of jewels around her neck. Her shoes were sort of like slippers and curled up at the tips."

"Did she talk to you, too?"

"No. Only to the professor." Again, Truman grinned. "I don't think she even saw me. What do you think of that?"

Cardona had his own thoughts about it. He reached over and clapped Truman on the shoulder.

"Thanks a lot, old man," said Joe. "Tell you what. You start ahead; I'll be right along. I want to see what this nut Orlio looks like inside his bathysphere."

The two officers caught Cardona's signal as Truman arose. They kept close to him as he went from the office, ready to grab him if he tried to make a break. As soon as the three were out of earshot, Cardona turned to Markham.

"No use in calling the commissioner yet," said Joe. "This guy Truman is the one that's nuts! There probably isn't any inventor named Professor Orlio. I'm going to check on it, though, just to make sure. I know that the commissioner expects me to report first and investigate later. But how can I do that, until I know there's something to report?"

Fifteen minutes after Cardona had gone, Markham received an unexpected call from Weston. The commissioner wanted to talk to Cardona. In a quandary, Markham finally stated that the inspector had just left, which caused Weston to ask why.

Muddled by the question, Markham decided to explain where Cardona had gone. He emphasized that Truman probably was crazy, but he gave the address of Orlio's place, which Cardona had learned while questioning Truman.

At the phone booth in the Cobalt Club, Commissioner Weston repeated the details to Lamont Cranston. He mentioned that Cardona had just left headquarters, not knowing that Markham had misgauged the time. When Weston named Orlio's address, Cranston's eyes took a sudden glint.

"We can get there first, commissioner," suggested The Shadow. "Why not take a cab out front, and be on hand when Cardona arrives?"

The idea pleased the commissioner. They left the club promptly and stepped into a cab that Cranston hailed. Soon, they were speeding to their destination, where Commissioner Weston expected some interesting developments.

The Shadow expected more. He foresaw the situation as a grim one, upon which life depended. Not just one life, but many. The curious case of Professor Orlio might bring exactly what The Shadow sought: a chance to thwart the schemes of Shiwan Khan!

## **CHAPTER XI. A TRAGEDY OF ERRORS**

WITH fifteen minutes' start, Cardona arrived at Orlio's ahead of The Shadow and Commissioner Weston, even though Joe's trip was some twenty blocks longer. The police inspector wasn't wasting any time. He wanted to find out whether or not Truman was crazy, so as to deal with the fellow accordingly.

As they swung the final corner, Cardona saw that Truman had informed him correctly on one point. The printers who worked in the shop on the ground floor were having some sort of strike. Men who wore big placards were standing on the sidewalk staring in through the window at others on the inside.

Alighting first, Cardona observed two types of pickets. Apparently, the printers themselves were engaged in a dispute over whether the strike was authorized. It must have been going on for a few days, as Truman specified, for most of the arguing pickets had unshaven faces.

The men inside looked worried. They were all ready to start the presses; a foreman was urging them to go ahead. But they wanted to see what happened outside, first. Too many men were picking up bricks, as if ready to heave them through the window.

Scuffles were starting among the arguing pickets. Cardona shoved a pair of men aside and started for the steps that led up to Orlio's place. He beckoned for Truman to follow him, and the fellow did. The two officers clambered from the car, remembering Cardona's order not to let Truman get away.

Sight of the uniforms brought yells from the strikers. They thought that the cops had come to scatter them. Instantly, brawling was forgotten. Both bands of pickets scattered of their own accord. Inside the printing shop, the insistent foreman won his point. The presses began to move.

They were thumping steadily, those presses, as Cardona and his companions went up the steep stairs to Orlio's premises. For a moment, Cardona thought the pounding sound came from an elevator; then one of the cops informed him what had happened below.

Cardona chuckled. Perhaps it was well that he did. Joe wasn't going to run into anything else that was funny; not for quite a while.

Truman pointed the way through a musty storeroom to a doorway. He said that the bathysphere was in the room beyond. Convinced that maybe he was going to see a bathysphere Cardona shouldered ahead and found one.

It was quite like Truman had described it - a hollow metal ball, ten feet in diameter. It glistened with a silvery tint, and above it Cardona saw the holes that had been mentioned. They were gouged upright, like corners of a square, a few feet below the summit of the great sphere.

The room itself wasn't much larger than the bathysphere. It had a small, square window in the opposite wall; but the only light in the room came from the large storeroom where Cardona stood, for darkness had settled out of doors.

Before Cardona could approach the metal ball, a door flipped downward from its side and a scrawny man popped into sight. He was white-haired, with unkempt beard, and his actions were very wild. Springing to the floor, he clapped both hands to his forehead and shrieked in high-piped tone:

"I can work again! Eureka! I can work again and my task is almost finished! I remember!"

Like an ape, he scrambled around the bathysphere, snatching at the gadgets on the top. He was tightening them, shrilling constantly:

"Wait - wait - give me a few minutes more!"

Cardona gave Orlio the few minutes that he wanted. Knowing that the scrawny professor had been cooped up for several days, he decided that the man would soon exhaust himself.

Cardona's hunch seemed justified, when Orlio slid down to the floor and flipped the metal door shut. Backing away from the bathysphere, he sagged, murmuring happily.

Catching Orlio, Cardona heard the man murmur:

"It is finished!"

"All right, professor," approved Joe, in a humoring tone. "You've done a good job. What you want is something to eat and a place to rest. Come along."

CARDONA was steering Orlio toward Truman and the waiting officers, when the man's scrawny figure went rigid. It seemed to swell, like a bundle of tightening muscles. Clapping his hands to his head, Orlio wrenched away.

It seemed as if his jerky actions were inspired by the thumps of the presses below.

"It's finished!" he screeched. "Finished, I tell you! Why do you ask me? Can't you hear me answer?"

Sharp eyes were staring from the scrawny face. Orlio's gaze was distant. The mad expression of his features indicated that he actually saw something, far away. Taking a look, Cardona spied only a brick wall, almost in front of the professor's nose.

Cackling gleefully, Orlio swept his arms wide and bounded about as he had before. He acted as if he had heard an answer to his shrieks.

"He's nuts, all right!"

With that assertion, Cardona grabbed for the human jumping jack. Slippery as an eel, Orlio twisted away. Bouncing from the bathysphere, he darted out into the larger room.

The cops tangled with him; despite his puny weight, Orlio dragged them along. Then, with a dipping dive, he was free of them. Wheeling toward the outer doorway, he shouted again:

"I hear! I shall obey!"

With that, Orlio thrust his hand behind his hip and yanked out a big, old-fashioned revolver. He flourished the antique weapon as he backed toward the door. His tone was a cackled threat, more than a warning.

"Don't try to stop me! You will regret it!"

He was backing toward the stairway door when arms grabbed him. Truman had sneaked to the exit

ahead of Orlio. Valiantly, the man was trying to suppress the maddened inventor. The officers drove forward to help. Orlio's gun came wagging upward at them.

Cardona yanked the cord of the dangling light that illuminated the room. The move was timely. The cops were diving for the floor, with Orlio trying to spot them as he struggled in Truman's clutch.

Thanks to the darkness that Cardona supplied, Orlio fired wide. Joe was making a low drive for the doorway when another shot came, muffled.

Something went thudding down the stairs. Halted by the door, groping vainly for Orlio, Cardona heard a chortle very close to him. The professor's tone was gleeful.

"It is done!" gloated Orlio. "My life work is completed! Where are the fools who said that I could not accomplish it? One is gone" - the words were chuckled - "and I shall find the others!"

Cardona knew the one that Orlio meant: Truman. It was the grappler's body that had thudded down the stairs. Orlio had managed to turn the gun on him and deliver a fatal shot. Loose again, the mad professor was looking for more victims.

He was sneaking somewhere, very close at hand. Cardona couldn't see him, for, quite oddly, the clanking of the presses seemed closer. The heavy thud-thud could have been in this very room; but, as Cardona groped about, it gradually dwindled.

Against the dimness of the little window in the next room, Cardona suddenly saw Orlio and made a grab for him. The officers sprang to their feet and joined the mad struggle. They could tell where it was by the sounds, but the darkness handicapped them later.

Orlio was slashing about with his revolver, shrieking that he would need his bullets later. No hands could stop that scrawny, lashing arm, that seemed inspired by some strength greater than the professor's own.

Cardona was managing to dodge the strokes, but the cops were taking them. Joe felt them drop away, though he couldn't hear them fall.

Cardona's head was pounding with a rising thud-thud-thud, louder than the presses below, which hadn't stopped. They made so much noise, those presses, that the printers couldn't hear the gunfire. Then the thudding ended. Only the presses kept up a steady throb.

Struggling furiously with the wiry professor, Cardona heard footsteps coming up the stairs.

Reeling across the floor, Cardona propelled Orlio to the inner door that opened into the bathysphere room. It was there that the professor landed a glancing blow, gave a gleeful cackle as Cardona staggered. Groggily rising on hands and knees, Joe heard a gloat, knew that Orlio had spotted him in the darkness.

A bullet was scheduled next. Cardona expected it, but the shot did not come. Instead, Orlio gave a frenzied shriek. Cardona heard the crazed professor stagger backward, held in the grip of an arriving foe.

Low, whispered, and sinister came an accompaniment to Orlio's disappointed screams. Cardona recognized it, knew that rescue had arrived.

It was the laugh of The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER XII. THE VANISHED TRAIL**

FACTS were pounding themselves through Cardona's head; details that jammed themselves into brief seconds. Truman had said that Orlio quit working when the printing shop had closed. He'd told the truth, as in everything else, Truman had.

Whatever his mania, Orlio gained the inspiration from the thumping presses. The first error in a tragic series was the mistake on the part of the pickets, when they thought the police were after them.

They had let the presses start again, and Orlio had gone back to work. Lacking only a few minutes to complete his crazy bathysphere, he had found the time he needed. No wonder he had gone berserk and tried to murder all intruders.

It didn't occur to Cardona that all of Orlio's actions were inspired by the restored control of Shiwan Khan. The chance closing of the printing shop had furnished a snag for the master mind who had made allowances for everything else. The thumping elevator in the Hotel Monolith was tuned to the pounding of the presses below Orlio's storeroom!

Cardona had something else to think about at the end of those crowded seconds. The Shadow was struggling with Orlio, trying to capture him alive. Knowing that even The Shadow might find difficulty with the crazed inventor, Cardona made for the little room.

At that moment, a flashlight glimmered. It belonged to Commissioner Weston; he turned the beam from the stairway door. Seeing the hanging bulb that Cardona had extinguished, Weston dashed forward and tugged the cord.

The glow showed the window in the little room. Orlio had reached it, was thrusting his scrawny body through. Weston saw Cranston trying to haul him back, with Cardona stumbling up to aid in the process.

Others saw that struggle, too, thanks to Weston's mistake in turning on the light.

Guns barked from outside. Orlio's body writhed, then slid back into the little room. Wheeling away from the sprawling figure of the inventor, The Shadow grabbed Cardona and hurled him to the floor, just as more shots blasted. Then, crouched low, Cranston stooped above Orlio's body.

The gaze that The Shadow turned toward Weston told that the bearded inventor was dead.

Cardona was staring about, totally amazed. He saw neither Cranston nor Weston. He was looking for something that should be in this room, but wasn't.

"The bathysphere!" he gulped. "It's gone!"

From the way his eyes went upward, Cardona apparently expected to see something the size of a young elephant. Blinking, he looked toward the little window and shook his head.

"Ten feet high," muttered Joe, "and ten feet wide. A big ball, made of metal. It couldn't have gone out through there."

Joe was too bewildered to connect the louder thumps that he had heard with the disappearance of the beryllium bathysphere. But The Shadow, looking round and about, saw immediately how the thing had gone.

This little room was an elevator. Someone had pushed an automatic switch, taking it to the ground floor while the fight was going on in the big room. The bathysphere had been rolled out into the rear alley, below the little window.

The elevator had been sent up again, arriving just before Cardona reeled Orlio toward the little room.

"Turn out the light, commissioner," said The Shadow, quietly. "We may see something interesting from the little window."

THE commissioner extinguished the light and crept into the elevator. Lifting his head, he peered out through the window. For a dozen seconds, he studied the darkness below; then he heard a rumble. A truck suddenly shot into sight, to swing for the corner. Street lights showed a bulky, rounded object in the center of the open truck.

The thing was the bathysphere, covered with a large sheet of canvas. Men were crouched beside it, staring back at the building they had left.

Shots rang from below. The men on the truck answered with quick-spurting guns. The truck was around the corner, away from immediate danger, but a cab was taking up the trail. Weston thought that there must be three men in the cab, from the rapidity with which shots issued from it.

"Come on, Cranston!" shouted Weston. "Let's get down there and dash after them!"

Hurrying for the stairs, Weston reached the bottom. He hurdled Truman's body and yelled at a patrol car that was pulling up. Climbing into the rear seat, the commissioner saw another man come dashing from the doorway and yanked him into the car, thinking it was Cranston.

It wasn't until the patrol car was on the move that Weston discovered his companion to be Joe Cardona. By then, they were around the corner and in the middle of another block. Regretfully, the commissioner decided that it was too late to go back and pick up Cranston.

They heard distant shooting, but lost it after several blocks. Realizing that the trail had vanished, Weston decided to return to Orlio's, anyway, and give the general alarm from there. The patrol car whisked them back to their starting point.

As they neared the rear alley, they came across two groggy cops.

The officers were the pair who had taken the battering from Orlio's gun. They had come downstairs, and found a rear way through to the alley. Weston gave a rueful grunt.

"That's the route we should have taken," he said to Cardona. "But it's too late. The trail is lost. Go into that printing shop, Cardona, and phone out an alarm. And tell those fools their presses are making so much noise that they didn't know when murder was happening right over their heads!"

Looking for Cranston, the commissioner discovered that his friend was gone. So was the cab that had brought them from the Cobalt Club. Weston hadn't told Cardona that it was Cranston who had rushed to Joe's rescue.

In the first place, Weston thought that Cardona knew who it was. Again, the commissioner did not realize how much Cranston's aid had meant to the ace inspector. Not only had The Shadow handled Orlio in the darkness; Weston had still been on the stairs when it happened.

There was still another reason why the commissioner let the Cranston matter drop. He was somewhat disappointed in his friend. He supposed that Cranston, somewhat overexerted, and perhaps alarmed by gunfire, had taken the cab and returned to the club or gone home.

Weston knew that Cranston enjoyed hunting big game; but elephants and tigers didn't fire back at people, the way crooks did. Cranston couldn't be blamed, if he didn't consider crook hunting as fun.



IT never occurred to Weston that Cranston had started downstairs ahead of him, and had found the rear door to the alley. It would have surprised the commissioner further, had he known that their cab was the one in the alley.

It had gone there as soon as the shots sounded from that spot, and had picked up Cranston as a passenger.

In fact, the three men in the cab had all been Cranston. The commissioner's estimate was a most complimentary one. Weston had never guessed that Cranston was The Shadow.

Nor had Joe Cardona. Finished with his telephone calls, the police inspector decided to keep certain facts to himself. There would be no use saying that The Shadow had sprung in to the rescue. The commissioner wouldn't believe it.

Funny, thought Joe, the way The Shadow had disappeared so rapidly. Yet Cardona had a good idea where he had gone.

Joe's hunch involved the cab that had pursued the crooks. He figured that The Shadow was in that cab; that he had stayed close enough to keep on the trail of the murderers who had stolen Orlio's bathysphere. It was a double hunch, and both guesses were correct.

Many blocks away, a light truck was dodging in and out of narrow streets, trying to shake off a cab that pursued it. In the truck was a huge hollow sphere. Though made of metal, it was light enough to roll every time the truck swung a corner.

Darkish men who formed the truck's crew were busy keeping the stolen bathysphere underneath its canvas. At the same time, they were taking turns to guard against attacks from the rear.

The cab did not overtake them. Purposely, it lagged behind, to make the Afghans think that it had lost sight of them. So far as the law was concerned, the trail of the truck had vanished. So had the trail of The Shadow.

He was no longer Cranston. The cab in which he rode was Moe's; it had been in readiness outside the Cobalt Club. Having managed to leave the police commissioner at Orlio's, The Shadow had produced his black garb from beneath the rear seat. Wearing cloak and hat, he was ready to leave the cab after the truck stopped and take up the trail on foot.

Vengeance against the Afghans could wait. The Shadow wanted them to reach their appointed destination and deliver Orlio's bathysphere. There was only one place where that valued prize could go: to the headquarters of Shiwan Khan.

Like Maybrell's high-speed fans, Orlio's huge sphere was something that Shiwan Khan wanted; would intrust to no one else. Trail's end promised to bring The Shadow face to face with the unfathomable Shiwan Khan!

### **CHAPTER XIII. STRANGE SNARES**

DURING his canny pursuit of the Afghan-manned truck, The Shadow kept on constant lookout for other cars that might close in about him. He knew the ways of Shiwan Khan; how the Oriental crime wizard took tricky precautions to cover every evil deed.

Possessed of limitless wealth, Shiwan Khan could buy all the help he needed. It was possible that he had bands of New York mobsters on the move, to intercept pursuers like The Shadow.

As the chase progressed, however, it became apparent that such was not the case. It followed, therefore, that Shiwan Khan had not expected his Afghans to encounter trouble.

He had probably sent the truck to Orlio's to pick up the bathysphere, whether it was completed or not. Unacquainted with Truman's visit to police headquarters, Shiwan Khan's messengers had arrived when they did through sheer coincidence.

They might have remained befuddled in the alleyway, if the printing presses hadn't started. Regaining contact with Orlio, Shiwan Khan had caught some mental picture of the trouble, and had responded with telepathic orders that caused the professor to behave in murderous fashion.

Through his victim, Shiwan Khan had tipped off his workers to hurry up their job!

The Afghans had killed Orlio and started their getaway. Shiwan Khan had faith in their ability to disappear when hunted. He was expecting overmuch, though, when he wanted them to dispose of a truck along with themselves, to say nothing of Orlio's bathysphere, which was bulky, despite its light weight.

From the way the truck was twisting, The Shadow knew that the Afghans were still trying to dodge away with it. They would have to do something smarter, if they wanted a clear path to Shiwan Khan's headquarters. A crisis was due, and The Shadow scented its immediate arrival when the truck swung from a side street into an alleyway, where its sides almost scraped the walls.

Moe extinguished the cab lights at The Shadow's order. As the cab nosed into the darkened alley, The Shadow saw another peculiarity. The buildings on either side had a connection overhead - a high brick archway, that the bathysphere must have grazed when it went beneath.

The fact betokened previous calculations on the part of Shiwan Khan. Ahead was the truck, halted in the depths of the alley, where Afghans were frantically trying to open an old gate, so that the truck could pass through.

The Shadow's gloved hand clamped Moe's shoulder, an order for the cabby to stop.

It was all too easy, up ahead. If these had been ordinary thugs, The Shadow would have told Moe to speed straight for the truck, while his cloaked chief opened fire. But it was better, in this case, to let the Afghans think that they were safe and untrailed.

They couldn't see the cab, where it had stopped in the shelter of the looming archway. The Shadow decided to fare ahead alone; to spring a surprise attack in the very midst of the darkish murderers. Silently, he swung from the cab.

The Shadow was past the front of the cab when something dropped from the archway. It must have dangled before it fell, for it landed with a very slight plop. In fact, the sound did not reach The Shadow, up ahead; but Moe heard it, for the thing struck just outside the window at his elbow.

Peering down into the space beside the cab, Moe made out a roundish shape that he almost mistook for the bathysphere, until the thing stretched toward him.

An instant later, the mammoth hands of a seven-foot giant were stretching into the cab. One came through the front window, the other through the back.

The huge Mongol, Hulagu, was on the job. He had come along with the truck.

SO huge were Hulagu's fists, so confident was he of his prowess, that he thought nothing of tackling two

adversaries at once, even with The Shadow included in the pair. But his crunching grip found only one: Moe Shrevnitz.

With a twisting wrench, Hulagu swung Moe out from behind the wheel and hauled him through the open window. The one hand that performed the move clutched clear around Moe's neck. The cabby couldn't even gargle a warning to The Shadow.

Moe did the best he could, though, and it was good enough. He kicked hard as he came through the window; his flailing feet rattled a tattoo against the cab door. Hearing the sound, Hulagu uttered a deep but muffled bellow, just as The Shadow lunged around from in front of the cab.

A spotlight gleamed from the truck. Its glare showed The Shadow, but Hulagu and Moe were out of sight. In a moment, The Shadow would also have been gone, if Hulagu hadn't found a way to stop him.

The Shadow was aiming an automatic, holding his fire temporarily, to avoid hitting Moe. Hulagu decided that if The Shadow wanted Moe, he could have him.

Crumpling the helpless cabby, the giant hurled him like a bag of straw, straight for the black-cloaked rescuer. The Shadow hadn't a chance to side-step that human missile. Nor did he attempt to do so. He wanted to break the force of the hurl, on Moe's account.

Though he spied Hulagu and noted the man's great bulk, The Shadow underestimated the force of the fling. Hulagu had hurled Moe with about three times the power that The Shadow considered humanly possible.

Hitting his chief, Moe's figure lifted The Shadow clear from the ground and landed him face up in the alley. Moe himself rolled a dozen feet beyond, but the force of his smash was broken.

Guns spat from the truck. The shots were wide. Indifferent gunners, the Afghans had settled Orlio with a volley, when he was framed in a lighted window. But it was a different matter, finding the blackened shape of The Shadow as it lay below the fringe of the spotlight's glow.

The Shadow told them where he was, but he sent the message with bullets. Half groggy, he had his head tilted back, his arms lying beyond. But even in a dazed condition, The Shadow could not ignore so obvious a target as the big, shining eye of a spotlight. As for shooting overhead, that was a method in which he was long trained.

When The Shadow shattered the spotlight with his third bullet, he settled the Afghan problem. Fearing for their own hides, worried lest shots would dent the valued bathysphere, the tribesmen did not linger. The gate was open; the truck roared through.

Hulagu was left alone to finish off The Shadow.

His catlike approach a contrast to his elephantine size, the Mongol crept toward where The Shadow lay. Guns silenced, The Shadow, too, was on the move, rising to hands and knees. He shook his head a few times to relieve the daze, then turned to listen for Hulagu. He sensed the Mongol's approach and lunged.

It was too late. Though gloved fingers were on gun triggers, shots were rendered futile when Hulagu's great paws drove The Shadow's fists straight upward. Bullets nicked the bricks on the archway, nothing more. Then Hulagu was handling The Shadow as a St. Bernard would treat a poodle.

CONTORTED in the giant's tremendous arms, The Shadow felt Hulagu's fingers pluck away the guns. The Mongol had a grip like a python; wrenching out of it was impossible. His only course was to clutch at his foe's throat - a remarkable achievement in itself, considering the way The Shadow's arms were

skewed about.

The counterattack surprised Hulagu, especially when he found he could not shake it away. Though he twisted The Shadow right and left, and nearly managed to tie him in a knot, those fingers wouldn't leave Hulagu's windpipe.

The Shadow's grip was his only chance for life. He clung to it, despite the torture that Hulagu provided.

At last, the giant had enough of the choking tactics. He clamped his own hands upon The Shadow's, with a grip that threatened to break the cloaked fighter's wrists and render his clutch useless.

As Hulagu relaxed his fists to get a firmer hold, The Shadow saw a chance to get away. Jamming his feet against Hulagu's knees, he made a backward flip, clear from the Mongol's grasp.

Hulagu was pouncing after him, pawing the darkness. The Shadow managed to stumble away from him; coming across a gun, he picked it up and fired its remaining shots. The cartridges did no more harm than blanks.

The Shadow hadn't an idea where Hulagu was. The shots gave him respite, though, for Hulagu, knowing that bullets could bite, made a distant scramble into the depths of the alley.

Someone was stirring close by. It was Moe Shrevnitz. He was whispering hoarsely that he had found a gun, which happened to be The Shadow's second weapon. Moe heard a sibilant laugh, weary of tone and forced. The Shadow had reached the cab and was summoning the driver.

Hopping to the wheel, Moe heard The Shadow mutter something about resuming the chase. Rather dazed himself, Moe thought that his chief was all right.

Tossing the gun into the back seat, Moe shoved the cab into reverse, backed it unsteadily out beneath the arch. At the street, he turned on the headlights.

The glare showed the alley. From the depths, Moe saw Hulagu hurtling forward. So immense did the giant seem, that Moe actually thought his forward crouch was necessary to get him underneath the arch. Moe gargled a warning, but The Shadow did not heed it. No shots came from the rear seat.

Remembering the former order, realizing that he couldn't battle Hulagu alone, Moe gave the cab a last jab backward, swung the wheel and shoved into low gear. He heard the door slam just before he started and thought that The Shadow had pulled it shut from within.

Then the cab was away, just as Hulagu lunged with both arms for the open window. The Mongol's previous tactics did not work. The whip of the cab was too speedy, too sudden. The windows caught Hulagu's arms and handled them like levers.

Spun away from the cab, the giant went whirling like a human windmill, across the curb.

He didn't give up the chase. Wrenching a chunk of broken stone from a house step, Hulagu hurled it as he would a pebble. The heavy missile caved in the back of the cab.

Hopping along the street with great strides, Hulagu snatched up an ash can and tossed it forty feet. It landed, clattering, just behind the cab.

Rounding one corner, Moe swung for the next one. He caught a last glance of Hulagu, a block behind, tearing a fire plug from its moorings. Hulagu didn't have a chance to use his new ammunition, for Moe sped out of sight.

Valiantly, the cabby tried to pick up the truck's trail, not realizing how good a start the Afghans had gained. Moe threaded through scores of blocks, scarcely seeing red lights when he ran right past them. Sagging at last through sheer exhaustion, Moe stopped the cab in the middle of a block.

Dizzy all during the drive, he hadn't an idea where he was, nor where he had come from. Everything was chaos in Moe's mind, except the fact that The Shadow was a passenger. Staggering out from behind the wheel, Moe tottered to the rear door and yanked it open.

The sallow light of a street lamp showed only a loose gun lying on the floor. There was no sign of a passenger, though the whole rear seat was revealed.

Moe had made that frantic trip without The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER XIV. THE MISSING SHADOW**

BACK in the blackened alley, a figure was crawling painfully beneath the archway. It was The Shadow, and his creeping progress was actually a limp. Racked by the wrenching hands of Hulagu, his limbs seemed out of their sockets, his ribs constricted so tightly that he could hardly breathe.

The Shadow's condition explained why he was where he was. He had actually gotten into the cab, but had lacked the strength to stay there. Moe's quick-jolted reverse had tumbled The Shadow through the unlatched door, just before the cab had pulled away past the mouth of the alley.

Slamming automatically with the cab's motion, the door had given Moe the impression that his chief was with him. Hulagu had held to the same idea when he chased the cab. Pursuit failing, the disgruntled Mongol had returned to Shiwan Khan without taking a route past the alley.

Those circumstances were unknown to The Shadow. Anticipating Hulagu's return, he was trying to get to some place where he could barricade himself. At intervals, The Shadow fumbled with the gun he carried, hoping to reload it. His hands were too numb to do the work.

Reaching the gate, The Shadow found it open and crawled into the space beyond. It was a little court, wide enough for a truck to pass, with street lights shining ahead. Avoiding the glow, The Shadow found an old door in the wall. Managing to thrust his gun beneath his cloak, he gripped the doorknob with both hands and squeezed.

The door gave. Half crawling, half rolling, The Shadow entered in a little room, found a table in the darkness and dragged himself to his feet. As he came entirely clear of the door, it went shut on a spring hinge. As the door latch clicked, the room flooded with light.

Cobwebbed walls, dust on the plain furnishings, indicated that the room was a janitor's office, fallen into disuse. Its self-closing door, with the automatic light switch, proved that it had been converted to some other purpose.

Only one person could have so devised it: Shiwan Khan. This room was the superplotter's trap for The Shadow, in case Hulagu failed. Shiwan Khan had taken the most likely place where The Shadow, if crippled, would seek refuge, and had turned it into a potential murder chamber.

He had supplied the murderer, of course. Shiwan Khan was a stickler when it came to details.

Facing The Shadow was a gorgeous girl, shapely and alluring in the scanty Persian costume that she wore. Her beauty, however, did not intrigue The Shadow. He could reasonably have regarded the girl as hideous, for she had come here to be The Shadow's executioner.

In her hand the girl held a silver-barreled pistol, which glimmered dully, compared to the jeweled girdle which encircled her slender body. Gold sash, purple pantaloons and curled slippers completed her Oriental costume.

She could well have been a Persian princess, the product of an age when savage motives could inspire the most civilized of ladies. For her eyes were fixed upon The Shadow with a hateful glare. Her lips were set with a tight determination, matched by the tension of her slender trigger finger.

She was waiting, ready to fire the fatal shot the moment that The Shadow moved. Like a hunter trapped by a ferocious jungle cat, her cloaked prey realized that a gesture would mean death. This girl was under the control of Shiwan Khan; set, like a human mechanism, to act with clockwork precision when the cue arrived.

His muscles weakening, The Shadow knew that he would soon waver, and thereby give his own death signal. Keeping his hands pressed wide against the wall, he tried to prevent his coming sway. His thoughts came clearer as the moments passed. For the first time, he actually studied the girl.

She was not a Persian. Her face looked darkish, because her back was toward the light. But her shoulders and her arms were whiter; so were the hips that showed above the fringe of the loosely tied gold sash.

His face obscured by the shading brim of his slouch hat, The Shadow showed no visible motion of his lips as he pronounced the name:

"Marjorie Cragg!"

A GLEAM came to the girl's fixed eyes, a quiver rippled her statuesque body. It was as if she had heard a voice from far away - a ghostly tone creeping out of the forgotten past.

Again, The Shadow spoke the name. His tone was louder, almost sinister. It had the touch of a rebuke. The girl's finger relaxed; her lips opened as she tried to speak.

"You are Marjorie Cragg -"

"Yes!" The girl trembled violently. "Yes! I am!" She paused, her shudders indicating her effort to discard an acquired personality. "I am -"

At that moment, The Shadow's strength failed him. His hands slipped from the wall. His sagging motion jolted the girl mentally back into the character of Princess Dunyazad. Her hand tightened; her finger found the trigger and pressed it.

Had she been wholly Princess Dunyazad, Marjorie would not have heard the gunshot that echoed through the room. When she came here, she had been totally under the influence of Shiwan Khan. The Shadow had broken the mental shackles that held her, except for the one cue that forced her action.

The shot delivered, Marjorie was her own self again. The roar of the pistol completed the work that The Shadow had commenced.

A very horrified girl was staring at a smoking gun that lay loosely in her trembling hand. The silver pistol clattered to the floor, as Marjorie's eyes turned toward the wall and saw a huddled, motionless figure in black.

"I killed him!"

It was Marjorie's voice; not the forced tone of Princess Dunyazad. Stumbling forward, Marjorie sank to her knees beside the victim. As she sobbed, tears streaked her face. The blur that came to her eyes made the whole scene shimmer. She thought that the black-cloaked figure had moved. Marjorie gave a joyous gasp.

At that moment, The Shadow did move. He propped himself upon one elbow and managed to speak. He wanted to learn Marjorie's story, to learn the clues that she could give. But the effort was too much. The Shadow sagged.

By then, the girl had spied a bullet hole in the wall. Hazily remembering her action with the gun, she realized that The Shadow had collapsed before she fired. He had spoken to her then, had called her by name. That was why she had delayed her shot. The Shadow had dropped below the gun level when Marjorie pressed the trigger.

The shock of the experience helped her. She was able to recall bits of the false part that she had played, as Princess Dunyazad. Eyes half shut, Marjorie could picture the sallow face of Shah Nikwan floating in front of her. She shuddered, wondering why she had not detested the man.

Marjorie's thoughts went to The Shadow.

She knew that Shah Nikwan - if such his name chanced to be - had plotted the death of The Shadow. She was to have been the instrument in murder. As amends, she must find some way to get The Shadow to safety.

Marjorie couldn't remember how she had reached this room. She looked at the door that The Shadow had entered, then shook her head. Across the room, she saw another door. It was the right one.

When she helped The Shadow to his feet, he responded. He still had strength, but he needed guidance. She piloted him out through the far door; it swung shut after they passed, and from the click that sounded Marjorie knew that the lights had been automatically extinguished.

They were in a little courtyard, similar to the one from which The Shadow had entered.

Letting The Shadow lean against a wall, Marjorie stepped slowly toward the street. She felt terribly conspicuous in her featherweight costume, for she could feel the cool night breeze sweeping from her shoulders to her hips. Marjorie paused, clenching her hands tightly.

She found that she was carrying the pistol. She had picked it up, probably inspired by the fact that The Shadow clutched a gun. Tucking the silvery weapon into her sash, Marjorie took a few steps forward.

She drew back as a car wheeled toward her. It swung into the alley; pressed against the wall, she hoped she would not be seen. Then came the driver's voice, in a peculiarly foreign accent:

"I have come for you, princess!"

MARJORIE stepped toward the car, wondering what to do next. She repressed a scream as a hand clutched her arm. She realized almost instantly that the hand was The Shadow's.

As she opened the door, he released his grip and eased into the rear of the car, where he settled silently upon the floor.

As soon as Marjorie was in the car, it backed from the little court. After a trip of about a dozen blocks, the car stopped by an entrance to a tall building.

Marjorie watched the driver; he did not budge. She opened the door - felt The Shadow's shoulder graze her ankles as he worked out into the darkness. Marjorie followed. The car pulled away.

The outside air had strengthened The Shadow. Marjorie helped him into the building; an elevator was waiting. Deciding that she was to take it, she guided The Shadow along. At moments she hesitated, wondering if the course would be the best one. It was The Shadow who ended her hesitation. He kept urging her forward.

Starting when Marjorie closed the door, the elevator carried its passengers up to a high floor. The door slid open; Marjorie saw a deserted corridor and recognized it as something in a dream, particularly because of the open door that waited at the other end.

Supporting The Shadow as he stepped along, Marjorie reached the open room and closed the door behind them.

She knew this room.

It was where she had lived for days as Princess Dunyazad, with a maid named Hayat, who, fortunately, was absent. Next to it was another room, an ordinary hotel room, that was not furnished in this lavish Persian style. She urged The Shadow toward the connecting door. It opened.

The room beyond was black. The Shadow seemed to welcome it. He paused, though, steadying himself against the doorway. In weary tone, he asked:

"What place is this?"

"The Hotel Monolith," replied Marjorie. "But a dangerous man controls everyone who lives here. He calls himself Shah Nikwan."

The Shadow responded with a whispered laugh.

"His name," he told Marjorie, "is Shiwan Khan! Be careful what you say to him. If you meet with danger, summon me."

The door closed, but Marjorie could see The Shadow waver as he shut it. Alone in the Persian room, she was tempted to knock and learn if he needed aid. With the pistol in one hand, she raised the other. Hesitating before she rapped, she was startled to hear knockings!

But not from the connecting door. Marjorie suddenly realized that the raps were from the hallway. Fearfully, she crossed the room; gathering nerve, she pulled the door wide.

On the threshold stood the very man she did not want to meet. She had hoped that it was Hayat who had knocked, but luck was against her. Marjorie Cragg was faced by Shiwan Khan!

## **CHAPTER XV. INTO THE PAST**

OF all the times when the pretended Shah Nikwan had called on the so-called Princess Dunyazad, this was the only one when his keen vision was lacking. The girl knew that he was Shiwan Khan; it was logical that he should have recognized her as the old Marjorie Cragg.

Instead, he missed the self-betraying expression on Marjorie's face. Believing her still to be a dupe, Shiwan Khan grabbed the first thing that caught his eye: the pistol that Marjorie carried. Cracking it open, he saw that its single cartridge had been fired.



"You killed him!" exclaimed Shiwan Khan, gleefully. "You have done well, Princess Dunyazad!"

By the time the compliment was spoken, Marjorie had gained a sham composure. Spared the ordeal of meeting Shiwan Khan's gaze, she rallied to her part.

"I obeyed your order," said Marjorie, forcing her tone. "I shall always obey your orders, Shah Nikwan."

Their eyes met. Marjorie was steeled for it. The greenish gleam in Shiwan Khan's eyes was something monstrous, but it expressed elation. He was too enthused to indulge in his usual sharp scrutiny, whereby he studied the innermost thoughts of his dupes.

"I leave you, princess," stated Shiwan Khan, with a bow. "There are matters to which I must attend. After that, I shall return."

Bowing in the smug manner of Shah Nikwan, the master plotter left, taking the pistol with him. Returning to his own apartments, he gave orders to his Afghan servants, then entered a room that was draped with golden curtains.

Hulagu was there, looking very glum. Shiwan Khan addressed the huge Mongol, with a tinkly chuckle.

"You were wrong, Hulagu," said Shiwan Khan. "The Shadow did not escape in the cab. He tricked you and remained in the alley. I was sure that he must have, from your description of the way you treated him."

A furious glare swept over Hulagu's face. He wished that he had treated The Shadow even worse.

"It worked as I planned," continued Shiwan Khan, displaying the pistol. He gave his hand a graceful gesture, as if in a farewell. "We have solved the problem of The Shadow."

He stepped to a corner, raised a curtain, and drew out two oblong boxes of fine mahogany. Each box measured about a foot across, and they matched perfectly. Shiwan Khan set them on a taboret.

"These are needed for tomorrow," declared Shiwan Khan, "after we have dealt with Felber as we did with Maybrell and Orlio. Our real task is just ahead, Hulagu. I shall need you."

The Mongol's glum expression faded.

"You will share my glory," continued Shiwan Khan. "The others, they are nothing. But you are my right arm, Hulagu, and my sword, as well. It is the sword that strikes down, as you struck down our enemy, The Shadow.

"After the sword, the poniard. It takes the dagger, Hulagu, to end the life of the vanquished foe. Princess Dunyazad was the dagger; that was all. We shall let them find The Shadow, in the death room where he lies. They will not discover him until long after we have left here, Hulagu."

For the first time, Hulagu spoke, in his ugly, muffled tone. His glary eyes showed malice, as he asked:

"We shall take the princess with us?"

"No, Hulagu," replied Shiwan Khan. "We shall let them find her, also. Dead, by her own hand! But not until after we have completed our real task. Until then, I still may need her."

UNAWARE of Shiwan Khan's new plans concerning her, Marjorie was pacing the Persian room, stopping at the windows, where she gazed at the lights of the city. For the first time since she had become Princess Dunyazad, she wanted freedom.

All that kept her here was her hope that she could protect The Shadow; but with the passing minutes, Marjorie realized that she could do but little, if a crisis came. It would be better, she finally decided, if she attempted an escape.

If she succeeded in leaving the hotel, she could bring aid. If not, her attempt would at least be helpful to The Shadow. It might give him a chance to stagger to freedom, while Shiwan Khan's men were capturing her.

She couldn't leave in this Oriental garb. Her plan was to find a way to the floor below, then go down through the hotel, instead of by Shiwan Khan's private route. Fortunately, one of her suitcases was in the closet of this room; she had seen Hayat put it there.

It was an unlocked suitcase. They had taken the keys to all the others. Luckily, it contained the clothes that Marjorie needed. She stepped to the closet to get it; paused there, listening to sounds beyond the outer door, which was close by.

Men were in the corridor, moving something. At times, the sounds came closer; at last they dwindled.

Marjorie decided to hurry. Eagerly, she removed her Persian trappings, which did not take her long.

She felt a surge of freedom, the moment she was relieved of those garments. Pushing them aside, she tugged the closet door. She found the suitcase and opened it.

The suitcase was quite empty.

Kneeling beside the closet door, Marjorie realized how she had been tricked. This was Shiwan Khan's way of telling her that escape was useless. Listlessly, she reached for the Persian costume. The mere touch of the garments harrowed her. Shrinking away, she stared at the jeweled decorations.

Emeralds predominated. They reminded her of the green, evil eyes that belonged to Shiwan Khan.

Marjorie realized her full plight, designed by Shiwan Khan. As herself, she would never have courage to put on those flimsy garments, once she had discarded them, for they belonged to Princess Dunyazad.

When Shiwan Khan returned, Marjorie could not answer his rap. He would send Hayat in, to find her in the midst of scattered proof that she was no longer a dupe.

That learned, Shiwan Khan would doubt everything, including the supposed death of The Shadow. Steeling herself, Marjorie tried to gather up the exotic costume. Her will power weakened instantly. It would be impossible to resume that hated garb.

Unless she could again believe that she was Princess Dunyazad! The inspiration horrified her; nevertheless, it was the only way. The opportunity was present, for the aeolian harp lay beside the window, which was closed.

She had nerve enough to open the window; rising, she stepped toward it and raised the sash. A breeze stirred the harp strings.

There was rapture in the rising rhythm of those chords. They drifted dreamily; fading, they produced a delicate harmony. Turning from the window, Marjorie gathered up the Oriental costume.

Never had silk seemed so lovely, jewels so brilliant. Adorning herself with the splendid trappings, Marjorie sought the divan and reached for the narghile.

She was smoking the pipe contentedly when Shiwan Khan rapped at the door. It was Princess Dunyazad who graciously requested Shah Nikwan to enter. She spoke in the language of Persia.

A SLITTED smile was present on the face of Shiwan Khan when he made his entering bow. He was pleased when he heard the strains of the wind harp. He thought the playing of that instrument to be the idea of Princess Dunyazad; not of Marjorie Cragg.

No wonder. It was Princess Dunyazad who returned his smile. Marjorie's brief respite from that strange part was ended. Voluntarily, she had returned to the servitude of Shiwan Khan. Her memory of a brief escape from mental bondage had effaced itself.

Shiwan Khan had brought the silver pistol. He showed the princess that the gun was loaded, then gave her the weapon. Meeting the girl's fixed, wide-eyed gaze, Shiwan Khan spoke slow, emphatic words:

"Keep this pistol always. The time shall come when you will need it. Then you will respond to my command. Remember!"

Marjorie did not nod. Her eyes retained their hypnotic stare as she repeated:

"Remember. Yes, Shah Nikwan, I shall remember."

The interview completed, Shiwan Khan departed, still wearing his pleased smile. He had accomplished exactly what he wanted, so he believed. He expressed that opinion to Hulagu, who awaited him in the golden room.

"The Persians," affirmed Shiwan Khan, "have a civilization which is merely skin-deep. In it, the barbarian, even the savage, sleeps but lightly beneath the cloak of culture. I am glad" - he chuckled dryly - "that Princess Dunyazad is a Persian. It will serve well in the future."

It happened that Princess Dunyazad was thinking of the past. Alone in the sumptuous room that fitted her assumed character, Marjorie had risen from the divan. Holding the pistol, she spoke the words:

"I shall remember."

Stepping to the connecting door, the girl opened it. Every vestige of Marjorie's true personality had vanished. She was every inch barbarian - a savage princess bent upon redeeming a forgotten cause.

Against the glow from the room behind her, she was a revelation of shapely beauty, her clinging raiment a mere haze that intensified her alluring figure. Soft was the voice of Princess Dunyazad. Her eyes sparkled as she turned them toward the light; her lips wore a sweet smile above her uplifted chin.

Her left hand was resting against the doorway. Her right pressed lightly toward her graceful hip. Partly hidden, that hand was slipping downward, carrying her sash with it. A totally unconscious action, so it seemed, until the loosened sash fell away.

That moment was designed. The girl whirled in from the doorway, swinging to the left, where her toying fingers had found the light switch. Her right hand swept into sight with the silver-barreled pistol, which had been hidden in the sash.

The entire room was within the view of her glaring eyes, with the pistol muzzle following her gaze. No victim, lulled by the sight of unfolding loveliness, could possibly have anticipated that change from beauty to savagery.

Doom was due, except for an existing victim. Halting her whirl, the murderous girl stood rigid. The flare

faded from her eyes; their gaze became fixed. Lips that spread for a triumphant snarl became straight and expressionless.

This wasn't the scene that Princess Dunyazad expected. Instead of a hotel room cluttered with luggage, the place was a Persian boudoir fitted with rugs and cushions. Marjorie's trunk and suitcases were gone, so was the wearied, black-cloaked fighter that the girl had hidden here.

SHIWAN KHAN had ordered his Afghans to change the decorations in this room. They were the men that Marjorie had heard moving about, providing new furnishings to enlarge the suite assigned to Princess Dunyazad.

It was a reward from Shah Nikwan, a token of pretended esteem because Princess Dunyazad had settled the problem of The Shadow.

By that action, Shiwan Khan had further preserved the life of the foe that he already regarded dead. Forced to some move by the arrival of the Afghans, The Shadow had somehow managed to disappear along with the furniture and luggage.

In the newly arranged room, there wasn't a spot where The Shadow might lie hidden. No crannies of any size existed; none even large enough to suit a creature so small as the Persian cat that came strolling in from the other room, to rub itself against Marjorie's silk-draped ankles.

Not being herself, Marjorie was unamazed. As Princess Dunyazad, she picked up the fallen sash, tied it about her smooth waist and tucked the unfired pistol in its folds.

Again, The Shadow had melted away in darkness, to avoid a seeking killer inspired by Shiwan Khan!

## **CHAPTER XVI. PATHS UNSHADOWED**

THE tragic death of a second crazed inventor was meat for the New York Classic. Added to the story was the angle of positive crime. Maybrell's death could still be classed as accident or suicide. Not Orlio's, however.

Perhaps chance had brought those shots from the alley. The police were hunting up the pickets who had fled from the printing shop, arresting them on a murder charge. Most of them had been gathered in, all swearing innocence.

In handling the story for the Classic, Clyde Burke supplied the gravy that went with the meat. He poured it on thick. Murder or what not, Richard Orlio had brought it on himself, by his madness. The claim that an epidemic of deranged genius had struck New York was something that people could actually believe.

The Classic had published descriptions of Maybrell's high-speed fans, with statements from experts, who could see no purpose in such lightweight devices. But Orlio's bathysphere offered greater scope.

A sketch of it appeared with detailed diagrams, with a caption entitling the bathysphere as "Orlio's Folly." A beryllium globe, light enough to float on the ocean like a rubber ball, could not feasibly be used for exploring the ocean's depths. Even if it were hung with tons of weights, its thin shell couldn't stand the strain when submerged.

More conservative newspapers were advancing the theory that Orlio was experimenting with the tensile strength of beryllium; that he wanted to prove the wonder metal could resist the pressure of deep-sea journeys. Such a theory did not have a chance. The Classic spiked it in a later edition.

Why, the Classic asked, had Orlio constructed a complete bathysphere, equipped to carry human

observers, if he merely wanted to test the metal used? The bathysphere had a watertight door and windows, according to Cardona's firsthand description of the thing.

Who had stolen the bathysphere?

Someone as crazy as Orlio, according to the article that Clyde Burke wrote. Another mad inventor was probably in the picture. The epidemic was spreading to the point where crazed men were declaring open season on their fellows.

No one could dispute that point; not with the slender evidence at hand. It actually was the best portion of Clyde's story, for it served a hidden purpose.

It kept the trail away from Shiwan Khan.

Until they heard from The Shadow, Clyde and other agents were doing their utmost to stifle any talk of a mysterious figure from the Orient, who might have uses for such crackpot inventions as Maybrell's electric fans and Orlio's bathysphere.

The agents knew that their chief was missing. His life, if he still possessed it, might depend upon their ability to maintain the existing situation.

Yet the agents could not remain idle. They knew that other lives were threatened. Unable to link Marjorie with either Maybrell or Orlio, they came to the correct conclusion that another inventor must be somewhere in the picture; that his life, like the girl's, might soon be terminated by Shiwan Khan.

It was their hope to find the trail, and with it gain some way to reach The Shadow, the only person who could hope to fully block the schemes of Shiwan Khan.

APPOINTING himself as a committee of one, Rutledge Mann went to the Cobalt Club and sought out Commissioner Weston. They had met before; Weston knew that Mann was Cranston's broker.

When Mann stated that Cranston had not called at the office to complete the purchase of some important bonds, Weston began to wonder what had happened to his friend.

The commissioner took Mann into his confidence, was telling him all angles of the Orlio case, when another visitor was announced. The arrival was Vic Marquette, a Federal agent, in from Washington.

A mustached man with an expressionless face, Marquette was taciturn, until he learned that Weston and Mann were talking about Cranston. Then Vic spoke his piece.

"Cranston is the man I've come to see," said the Fed. "I'm here at the suggestion of Senator Releston. Some time ago, Cranston helped us prevent the theft of some important military secrets. We may need his services again."

Weston ventured a question. "Do you mean that Maybrell and Orlio were working upon inventions that could be used in warfare?"

Marquette shook his head.

"Not a chance!" he said. "I've talked with experts who say that both those guys were crazy. What bothers us" - he was drawing a copy of the Classic from his pocket - "is this epidemic stuff. We're afraid it may be real, wild though it seems. We're worried about certain persons who have invented things of actual value."

"Suppose that one of them should go nuts" - from Vic's tone, it was apparent that he was thinking of a particular person - "and let out something that nobody is supposed to know. We'd have real trouble on our hands. Trouble so bad that we might not be able to rectify it."

Sitting back, Vic pondered. He hadn't stated the most important reason why he wanted to talk to Lamont Cranston. It was Vic's intention to enlist The Shadow's aid in a most important matter. He knew, from past experience, that Cranston was one man who had some way of communicating with The Shadow.

"I don't know where you can find Cranston," declared Weston, soberly. "He was with me last night, at Orlio's, and he disappeared immediately after the trouble there. From what Mann tells me, it appears that Cranston may be missing. Mann" - Weston gestured toward his companion - "happens to be Cranston's broker."

There was silence, while Vic's eyes showed prolonged meditation. Suddenly, the Fed swung to Mann with the question:

"Do you know a chap named Harry Vincent?"

Mann nodded. Harry was one of The Shadow's agents; the oldest, in point of service. Only Burbank, the contact man who played a passive part, had been with The Shadow longer than Harry.

"Where can I reach Vincent?"

"At the Hotel Metrolite," replied Mann, in answer to Vic's question. "I am quite positive that he is in town."

VIC MARQUETTE made an abrupt departure. Rutledge Mann knew why. The Fed had learned one fact that very few people knew: namely, that Harry Vincent worked for The Shadow. Often, Vic's path had crossed Harry's, in cases where The Shadow had co-operated with the law.

Unable to find Cranston, Marquette had decided to see Vincent, the only other person - so far as Vic knew - who might be able to reach The Shadow.

Rather impressed with Mann, Commissioner Weston invited the investment broker to have dinner with him. They had just finished their meal, when Joe Cardona appeared, accompanied by a serious-faced man who wore large gold-rimmed spectacles. Mann started to take his leave, but Weston told him to stay.

Cardona introduced the serious man as Dr. Philip Buffton, a nerve specialist. He let the physician do the talking.

"I have come in reference to the subject of crazed inventors," declared Buffton, importantly. "All talk of an epidemic is tommyrot, but very regrettable. It is quite possible that it may influence persons already on the border line of insanity, should they hear of it."

"Do you know of any such cases?" asked Weston, quickly. "We are anxious to learn of them."

"I have heard of one," declared Buffton. "A young man named Howard Felber is working on some sort of automotive device that has perplexed his associates. A while ago, they were worried over his mental condition."

"Do you know where Felber is?"

Dr. Buffton nodded.

"We shall have to stop at my office," he stated. "My secretary has left, and the address is in my files. I didn't happen to think of Felber's case until I was driving downtown. The newsboys were shouting about another mad inventor. Their cries stimulated my recollection."

The commissioner decided that they would go to Buffton's office. He asked Mann to go along; the broker hesitated, not wanting to overdo his new acquaintance with Weston. Then Buffton made a statement that settled the matter. After hearing it, Mann had to go along.

"According to the last report," stated the physician, "Felber had improved. But that was before this so-called epidemic started. Since then, it has been impossible for me to learn more about the case, because the person who informed me has gone away."

"I preferred to wait until she returned, as she did not tell Felber that she was consulting me. But she has gone on a three-week cruise, and the time may be too long. Perhaps you have heard of the young lady in question. She is a radio singer - Miss Marjorie Cragg."

The Shadow's newspaper campaign had worked. Through Clyde's articles in the Classic, the needed link had turned up. Crime's coming threat was known in advance.

But The Shadow was not here to learn it!

The thought distressed Rutledge Mann, but it steeled him to a purpose. He knew that he would have to do what little he could, to make up for The Shadow's absence. How soon the stroke would come, Mann could not guess.

Only one person could have told him.

By a window, high in the Hotel Monolith, Shiwan Khan was engaged in deep concentration. His green eyes dilated as an elevated train rumbled below. Rising, he let his hideous features relax into calmness, then summoned Hulagu.

"All is ready," announced Shiwan Khan. "Send out the Afghans, Hulagu; then remain here. Do not disturb me, as further concentration will be needed at important moments. I shall continue to use the thought control that I have so perfectly established."

Relaxed by the window, Shiwan Khan eyed a squatty, tight-closed building far below. It was the sealed garage where the Afghans kept the hired truck. Even Shiwan Khan could not spy the creeping dark men as they approached the place, but he saw the truck wheel from the squatty building and roll away beneath the elevated structure.

Another expedition was on its way; in this, the third of his peculiar enterprises, Shiwan Khan expected no opposition. If his Afghans met with a challenging figure in black, they would know it for a ghost and nothing more.

The ghost of The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER XVII. SCHEME OF DEATH**

HOWARD FELBER was standing beside the chassis of the crazy-looking motor vehicle that still occupied the center of his garage workshop.

He was more haggard than ever; his clothes, hands and hair were a mass of grime. So was the light-hued beard that sprouted from his face. Those grease-streaked whiskers were nearing full-fledged proportions.

Casey and Jim were watching him from a corner beside a junk pile. Their faces were beard-stubby, too. Their taut nerves had reached the limit of endurance. Felber's constant mutters drowned the whispers of the mechanics. Between them, Casey and Jim were agreeing that it was time the farce should end.

Creeping from the corner, they approached Felber, hoping to trap him unawares. The thing that stopped them was the rumble of a passing el train. During that roar, Felber clapped both greasy hands to his forehead and stared upward with wild, bulging eyes.

"Hold it," advised Jim, gripping Casey's arm. "He's having another fit. Better wait until he calms."

With that, a strange thing happened. Felber drew both grimy hands down across his face. Pressure seemed to ease his eyes back into their sockets. His hands wiped the haggard expression from his features. Drawn past his chin, those hands dropped to his sides as Felber's whole frame relaxed.

Turning about, Felber saw Jim and Casey, gave them a mild smile through his beard. He greeted them as if seeing them for the first time after a long absence.

"Hello, boys!"

The mechanics gawked. Felber's return to normalcy surprised them more than his strange actions. They had become used to his crazed behavior.

"Something went wrong with me," declared Felber, stroking his forehead. "But I've snapped out of it. Say" - he was rubbing his whiskers, dubiously - "I must have been goofy for a long while, wasn't I?"

It was Jim who gulped the answer: "A couple of weeks, boss."

Felber shook his head. He gazed curiously at the chassis, with its four wheels askew at different angles. Half laughing, he asked:

"Was this thing my idea?"

The mechanics nodded. Apparently, Felber had no recollection of his invention. Together, Jim and Casey explained the intricacies of the four-wheel drive, with the triple shafts that went to each wheel.

"I must have been woozy," declared Felber, ruefully. "Does the thing run?"

"It ought to," said Jim. "But if you ever got it started, there'd be no way to stop it!"

FELBER strolled over toward the wall. There, he saw another motor, an array of shafts, like those on the chassis. Handling the light-weight rods, he exclaimed:

"These are a beryllium alloy! The stuff costs like all blazes! Who bought it?"

The mechanics told him that he had.

"Don't worry, boys," decided Felber. "I'll get most of my money back. This isn't ordinary junk."

He picked up a large hollow shaft. He noted that it was about four feet long, that there were several others like it in the stack. He looked at the chassis and nodded. These outer shafts were the right length.

He was puzzled, though, to find that shafts of the next diameter were longer, approximately eight feet. As for the slender, solid shafts that lay in the discarded pile, they were a dozen feet in length.

"Why did I get these extra lengths?" inquired Felber. "Did I intend to cut them shorter?"



"We figured you did," replied Casey. "You had them spread all over the place, testing them. But when you got working on the motor, you shoved this whole batch aside and began to work with standard-sized shafts."

"You kept talking about strain," added Jim, "and you said a lot about torque. There's a lot of other gadgets in this junk pile, too. Stuff that you fooled with, then chucked away."

Felber wasn't surprised. His success as an automotive engineer depended largely on his love for experimental work, in which he discarded much, before choosing little. Evidently, his ingenuity had been working at par or better during his period of mental chaos.

He was frowning, trying to catch a few thoughts from the whirl that had dominated him. Seating himself on the chassis, he rested his chin in both hands and stared toward the junk pile. His eyes lighted up as an elevated train rolled by.

The uneasy mechanics were ready to grab him if his former mood returned. But Felber showed no signs of reverting to his mania. Instead, he seemed to have captured the thoughts he sought.

"I remember," he said slowly. "I am to send the unused parts away, along with the extra motor. As for this creation" - he gestured to the chassis - "I shall keep it. How would you boys like to test it some day?"

"Good enough," returned Jim, with a grin, "if we ship it out to the middle of a prairie, first. We couldn't run it around the block, the way you wanted."

"We talked you out of that idea, boss," added Casey. "Jim kept stalling while he filled the gas tank, and I argued with you about other things until you forgot that you wanted a test."

"You must have had to humor me a lot," decided Felber. "But that's all over. I don't know where I picked up this fool idea, but it's out of my system."

He strode across the garage, opened the little door at the back wall.

"Truckmen are coming for the junk," he said. "Give them a hand with it."

Both mechanics stared. They couldn't remember any time when Felber had left the garage to call up truckmen. Felber was smiling, though, quite normally, as the mechanics stared at each other. It was their turn to scratch their heads.

"I arranged for the truck to come," declared Felber. "Don't you remember? Let me see" - he was stroking his chin - "well, I can't just recall when I did it, but the truck ought to show up very soon. You'll see."

Jim and Casey heard before they saw. Returning to the chassis, Felber had scarcely seated himself before a clatter sounded in the alley. Through the doorway, the mechanics saw the lights of a truck.

Tall, darkish men entered the garage, bringing a load of luggage. Two were handling a heavy trunk; others were burdened with stacks of suitcases. Complacently, Felber gestured toward the front of the garage, told them to stack the stuff there.

That done, the darkish men gathered the discarded shafts that Felber was sending away, along with all stray parts and gadgets. Two of them picked up the extra motor. They formed a procession, starting out through the little door in the back of the garage.

During that process, two onlookers stood totally amazed: Casey and Jim. Muttering to each other, they wondered if they were the ones who had gone crazy.

"Maybe it is an epidemic," expressed Jim. "Felber was took with it, and got over it; but we could have caught the bug from him."

"We can't both be nuts," argued Casey. "It don't seem logical. Only when a guy goes whacky he don't know what's logical, anyway."

If those two had looked behind them, their speculations as to their sanity would have ended. Each mechanic would have been convinced that the mania had actually seized him. For, in contrast to the normal behavior of the truckmen, who were carrying burdens in normal style, something very unusual was occurring at the front of the garage

The big trunk had opened. Its lock, though broken, had appeared quite tight, until the trunk lid lifted. Through a four-inch space peered eyes that reflected the garage lights with a burning glow. Beside those fiery eyes appeared the muzzle of an automatic, trained for the darkish men who were filing out through the rear door.

Those were the eyes of The Shadow. He had left the Hotel Monolith in Marjorie's trunk, which had contained only a few theatrical costumes. Recuperated after a day's rest in the tight-locked building where Shiwan Khan kept the hired truck, The Shadow had made this trip with the crew of Afghans.

The fact that they had brought Marjorie's luggage to this old garage, was proof that some disaster was intended after the Afghans left with another stolen invention.

Whatever happened later would probably be blamed on Felber, as it had with Maybrell and Orlio. Marjorie's luggage, found here, would indicate that Felber had abducted the girl.

As usual, Shiwan Khan was covering everything; but the master plotter had missed one angle. The Shadow was still alive; moreover, he was in a perfect vantage spot. He was waiting only until the Afghans were through the doorway. Then they would hear from him.

A fling of the trunk lid, a spring across the garage - The Shadow could overtake the men who served Shiwan Khan and catch them off guard before they reached their truck.

Such a move, performed in The Shadow's swift style, would place him between the Afghans and men like Felber, Jim and Casey, who had no weapons for their own defense.

There might be trouble from Felber, but The Shadow's tactics would give Jim and Casey a chance to handle the inventor. The Shadow's plan seemed perfect. In fact, it would have been, had he been allowed a dozen seconds more.

But something was already on its way, to steal those needed moments from The Shadow and give them to Shiwan Khan.

The approaching rattle of an elevated train grew suddenly into a terrific rumble that quivered the walls of the old garage. Eyes toward the Afghans, The Shadow could no longer see Felber, as the inventor clapped both hands to his forehead.

Above the roar of the passing train came a curdling shriek from Felber's lips, a cry that marked the ruin of The Shadow's present strategy. Felber's brain had caught the tuned command from Shiwan Khan: the signal that was to loose a scheme of tragedy more potent than any launched before!

## CHAPTER XVIII. DEATH ON THE LOOSE

FELBER'S harrowing yell put everyone in action. Jim and Casey forgot their stupor, made a mad dash to grab the berserk inventor. The Afghans who crammed the doorway pushed hurriedly out into the alley with the burdens they lugged.

The Shadow hurled the lid of the trunk wide open, vaulted into sight with a long lunge, to begin his planned pursuit.

His muscles, still stiffened from battle with Hulagu, and cramped by a long stay in the trunk, were not equal to the need. The Shadow's foot tripped on the trunk edge; he took a long sprawl across the floor.

He was up, though, with his gun, as the Afghans slammed the rear door. He still saw a chance to reach it before they could bar the door from the other side.

It was Felber who blocked The Shadow's effort. Acting with greater speed than anyone else, the inventor had flung himself into a narrow seat that crossed the chassis of his crazily built car. He had started his jump as he screamed; he was completing his move when Jim and Casey reached him.

Turning a switch and kicking a starter, all in one action, Felber rammed home a gear that put the vehicle in motion. Instantly, the machine was a thing as wild as the madman who handled it. The crazy car was headed toward the door that The Shadow had chosen as his own objective.

Only an amazing effort could have saved The Shadow. He made it, and this time his muscles served him true. Flinging himself full about in the middle of a stride, he hit the floor shoulder first and took a quick flip along the floor, away from the hurtling car.

Big wheels almost skimmed his body as they matted down the stray folds of his cloak.

Rolling over, The Shadow came to hands and knees just in time to make another spring for safety. Responding to Felber's handling, the four wheels of the car had slashed sideways, to whirl it full about.

Felber was steering the thing by throwing power to separate wheels - a wild, haphazard process. There wasn't any method of braking the car, except by turning off the ignition, something that Felber did not intend to do.

Screeching his high-pitched glee, he bore down on Jim and Casey. Each dived in an opposite direction.

The roaring car went into a whirl; as Felber yanked levers and pushed pedals. It was a juggernaut on the loose; what little control it had was a matter of the crazed driver's whim. Felber, it seemed, was bent upon destroying everything in the place.

Slashing along the front wall, the crazy car smashed Marjorie's luggage into shreds. Glancing from a corner, it veered back toward The Shadow, blocking him from the rear door. A long dive across an approaching front wheel saved The Shadow. When he came up beside the wall, the car was past him.

Jim wasn't so lucky. He and Casey were again the threatened ones, and Jim gave his pal a needed shove to safety. Hit by a wheel, Jim was thrown to the wall, where he crumpled. Fortunately, the wheel did not pass over him; but he sagged weakly when he tried to get to his feet.

The car was slashing away again, taking The Shadow as its target, while Casey tried to get the front door open. Casey had no luck; the door was nailed tight. Seeing The Shadow tugging at the rear door, Casey realized that the truckers had by this time barred it.

Instinctively, The Shadow guessed the direction of the car's next veer, for he flung himself in the opposite direction, escaping death by inches. His gun shoved away, he whirled across the center of the floor under the very nose of the returning juggernaut, to reach Jim.

Whipping the disabled man into a corner, The Shadow performed another rescue as he swept about and bowled Casey away from the front door. Felber had swung the death car full about, and was again on the trail of victims.

He almost clipped The Shadow, after Casey's rescue. Only by flattening himself against the door did The Shadow avoid the onrush of the mechanical avalanche.

All wheels slanted at a sharp sidewise angle, the crazy car went into a rapid revolution. Struck by the passing chassis, Casey was thrown a dozen feet away. The best he could do was crawl to a corner, like the one that Jim had found. Both men were too groggy to save themselves further.

The whirl of the car revealed Felber's ultimate purpose, as dictated by Shiwan Khan. Each revolution was carrying him closer to the walls, where he would eventually crush all human obstacles. After that, there could be only one result: the complete wreckage of the car, with the destruction of its driver.

OUTSIDE, the Afghans had pulled away with their load of freight: the motor and special shafts that Shiwan Khan desired.

The Afghans knew they wouldn't be needed back in the garage. Shiwan Khan deemed death a certainty for anyone trapped in the place. It was he, the mental master, who actually controlled the course of the flaying juggernaut.

Sweeping like a whirlwind, the murderous chassis left only one spot of certain safety: the center of the floor, about which it revolved. To reach that zone meant crossing the path of the metallic cyclone, which was sweeping about so rapidly that it looked like nothing more than a vast blur.

A matter of split seconds, such an attempt - but The Shadow was practiced in that sort of speed. Just as the blur skimmed close to him, he flung himself straight at it. The whirling car was gone before he reached it. Almost instantly, as Jim and Casey viewed it, the thing was full around again.

The seeming instant was enough. The Shadow had passed the car before it reached him on its swing. He had ended his dive abruptly, in the middle of the floor. The Shadow was safe, for Felber hadn't even seen him.

Still, tragedy loomed ahead for Jim and Casey; eventually, it would gulp Felber, also, if nothing intervened. If self-preservation had been The Shadow's only motive, he would not have come to this garage at all.

He was here to save other lives; so far, he had managed a pair of temporary rescues. And dangerous though the prospect was, he intended to put an end to the thing that threatened death.

Rising in the central calm, The Shadow could follow the whizzing car with his eyes, for now he had a better angle of view. Gauging its speed was impossible, but precise calculation was not necessary. The Shadow had gained his required vantage point; having very little time to spare, he started his all-important move.

Beginning a rapid spin, The Shadow carried his own whirl as close as possible to the revolving chassis. It was making three trips to his one, although he had the inside track, and the ratio further favored the metallic monster as The Shadow's circle widened.

Then came the moment when The Shadow felt singeing burn, as the whole length of the chassis grazed his shoulder. An interval, while The Shadow drew a breath; again, the metal mass skimmed him.

Another breath; The Shadow was flinging outward. His own dash helped, for the machine overtook him at an angle. Off his feet, The Shadow was spinning in the air, clawing for any hold that he could get. His hand bashed a lever, lost it, only to strike another.

Twisted about, The Shadow made a mad effort to better that skimpy grip. His free hand made a sweep and found substance on which to cling. Instead of clamping another hold upon a portion of the car, The Shadow had grabbed the driver.

SWAYING, shouting as he crouched low on the seat, Felber was no longer bothering with the controls. His brain, whirling as rapidly as the car, was telling him to let destruction ride. He was conscious, though, that something had flung in from space to molest him.

Violently, Felber grappled, and thereby served The Shadow. Anchored safely in the center of the chassis, the inventor indulged in bone-crushing tactics that drew his attacker down beside him. Once secure, The Shadow began to fight off Felber's grip.

They sagged as they struggled, until both were scorched by the red-hot motor just below the seat. Gauged according to the revolutions of the car, the fight was a long one; in a matter of minutes, it was very brief.

With all his maniacal power, Felber was yielding to The Shadow's strength. They bent forward toward the crude cross brace that served as dashboard for the hoodless car. The Shadow's hand, working despite the pluck of Felber's fingers, managed to reach the ignition switch.

In its wider revolutions, the car was nearing the corners that Jim and Casey had tried to reach. A few more rounds would doom that crippled pair. Felber didn't know it; he had forgotten the unfortunate mechanics entirely. All he wanted was to keep the car in its mad motion.

He gave a tug that wrenched The Shadow's hand from the ignition switch, but lost his own grip as he made the pull. The Shadow's fingers plucked for the switch, while Felber grabbed for the first thing that might serve him as a weapon.

It proved to be a lever. Felber yanked it.

The lever didn't come loose, as Felber was crazed enough to think it might. Instead, it changed the speed of one rear wheel. The car took a flying skid as The Shadow's fingers pressed the switch. The power was off, but the course of the car was altered.

The front wheels were cutting to the left, but the rear ones formed an outward V which caused one wheel to act as a drag.

Like a great stone flung from a catapult, the machine left its circular course and hurtled straight for the wall. The distance was too short for the stalling motor to halt it, but the crash was greatly lessened.

If it hadn't been, the garage would have crumpled into ruins, for the shock that did occur was sufficient to crunch a big chunk from the wall. The chassis telescoped; two figures shot forward, along with the motor, which broke loose from the bolts that moored it.

There was a huge spatter of gasoline, a flare of flame that showed two forms rolling from the wreckage, still struggling. As they rolled toward the spreading flames, one fighter lost a cloak that had entangled with a twisted crossbar. The Shadow's slouch hat had already gone with the crash.

The strugglers weakened through sheer inertia. Rolling apart, they were lying in the path of the fire, their garments oil-soaked, ready to add fuel to the flames. Shiwan Khan's design of doom would still have functioned, had it not been for Casey.

There was a fire extinguisher in Casey's corner. He had strength enough to get the big cylinder and spray the chemicals on the fire, keeping its blaze away from Felber and The Shadow.

Jim was trying to get another extinguisher, but couldn't make the grade. Casey was turning to help him, when other rescuers arrived.

The door from the alley was flung open by a man who had unbarred it from the other side. Joe Cardona rushed into the garage, followed by Commissioner Weston. Behind them were Dr. Buffton and Rutledge Mann.

They extinguished the flames, then looked to the victims. Casey and Jim were telling them who Felber was. It was Commissioner Weston who announced the identity of the other stunned survivor, whose face was recognizable despite its fire-blackened grime.

"It's Cranston!"

MANN heard the commissioner's ejaculation. He stood by, watching solemnly, while Cardona and Buffton carried the unconscious forms to the car.

Casey was aiding Jim, and Weston was watching both, when Mann stepped to the mass of steel and battered beryllium that lay against the wall.

From the wreckage, Mann extricated a torn cloak and a flattened slouch hat. Taking off his topcoat, Mann placed The Shadow's garments in its folds, then laid the cloak across his arm.

Whatever else might come, Mann, as an agent of The Shadow, had preserved his chief's identity. An important precaution, considering the fact that The Shadow, for the present, lay helpless. A question of mere identity might mean life or death, where The Shadow was concerned.

From all accounts that Mann had heard, Shiwan Khan was practical, rather than vengeful. If his death thrusts failed in the case of minor victims, the master plotter followed the policy of letting them live awhile, rather than make the misstep of showing his own hand too soon.

That rule, Mann knew, would never apply, should Shiwan Khan discover that Lamont Cranston was The Shadow.

## **CHAPTER XIX. MARQUETTE'S MISSION**

TWO men were seated in a far corner of a small cafe near Times Square. Their luncheon finished, they were chatting in low tones that no one could overhear. One man was Vic Marquette, as dour-faced as ever. The other was Harry Vincent, agent of The Shadow.

So far, Vic had mentioned The Shadow, but had not stated definitely why he wanted to see him. Matters had reached a point, however, where Vic was ready to talk.

"I just came from Buffton's place," said Vic. "I wanted to talk to Cranston, but no luck. He isn't in shape yet. He and that fellow Felber got pretty well banged up last night."

Harry nodded. From his expression, Vic could tell that Harry was deeply concerned over Cranston's condition.

"I wanted to have Cranston contact The Shadow," declared Vic. "But since he can't, I'm going to put it up to you, Vincent. How soon do you think you could reach The Shadow?"

"I don't know," returned Harry, frankly. "I can pass the word along, but it all depends upon when The Shadow is ready to see me. That's the way it always works."

Marquette didn't catch the connection between the fact that Lamont Cranston was out of circulation and Harry's inability to promise an immediate response from The Shadow. Figuring that Harry would do his best, Vic decided to proceed.

"It's these crazy inventors," declared the Fed. "First Maybrell, then Orlio. Last night, Felber. There's a lot behind it, Vincent. Not any epidemic hokum. That stuff is all bunk!"

"I suppose it is," agreed Harry. "Nevertheless, the inventions were crazy, if the inventors weren't. From all appearances, the man who stole those inventions could be crazy, too. What does anybody want with high-speed fans, a beryllium bathysphere, and a motor with a four-wheel, triple-shafted drive?"

"There's one man who might figure some use for that junk," returned Vic. "His name is Shiwan Khan."

Harry's face went rigid. He hadn't supposed that anyone, other than The Shadow, knew of Shiwan Khan's presence in America. Vic saw the alarm that Harry tried to repress, but the Fed didn't catch its full significance.

"Right here in New York," said Vic, looking about to make sure that no persons were within earshot, "is a man who could supply Shiwan Khan with the most powerful weapon ever designed for warfare! The man is a chemist. His name is Hiram Bixley.

"He has developed a compressed gas that is both poisonous and inflammable. A bomb load of it, dropped in a small town, would spread all over the place. Not only would it kill off the inhabitants; it would ignite the moment it encountered a spark or a flame."

"The stuff is heavier than air. It can work down into bombproof shelters. Its fumes are even more poisonous than the gas itself, and they stick around. If Shiwan Khan gets a sample of that gas, Vincent, he'll be ready to start conquering the world tomorrow morning."

Harry was thoroughly impressed, as Vic expected him to be. Having revealed the main issue, Marquette decided to embellish it with complete details.

"We'll go up to see Bixley," decided the Fed. "After you've seen the place and know what it's all about, you'll be able to give The Shadow a full report on it. What we want him to do is find out if there's any loophole, any chance of a slip, in the precautions that we've taken in regard to Bixley."

THE house where the remarkable chemist lived looked very much like any other brownstone house. Harry noted, though, that several alert men were in the vicinity and was quite sure that they were Feds.

When Vic knocked at the basement door, the man who admitted the visitors had a badge showing beneath the edge of his coat.

On the second floor, they found Bixley in his laboratory. The chemist was a benign, white-haired man, who talked quite freely about his invention when Vic introduced Harry and said it would be all right.

"Here are the components of the gas," said Bixley, as he pointed to a row of beakers, containing liquids of different colors. "The 'terror gas,' we call it, and it is my hope that it will never be used in warfare. I have developed it in the belief that its existence will encourage peace, so long as it remains the sole

property of a nation like our own."

Going to another table, Bixley pointed out the apparatus with which he manufactured the gas. Harry saw Bunsen burners, hydrometer jars, spiral tubes of glass, all leading to a metal cylinder that projected from a heavy wall bracket.

Marquette tested the bracket, found it solid. It was supported by an old water pipe that ran up beside the wall. Vic nodded his approval.

"I'm glad you let Torron fix that," declared Vic. "If that tank ever fell and cracked open, you'd have a lot of gas loose in the place."

As they left the lab, Harry observed that a Fed was on guard outside the door. On the way downstairs, Harry asked Vic who Torron was. He learned that George Torron was one of Bixley's assistants, of whom there were several.

"None of them know the formula," stated Marquette. "It's locked in Bixley's brain. We always have a man on duty to see that Bixley doesn't talk to any of them. We've been watching Bixley more than ever, lately" - Vic's tone became emphatic - "because of Shiwan Khan!"

Harry understood, fully. Shiwan Khan's ability at thought transference was a known fact. But, as Vic proceeded to assert, there were always definite symptoms when any brain came under Shiwan Khan's control.

"Those nut inventors," declared Vic, "could have gone gaga because Shiwan Khan was working on them. It's beyond me how he does it, but we've got plenty of evidence in our files to prove what I say."

Harry remembered that full reports of Shiwan Khan's former campaign had become part of the government records, with the testimony of persons who had been under Shiwan Khan's influence.

The New York police had figured in those cases, too, but only from the local angle. It wasn't surprising that they had not linked Shiwan Khan with present happenings.

"Understand this, Vincent," said Marquette. "I'm not saying that Shiwan Khan is in this business. I'm only saying that he could be. You've seen Bixley. What do you think of him?"

"He seems quite normal."

"That's my opinion, too," nodded Vic. "I'd say he's safe. But that's partly what bothers me. He looks too safe."

"How often does he leave the house?"

"Never! We let Torron and the others go out, because they don't know the secret. But we watch them like hawks whenever they go in the lab. We won't even let a thimbleful of that terror gas go out of the place."

Harry asked if Bixley minded the shut-in life that he led. Vic replied that the chemist actually liked it. He was free to take a vacation, should he need one, under the surveillance of Feds, but so far Bixley hadn't used the privilege.

BY that time, the two investigators were in the basement. From a rear room, they could hear the plaintive tinkle of an old-fashioned music box. Vic smiled.



"It's Torron," he said. "He collects music boxes. He has some that play a dozen different tunes. Quite a hobby. I guess he spends most of his spare cash on it."

Vic knocked at the door from which the music came. It was opened by a solemn-faced man, whose narrow, curving chin and roundish bald head reminded Harry of an egg balanced on its small end.

"Hello, Torron!" greeted Vic. "Meet Mr. Vincent."

Torron shook hands cordially, but did not speak. He sat down in a corner, beside the playing music box. Vic looked at the little cabinet, admiring its mahogany finish.

"A new one, Torron?"

"Yes," replied the man, in a drawling tone. "It arrived this morning. It is a fine piece of workmanship."

There were other music boxes about the room. Torron did not seem to mind if they were handled. He preferred to sit and listen to the new one; when its tune had finished, he started it over again.

Meanwhile, Vic began to operate others, including the one that played a dozen tunes. The room became a medley of jangling tunes, but Torron was not annoyed. He kept playing the new music box, watching it with his chin in his hand, as if its tune reached his ears alone.

Leaving Torron's room, they went up to the first floor, where Vic ushered Harry into a comfortable library.

"An odd chap - Torron," declared Vic, "but he's consistent. As long as he sticks with his music boxes, he's normal. He's free to leave the place whenever he wants, provided he notifies us first. We've got to be careful, though, with anybody who comes in here. Those are the regulations."

"I suppose," remarked Harry, with a smile, "that the regulations now apply to me?"

"I guess they do," returned Vic. "Tell me this, Vincent: How do you expect to contact The Shadow - by telephone?"

"Very probably."

"Why don't you stay here, then? You can make all the calls you want, in private. You'll have a chance to see Bixley at work, and you can look the whole place over, if you want. I'd like The Shadow to get a full report as soon as possible; so the more you can tell him, the better. It will save time after you reach him."

ALONE in the library, Harry telephoned Burbank. He learned that Mann was going to visit Buffton's later in the afternoon, with the police commissioner, to learn how Cranston was progressing.

Meanwhile, Burbank agreed, Harry's best course was to stay at Bixley's, since it would please Marquette.

Finished with his call, Harry gazed from the window while he awaited Vic's return. Noting the Feds in the offing, he wondered whether this house would become the scene of Shiwan Khan's most important thrust.

Somehow, the place seemed very peaceful and secure; almost too much so, as Marquette had put it. Imbued with the calmness, Harry found himself humming the strain of a short, lilting tune. Odd, he thought, that he should remember the melody played by Torron's new music box, out of all the others that he had heard.

Had Harry regarded that fact as an actual riddle, and pondered on its possible significance, he might have gotten the answer to a coming problem.

Without realizing it, The Shadow's agent had found the key to Shiwan Khan's main move, the subtle stroke through which crime's master genius intended to acquire the famous terror gas that would make world conquest simple!

## **CHAPTER XX. CRIME'S GREAT STROKE**

IT was dusk when the commissioner's car stopped at Dr. Buffton's office. Three passengers alighted; Weston was one; the others, Cardona and Mann. Looking about, the commissioner saw policemen on duty and gave an approving nod.

He had preferred to leave Cranston and Felber at Buffton's, rather than at a hospital. Here, they could be under special guard.

Much would depend upon the testimony of the two patients, when they recovered from last night's brutal experience. Neither Jim nor Casey had been able to supply the law with any worthwhile information.

But Felber, certainly, was a victim of some peculiar mania, like Maybrell and Orlio. Perhaps he could describe some of the sensations that had held him during the past few weeks.

As for Cranston, he had definitely forestalled disaster when Felber's crazy car ran amuck. Weston was confident that his friend, back from the missing, could relate facts of value to the law.

So far, only one thing was established. Felber's invention, as wild an idea as anything produced by Maybrell or Orlio, had been shipped away, perhaps to reach mysterious hands.

True, the model of the finished car had been left in the old garage, but duplicate parts, motor included, had been loaded into a truck and carried away.

The visitors found Buffton in his office; the nerve specialist had a worried look. He took them to a room where a detective stood on guard. Cranston and Felber were lying there on cots. Both were asleep.

"I can't quite understand these cases," declared Buffton. "Both men have recuperated physically. They needed nourishment, and it was given them. Felber's mania seems to have passed, and Cranston has suffered no apparent harm.

"Yet they seem subdued. Any attempt at questioning tires them. It would be no use to wake them. I have tried and found that their response does not improve. I suppose their lethargy is the result of the strain they underwent last night.

"Felber acted like a madman and is suffering as a consequence. As for Cranston" - Buffton shook his head - "I can only presume that he deliberately threw himself into a similar state, in order to cope with Felber. In dealing with erratic individuals, I have often observed that the persons who handle them become quite as exhausted as the patients."

BUFFTON spoke quite sincerely enough so to impress Weston and Cardona. The only one who doubted was Rutledge Mann. Methodical to the extreme, Mann was looking for a flaw in the argument. He felt a lurking suspicion of Buffton.

To test it, Mann remained in the sickroom when the others left it. His roundish face was very solemn as he gazed at the recumbent form of Cranston. The quietness of the room impressed him, until he heard a distant jangle.

It was a telephone bell, ringing in an apartment across the courtyard. Mann tilted his head and listened. He remembered that the bell had rung while Buffton was talking. Two minutes passed; Mann heard the bell again. He left the room and went to Buffton's office.

Weston and Cardona were gone. Buffton was quite surprised when Mann appeared.

"We thought you had left," said the physician. "The commissioner said that you had an appointment and intended to take a cab. So he didn't wait -"

"The appointment does not matter," interrupted Mann, his tone unusually abrupt. "Tell me, doctor, why is that telephone bell ringing in the apartment across the court."

"You mean it's still ringing?" queried Buffton. "Why, I thought it had stopped hours ago."

"Who lives there?"

"No one. The people left a month ago. I suppose they forgot to have the phone removed."

Buffton went to the sickroom to listen for the disturbing bell. Mann headed for the courtyard, where he was stopped by a patrolling officer. Explaining, satisfactorily, that he had come with the commissioner, Mann inquired about the telephone next door.

"That bell's been ringing ever since I came on duty," declared the cop. "I didn't think it was important. What's it doing, disturbing the patients?"

Mann nodded.

"I'll fix that," the officer assured him. "If nobody's living there, nobody's going to squawk if I climb in and take the receiver off the hook."

By the time Mann had returned to the room where the patients were, the telephone's jangle had ended. While he was gazing at Cranston's cot, Mann saw the patient stir. So did Buffton.

"A good sign!" exclaimed the physician. "I must call the commissioner and inform him."

Knowing that it would be some minutes before Buffton could locate Weston at the club, Mann remained in the sickroom. Seated beside Cranston's bed, Mann met his chief's eyes when they opened. A murmur came from The Shadow's lips:

"Shiwan Khan?"

Mann nodded. The Shadow came up to one elbow, holding his hand to his forehead.

"I recognized it," he said. "It had the same effect as the astral call bell, the mental sound that the mystics of India produce when they wish to communicate with one another. People believe that the telephone bell is a modern invention. Instead" - The Shadow chuckled - "it dates back to antiquity!"

"It is the sound that commands attention. No mind, when weary, can think of anything else, when concentrated on that sound. Shiwan Khan has learned that Felber was brought here, and has been ringing that number constantly, to keep him lulled.

"Unfortunately, it has the same effect on me. I couldn't shake it off, Mann, not after the ordeal I had undergone. Every time I tried to speak, it halted me. The intervals were perfectly spaced. You did well to have it stopped."

Resting back upon the pillows, The Shadow closed his eyes. Then, dropping the tone of Cranston, he spoke one word in his own weird whisper:

"Report!"

Mann told what he had learned from Burbank. News of the terror gas and its inventor, Bixley, roused The Shadow.

"There is no time to lose," he decided. "Get my clothes, then summon the special cab. After that, have Burbank contact Vincent."

WHILE Mann was obeying those instructions, events were taking place at Bixley's house. The elderly chemist was conducting one of his scheduled experiments, with Vic Marquette and Harry Vincent standing by. Liquids were bubbling in their jars; vapors were passing through the gas coils into the metal tank above, forced there by pressure.

"We ship the tanks under guard," explained Vic to Harry, "so that the gas can be tested. Its results vary, according to the quantities of the component parts."

Torron entered while Vic was speaking. A solemn look upon his egg-shaped face, the baldish assistant walked directly to Bixley's table. Marquette stepped close to check on whatever Torron said. Reaching past the tank, Torron carefully tightened the new wall bracket.

"If everything is satisfactory, sir," he said to Bixley, "I should like your permission to leave. I am going away for a few days, you know."

Bixley nodded. "Good-by, Torron," he said. "Have a good trip."

Noting nothing unusual, Marquette stepped back to let Torron pass. Vic's eyes were on Bixley; it was Harry who watched the assistant's departure.

It seemed to Harry that Torron was moving in a very mechanical style, almost as if in a trance. But from what he had seen of Torron, Harry supposed that was the man's usual manner.

A few minutes passed, while liquids bubbled and gases of vivid colors ran through the glass coils. Then Bixley turned about, his face quite troubled.

"I can't understand it," he said. "Look at that gauge, Mr. Marquette."

"It's working, isn't it?" queried Vic. "It says half full."

"It has stayed at that point," replied Bixley, "ever since Torron left here. Yet the gas has been flowing steadily. Ah! The gauge has started again."

Vic shot an alarmed look at Harry, then shot the words: "Let's go!"

They dashed down the stairs to Torron's room. When Vic yanked open the door, they were greeted by the tinkle of a music box. Torron was gone, but he had left evidence behind him. A table was pulled out from the wall. The space revealed the bottom end of a water pipe, plugged with a steel screw cap.

"The bracket in the lab!" exclaimed Vic. "It must be hollow! Torron drilled a hole into the water pipe and fitted it with a screw valve. That's why he fooled with the bracket tonight."

"He came down here and opened the screw cap. He's drained half a tank load of the terror gas, and has taken it with him. He's on his way to Shiwan Khan!"

THE music box had stopped, but the tinkle was still running through Harry's brain. He knew who had sent that curio to Torron. It was a gift from Shiwan Khan.

Too clever to work upon Bixley, whose peculiarities were being watched, Shiwan Khan had chosen Torron as his instrument. Their minds tuned to the same vibration, Shiwan Khan had inspired the chemist's assistant to a deed of crafty theft.

Through the old disused water pipe, Torron had drawn off a supply of the deadly gas while Bixley was manufacturing it. Marquette was right: the dupe was on his way to Shiwan Khan!

Dashing to the front of the basement, Marquette shouted at the Feds stationed there. He learned that Torron had taken a cab and was carrying a heavy suitcase. Having been told to pass Torron through without question, the Feds had let him go.

They had noted the direction that the cab had taken. Jumping into a car, Marquette started on the trail, shouting for Harry to follow in another automobile. But Harry was gone, with a purpose of his own. He was dashing up to the library to reach the telephone.

He heard the bell start to ring while he was on his way. Snatching the receiver, Harry heard Burbank's voice. Quickly, Harry gave the details regarding Torron. Burbank told him to stand by for instructions.

A sample of that vapor in his possession, Shiwan Khan would have the requirement for world conquest, as Vic Marquette had declared.

Victory was in the grasp of Shiwan Khan. Only one being could pluck the triumph from him.

That being was The Shadow!

## **CHAPTER XXI. BLOCKED VICTORY**

SEATED in his golden room, Shiwan Khan smiled as he heard the final tinkles from a little music box. Closing the mahogany case, he handed it to Hulagu.

"Dispose of it," ordered Shiwan Khan. "I go to meet our new guest, Mr. Torron."

There was a button on the table. Shiwan Khan gave it a final press, timed to an exact interval.

"Our last call to Felber," he told Hulagu. "He will rouse soon, when he hears the ringing bell no longer. But it will not matter. By the time that he has told his hazy story to the physician, we shall be gone."

Apparently, Shiwan Khan did not consider Lamont Cranston as a factor. That was not surprising, since the newspapers had merely stated that the commissioner's friend had aided in Felber's rescue. The Afghans, fortunately, had brought no word of The Shadow's reappearance.

The thing that had hurried the darkish truckmen out from Felber's garage had been the scream that the inventor gave. In reporting to Shiwan Khan, the Afghans had stated that all had operated according to their master's plan; at least, up to the moment when they had made their rapid exit.

Strolling from his many-roomed apartment, Shiwan Khan heard the elevator coming upward. He waited until it stopped; then stepped toward the opening door.

Torron came from the elevator, carrying a suitcase. Shiwan Khan plucked it from Torron's hands, opened it and found a small, sealed tank within.

In response to Shiwan Khan's evil gloat, Torron smiled. Under a strange control that he had been unable to explain, the dupe was finding this reception to his liking. When Shiwan Khan beckoned, Torron followed.

Shiwan Khan led the way to a spiral staircase that led to the floor above. They reached the closed door of the Moonlight Cafe, which Shiwan Khan had stated he would change into a Persian garden. There, Shiwan Khan placed the little tank in Torron's custody.

"I shall take you with me," declared Shiwan Khan, in a tone that carried the tinkly rhythm of the music box. "Yes, Torron, I shall need you, because of your experience with Bixley. You shall leave tonight, with myself and Hulagu."

As he finished the statement, Shiwan Khan lifted one yellow, long-nailed hand and spoke the word:

"Listen!"

From far away came the sound of sirens, the clang of bells. Police had joined the Feds, in an effort to trace Torron. The sounds jarred the long-faced man. He spoke pleadingly to Shiwan Khan.

"I did as you ordered, master," claimed Torron. "I took the first cab I saw and came here. But I was afraid that they would follow -"

"I knew that they would follow," interposed Shiwan Khan, in his bell-like tone. "I foresaw that it would be impossible to acquire Bixley's gas without raising a huge alarm. They have found our lair" - he turned to Hulagu, with a smile - "now let them trap us!"

"It will occur to them that Shah Nikwan and Shiwan Khan are one. They will be unable to use my private elevator. Forced to batter their way up from the floor below, they will meet my faithful Afghans, fighters who consider death in battle to be life's greatest privilege.

"With all those obstacles conquered, they will come for us, only to find that we have gone. How, they will never guess. Our strange departure will remain a mystery."

DRAWING a large key from his tunic, Shiwan Khan turned to unlock the door of the hidden Persian garden. He paused, smiling as he recalled a former time when he had opened that same door.

"I must not forget Princess Duniyazad," declared Shiwan Khan. "It is too bad" - he was clucking his disappointment - "that we cannot take her with us to Xanadu. She is very beautiful, but she is not important.

"Princess Duniyazad still awaits my command. She has a mission; it is only right that I should allow her to complete it. Remain here, both of you, until I return."

Hulagu was holding Shiwan Khan's turban. Taking it, Shiwan Khan put on the headpiece, to play the part of Shah Nikwan. He descended by the spiral staircase, leaving Torron with Hulagu.

When Shiwan Khan had gone, Torron became nervous. This talk of going to a place called Xanadu had sounded glorious while Shiwan Khan was present. But when Torron gazed at his traveling companion, Hulagu, he found himself ill at ease. The Mongol glared in Torron's direction; the long-faced man stiffened, clutching the gas tank tightly.

Reaching the floor below, Shiwan Khan passed two rows of stolid Afghans. Each row had its leader. Suji was one; Kuli, conspicuous because of a bandaged shoulder, was the other. Shiwan Khan spoke to them in their Pukhtu dialect. The tribal warriors clasped their fists to the long daggers that they carried.

They could hear the siren shrieks, the clang of bells, much closer than before. They were pleased at the thought of coming battle. They loved death, as Shiwan Khan had said; yet they loved life, too, a fact that he had not specified.

Not one of the wily Afghans knew of the sacrifice that was to be their lot. Confident in the power of Shiwan Khan, they supposed that he included them in his future plans and had therefore made arrangements for their safe departure.

Passing the Afghans, Shiwan Khan knocked at the door of Marjorie's boudoir. A voice, speaking Persian words, requested him to enter. Shiwan Khan stepped in and closed the door.

As he had said, Princess Dunyazad was beautiful. Since her return to mental bondage, Marjorie had reveled in the part she played. Her eyes were languid, her smile voluptuous, as she rose to greet Shah Nikwan.

Meeting her gaze, Shiwan Khan wondered if she would balk at the test to come. Her thought was life; not death, as with the Afghans. But Princess Dunyazad would relish death if melody came with it. Pointing toward the window, Shiwan Khan spoke in smooth Persian. Marjorie understood.

With slowly undulating stride, Marjorie strolled to the window and opened it. Her eyes lighted with a joyous recollection as the wind stroked the strings of the aeolian harp. There was ecstasy in her gaze as she turned to face Shiwan Khan.

Green eyes bored into Marjorie's. Her face froze in all its loveliness. Fascinated by Shiwan Khan's hypnotic power, entranced by the strum of the vibrating harp, the girl was ready for any command.

Shiwan Khan could have controlled her by thoughts alone; but he spoke, to give emphasis. His voice chimed with the chords from the harp:

"The pistol!"

Sliding the golden sash from her hip, Marjorie lifted the silver gun. Again, Shiwan Khan gave an order:

"Place it to your heart!"

The girl obeyed. Riveted by Shiwan Khan's gaze, she did not feel the coldness of the gun muzzle as it pressed her flesh below the jeweled girdle. Her finger was on the trigger, awaiting the word to fire.

This was to be death as Shiwan Khan enjoyed it. He lingered, as the moments oozed, holding the final word until the wavering harp notes should rise to a crescendo. The tone was swelling, almost to the needed pitch, when suddenly strings clanged with discord.

SHIWAN KHAN'S eyes sped to the window. So did Marjorie's; the girl's lips gave a horrified gasp at the sound of the jarring interruption. A single string twanged sourly. With that last false note, the harp was silent.

A hand had stifled the plucking sweep of the intermittent breeze. A gloved hand, that reached across the sill and clamped itself upon the strings. The notes of the harp were replaced by a weird whisper that Marjorie had heard before, but never with such mockery.

A head came above the sill. Burning eyes glowed from beneath a slouch hat. Lips were hidden, however, as they voiced the eerie taunt still louder. That mockery was meant for Shiwan Khan, the plotter who had never expected to hear its challenge again.

The laugh of The Shadow!

## CHAPTER XXII. CRIME'S FLIGHT

THEY were face to face, old enemies who had met before, each at a disadvantage of his own manufacture. Shiwan Khan had come here weaponless, fearing no opposition from a foe. The Shadow, climbing from a floor below, had stretched his hand to the limit, to gain a hold upon the dooming harp.

Though the fate of civilization rested in their coming duel, the present moment offered controversy over a single person. Marjorie Cragg was the person for whom they fought. She held the balance, thanks to the silver pistol. Already, the startled girl had withdrawn the weapon from her breast.

Marjorie's next move with the gun was to be a deciding factor in a struggle between two titanic wills.

Green eyes glaring, his voice babbling swift persuasion, Shiwan Khan tried to regain his sway over Marjorie. He was telling her to give death where it belonged: to The Shadow.

Remembering a previous mission, Marjorie swung about. She met the burn of The Shadow's eyes, heard his laugh quiver its strident peal. The girl aimed, but her finger did not press upon the trigger. Then, as the mirth reached its crescendo, Marjorie yielded to its strains.

No words were needed. Marjorie understood the command and obeyed. Wheeling, she pointed the pistol for Shiwan Khan.

Green eyes saw the death threat coming. With a forward bound, Shiwan Khan grabbed at Marjorie's slender wrist, struck it upward as she fired. The bullet whistled past the turbaned head, burned a path through a rare tapestry hanging on the wall.

With a fling, Shiwan Khan sent Marjorie sprawling across the divan; recoiling, he fled for the door.

Startled Afghans spread away as they saw their vaunted leader's rush.

They spied The Shadow in pursuit, but not a hand went to a knife. Darkish faces were bobbing back and forth, watching the amazing sight.

Behind The Shadow came Marjorie, carrying the pistol. Though she wore the attire of Princess Dunyazad, the girl was herself again. She had caught the spirit of bravery from The Shadow's challenge to Shiwan Khan. She was ready to throw her frail strength to The Shadow's aid, no matter what the danger.

Shiwan Khan had reached the spiral stairs. There, he banked everything on a desperate stroke. Wheeling to face the Afghans, he spread his hands, empty, shouting that he was weaponless.

The Afghans did not realize that Shiwan Khan had gained boldness because he was temporarily away from The Shadow's aim. They saw only that he halted, turned about to meet death face to face.

WITH one accord, the Afghans sprang for The Shadow. He was in their midst, whirling before they could start their own spinning tactics. His guns were pumping, spilling those who tried to draw their dirks. The only ones who reached him were those who fought with bare hands, clutching for The Shadow's throat.

Passing the black-centered whirl, Marjorie saw Shiwan Khan start up the stairway, and shouted to The Shadow. Slugging away a pair of clawing Afghans, The Shadow gestured toward the elevator, then followed Shiwan Khan.



Grabbing a dagger that lay beside a sprawled Afghan, Marjorie reached the elevator. As she pulled the door aside, she swung about defiantly, ready to meet any attacking Afghans, blade to blade. In her other hand was the gun. None were in sight, except the flattened ones. The rest had gone for the stairs.

Inside the elevator, Marjorie slammed the door, started a downward trip for aid.

On the top floor, The Shadow met Hulagu coming in full stride. He didn't aim at the huge Mongol; an instant's pause would have been too much. It would take a lot of bullets to stop Hulagu, and meanwhile, the Afghans would arrive. Side-stepping, The Shadow let Hulagu end his surge against the wall.

Shiwan Khan was unlocking the door of the former Moonlight Cafe. Instead of taking the Unfathomable as a target, The Shadow swooped upon Torron, who still clutched the tank of death gas. Pressing Torron to the wall, The Shadow placed a gun muzzle against the metal container.

A shrill order came from Shiwan Khan. It stopped a lunge from Hulagu, and halted a squad of Afghans at the stairway top. Shiwan Khan knew what a shot would mean: death to all, himself included.

Words dripped from those slitted lips, as Shiwan Khan proposed terms to The Shadow. All the while, the green eyes were darting beady looks toward Hulagu and the Afghans. Imperceptibly, they were working closer to The Shadow.

Shiwan Khan was trying to gauge a moment for attack. He didn't know that The Shadow, in his turn, was calculating the time it would take Marjorie to return. Shiwan Khan had opened the door to the Moonlight Cafe; inch by inch, he was working past it, ready for a slippery move if all else failed.

Amid the increasing tension, The Shadow heard a faint clang from below. It must have reached Shiwan Khan, also, for the master schemer shouted an order. Instantly, Afghans were surging for The Shadow, while Shiwan Khan was diving into the Moonlight Cafe.

Instead of blasting the death tank, The Shadow wheeled away. Worming past the clutches of dark hands, the slashes of hastily swung knives, he reached the door of the Moonlight Cafe.

With a hard swing, The Shadow whipped the door into the faces of the nearest Afghans and went through. Flung blades, aimed for The Shadow, found the door instead.

There wasn't time to look for Shiwan Khan. One fighter had reached The Shadow. The pursuer was the giant Hulagu. Again, it was a case of combat between the cloaked battler and the giantlike killer from Mongolia.

SWINGING both guns, The Shadow drove for Hulagu. The giant performed his usual trick. His big paws thrust out, grabbing for wrists, to twist away the guns from hands that clutched them. Hulagu missed that grab, as The Shadow's hands flung aside.

Hurling one gun squarely in the monstrous Mongol's face, The Shadow lunged as the giant staggered. Clamping his free hand upon Hulagu's shoulder, the black-cloaked fighter vaulted to his foeman's neck. He wrapped a choking grip there, not with his hands but with his knees.

Slashing with his gun, he beat off the big hands as Hulagu tried to raise them. Then, swinging downward, The Shadow hooked one massive arm with his own and wrenched it behind Hulagu's back.

Hulagu couldn't reach The Shadow. Choking, he was unable to bellow as he reeled. Astride those huge shoulders, The Shadow jabbed bullets at the Afghans, sent them diving for the stairs.

There, as they tried to rally, gunfire greeted them. The Shadow's agents had come to the proper door, in

accordance with instructions that their chief had given to Rutledge Mann. Marjorie had brought the valiant squad up by the elevator.

Hulagu was sagging to his knees. Twisting furiously, he gained a grip on The Shadow. They were tangled in a solid grapple, but The Shadow's locked legs still kept their strangle hold on Hulagu's neck.

Working to wrest his gun hand wholly free, The Shadow took another look for Shiwan Khan. He saw the master plotter, standing by the strangest machine that human eyes had ever viewed.

The contraption was mounted on the great platform in the center of the room. It looked like a giant mechanical octopus, with its rounded body and long, thin arms. The body was Orlio's beryllium bathysphere. The arms were the three-length shafts left over from Felber's motor.

Wherever inner shafts poked from the outer, the larger ones had one of Maybrell's fans geared to it. The four holes in the top of the bathysphere were also equipped with shafts, each carrying one of the propeller fans.

Crazy inventions when taken singly, those brainstorm had been combined into a complete machine. The contrivance was a helicopter, built for flight through the air. Its propellers, set on the horizontal, were equipped to lift it in a straight, upward flight.

There wasn't a doubt that it would work. Such machines had been devised before, with successful results. This craft of Shiwan Khan's had features that none of the previous models possessed. With sixteen blades to lift it, made of the lightest of all metals, beryllium, it was the aircraft of the future.

How Shiwan Khan intended to fly it was another question. The domed roof had the helicopter cooped in. Meanwhile, Shiwan Khan was shouting encouragement to Hulagu, urging him to dispose of The Shadow and bring the precious gas tank.

Hulagu didn't respond. Instead, The Shadow did. His gun hand swung toward Shiwan Khan. Ducking into the bathysphere, the cornered conqueror reappeared with a revolver. By then, The Shadow and Hulagu were no longer tangled.

RISING above the half-choked giant, The Shadow aimed for Shiwan Khan, who returned the favor. Both guns spouted, starting a new deal. Neither marksman found his target.

Hulagu had grabbed The Shadow, ruining his aim; but in hauling the cloaked fighter downward, the giant had dragged him from Shiwan Khan's path of fire.

Lashing with Hulagu, The Shadow swung toward the wall, to keep his huge foe still blocking any shots from Shiwan Khan. Hulagu was groggy, but he still had power. The Shadow let him waste it, giving way as fast as Hulagu surged.

As they reached the wall, the Mongol made a lunge. The Shadow side-stepped, but Hulagu's paw came ahead. Over the cloaked shoulder, it clamped upon a lever and dragged it downward, hard. A rumble came from the roof of the Moonlight Cafe.

Looking upward, The Shadow saw the great dome spread apart, to reveal the sky above. Designed by Shiwan Khan, built by a man that he controlled, that special roof had been provided for this moment.

The name of the Moonlight Cafe was singularly appropriate. With the dome spread apart, real moonlight shone from above, visible despite the glow of the Manhattan sky.

The blades of the helicopter's propellers were whirling dizzily. Inside the body, Shiwan Khan was

handling the controls beside the purring motor.

Geared differently, because of the varied shafts, the horizontal blades were lifting the arm ends first; those long rods seemed to hoist the body before its propellers had reached their full whirl.

With a sudden rise, the whole contrivance took off for the open dome, just as The Shadow reached the platform. It was clear of the roof as The Shadow opened fire. Bullets were useless in stopping a take-off with the speed of that one.

The Shadow's agents were through the door, a sprawled mass of Afghans behind them. Hulagu, on his feet, was making a surge for The Shadow, only to be blocked by a huge African not nearly his own size, but big enough.

The new fighter was Jericho Druke, a handy man in mass conflict. Harry Vincent had brought him along with other agents.

Jericho had long been looking for a foeman bigger than himself, and he had found one. He and the revived Mongol reeled to the very roof edge, where Jericho showed that he could use footwork with his brawn.

Wresting clear of Hulagu, Jericho twisted in again, to meet the rival giant's lunge. As they rammed, Jericho side-stepped, to take a strangle hold.

He missed it. Hulagu had started a dive that couldn't be stopped. Tripping across a low rail, the Mongol was on his way to the street. He ended that thirty-story plunge with a smash that cracked the sidewalk.

Gazing down from above, Jericho let his broad grin dwindle. He was sorry that Hulagu hadn't stayed to make it a finish fight.

The Shadow held the same sentiments regarding Shiwan Khan. From the doorway, others watched him. Beside Harry and accompanying agents stood Torron, clutching the precious gas tank, blubbering that he would take it back to Bixley.

Marjorie was there, too. Unconscious of the fact that she was still attired in the minimum of costume, even for a former Persian princess, the girl was staring toward the sky, her gaze fascinated by a sight that The Shadow also viewed.

Tiny against the moonlight was a silvery speck, heading off over the sea. Whether that strange ship of the air would come to a safe landing, where it might find haven, were questions that only the future could answer.

Its pilot had escaped with nothing except the chance of continuing his own evil existence. Perhaps, with that mighty brain of his, Shiwan Khan could catch the echo of a weird, pursuing sound that came from a rooftop thousands of feet below.

It was the laugh of The Shadow. Victor in the final fray, the cloaked fighter was sounding his triumph over Shiwan Khan, the vanquished man who called himself a conqueror.

With that weird farewell, The Shadow voiced his invitation to return, that he might put a final end to the career of Shiwan Khan.

THE END