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LAMA**

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as compiled from his  
personal case books  
by Richard Foster*

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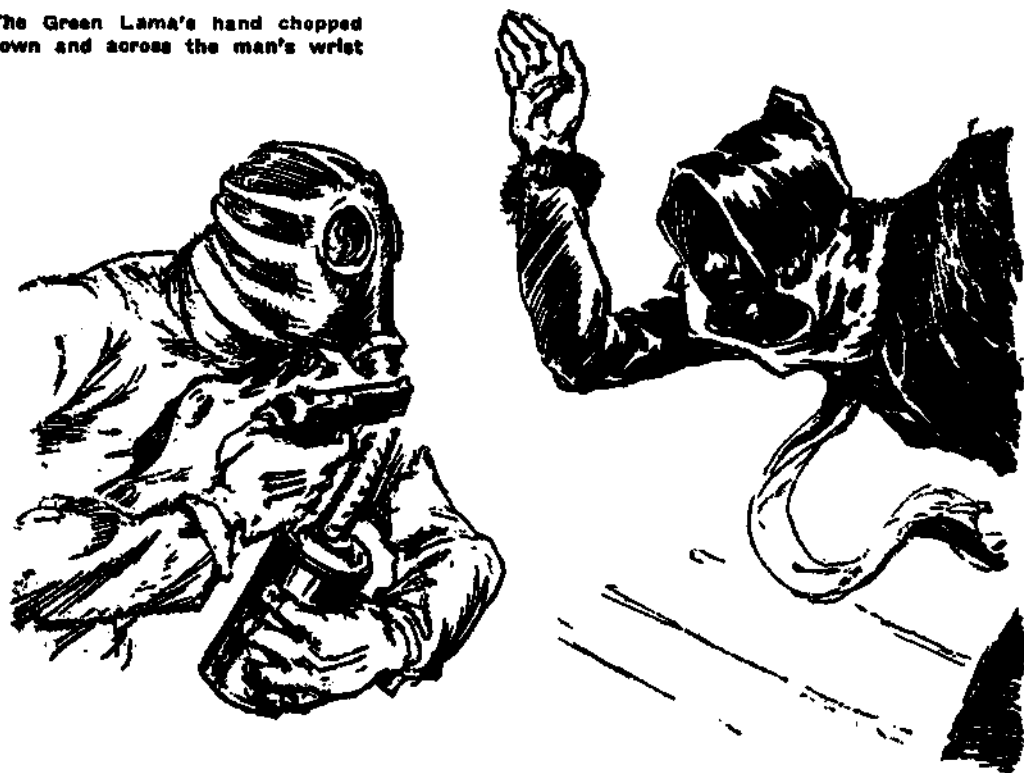
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*Only the Green Lama stood between this  
mysterious, sinister, master criminal, and the  
domination of the world. Only the Green  
Lama had the knowledge, out of the ages, and  
the fortitude, out of a life of strict adherence  
to Truth and belief in Justice, to combat this  
menace which threatened the very life of the  
nation.*

The Green Lama's hand chopped  
down and across the man's wrist



*The first of a series of amazing, thrilling adventures of a crime fighter extraordinary, a retributive nemesis of the underworld, known and feared as*

# The Green Lama

*Compiled from his personal case books*

**by Richard Foster**

## Author's Preface

**I**T WAS about two months ago that I first heard from the Green Lama. I received a letter, written on stationery engraved with a small golden Gargoyle and the symbol of Om, asking me if I would be interested in preparing his case books for publication. If so, I was to insert an ad in the Personal column of the *Times*.

I inserted the ad the following day and then came a long period of waiting. I had just about decided that he had changed

his mind when a messenger delivered a package containing several folios. With it was a letter saying that I was to treat the material as I thought best.

The reports I have prepared (of which the following is the first) are true in every detail, but one. That is my belief that my close friend, Jethro Dumont, is the Green Lama. There, I have taken certain liberties, based on my own observations and conclusions. I am sure that Jethro is the Lama, although he has always denied it when I have hinted as much. True, there

*A Full-Length  
Novel*



is no direct proof. But since I have taken that liberty, let me present a few facts about Dumont and the Lama that the readers may judge for themselves.

Jethro Dumont attended Harvard and came away with a Ph.D. in Oriental religions. He had inherited some ten million dollars and there was no need for him to work. He did, however, for a time, interest himself in one of the corporations that was a part of his holdings. But he soon became bored with this and left for the Orient.

While in China he again became inter-

ested in Buddhism and began to study. He made such rapid progress that he was shortly invited to come to Lhasa, the Holy City, by the King Regent himself. There, Jethro continued his studies until he was ordained a Buddhist priest—a lama.

It was then that he conceived the idea of returning to America to try to spread the peace of Buddhist meditation here. Taking leave of his Tibetan friends, he crossed through the interior into India and on to Calcutta, where he caught a boat for New York.

Screaming tug boats ferried the ship up the North River, under the towering shadows of Manhattan. Jethro sat in his cabin, thinking of his plans for the future and murmuring the sacred chant of pilgrims bound for Lhasa: "Om! Ma-ni pad-me Hum!"\*

A moment later, as he descended the gangplank, something happened that precipitated the appearance of the Green Lama. At the very edge of the pier, a fleeing gangster was cornered by his former pals. Machine guns stuttered their fatal message from a passing car and the gangster died. But with him in death went a woman and her three small children. One of these children, a tiny, golden-headed girl, was not more than fifteen feet from Jethro when she died, bright blood flecking her yellow curls. It must have been a terrible shock, coming from the quiet of meditation into the bedlam of sudden death.

Even though Jethro was able to give the police a good description of the men in the death car, nothing ever happened. The police claimed that they were unable to find anyone who answered the description. For days Jethro haunted the police station, hoping that someone would show up in the line-up. Finally one day as he was entering headquarters he saw a man whom he recognized as one of those who had manned the machine gun, coming out of the commissioner's office.

Two days later, all the city newspapers published a letter each had received. The letter stated that the police seemed incompetent to meet the problems of crime and that, therefore, the writer was going to take the problem into his own hands. It was signed "The Green Lama."

At the same time, Jethro Dumont took an apartment on Park Avenue and withdrew into a seclusion that was almost as complete as his sanctuary in the mountains of Tibet. So far as I know, I was the only person he saw. Even with me he was extremely reticent, reminiscing on our col-

lege days or explaining the philosophy of Buddhism whenever I tried to bring up the subject of crime, or the Green Lama.

One thing that has marked the Green Lama from the beginning is his extensive knowledge of the sciences. Jethro Dumont is one of the most learned men I know.

The Green Lama has always shown a reluctance to take a life deliberately, preferring other means of delivering criminals to their just ends. Jethro Dumont wouldn't take so much as the life of a fly.

The five senses of the Green Lama are developed to an almost unbelievable degree—as are Jethro Dumont's, from his training with the Tibetan lamas.

The Green Lama performs most of his deeds at night; Jethro Dumont is never to be found at his apartment during the same time. One more point that has just occurred to me is that the penthouse laboratory of the Green Lama's, which he rents under the name of Dr. Pali, is in a building owned by a corporation controlled by Jethro Dumont. These, briefly, are some of the points that have convinced me that Jethro is the Green Lama.

Shortly after the Lama's first appearance, he saved the life of Gary Brown, the college-educated gunman for one of the Harlem policy gangs. Brown was on the spot, on the order of his own boss, and just as he was about to be dumped into the East River, properly weighted, the Green Lama appeared out of the darkness and rescued him. He gained his first assistant at that point.

I have tried to learn more about Gary Brown's background, prior to his gang activities, but outside of the fact that he was a college graduate, I could learn nothing. It is useless to add that, to date, I have been unable to discover anything concerning Magga†. Since the Green Lama's case books fail to give any information about her, I gather he, too, has been foiled on that score. If the Green Lama has been unable to discover her identity, how much less chance has an ordinary historian.

\* Hail! The Jewel in the lotus-flower.

† A Pali word meaning "the way; the path."

Therefore, I give you the Green Lama, the greatest scourge of crime the modern world has ever known. If his present crusade against crime is an outcome of Jethro Dumont's desire to spread the peace of meditation that was his, I can only say that it has probably benefited humanity more than the act of any single man in centuries.

## CHAPTER I

### The Liquid Ray



HE soft glow from indirect lamps flooded the study in the apartment on Park Avenue. In the far corner of the room, a small butter-candle flickered half-heartedly beneath a Buddha shrine. All four walls contained built-in bookcases. Three of the walls were filled with volumes dealing with all of the various sciences. The fourth wall contained row after row of exotic-looking titles. *Ānāpāna Sati*, *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Abhidhammasattha - Sangaha*, *The Samāññaphala Sutta*, *Bhikkhu Sīlācāra*, *Visuddhi-Magga*, *Le Modernisme Bouddhiste et le Bouddhisme du Bouddha*.

Jethro Dumont sat behind a huge flat-top desk, sipping tea and reading the Home Edition of the New York *Evening Sentinel*. Two items in particular interested him. The first one merited, in the opinion of the *Sentinel* editors, a two-line head.

#### CRIMSON HAND THREATENS TO STRIKE AGAIN

Police Commissioner Horton today received another letter from the mysterious criminal who calls himself The Crimson Hand, threatening an early overthrow of organized government and the establishment of a criminal oligarchy.

This is the fourth such letter received by Commissioner Horton, who declined to comment on the matter other than to say that he was confident they were the work of a crank.

In part, the letter said, "... I have been fortunate in coming upon a weapon which I consider the most dangerous ever invented by man and which I am confident will bring the United States, as well as the rest of the world, under my control. I shall demonstrate the power of this weapon within a few days in the heart of one of one of our major cities. . . ."

The other story which interested Jethro Dumont was in a box at the bottom of the front page and rated only a very small caption.

#### VILLAGERS AWAKEN FROM STRANGE SLEEP TO FIND HOMES LOOTED

The residents of Norton, N. Y. (all 400 of them) awakened this morning from a strange sleep, which they claim lasted almost twenty-four hours, to find themselves stripped of all their worldly possessions. The town's small bank had been robbed, and trucks had evidently backed up to every home in the village and carted away furniture and clothes. . . .

There were several more paragraphs in the same vein. It was rather obvious that the *Sentinel* reporter thought the story more humorous than serious. But to Jethro Dumont it seemed to carry a significant message. He studied it thoughtfully, sipping his tea.

For all his careless ease as he lounged in the leather-upholstered chair, there was an air of action about Dumont. The tanned ascetic face only served to mask the determination behind it. His blue-gray eyes had the piercing look of a man who has surveyed the world from great heights; they were the eyes of a man who has searched both the world and his own soul and is sure of the path his feet are treading. The rich golden *namas\** he wore, successfully concealed wiry mus-

\* Tibetan robe. Gold, or yellow, is the color of official robes worn by Tibetan officials, or high priests.

cles that could perform feats far more astounding than any of those of professional strong men.

Evidently reaching a definite decision, Jethro Dumont leaned over and struck a small gong that rested on his desk. The musical note echoed pleasantly through the apartment.

A moment later, a door, close to the Buddha shrine, swung open and a small, dark Oriental entered.

"Yes?" he asked softly, speaking in perfect English.

"Bring me the clippings filed under *Radium—Delta and Valco*," Dumont said. His voice was low, with undertones of temple chanting.

The short Tibetan servant slipped from the room and returned almost immediately, laying two newspaper clippings silently on the desk. He waited while Jethro Dumont studied the clippings.

The first one was from the science page of the *Times*, dated a couple of weeks earlier. He scanned it quickly.

#### POWERFUL NEW RAY DISCOVERED

BY N. Y. PHYSICIAN

Discovery of a new and powerful ray was announced early this week by Dr. Harrison Valco, of New York, before the 87th Medical Congress at Columbia University.

Dr. Valco, who is a radiologist specializing in radium therapy, stated that quite through accident he discovered the existence of a fourth ray emanating from radium salts. Heretofore, science has known of only three radium rays; *alpha*, *beta* and *gamma*. Dr. Valco discovered that if radium salts, or better, pure radium, were placed in a leaded room and subjected to an electrical disturbance, the three known rays reflected from wall to wall with tremendous rapidity, forming a new ray of large particles, which, because of the rapid reflection and large size, becomes gaseous and then liquid. Apparently the gaseous form is immediately lethal, while the liquid form is a strong anesthetic.

The ray, Dr. Valco told the Congress, can be used as an effective means of war-

fare inasmuch as a capsule less than an inch in length will hold enough to reach all living organisms within the space of a cubic mile. Since the ray travels with the speed of light, the effect would be almost instantaneous. "I hope," Dr. Valco added, "that we will, however, find a better use for the Delta Liquid Ray than killing. I believe it may prove beneficial in curing a great many diseases. A patient of mine, accidentally exposed to the ray, was cured within two weeks time of an advanced case of epithelial cancer."

The second clipping was a small, one paragraph piece from a morning tabloid of two days before. It told of a breaking and entering of the office of Dr. Harrison Valco on West Twenty-fourth Street. According to the dispatch, nothing of importance had been taken.

For several minutes, Jethro Dumont stared moodily into the flickering flame of the butter-candle at the far end of the room. Then he placed the clippings on his desk, rose and threw off the golden robe. He was dressed in a dark business suit.

"I am going out, Tsarong," he said to the Tibetan. "There is work to be done."

"It was known that you would go," Tsarong said. While Jethro was staring into space, he had slipped out and returned with an overcoat and hat. He was now holding the coat. Jethro slid into it quickly and took the hat.

"Do not be impatient," Tsarong continued as Jethro hurried toward the door. "Remember that a seed can never pop into a tree. Is it not written that some men must devote several lifetimes to attaining the summit?"

"I'll remember," Tsarong, Jethro promised as he let himself out of the apartment.

A few minutes later he hailed a cruising taxi on Park Avenue and climbed in.

THE reception room in the office of Dr. Harrison Valco was dark, the nurse having gone home a few hours earlier. There was, however, a light streaming from the examination room.

There were three figures in that inner room, two of them bending over the third lying on an examination table. The figure on the table was that of a young girl, her blonde head resting on her arms, creamy shoulders peeping from the edge of a sheet. She was Evangl Stewart, post-debutante. Dr. Valco had long been a friend of the Stewart family.

The tall, slender man, wearing a white coat, straightened, with his stethoscope still dangling from his ears.

"I quite agree with you, Harrison," he said. "There's nothing organically wrong with this young lady. She probably drinks too much, eats too much rich food and doesn't get enough exercise. But I'd say her worst ailment is boredom." He smiled in an attempt at joviality.

Dr. Frank Pelham occupied the suite of offices next door to that of Dr. Valco's. He had once been an outstanding brain specialist, but had announced suddenly one day that he was through with surgery. He had never performed another operation. He gave as the reason, the fact that rheumatism had attacked his right arm and hand, although there was no evidence to support his claim that it had impaired his ability. Later, he had moved to West Twenty-fourth Street where he enjoyed a small but lucrative practice as a general practitioner.

"I thought that's what you would find," Dr. Valco said, "but it's been so long since I've done any general work that I thought it best to call you in."

"By the way," Pelham said, putting

his stethoscope in the pocket of his jacket, "is there anything new on that Delta ray of yours?"

"Not much. I think I may offer it to the government. But the chief problem that has been concerning me is how to fix up a treatment room for its use. I'm convinced that it will prove to have great curative value."

"I still don't see how you isolated it," Pelham said.

"Pure accident, doctor, pure accident," Dr. Valco dismissed the subject with a smile. He was a tall, well-built man in his early forties, with a ruddy face and short-cropped black hair. He wore a small, trimmed mustache.

"Well," Pelham said abruptly, "I have a patient coming in. I must be getting back." He moved swiftly toward the connecting door between the two offices.

"Thanks, doctor," Valco called after him.

While the two men were talking, Evangl Stewart had slipped from the table and hurried into the small dressing room. Now she emerged, wearing a smartly-tailored blue suit, with a luxurious wrap thrown carelessly around her shoulders. A saucy little hat perched on top of her blonde curls.

"Now," she said, as the door closed behind Pelham, "that you've thumped and prodded all over my poor anatomy, so what?"

"You heard what Dr. Pelham said," Dr. Valco remarked. "There's nothing wrong with you. But you must cut down on the cocktails." He tried a firm note, but it failed as it always had since the days when he was a young, struggling medico and she was a little girl with long golden curls. No one had ever been successfully severe with Evangl Stewart.

"I suppose so," she said crossly. "I

get so damned sick of doing the same thing every day, I could scream. And Mother keeps telling me to watch out for this 'catch' and that one, worrying about the fact that I've been out for four years now and still not married. But there's nothing else to do. The beauty salon, at one, cocktails at three, more cocktails at four . . ." She lit a cigarette impatiently.

"What you need, my dear," Valco said, "is something that will absorb your interest, make your blood race through the veins—"

"You mean I should fall in love," she interrupted.

He frowned. "I suppose that would do it. But surely there must be other things . . ."

"I don't know of anything that falls under the prescription," she answered, smiling at his frown. "I might come under your wing and become a female radiologist, but I doubt if that would raise my blood pressure. . . . Harrison, how about using your new ray to cure my boredom?"

"I'm afraid it wouldn't do that," he said, smiling indulgently.

"How did you discover it," she asked, "and what's it good for?"

"Just luck," Valco answered, starting to fill his pipe, "although it cost the life of poor Davis—you remember, the young man who was assisting me? He went into the radium room for a supply to treat a patient. When he didn't come back in a reasonable time, I went to see what was wrong. The door to the room was closed. When I opened it, I fell unconscious almost immediately.

"On recovering, I discovered that both my nurse and the patient were



Jethro  
Dumont

also unconscious. I believe that I recovered sooner because just the day before I had taken some radioactive salt\* which I think nullifies the effect of the ray. But poor Davis was dead. I investigated and found a short circuit in the electric light in the room. From that, I reasoned that a new ray had been formed by the action of the electrical disturbance on the three known rays.

"It will—"

He broke off in amazement as the door to the examination room opened and four men walked in. All of them were masked. Two carried submachine guns cradled in their arms. The one in front, obviously the leader, carried a .45 automatic in his hand. The hand holding the gun was encased in a bright crimson glove. His other hand was in his pocket.

"You Doc Valco?" the leader asked.

"Yes," admitted the doctor, "but—"

\* Ordinary table salt is made radioactive by bombarding it in cyclotron. A person drinking a solution of the salt mixed with water is able to light bulbs by the electrons passing out of his hand. This was recently demonstrated at Columbia University. And as the Green Lama discovered, if taken in sufficient quantity, it can make the drinker a walking battery.



"You won't be harmed," the masked man said, "if you give us what we want. If you don't . . ." His voice trailed off suggestively.

"What is it you want?" Dr. Valco asked, trying to edge around in front of Evangl.

"The formula for this death ray you've invented."

"But," Valco said, trying to think of some way to stall, "it isn't here."

"Cut it out!" ordered the leader sharply. "We know better. In the first place you can probably recite it off without any written reminder. Give!"

"Who are you?" Valco demanded.

"The Crimson Hand is my title now," the man said calmly, "but when I am in control of America, with the aid of your little ray, I can be whatever I choose. Take your choice. King, dictator, leader; they all mean the same."

"In control of America?" the doctor gasped. "You must be mad! I will not—"

He was cut off as the crimson-gloved hand rose and fell, with a blur of brilliance. The snout of the heavy .45 raked across the front of Dr. Valco's skull and he fell to the floor, pain arcing through his head. As he lost consciousness, he thought he heard Evangl scream.

## CHAPTER II

### The Green Lama



HE private elevator rose swiftly and silently to the penthouse on top of the sixteen story apartment building. As it came to a stop, the doors slid noiselessly open and the dim

figure of a man stepped out and made his way through the dark rooms to a large laboratory overlooking the terrace. Here a single light burned, a small butter-candle, sputtering beneath a Buddha shrine, its feeble light throwing eerie shadows over the walls. The *thankga*\* hanging over the shrine only added to the weird effect.

As he entered, the man snapped a switch and a small electric light flared into existence. But it threw only a thin concentrated light over a small dressing table and mirror. The man was still in the shadows, out of sight, had there been an observer. But there was none. There was only the shadowy figure, the peaceful Buddha with the candle at its feet, the dressing tale, shelves of books and a long bench holding crucibles and test tubes.

Standing close to a wardrobe closet, in the far shadows of the room, the man hurriedly changed clothes. A moment later, he moved silently to the small dressing table. Still keeping out of the rays of the light, he reached in the drawer, pulled out a make-up kit and applied its contents with deft fingers. They were fingers that had been trained by du Plessis.†

It was only after the make-up had been applied that the man seated himself on the chair and leaned forward into the circle of light. Even a keen observer would have failed to find any trace of Jethro Dumont in the image that stared back from the mirror. The face was fuller, and there seemed to be a full ruddy color beneath the tan. It was the face of a man who looked after his spiritual needs without neglecting the physical. There was a touch of gray at the temples. His eyebrows arched sharply upward, giving a

\* A tapestry bearing the likeness of Buddha.

† Marcel du Plessis, the greatest make-up artist of the Twentieth Century.

slightly skeptical expression to the otherwise trusting features.

Satisfied with the close examination under the light, the man moved from the chair and pressed another switch. The room was flooded with indirect light. The Green Lama stood revealed in all his glory.

He was wearing a dark green silk monk's robe, reaching almost to the floor, with the hood thrown back on his shoulders. His feet were shod in dark, felt-soled shoes. As he walked across the room, the robe swung open, revealing the inner lining of golden yellow. The sleeves and the collar of the robe were edged with green fur. Underneath the robe he was wearing an ordinary business suit of dark green, and an ecclesiastical shirt and collar of light green. On the front of the collar, the sacred symbol of *Om* was embroidered in black. With the exception of the color and the symbol, the dress beneath the robe was that of orthodox clergy. Around his neck, and beneath the robe, there was a dark red *kata*.\* He wore a small ring, woven with hair dyed in the six sacred colors of white, green, yellow, blue, red, and black.

The Green Lama crossed to the long workbench and pressed a concealed button under the edge. A section of the bench slid back and a microphone rose noiselessly. The same switch that brought the microphone into view caused two aerial spires to rear from their hidden niches on the roof above. It was a small broadcasting station, a means of getting in touch with his one henchman. The Green Lama's broadcast had been heard many times but never traced to its source for the simple reason that a different wave-length was

utilized for each night of the week.

The Green Lama leaned forward and spoke into the microphone, his voice a curious chant as he repeated the same phrase over and over.

"Calling Gary Brown, the Lama calling Gary Brown. Calling Gary Brown. *Nimitta; Nibbāna, lobha, dosa, moha.* Calling Gary Brown, the Lama calling Gary Brown . . ."

Over and over, this message went rushing out over the ether waves; tentacles of sound reaching out for the one man who sided with the Green Lama in an unyielding fight against crime. And finally the answer came, a pleasant resonant voice floating softly into the room from a hidden loudspeaker.

"Gary Brown coming in, Gary Brown coming in. What is it?"

"A bad patient at Dr. Valco's. Am making a call. A bad patient at Dr. Valco's. A patient suffering from *lobha*."

"Okay," answered the voice from the loudspeaker. "I'll follow up. Go ahead."

"Right. This is dangerous, Gary."

"Sure," the voice said. Then, just as the Green Lama's hand reached for the switch, "Good hunting, chief."

As the Green Lama flipped the switch, the microphone dropped from view, and the panel in the bench slid back into place.

A moment later, the lights blinked out, leaving only the candle to cast its feeble gleam. The Green Lama blended with the shadows, slipping through the darkened rooms as silently as a wraith of the night. As the elevator descended, a whispered echo lingered on in the penthouse, "*Om! Ma-ni pad-me Hum! Om! Ma-ni pad-me Hum!*"

\* A silk scarf, about five feet long, used in high Tibetan circles instead of calling cards. This was the Green Lama's only weapon, which he used as a garrote, other than his knowledge and training.

**H**IS hat pulled low over his eyes, Dr. Valco was brought out of the apartment house, supported between two of the gunmen. The men whipped off their masks as they dragged the limp body onto the sidewalk. The other gunman and the Crimson Hand followed with Evangl Stewart between them. Her wrap was gathered up around her face to conceal the gag in her mouth. Only the Crimson Hand kept his mask on, low-pulled hat shading it.

The two captives were hurried across the sidewalk and into a big black sedan, standing at the curb with its motor running.

Just as the sedan was about to roar into life, one of the gunmen in the rear prodded the Hand's shoulder and pointed toward the apartment house. For a brief moment a shadowy figure was framed in the entrance. The silhouette was that of a monk, a cowl shrouding the face.

"The Green Lama!" gasped the gunman. "How'd he find—"

"That doesn't matter now," the Hand said curtly. "If he's going into the office, we've got him. There's only one exit. Quick! Shag, get in there and get him!"

One of the gunmen jumped out of the car, a submachine gun under his arm, and followed the Green Lama into the house. The sedan waited, its motor idling softly.

"There's a cop!" exclaimed one of the men, pointing.

A patrolman had just crossed the street and now stood under the street lamp, a bare twenty feet away.

"I'll take care of him," the Crimson Hand said grimly. He rested his black automatic on the edge of the window glass and waited, a crimson-clad finger curled around the trigger.

Inside, the pursuing gunman hesitated at the open door leading into Dr. Valco's office. The office was dark. Then, to the ears of the straining man, there came the soft rustle of cloth somewhere in the reception room. The nose of the machine gun tilted up and the gun chattered into life. Slowly and methodically it swung to and fro, the swift shower of lead combing every corner of the reception room. The crackle of falling plaster and the splintering of furniture added to the din.

Satisfied that nothing or no one in the reception room was still alive, the gunman moved forward to the examination room. Again the machine gun loosed its lethal stutter, searching the room for the elusive target that couldn't be seen. The bathroom and the radium room were next in the remorseless search. The acrid stench of powder filled the office. The gunman turned and ran from the office.

At the first sound of the shots, the cop on the street dropped his nightstick and grabbed for the Police Positive on his hip. It was then that the crimson finger tightened on a trigger. The sharp, clean crack of the .45 cut through the muffled cacophony of the machine gun. The force of the heavy bullet spun the cop half around, his half-drawn gun clattering to the sidewalk. He coughed once, blood flecking his lips, and slumped to the ground.

"A perfect shot, boss," one of the admiring gunmen in the car said.

"All of my shots are perfect," the Hand said coldly. "Here comes Shag. Get ready to move."

It was then that Gary Brown took a hand. He had been delayed in starting out to meet the Green Lama by having to hunt through the telephone book for the address of Dr. Valco. He had just swung his small Ford coupe

into Twenty-fourth Street when the first shots broke loose. He was already putting the coupe to the curb when he saw the cop fall.

As the Ford hit the sidewalk and jerked to a stop, Gary threw himself from the car. Crouched on the running board, he trained his gun, which had leaped almost magically from his shoulder holster, over the engine hood.

His first shot hit the running Shag in the chest, the second ripped through his neck. Shag stumbled to the sidewalk, the machine gun skidding along in front of him. Gary turned his gun on the car.

A cold fury gripped Gary as he poured shot after shot into the black sedan. Even as he had leaped from his coupe, he had reasoned that the machine gun fire meant that the Green Lama was trapped in the apartment house. The fact that the gunman had ceased firing and was fleeing, could mean only one thing; that he had succeeded in killing the Lama.

Flame lanced back at Gary as the sedan lurched under way. It picked up speed, heading for Seventh Avenue. As it neared the corner, a police cruiser careened in to meet it, with siren moaning.

For a second the sedan hesitated, then leaped forward with a burst of speed. There was the agonizing scream of tearing steel, the screech of rubber, and the sedan spurted around the corner and roared away. The steady motor hum slackened once briefly, then picked up and quickly merged with the city noises. The police cruiser, one rear fender gone and its side dented, pulled up to the apartment house. The driver whirled it crosswise in the street, blocking the way for Gary.

As the police car skidded to a stop, one cop leaped out with drawn gun.

"Hold it, you!" he shouted at Gary, who was trying to get into his car. The cop raised his gun.

Gary straightened up from the car, his arms raised in the air. The two cops came up to him swiftly. One of them moved behind him, ran careful hands over him and extracted Gary's gun.

"Who the hell are you?" demanded the first cop, jerking him forward into the light.

Gary shook his head dumbly and stared toward the apartment house. All up and down the block, windows were going up and heads emerging, but there was no sign of life from the doctor's office. If the Green Lama were dead, Gary thought, it didn't make much difference if they took him in, or not. He merely shrugged as the cop slipped handcuffs on him and dragged him toward the sidewalk.

A riot car pulled up along side the prowl car and four officers piled out.

"What've you got?" one of them called.

"Don't know yet," the cop holding Gary answered. "There was quite a gun fight goin' on down here. One bunch got away, sideswiping us at the corner. This guy didn't quite make it."

"I know this one," one of the new comers said. "His name's Gary Brown. Used to be one of Harlem Joe's guns."

Pushing Gary ahead of them, the cops walked across the street. When they reached the body on the sidewalk, one of the men callously turned the corpse over with his foot.

"Shag Hennessey," he said. "One of Mort Lane's boys."

The men pushed on into the building without seeing the dead cop. Inside, in the doctor's office, they clicked on the light. One bulb, in the center chandelier, was still working.

The office looked as if a major hurricane had struck it. Nowhere, from floor to ceiling, was there a place as large as a man's hand that hadn't been struck by bullets from the machine gun.

Gary looked around for the slumped body of the Green Lama but there was nothing in sight but damaged furniture . . . The officers pushed on into the office.

"That's funny," one of the detectives remarked, when they had searched through the whole office without finding anyone. "They certainly filled this place with lead, but there ain't no corpse. You don't suppose Shag was shooting at shadows, do you?" He rattled the knob of the splintered connecting door. The knob turned in his hand.

"What the hell—" muttered the detective. He jumped away from the door and yanked out his gun.

Slowly the door opened and a white face came through the opening. It was Dr. Pelham. His face was drained of color, and he was breathing heavily.

"Who are you?" snapped the detective.

"I—I'm Dr. Pelham—from next door. There was an awful amount of shooting and—and I thought it best to keep hidden until I heard you officers in here. I'm afraid guns rather upset me."

"Okay, doc," the detective smiled. "You can crawl out of that blue funk now. Everything's under control. . . . What the hell you laughin' at?" This last was directed at Gary who had suddenly begun to laugh.

Gary only shook his head and continued to laugh, half with relief and half with exultation. The reason for his strange conduct was that he had just seen something that told him plain-

ly the Green Lama was not dead.

On the wall, near one of the windows, was a rough chalk sketch of a Tibetan gargoyle. The chalk marks went into the bullet holes. The picture had been drawn after the shooting!

### CHAPTER III

#### A Letter from D. Pali



WHEN the Green Lama slipped through the door of the apartment house on West Twenty-fourth Street and into Dr. Valco's office, he was perfectly aware that he was being followed. His ears, trained in a Buddhist monastery to apprehend sounds inaudible to ordinary men, had caught the low-voiced command given by the Crimson Hand.

He was in the reception room when Shag Hennessey paused outside the open door. He could see the gunman plainly although he, in his dark green robe, was completely invisible. Therefore he saw the gunman prepare to enter.

The sound that Shag had heard was the rustle of the robe as the Green Lama leaped upward to grab the top of the door with strong fingers that lifted him easily. There he propped himself between the top of the open door and the molding above it.

An ordinary man would have been unable to maintain his balance there, to say nothing of holding on with such narrow support. But the Green Lama had held more difficult positions, according to the Yoga, for hours. So it was easy for him to stay there, over the gunman's head, while the machine gun sprayed in every direction—except straight up. He was still there when Shag finished with the other rooms.

For a moment he thought of drop-



The Crimson Hand

ping to the floor and capturing the man with the aid of the *kava*\* but decided that there would be little value in it at this stage. So far, the Green Lama was only guessing at the plot in the mind of the gang leader. With so little to go on, he was not one to be precipitant in his actions.

While Gary was engaged in battle with the gangsters outside, the Green Lama, using a tiny flash, was quickly searching the office. In the examination room, he bent to pick a tiny piece of paper from the floor. He looked at it carefully, then tasted it with the tip of his tongue. He nodded to himself and chuckled quietly. But there was no humor in the silent laughter.

Standing by the window, the Green Lama watched the arrival of the police and the arrest of Gary. As the officers entered the apartment building, he slipped through the open window and stood, invisible in the half darkness, at the edge of the sidewalk. From there he witnessed the search of the office

and the meeting between the police and Dr. Pelham. Once it was obvious that the police were going to take Gary to Headquarters, the Green Lama slipped away.

He hurried back to the penthouse laboratory. There he quickly shed the hooded robe, putting it in a black briefcase. It was only a matter of seconds to exchange those outer garments for the robe in the briefcase and become the Green Lama.

There was a small radio in the corner of the room. He crossed and snapped the switch. It was tuned to a station that gave news flashes at regular intervals, paying special attention to those dealing with crime.

As the sound of muted music filled the room, he sat, crosslegged, on the floor in front of the Buddha shrine. The rays from the butter candle added saturnine lights to his face as he removed the make-up.

It was maybe an hour later when a popular song broke off in the middle to give way to the announcer's voice.

"Flash," the announcer said, "from Headquarters: Two groups of gangsters tonight engaged in a pitched battle on West Twenty-fourth Street. Police were called by people in the neighborhood, but failed to arrive before the gunmen had fled, leaving behind them a dead patrolman and a gangster, named Shag Hennessey, also dead. The police arrested Gary Brown, former henchman of Harlem Joe, whom they found on the scene. Lieutenant Caraway, head of the homicide detail, is promising early results. . . ."

The man who was the Green Lama rose from the floor, snapped off the radio and left the room.

\* The Green Lama was so proficient with the scarf that he could use just the right amount of pressure to make the victim unconscious instead of killing him. He had been taught the use of the garrote by Nyanatiloka, the recognized master of that weapon among the Thugs in India.

**W**HEN Jethro Dumont went to report his description of the two murderers at the pier, he had been impressed by the apparent honesty of one and only one man. That officer, after Jethro's third or fourth visit, had told him frankly that politics and graft in certain quarters made it unlikely that the two killers would ever be arrested. He also mentioned the new confidence and bravado that had lately invaded the underworld, and the whisperers of a new, mysterious leader. Later, he and Jethro became good friends. That man was Lieutenant John Caraway.

Lieutenant Caraway was in charge of the night homicide detail at headquarters. He had just finished questioning Gary Brown, with no success, and gone back to his office when his phone rang. It was the desk sergeant.

"Send him in," Caraway said, after hearing what the sergeant had to say.

There was a sound of brisk footsteps in the hallway, and the door opened. Jethro Dumont looked in.

"Hello, Jethro," the lieutenant said. "What brings you down this time of night?"

A brief smile flitted over the ascetic face of Dumont as he greeted Caraway and dropped in the chair by his desk. He was carrying a leather briefcase.

"I just heard a radio flash," he said, "about your capture of a gunman tonight. I was in the neighborhood and thought I might as well drop in and see if he answered the description of . . ."

"Of the two men you saw at the pier months ago? I thought I told you that you're wasting your time. Anyway, this probably isn't your man. A guy named Brown. Used to run with a Harlem gang."

"I daresay," Jethro murmured. "What is the latest about the—er—Crimson Hand?"

"Another note came from him today, stating that this robbery at Norton was his work and that he would next demonstrate the power of his new weapon in one of the major cities. He said that after that he would serve an ultimatum to each city.

"I know I shouldn't be saying this, but it seems to me that the commissioner and the chief are a little too anxious to claim that the whole thing is crank work."

"You think they're in it with him?" Jethro asked.

"Dammit, Jethro," the lieutenant exclaimed, hitting the desk with his fist, "I can't say that. But I do know there's a hell of a lot of politics and graft somewhere. It has to be higher up because most of the men on the force are honest. And, since this Crimson Hand showed up, all the crooks are getting cocky as hell. If we arrest anyone, he's out on bail almost immediately and by the time we try to get an indictment, the evidence has all vanished. I've personally grilled a lot of known gunmen and they either don't know, or won't tell, who the Crimson Hand is. For all I know, he may even be the commissioner himself!"

"Well," Jethro said, "perhaps your Green Lama will do something."

"I doubt it," Caraway said. "If I thought he could, damn if I wouldn't help him. But he'll turn out to be just another crook."

"By the way," Dumont wanted to know, "is this Brown here or have you taken him somewhere else?"

"Here," the lieutenant said, uncoiling his lengthy frame from the desk. "We're holding him here for forty-eight hours but I don't know if it'll

do any good. I don't think he's guilty of killing the cop, but we can get him on the murder of Hennessey—although we ought to give him a medal for that. I guess you can take a look at him though."

Caraway led the way out of the office and down the corridor to the cell blocks. The turnkey unlocked the outer gate and let them through, pointing out the cell they wanted.

Gary Brown was sitting on the bed in his cell, wondering what had happened to the Green Lama. He stared impassively at the two men who looked in at him.

Jethro Dumont glanced briefly at the occupant. He saw a well-built young man, with a great shock of black hair. Under the hair, there was a rather handsome face somewhat spoiled by a twisted nose, broken once while discussing business with one of Harlem Joe's competitors. One eye was puffy and blue.

"No," Dumont said in a disappointed tone. "He isn't one of them. . . What happened to his eye?"

"One of the boys roughed him up a little," Caraway explained.

The two of them walked back to the lieutenant's office where they talked for another fifteen or twenty minutes. Then, Dumont tucked his briefcase under his arm and departed. He nodded good night to the desk sergeant and stepped into the night.

**T**HE desk sergeant at headquarters was a good-natured Irishman, named Murphy, who considered his job the most unexciting one in the world. To him, the passing parade of murderers, burglars, grief-stricken mothers,

and lost humans were just part of the daily routine. So for excitement, Murphy avidly read all the pulp detective magazines.

As Jethro Dumont nodded good night to him, the sergeant merely grunted for he was in the midst of a stirring novelet. The private detective in the story was just creeping up the back stairs of an old tenement where Johnny the Gimp was holding the kidnapped heiress. Consequently, he failed to notice that shortly after Dumont's exit, the door swung silently open and a dim, hooded figure flitted into the room.

For a moment, the Green Lama hesitated at the edge of the door, seeming to blend with the few shadows in the room. The sergeant continued to read. Then the figure moved silently across the room, passed within two feet of the sergeant's back and went noiselessly down the corridor. Even the reporters in the press room were unconscious of the shadow that passed fleetingly by their open door.

The turnkey was sitting with his chair tilted back against the wall and trying to envision what his wife would say when he tried to explain the five dollars he'd lost shooting craps with the reporters.

The hooded figure hesitated behind the turnkey. One arm rose and fell, the edge of his hand chopping against the base of the man's skull.\* The turnkey relaxed, unconscious.

A quick search of the man's pockets revealed the big key ring. The Green Lama fitted one after another into the outer gate until he found the key that unlocked it. The grilled door swung open.

\* The Green Lama was an expert in the art of *ju-jitsu*, although he did not resort to such crude methods, preferring to use his knowledge of radioactivity, as shown in a later chapter. But in this case there had been no time to make himself radioactive.



The slight rattle of the key in the cell door was the first inkling Gary Brown had that he was being freed. He looked up quickly and a smile sprang to his face as he saw the green-robed and hooded figure pulling the door open.

"The Lama!" he exclaimed. "I should have known you'd be here. Listen, chief, I —"

"I know," the Green Lama interrupted, "I saw it all. But you can write out your report and give it to me in the usual manner. You know, Gary, while I despair sometimes for your soul, there are times that I'm glad you are the active type rather than the meditative. Come."

He led the way past the unconscious turnkey and down the long corridor. As they passed Caraway's door, they could hear the lieutenant talking on the phone. Once they were past the press room, the Green Lama motioned for Gary to wait. Then he proceeded alone to where the desk sergeant sat engrossed in his detective story.

Even though the sergeant was concentrating on his story, the Green Lama knew that Gary Brown could never move silently enough to get by the desk. So the only thing to do was send the sergeant to join the turnkey in sleep.

This time it was impossible to slip up close enough for the light blow at the base of the skull. The Green Lama pulled the red *kava* from his neck. With a deft movement, he tossed the loop of the scarf toward the cop. As it settled over the cop's head, there was a quick, twisted jerk on the ends. There was a slight grunt from the sergeant as his head jerked, then he slumped over on his desk.

He would be out for an hour or so and then his throat would be sore for

a couple of days. But if there had been only the least more pressure on the scarf, Sergeant Murphy would never have known how his story ended in the magazine.

The Green Lama and Gary Brown hurried out of the station. In front of Headquarters, they separated wordlessly.

Somewhere in the shadows between headquarters and the next block, the Green Lama's robe disappeared and a dark overcoat and slouch hat replaced it. As he hailed a taxi, there was a leather briefcase under his arm.

There was a small mailbox next to the private elevator that served the uptown penthouse where the Green Lama had his headquarters. On the box was the name *Dr. Pali*. As a rule the only mail that came to that box were the written reports of Gary Brown and advertising circulars.

When the Green Lama had gone out earlier in the evening there had been no mail there. Therefore, there shouldn't have been any when he returned at eleven o'clock that night. But there was; a brief glimpse of white caught just as he was about to enter the grilled car.

The letter he pulled out had not been mailed, since there was no stamp on it. The envelope was a delicate gray in color and the Green Lama noticed a faint perfume as he examined it. A subtle old aroma that only a few women would affect.

The sheet of paper he pulled from the envelope was also gray. At the top of the paper was the monogram W. The letter was written in green ink. Since no one, not even Gary, knew the Green Lama's headquarters, it was astounding to find the message. The envelope had been addressed to Dr. Pali, but not so the letter.

Dear Green Lama (the letter began):

You are to be complimented on your promptness in guessing the intentions of the Crimson Hand. But if you are to stamp out crime, you will have to do even better. The Crimson Hand is the first real menace that America has known. He *must* be stopped! Day after tomorrow, the Crimson Hand is planning to strike in Cleveland, Ohio. His attack there will take place at approximately ten o'clock in the morning. I can't give you the full details but he will use the Liquid Ray and will attempt to loot the entire city. The rest is up to you. Magga.

The Green Lama stared for a long time at the signature, written in a firm, feminine hand. Magga, meaning "the way; the path." Was this a trap, or had he won another assistant; one who wanted to walk in a darkness more complete even than that of the Green Lama?

## CHAPTER IV

### Salute to Death



EVEN men were gathered in the room of a house in Tanner, New York, a small town about fifty miles from New York City. The air was blue with smoke. At one side of the room four men were around a table, playing cards. All of them had their coats off, and all were wearing shoulder holsters with the butts of automatics showing.

One man was standing at the window looking out; the other three were bent over a map spread on top of the radio. A short, stocky man, chewing on a cigar, was indicating spots on the map with a stubby forefinger and talking to the others.

"It's perfect!" he said. "I don't know how the guy does it, but he's a genius. Look, this way the whole town'll be covered an' it'll be like takin' candy from a baby!"

"Too damn high-falutin'," muttered one of the men. "Look, he calls it 'Plan MG-2'. What the hell does he think this is, the army?"

"Never mind that," ordered Mort Lane, the short, heavy-set man. "The Hand knows what he's doin' an' if he wants to call it some damn number, that's okay too."

"Okay," growled the dissenter, "but I still don't like it. I'd still like to know who the hell he is! Comin' around here with that damn red glove on an' never takin' off his mask. So far he's done a lot of talkin', but we ain't seen much cash. How do we know he ain't a phoney?"

"'Cause I'm tellin' you he ain't," Mort Lane said, looking at the other queerly.

"All right, you're tellin' me, but just the same the next time he comes out here I'm gonna tail him back to the city an' find out who he is."

"Forget that!" Lane said sharply.

"To hell with you!" the gunman said roughly. "I'm tired of workin' for some guy I can't even see! I tell you I'm gonna—" He broke off as he looked up and saw that Mort Lane had yanked out his gun. The other man had drawn to one side.

"Oh hell," he said, a sickly grin spreading over his paling face. "I was only kiddin', Mort. You know I don't mean it. If he wants it that way, it's okay with me. Don't . . ."

Mort Lane's face was a cold mask as he raised the gun slowly.

"For God's sake, Mort," the white-faced gunman gasped, "Don't—You wouldn't shoot a pal. . . . I was—"

The sound of the gun was almost deafening in the small room. The heavy slug struck the gunman in the left side; there was a sodden, tearing impact of lead against flesh and the look of

amazement and fear froze on the man's face. His sudden slump to the floor was an anti-climax to an awful drama.

Lane's expression was almost apologetic as he holstered his smoking gun. "I hated to do that," he said to the room in general, "but we can't take no chances. This is too big. I've—I've seen the Hand in action an' I don't want that devil to ever go to work on me." For a moment, something like fear flitted across the coarse features of the stocky gang leader. Then his face cleared. "Carry him out, boys."

A couple of the men lifted the corpse and went out the back door. A little later they came silently back in. The same fear, that had appeared on Lane's face, was reflected on the faces of all the men in the room. The fear of the unknown!

"All right," Mort Lane said when the two men were back, "you guys take a look at this map. You might as well start learnin' what you're goin' to do. We'll get somebody to take Dave's place."

The men crowded around the map on top of the radio while Lane pointed out spots on the paper with his pudgy forefinger.

"The spot marked G-1 is where the Hand will be," he said. "I'll take G-2, Mike has G-3, Dutch at G-4, Eddie at G-5, Spike has G-6, Fingers will handle G-7, Foley at G-8, and whoever takes Dave's place will have G-9. The Hand figures that will handle the whole city of Cleveland. It will also use up all the damn capsules, but, by that time, the Hand will probably make the sawbones come across with the formula. An' the take on this alone ought to run around a billion." He rubbed his hands joyfully at the thought of so much money.

A door at the other end of the

room opened and another man came in. Two bound figures were visible on the floor as he shut the door behind him. He was sucking the thumb on his right hand.

"That damn little she-tramp bit me," he growled.

"Don't be messin' around her then," Lane said. "You know what'll happen to you anyway if the Hand finds out you been tryin' to give her any of your personal attention."

"I know," the man said. His face, too, mirrored briefly that nameless fear. "The Hand just called up. Said he'd learned that this Green Lama is taking the plane for Cleveland. He says Fingers is to fly him in the two-seater and to mount the gun on the front cockpit. The Hand says he'll handle the gun himself so there'll be no slip-up like Shag's. The rest of us will take the cabin plane."

"Swell," Lane explained. "If the Hand is going to take charge of it himself, that'll be the end of the Green Lama! Now, you guys better memorize the streets where you're supposed to drop your capsules. There ain't gonna be no mistakes on this job!"

THE morning plane to Cleveland stood on the runway, its prop turning over idly. The passengers were having their baggage weighed and getting aboard. Among them was a man dressed in a dark green suit, with light green ecclesiastical shirt and collar. On the front of the collar was the embroidered symbol *Om*. A leather briefcase was tucked under his arm. The passengers glanced at him with curiosity, wondering what religious sect he represented. On the passenger list, he was down as Rev. James Pali.

The Green Lama was going to Cleveland.

The night before, he had gone over the strange letter carefully in his laboratory and decided that it was no trap. Getting in touch with Gary, he had told him to keep an eye on any of Mort Lane's men in New York while he was in Cleveland. Then he had called the airport and reserved a ticket in the name of Rev. Pali.

Finally, the last bit of baggage was stored away in the tail assembly of the big Tri-American ship and the last passenger was aboard, being made comfortable by the hostess. With a full-throated roar, the big plane lurched forward and trundled down the field like some prehistoric monster. It lifted gracefully into the air and wheeled westward, the sun glinting on silver wings.

The Green Lama placed his briefcase on the seat beside him and made himself comfortable. The briefcase held the green monk's robe, the Tibetan scarf and—more important—a bottle of radioactive salts.\* Otherwise he was weaponless. The man who had never fired a gun, never taken a life, was going alone to meet the cream of New York's worst criminals headed by the Crimson Hand.

From his seat in the rear of the plane, the Green Lama inspected his fellow passengers. He wondered idly if one of them was the Crimson Hand; if others were members of his gang. It seemed unlikely, yet anything was possible with a man such as the criminal leader seemed to be.

In the seat opposite his was a young woman who looked as though she might be a school teacher, possibly going home for a visit. The man in front of her had the appearance of a deacon,

or a Sunday School superintendent. The man in the black Homburg was obviously some minor business executive; the man wearing a derby was probably a salesman; the girl with the exaggerated mouth might be a movie actress. The others were nondescript individuals who might fit into any walk of American life.

As the plane gained altitude and the motors settled down to a steady hum, the passengers began to relax and take stock of their neighbors.

"Things look bad in Europe," the minor executive ventured, turning the pages of his morning paper.

"Oh I feel so sorry for those poor Finns," the schoolteacher said impulsively.

"I don't know," the man who looked like a deacon said, twisting in his seat so he could see them all. "I would say that's carrying sentiment too far. Now the way I look at it, this war in Europe is the best thing that's happened in many a moon. Yes sir, a mighty good thing!"

The other passengers had all turned and were regarding the cherubic-faced man with something akin to horror, but he didn't seem to mind. He smiled benevolently upon all alike.

"That's rather a barbarous way to talk," the minor executive said coldly.

"Not at all," the champion of war declared. "I find it a big help to business, and that's progress."

"What line are you in, may I ask?" the man in the derby inquired, leaning forward.

"Munitions," was the cheerful answer. "The Fenimore Munitions Company. We make the finest line of machine gun bullets to be found any-

\* While his knowledge of radioactive salts was one of the Green Lama's greatest weapons, he had also followed in theory the same path taken by Dr. Valon and reasoned that radioactive salts rendered a person immune from the Liquid Ray. He, therefore had another advantage over the criminals, who were forced to wear lead-lined suits and lead-lined masks.



For a brief moment  
a shadowy figure  
was framed in the  
entrance.

where. And we're thinking of going into the poison gas end of the business, if the war holds out. In fact, we have something very revolutionary in mind. It'll mean millions if we can get hold of it." He paused expectantly.

Although no one expressed further interest in his plans to revolutionize the poison gas industry, he continued,

undaunted. "If we can just get hold of this Liquid Ray thing some doc just discovered, we'll be set. Think of it! A little capsule that will hold enough gas to cover a cubic mile! Yes sir, there'll be a fortune in it!"

The man in green leaned forward. "Don't you think," he asked gently, "that it will be better if Dr. Valco's invention is used in the treatment of disease, as he plans, than for the destruction of souls?"

"With all respect to you, Father," the man answered, glancing at the ecclesiastical shirt, "I don't agree. The world is over-populated now. It'll be better for the rest of us if a few were knocked off. Think of the jobs

it'll create! No sir, father, you stick to saving souls and I'll stick to makin' more room for the ones you save!" The man laughed heartily.

The man who looked like a deacon made several more attempts at conversation but when no one responded to him, he lapsed into a sulking silence.

The school teacher had been covertly studying the man in green for several minutes, puzzled by the embroidered design on his collar. Finally she leaned towards him. "Of what faith are you, Father?" she asked.

The Green Lama smiled. "Faith?" he repeated dreamily. "I am of the faith of Truth, of Peace, of Justice. Of the faith of human smiths."

"Smiths?" the school teacher asked, puzzled.

"Precisely," the man in green smiled. "Was it not said by the wise Dhammapada that 'Even as the smith refines silver, so gradually, little by little, moment after moment, does the wise man fine away his defilements'?"

The plane passengers sat in silence, each busy with his own thoughts.

High above the Tri-American air liner, a trim two-seater fighting plane nosed through the clouds. In the front cockpit a masked figure sat, peering over the side, a crimson-clad hand caressing a machine gun.

As the two planes were crossing the forest-studded mountains of Pennsylvania, the crimson hand rose and fell, a flashing movement of color. The two-seater nosed down.

The wing struts screamed shrilly as the smaller ship power-dived toward the air liner. The crimson finger tightened on the trigger of the synchronized machine gun. A line of holes magically appeared in the cabin of the large plane, running rapidly toward the front of the ship.

A vicious burst of fire was concentrated on the front where the two Tri-American pilots sat, and the small ship swung in a wide circle to dive once more, its gun chattering grimly.

The left engine of the big liner coughed and quit. The ship wallowed uncertainly. Another burst from the machine gun and the second engine went dead. There was a puff of smoke from the engine and a small tongue of flame licked back toward the cabin. The air liner fluttered earthward.

The small ship circled lazily above, like a hungry buzzard, as the big plane went slowly down in swoops and jerks. The tongue of flame grew larger and larger, pushing steadily back against the cabin. Once, as it neared the forest below, the big plane nosed up momentarily, then it settled almost gently on top of the trees. A minute later a great wave of flames and smoke leaped above the forest.

The small plane dipped its nose once in a sardonic salute and wheeled westward, merging swiftly with the horizon.

## CHAPTER V

### Plan MG-2



THE best suite of rooms in one of Cleveland's larger hotels was crowded. Forty men sat around, eyeing each other suspiciously. Mort Lane was there with his seven men; there were two other New York gang leaders with a like number of men; Jerry Gatti and seven men from Chicago; and Bunny Fairin, Cleveland's Public Enemy Number 1, with his men. There was an air of tension in the room.

"I don't understand this," Fingers whispered to Mort Lane. "What's the idea of the Hand draggin' in all these ginzoes? I thought we was gonna handle the whole thing?"

"I thought so too," Mort admitted, frowning, "but the boss must know what he's doin'! I guess maybe this is too big a town for just a few guys to handle."

At that moment a door at the other end of the room opened and the masked figure of the Crimson Hand entered. He proceeded to a small table and chair set apart from the men. All eyes were almost unconsciously drawn to that right hand, clad in the brilliant crimson glove. The leader rapped on the table.

"The meeting," he said, in a muffled voice, "will come to order. . . . Each group of you is probably surprised to find other men here. I hope, however, that you weren't so stupid as to think that you alone could have handled a job this big."

"That's all right, boss," Bunny Fairin called out, "but why didn't you tell me you wanted more guys. I could 'a' got 'em here for you, without draggin' all these guys in."

"Shut up!" the masked figure ordered sharply. "One thing you must all learn is to take orders! I will brook no interference from anyone, nor will I make explanations unless I choose to!"

"The Green Lama is dead so if any of you have been worrying about him, you can stop. I took care of the matter personally to guarantee that there would be no bungling.

"Now to business. You have your copies of Plan MG-2?"

The five gang leaders nodded.

"Good. You will go over them thoroughly tonight. At nine o'clock in

the morning each Squadron Leader will receive the supply of capsules and will proceed to your appointed places. At precisely five minutes before ten you will don your suits and masks and at ten sharp you will throw the capsules.

"Fairin, you and your men will take the Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights area. Gatti, your sector will be East Cleveland and Cleveland down as far as East 105th Street. Mort Lane will handle the main Cleveland section to the High Level bridge. Silk and Hodgins will divide the Lakewood sector between them. Is that understood.

Again the five men nodded.

"As soon as the capsules have done their work," the Hand continued, "each group will meet with the Squadron Leader, as per instructions. You will take necessary trucks and proceed to the spots marked on your maps. The Lakewood section will take advantage of whatever planes are available at the airport. Remember, you are not to deviate from the instructions in the slightest!

"I expect your natural instinct will be to start general looting, but you *must* concentrate only on the banks. I think I can safely assure you that that will net us in the neighborhood of one hundred million dollars—which we split equally.

"One man in each detail is to get the necessary equipment for disguising the trucks. You will have twenty-four hours time in which to get away before there will be any alarm. In that time you should be a good distance from Cleveland and have the trucks disguised. Don't forget, each vehicle will be marked with the name of the wholesale firm as given on your copy of Plan MG-2. You will proceed directly to the Tanner Manufacturing Com-

pany warehouse, in Tanner, N. Y., where there will be a division of the spoils." He stopped and surveyed the men coldly.

"Stick with me," he continued, "and within two weeks we will have complete control of America; within six months, complete control of the world. But if one of you so much as thinks of double-crossing me, he will die like the rat he is. That is all, *gentlemen*." The Crimson Hand rose and left the room. The men filed out of the suite in small groups.

As the zero hour approached the next morning, Mort Lane sat in a car parked at the corner of East Ninth Street and Euclid Avenue. He was already wearing the lead-lined suit, with only the mask and gloves still to put on. He was watching the minute hand on his watch. Traffic streamed by him.

Thirty seconds before ten o'clock. Lane slipped the mask over his face, drew on the heavy gloves. From the seat beside him, he picked up the small red capsule. It was hardly more than an inch in length, a half inch in thickness. The gang leader counted fifteen and tossed the capsule through the window and onto the sidewalk.

There was only a tiny explosive sound as the capsule hit the pavement and burst. The sound wasn't great enough to penetrate the ordinary traffic noises. But the result was startling.

Up and down the avenue, as far as the eye could see, people dropped before the ray as grass before a scythe. It was uncanny, the way that solid wall of hurrying pedestrians simultaneously faltered in their stride and dropped to the sidewalk as one man. Cars in the street, their drivers unconscious, smashed into one another or mounted the sidewalk to crash against build-

ings. There was the whine of a hundred straining motors; then they coughed and died out. A street-car hit an auto, jumped the track and toppled over against a candy store.

The effect of all this was very strange. For several minutes there was the sound of cars piling up, the crackling crunch of steel against steel, of steel against concrete, the sharp shattering of glass. And then there was a quiet, an eerie, almost deafening silence that was fearfully unnatural in such a large city.

Looking like a man of Mars in his lead-lined suit, Mort Lane moved around searching until he found a truck that had been parked and was undamaged. The driver slumbered at the wheel.

The truck was already backed up to the wide doors of the Federal bank on the corner when Lane's seven henchmen arrived, picking their way past the wrecks in the street. Six of them immediately joined Lane inside the bank.

Huge sacks were rapidly filled with stacks of currency and bonds. The men worked swiftly and efficiently, stuffing the money in the sacks and carrying them out to the truck. It was a matter of only a few minutes to clean out that bank. Then the truck moved three blocks down Euclid Avenue, to where another bank was situated. Here the same process was repeated. It was just as they were pulling away from this bank that one of the men pointed up the street. His face had paled until it appeared waxen.

"My God," he said, his voice sounding shrilly in the quiet streets. "The Green Lama!"

Several blocks away, a hooded figure was speeding toward them.



WHEN the big Tri-American air liner had spun earthward in flames, the two pilots and five of the passengers were already dead. Two other passengers and the hostess were badly injured. One bullet, tearing through the cabin at oblique angles, had barely missed the Green Lama and caught the man who looked like a deacon in the throat.

As the heavy ship fell, the Green Lama fought his way forward, holding on to the seats. The heat of the flames was already intense in the cabin.

Several precious minutes were wasted in getting to the cockpit and several more in wrestling with the controls. The ship was spinning down so fast that there was too much air pressure to fight. Occasionally he could glimpse the ground rushing up to meet them. The heat was unbearable. The flames were already inside, running rapidly through the ship.

Then, just as the tree tops were reaching eagerly for the undercarriage, the Green Lama managed to jerk the nose of the ship upward. But there was no motor to pull it and the plane went into a whip stall. For a brief second it seemed to hang suspended in the air, then it slid back into the top of a huge oak.

There was a ripping and tearing, the groaning of steel, as the ship came to a stop with a suddenness that flung the Green Lama against the cockpit wall, stunning him.

A flame licking at his hand brought the Green Lama back to consciousness. Rubbing his head, he stumbled back through the ship. The fall seemed to have completed the job started by the bullets. Apparently he was the only passenger left alive. He glanced briefly at the lolling head of the school teacher as he retrieved his briefcase.

Luckily the crash had not jammed the emergency exit door and the Green Lama succeeded in wrenching it open. The plane was only ten or fifteen feet from the ground. Flame reached after him as the man in green dropped and began limping away through the forest. He had gone only a few hundred yards, when the whole plane burst into fire, roaring and crackling as the flames shot twenty feet in the air.

The Green Lama had gone perhaps a half mile, following a faint trail through the forest, when he became aware of a faint noise some distance behind him. He stopped and his keen ears made out the sound of hurrying footsteps. Someone was following him.

Stepping behind a tree, he waited. Presently, along the path came a woman. Her neat brown hair was disarrayed, straggling over her face. Her glasses were askew over her nose. It was the woman who looked like a school teacher. The man in green stepped out from behind the tree.

"Oh," she exclaimed as she saw him. "I was hoping I could catch you. I was—the forest frightens me."

"I'm sorry," the Green Lama said gravely. "I wouldn't have left you, but I must admit I thought you were dead. It is unforgivable that I should have been so lax."

"Not at all, Father," she said. "It was natural. I guess the crash did knock me out and I must have come to just after you left. I awoke to feel fresh air blowing on my face and just sort of followed it until I fell out. And just in time too, for the ship went up in flames. Oh, those poor people. . . ." She shuddered.

"Peace," the man in green murmured, putting his hand on her shoulder.

"But," she said, "why should that plane have attacked us? Why?"


"I don't know," he said hesitatingly. "Whoever it was, you may rest assured that justice will be meted out unto them. Come."

As the two of them made their way through the forest, he studied her. There was something different about her, something that even the crash couldn't explain. She seemed to have more confidence, more assurance, than her bearing had indicated in the plane.

"The female's ability to adapt herself to a crisis," he finally thought philosophically and shrugged. He led the way through the forest.

## CHAPTER VI

### Vanishing Millions



IT WAS late in the day when the two survivors straggled into a small town at the foot of the mountains. Both were covered with dust and their faces were marked with scratches. They were tired. But the man in green still clung to his leather briefcase.

"I'm getting a car," he said wearily, "and driving on to Cleveland. I suggest that you go to a hotel and get some rest. You can probably get a train in the morning."

"No," the girl answered, straightening her glasses, "I want to drive on to Cleveland with you."

"Impossible."

"Please, Father," the girl said, laying a hand on his arm. "It's important!"

"Well, all right," he answered, after a moment of thought. "But you'll have



Alma Palmer

to take a cab, or street car, the minute we reach the outskirts of Cleveland."

"I promise," she said.

It took only a half hour or so to find a second-hand car dealer and buy a good, fast sedan. Another half hour sufficed for getting a license.\*

They drove steadily through the night, but when they stopped for breakfast in the morning, they were still two hundred miles from Cleveland. The Green Lama was worried.

Ten o'clock, the note had said, would be the striking hour. He knew that it would be pretty close to that, one way or the other, by the time they arrived in Cleveland. He wasn't sure which would be worse; for the school teacher, who had told him her name was Alma Palmer, to be knocked out by the gas or suddenly to see everyone else falling unconscious about her while she was still awake. Finally, his common sense weakened.

"We're both pretty tired from that all-night trip," he said while they were still sitting at the restaurant table. "What we need is something to stimu-

\* The Green Lama always carried a few thousand dollars in cash for just such emergencies as this. He also had a driving license, in the name of Rev. Pall, for every state in the union.

ulate us a trifle. I have just the thing, prescribed by my doctor." He reached in his briefcase and pulled out the bottle of radioactive salts.

He pulled over her glass of water and shook some of the salts in the glass. He did the same to his own, and watched the salts dissolve. Then he pushed her glass back across the table.

"Drink it all," he commanded, lifting his own glass and draining it.

She tasted hers with the tip of her tongue, then lifted it and drank it all. Her face was reflective as her palate experimented with the faint taste it left.

By the time they were ready to leave, there was a faint flush in her cheeks. "My," she exclaimed, "I feel positively electrified."

He smiled at her remark.

It lacked but a few minutes of ten in the morning when they drove into the outer edge of Cleveland and joined the flow of traffic heading downtown. When they reached the car tracks in Euclid Village, he stopped the car.

"I'm sorry," he said firmly, "but you'll have to take a street car from here, Miss Palmer."

"I don't mind," she said, and then added impishly. "But it's the first time I've ever been made to walk by a man in clerical vestments." Laughing, she ran towards the car line.

As he reached East Cleveland, his watch showed thirty seconds before ten. He steered the car to the curb and parked, shutting off his motor.

A moment later he felt a shock almost as though he'd run into a live wire. His head was swimming. As from a distance, he heard the crashing of cars as their drivers lost consciousness. Then his head cleared. The radioactive salts had worked, as his theory had indicated.

That awful quiet was on the city. Once he thought he heard the hum of a car several blocks to his right, but decided he must be mistaken.

All along Euclid Avenue cars were jammed together, their drivers hanging limply over the wheels. A housewife, who had been sweeping her walk, lay crumpled on the front steps of her home. A small boy, roller-skating, had skidded into a rosebush. A street car had jumped the track and rammed a lightpost.

The Green Lama started his motor and drove slowly down town, skirting the wrecks all along the street. As it happened, he saw none of the gangsters on his way. When he reached Fifteenth Street, he parked his car and proceeded by foot. The only sound in the city, was the growling of the truck somewhere ahead. At Twelfth Street an airplane had crashed into the side of an office building.

It was like walking into a city of the dead. The sidewalk was covered with people who had been struck by the ray while walking. Here a fruit peddler had fallen over on his fruit; a window chef had collapsed, spilling his batter over an unconscious customer; a cop had passed out while only half in his patrolcar.

At Twelfth Street, the Green Lama had stopped and taken his robe and scarf from the briefcase. His overcoat and hat went into its voluminous interior as he donned the green robe and pulled the cowl over his head.

THE truck was just pulling away from the second bank as he arrived in sight. He broke into a run. One of the gunmen shouted and opened fire with his automatic. But the distance was too great and none of the bullets came even close.

It was then that the Green Lama had the nearest escape of his life; far closer even than the plane crash. He was opposite a large office building, passing the dark enclosure of an empty store. A hand reached out of the store and grabbed his arm. A quick jerk pulled him off balance, brought him staggering inside the store. At the same time the spiteful crack of a rifle sounded from the top of the office building and the window of the store collapsed with a crash.

The Green Lama had felt a slight shock in his arm as the hand grabbed him. Even as he caught his balance in the darkened store, his strong fingers were reaching for a vital nerve in the temple of his unseen assailant.

"Don't," a voice whispered quickly. "It's Magga!" The voice was that of a woman.

For a moment the Green Lama stood motionless, every sense searching for the identity of the woman standing beside him. The darkness was so complete that even his keen eyes could not pierce it. He caught the faint fragrance that he remembered from the letter; his ears heard the faint rustle of silken garments. The hum of the truck motor had been cut off. There was no more sound from across the street. He remembered the slight shock in his arm. Did someone else know the secret of radioactivating salt to the extent that he did, or did that mean it was. . . .

"Speak again," he said. "Aloud."

"What shall I say?" she asked throatily, laughing.

"Then you are Alma Palmer," he said softly. "But of course! How stupid of me! That accounts for the difference in you as you came from the plane. Your make-up was slightly marred. I have been careless."

"Careless in more ways than one,

Father Green Lama," she said seriously. "The Crimson Hand was on that roof over there, watching his men. I caught a glimpse of his rifle and the crimson glove and—well, then I grabbed you."

"It has been said that when the good man is careless, his friends think for him," the Green Lama said gravely. "Why are you in this?"

"The same reason as yours," she answered shortly. "To end crime." She placed her hand on his arm and again he felt that slight shock. "There are too many of them," she said, "for you to capture single-handed. But one of this group is separated from the others. I saw him entering a hardware store on the next side street. Perhaps if you could get him, he could be induced to talk and tell you where the headquarters are."

"An excellent idea," the Green Lama agreed. "I'll get him now."

"Wait," she said quickly. "The Hand may still be across the street. He won't miss the next time."

"Let him be there," the Green Lama laughed. "I was careless once. Now watch!"

He slipped from the doorway. It was daylight, with the sun shining brightly, yet the green-robed figure seemed to blend perfectly with the shadows cast by store awnings and before he had gone half a dozen steps, the girl in the store was not sure which was shadow and which the Green Lama.

It was only a matter of moments to find the hardware store. Inside he could see a figure moving around. Leaving his briefcase beside the building, the Green Lama entered silently.

The gangsters had gotten together the paint that he needed and then, unable to resist the temptation, had

gone over to the safe and opened it. As the Green Lama entered, he was bent over taking the contents. The store owner slumbered peacefully by his cash register.

There was no sound as the Green Lama sped across the floor and stopped behind the kneeling man. One hand came down in a swift, chopping blow across the base of the skull, between the edge of the mask and the suit. The man crumpled.

With the unconscious gangster tucked under his arm, the Lama started for the door. It was then that two other gunmen, sent by Mort Lane to look for the missing man, entered.

"The Green Lama!" one of them exclaimed, his voice muffled by the gas mask. Both men went for their guns.

Dropping his bundle to the floor, the Lama leaped forward. As he reached the first man, he seized the edge of the gas mask and jerked. The gangster dived forward, off balance. Half way in his fall, his head was yanked backward, there was the sound of tearing fabric and the mask came off. As the outside air hit him, he collapsed.

The other gunman had his gun already out, bringing it into line. The Green Lama's hand chopped across the man's wrist, paralyzing the muscles, while the fingers of his right hand sought for an opening between the mask and the lead-lined suit. He found a slight one in the mask just behind one ear. It was large enough to get a finger in. The Green Lama jabbed at the spot with his index finger. The

gangster reeled and fell to the floor. He struggled to his feet, took one short step toward his gun on the floor and fell again.\* The Green Lama kicked the gun across the floor.

Again he picked up the first gangster, tossed him over his shoulder, and walked through the door. As he left, the crippled man on the floor heard his soft laughter and the exulting whisper, "Om! Ma-ni pad-me Hum!" The man shivered as the uncanny sentence seemed to float in the air long after the Lama was gone.

**S**TRIPPED of his lead-lined suit and gas mask, the Green Lama's prisoner sat propped up against the wall in a deserted house just out of Euclid Village, beyond the range of the Liquid Ray. The Green Lama bent over him, waiting for the first flicker of returning consciousness.

At last the man's eyelids fluttered open and he looked around in a dazed fashion. Slowly, understanding came into his face. He recognized the figure bending over him.

"What the hell—" the gunman began, leaping to his feet. He had already noticed that the Green Lama was not holding a gun on him and, as he came to his feet, he struck with his right fist.

Almost leisurely, the Green Lama reached forward and jabbed with his forefinger at the top of the man's skull.† The result was startling. The gangsters' right leg seemed to collapse under him. The force of his swing carried him on around to crash into

\* The Green Lama's greatest weapon, as mentioned before in these pages, was his discovery of greater power in radioactive salts. He'd found a way to step up that power and the result was that he could transmit an electric shock through touching another person. The shock was too light to do any damage except when it was applied to a vital spot. In this case he had pressed the vestibular nerve which controls the sense of balance. It would be at least two hours before the gangster could stand.

† The Green Lama has transmitted an electrical shock to the Precentral Gyrus of Rolando, the nerve centers controlling the arms and legs. This nerve runs over the top of the front part of the skull, with a different part of it controlling the individual extremities. The slight radioactive shock was enough to paralyze the parts affected for two to three hours.

the wall. He tried to get up, but again the right leg gave away. There was a touch of fear in his face as he sat on the floor and regarded the hooded figure.

"What the hell is this," growled the gangster. "You ain't the Green Lama! I saw that plane go down in flames!"

"So," the Lama said softly, "you're the one who was in the plane and are responsible for the deaths of the passengers. The Green Lama will remember."

While he was talking the gangster had struggled up to stand on his left leg. Braced against the wall, he took another swing at the man in front of him.

Again that hand flashed out, this time pressing on the other side of the skull. The left leg collapsed, carrying the gunman to the floor. He glared up, his face whitening.

"What're you goin' to do?" he asked. "Turn me over to the cops?"

"Not yet," the Green Lama answered. "Not until I'm through with you."

"What d'you want?" the gunman asked sullenly.

"First, what's your name?"

"Go to hell!"

The Green Lama reached out and tapped the left side of his skull. The gunman's right arm, raised to ward off what he thought was a blow, went limp. He looked down at it in frightened amazement.

"What're you doin' to me?" he cried. His face was gradually losing its craftiness, as his nerve failed. A gun wouldn't have frightened him one-tenth as much as this sudden loss of power of his legs, and now his arm.

"Who are you?" the Green Lama asked again, his hand raised.

"Fingers Jordon," was the sullen answer.

"Who is the Crimson Hand?"

"I don't know," Fingers said truthfully.

The Green Lama struck again and the gunman's left arm went dead.

"The Hand'll kill you for this!" Fingers cried, his face contorting with fear.

"I hardly think so," the Lama said dryly. "He tried several times—unsuccessfully. Who is the Crimson Hand?"

"Honest to God, I don't know," Fingers insisted. "We ain't never seen his face. He always wears a mask. A couple of guys tried to find out and got bumped off for their pains."

"Where's the headquarters?"

"I ain't talkin' any more, see," Fingers said desperately. "The Hand will cut my heart out if I do!"

"You'll talk," the Green Lama promised grimly. His hand flashed up and the finger stabbed in front of the gangster's ear.\*

As though touched with a magic wand, the gangster's face stiffened in the mask of paralysis.

"Damn you!" he said through motionless lips.

"Where's the headquarters?"

"I don't know," Fingers groaned. "We meet in a house on Cherry Street in Tanner, just out of New York. But there's another headquarters somewhere. I don't know where it is."

"Who else was in on this deal besides you and Lane?"

"Two gangs from Brooklyn, some ginzo from Chicago and some of the local boys."

"Are they going on to New York with the Crimson Hand?"

\* The center of the facial nerve (Cranial VII) which controls all the muscles in the face.

"Yeah."

"How are they going to take the money there?" the Lama asked.

The gangster hesitated, obviously torn between his fear of the Green Lama and the Crimson Hand. Then his nerve stiffened.

"I ain't tellin' you any more," he exclaimed with bravado. "You can't do no more to me than you have done!"

"No?" the Green Lama asked softly. He reached out and pressed quickly with two fingers next to the eyeballs.\* There was a terrified scream.

"I'm blind!" sobbed Fingers. "I'm blind! Don't touch me again! I'll tell you anything you want to know!"

"How is the money to be transported?"

"By trucks mostly," Fingers said brokenly. "They're gonna stop somewhere along the road and paint all the trucks over so they'll look like they're from some wholesale house."

"You're sure you don't know where they're taking the money?" the Green Lama asked gently.

"No! Don't touch me again!"

"Where's the Hand holding Dr. Valco?"

"In the other headquarters—the one he ain't told us about. Only Mort knows where it is. He's got a dame there too."

"A girl?" the Green Lama said. "Who?"

"I don't know. Some dame that was with the doc when we took him."

"All right," the Green Lama said. He was disappointed. He had really learned very little. Evidently the Crimson Hand was too smart to let the men in his gang know all of his secrets.

"You ain't goin', are you?" Fingers called. "Don't leave me alone! God! I can't see an' I can't move! Don't—"

"You talk too much once you start," the Green Lama said. "Man with long tongue never learn anything." He bent over the paralyzed gangster and his finger pressed on the man's temple.†

"Dgo, tond gibble ared," Fingers called wildly as the Green Lama left the house.

At the first small town, the Lama stopped his car and called the Euclid Village police.

"If you'll look in the first white house on the left," he said when a gruff voice came on the wire, "you'll find a New York gangster named Fingers Jordon. He's responsible for the wreck of the Tri-American plane yesterday and also is mixed up in a little robbery in Cleveland you'll be hearing about shortly. Don't be surprised if he talks nonsense. He's completely paralyzed."

"Who's this?" the voice asked.

"The Green Lama." He cradled the phone and walked out to his car.

Reaching Pittsburgh late that afternoon, the Green Lama, once more in the garb of Rev. Pali, caught a plane for New York.

## CHAPTER VII

### The House On Cherry Street



IN THE evening of the fourth day after the abduction of Dr. Harrison Valco and Evangl Stewart, Jethro Dumont was in the study of his apartment on Park Avenue.

\* The Green Lama had pressed on the main optic nerves. The slight shock was painless but would cause blindness for about two hours.

† The Breca Center is located in the region of the temple. It is a nerve controlling thought transference into words. When paralyzed, the person can only produce garbled sounds.



The  
Green  
Lama

sitting cross-legged on the floor in front of the Buddhist shrine.

The lights in the study were out. The only illumination in the room came from the butter-candle in front of the shrine and two more candles that added their yellow glow from each side. The image of Buddha smiled benignly down. There was something of the hallowed atmosphere of the temple in the quietness. The mellow voice of Jethro Dumont chanted on in sing-song tones.

"Buddham saranam gacchami,

"Dhammam saranam gacchami,

"Sangham saranam gacchami,

"Dutiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami,

"Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami,

"Dutiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami,

"Tatiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami . . ."

After the tones of the chant had died out, Jethro Dumont sat motionless, staring into space and breathing gently. It seemed almost as though he were counting the breaths.

After a bit, he began chanting again, this time in English. His gentle voice seemed to fill the room, resounding from every corner.

"May all beings,

"High or low,

"Great or small,

"Strong or weak,

"Near or far,

"Visible or invisible,

"Be happy, preserve their happiness.

"And live without enmity."†

Long after the sound of his voice had died out, Jethro Dumont sat there, staring into space. He was finally aroused by a slight tapping on the door.

"Come," he called.

The door opened and Tsarong slipped quietly into the room. He bore a bowl of steaming, fragrant tea in one hand and a folded newspaper in the other.

"Your tea, Master," he said. "I have also brought the paper you asked for." He put the tea on the desk and laid the paper next to it. Then he switched on a small electric light.

"Thank you, Tsarong," Dumont said, sighing. He rose from the floor and seated himself at the desk. As he sipped the tea, he glanced over the front page of the *Evening Sentinel*. Tsarong stood quietly to one side.

Unlike the Norton incident, the editor had seen fit to break out his scare heads for the Cleveland story. The black type seemed to scream from the page.

\* The *Ti Sarana*, The Threefold Refuge, a Buddhist prayer which is part of the Ven. Mahinda's formula for meditation. It is, "To the Buddha for refuge I go, To the Dhamma for refuge I go, To the Sangha for refuge I go," etc.

† This is the *Metta*, meaning Love in the sense of benevolence, and follows the *Ti Sarana*.



**BOLD ROBBERY NETS 100 MILLION  
ENTIRE CITY OF CLEVELAND  
GASSED**

Cleveland, Ohio, January 26 (AP)—A gang of unidentified robbers yesterday cleaned every bank in this city, gaining an estimated one hundred million dollars in currency and negotiable bonds. It is difficult to determine how the robbery was carried out since the entire city was either gassed or subjected to a mysterious and deadly ray early in the morning.

To date, no one has been able to give a coherent account of what happened. At about ten o'clock yesterday morning the citizens of Cleveland were carrying on their usual business activities and then suddenly no one remembers anything until they awoke about ten this morning. People had apparently gone to sleep in the middle of the street. Automobiles and street-cars had crashed, their drivers under the influence of the unknown power. A great number of people were killed and many severely injured in the accidents.

When Cleveland awoke this morning, it was to discover that all of her banks had been cleaned out. It is believed that the criminals made their getaway in trucks, although a nation-wide search today failed to uncover anything that might indicate the present whereabouts of the trucks or the gangsters.

There were several more paragraphs in similar vein. A great many other stories of the incident were plastered all over the front page, almost to the exclusion of other news. There was one item to the effect that the Euclid Village police were holding a man suspected of being implicated in the robbery. Another story was headlined:

**HITLER AND STALIN BACK OF CLEVELAND OUTRAGE SAYS CONGRESSMAN DAYS.** Still another story was labeled: **CRIMSON HAND ACTING ON THREAT TO TAKE OVER AMERICA.** One item announced: **PRESIDENT TO CALL OUT ARMY TO POLICE NATION.** And, **U. S. CITIES DEMANDING PROTECTION.**

Down at the bottom of the page was the report of an interview with President Knox of Columbia University. In a way, it was the closest to the truth.

President Knox had told the reporter that the effect of the gas, or ray, sounded very much like the Delta Ray of radium recently discovered by Dr. Harrison Valco. The reporter added that Dr. Valco had been kidnapped, or *had disappeared*, four days before.

"Did you read this, Tsarong?" Jethro Dumont asked when he had finished.

"Yes," the small Tibetan said. He added, soberly, "It has been written in our books of wisdom that the road to Justice is covered with the rocks of Injustice. The wise man moves cautiously lest he stumble over the rocks."

"Each must follow the chosen path," Dumont answered. "I'm going out, Tsarong."

"I have your coat," the Tibetan said. He held up the overcoat for Dumont to slip into.

**T**HE house in Tanner, N. Y., was crowded with sullen-faced men. Several of the gunmen were in the small rooms playing cards. But the five gang leaders, several of their men, and the Crimson Hand were in the main living room. The two prisoners had been removed to the other headquarters.

The Crimson Hand strode up and down the floor, the crimson-clad fist smacking into his other hand, his voice hoarse with rage.

"Of all the muddle-witted fools anyone has to contend with," he snapped. "you damned panty-waisted sissies take the prize. I thought you were supposed to be gangsters; tough guys! 'Sure, Boss,' a couple of you said, 'just show us who you want bumped off an' we'll take care of it.' You'll take care of it! You'll take care of it! What a laugh! Sure, you can murder a man if someone holds him for you! But

turn you loose against an able-bodied man like the Green Lama and what happens? You muffed it every time!"

"Hell, boss," one of the men protested, "that guy ain't human! Lookit how Shag covered every inch of that office with his gun and the guy's there, but ain't touched. And even you, Hand, you handled the gun when he was in the plane."

"Yeah, I handled the gun," snarled the masked leader. "Try to blame it on me. If I hadn't listened to Fingers everything would have been all right. I wanted to shoot them down where we could land and make damn sure he was done for. But, no, Fingers insisted that we shoot them over the forest. I only made the mistake of listening to someone else!"

"I tell you the guy ain't human," Lane insisted. "Look how he walked through that ray in Cleveland an' nothin' happened to him. How could he do that?"

"How the hell do I know? He probably knows an antidote for the ray that we don't. If that old fool doesn't give us the formula pretty soon, I'll strip every inch of skin from his body! We've used the last of the capsules that Fingers got the night he broke into the office."

"You had another chance to get the Lama in Cleveland," Lane persisted. "When you took a crack at him with the rifle."

"Yeah," the Crimson Hand said savagely. "And why did I miss? Because you fools let someone else get in there and jerk him out of the line of fire. Hell, I can't be everywhere at once . . . How do I know it wasn't one of you that helped him? One of you working with him?" He glared at the men around him.

The gangsters paled and glanced

fearfully at each other. "No," Lane said, "it ain't none of them. You can trust all of 'em."

"By God I'd better! But I wonder if I can trust *you*?" The men shivered under the cold, merciless glare of the eyes surveying them through the mask.

"Oh hell," the Hand laughed harshly. "Of course, I can trust you. None of you has enough brains to work with the Green Lama. He probably wouldn't have you. Too stupid. You, Lane, you bragged to me about all the things you and your men could accomplish and not only can't you find out who the Green Lama is, you have bungled every effort to get rid of him. And the rest of you are no better! If I could only get a few men with brains!"

He resumed his pacing while the men squirmed about uneasily in their chairs.

"Look," said the Chicago gang leader, "there ain't nothin' to worry about, boss. We got a hundred million bucks, didn't we? That's a lot of coffee and cake!"

"Two million bucks apiece," another man muttered. "Boy, what I won't be able to do with two million bucks! And will the dames come flockin' around!"

"You fool!" shouted the Crimson Hand. "You damned fool!" His crimson-clad fist shot out to catch the gangster on the jaw with a resounding crack. The gunman crashed over backwards, the chair splintering with the violence of his fall. His hand moved uncertainly toward his holster. The Crimson Hand turned his back contemptuously.

"Greedy fools," the masked man raged. "That's the trouble with the whole lot of you. You can't think beyond a thousand bucks and some frowsy-haired woman you can paw and make a fool of yourself over. Two

million dollars! Why, you parasites—" his voice rose to almost a scream—"don't you realize that if you use your heads and work with me that two million dollars will be pennies compared to what we can get when we have control of the world? If we can only get rid of the Green Lama!"

He strode up and down silently, his hands clenching and unclenching at his sides. Then he began to talk again, his voice quieter this time.

"The formula alone is worth more than we got in Cleveland. We could get more than that from the world just to reveal it. Think of the power we can get with it! Power that no man ever had before! And to think *those fools* had the nerve to dictate my career to me. I'll show them. If that damned Valco will only talk. He *must* talk, by God!"

His ranting was interrupted by a small buzzer from the back of the house. It rasped twice.

"Somebody's comin' to the house," gasped Lane. "That's that electric eye thing you had installed!"

"Quick," snapped the Hand, "the lights!"

One of the men crossed the room swiftly and snapped a switch behind the radio. It was a master switch controlling all the lights in the house.

**T**HE men crowded to the front window and looked out. There was no moon, and the house was situated almost a block from the nearest street light in the small town. There was only the stars to illuminate the outside grounds.

Then, silhouetted against the sky glow, the men saw two dim figures crossing the lawn, edging slowly toward the house. One of them could be recognized as the Green Lama.

"Now," the Crimson Hand said triumphantly. "We've got him! Quick, your guns. Don't fire until I give the word."

At the first alarm, the other men had rushed in from the other rooms, two of them carrying submachine guns. From the three windows looking out on the front yard, there were thirty-some automatics and two machine guns trained on the Lama and Gary Brown.

"Now!" said the Hand.

Hell broke loose as he gave the command. The steady bark of the automatics and the deadly chatter of the machine guns made a racket that sounded like the battle of the century. There was the sharp shattering of glass as the men fired through the closed windows. A steady stream of lead poured over the lawn straight at the hooded figure.

Even as they fired, the Hand cursed savagely. He had seen the two figures leap to one side and vanish a split-second before the firing began. A moment later, when an answering flash of fire began to come back at the house, he thought for a minute they had gotten one. Then he remembered that the Green Lama carried no gun and he cursed his men anew.

The one-sided battle had been going on for several minutes when there was a confused shouting from the main part of the village. A little later, they could make out several forms running toward the house.

From somewhere in the street, a shotgun belched its hail of lead toward the house, the sound of the shotgun bellowing above the sharper sound of automatics. A voice yelled out.

"Stop! In the name of the law!"

The Hand cursed again and thought quickly. With the force of men he had there in the house, he could probably

defeat the local law plus whatever citizens were out there. But he could see no advantage to that plan.

"Into the cellar," he called hoarsely to the men. The firing from the house ceased as suddenly as it had started.

The men filed quickly down the stairs into the cellar of the house. From outside, they could still hear the shouting of the men and the occasional boom of a shotgun.

The Hand lifted a trap door in the floor of the cellar. It concealed a tunnel that led to another house five doors away. The gangsters had earned calouses digging that tunnel weeks before, but now they were glad. Slowly, one by one, they entered the tunnel and disappeared.

The Crimson Hand was the last to enter. As he closed the trapdoor over his head, his mouth was contorted with hate as he glared in the direction of where he had seen the Green Lama.

"There'll be another day," he muttered to himself. "And soon, by God!"

The trapdoor clanged shut. The house on Cherry Street was empty as the Tanner police discovered some thirty minutes later when they summoned up the courage to enter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Lady From Lhasa



THE night the Green Lama returned to New York from Cleveland, he had posted a letter, in code, to Gary Brown. In it he had told Gary, for the first time, the address of his penthouse headquarters and told him to stand by for a call.

It was still early in the evening when the muffled figure, his hat pulled low, entered the building. He stopped to look in the mailbox and it was almost with disappointment that he observed that it was empty. He got in the private elevator and rode up to the penthouse apartment.

There in the laboratory, lit only by the flickering butter-candle, he changed clothes and quickly applied the make-up of the Rev. Dr. Pali. Then he switched on the lights. His hand found the switch under the edge of the long bench.

The retractable microphone rose noiselessly from the center of the bench and there came the faint hum of hidden dynamos. With a faint click, the microphone snapped into place.

"Calling Gary Brown," the Green Lama chanted into the microphone, "calling Gary Brown. *Nimitta; Nibbāna, lobha, dosa, moha.* Calling Gary Brown . . ."

The hidden loudspeaker squawked into life.\*

"Gary Brown coming in. What is it?" the voice from the loudspeaker said.

"Come to Headquarters at once. That is all."

"Okay," the voice answered.

The microphone slid back out of sight as the Green Lama pressed the hidden button. For the next twenty minutes, he busied himself at the laboratory, bent over a Bunsen burner. Then he refilled the small bottle in his briefcase, dissolved a portion of the radioactive salts in water and drank it.

A tiny red light flashed from the wall beyond the Buddha shrine; and a moment later a green light gleamed

\* The Green Lama had an unlisted telephone which automatically connected with the loudspeaker. When Gary heard the short-wave broadcast calling him, he merely picked up the phone and dialed Morningside 7-2363. This number also spelled "Om pad-me."

briefly beside it.\* The Green Lama crossed the room and pressed a switch that would send the private elevator down to the ground floor.

The Green Lama was waiting when the elevator ascended. It was Gary Brown. The Lama led the way into the laboratory, and told Gary in detail about the robbery in Cleveland.

"I have a car outside," he said as he finished. "We'll drive up to the house in Tanner. Anything to report?"

"Yeah," Gary said, lighting a cigarette. "Nothing happened while you were in Cleveland, but today something did. It started this morning as I was leaving my place. . . ."

GARY BROWN stopped on the sidewalk in front of his apartment to light a cigarette. As he tossed away the match, his gaze fell on an elderly, white-haired woman standing a few feet away. He noticed her because her eyes were bright and vital, as though a young spirit were housed in the aging body.

But he soon forgot about the old lady and headed for the West Side. Since the Green Lama had left on the Westward plane, he'd made the rounds of the West Side bars three or four

times a day, keeping a lookout for Mort Lane's men. So far he hadn't seen any of them.

Once or twice he had the impression that his cab was being followed, but he finally dismissed the idea.

It was in the fourth bar that he finally spotted Dutch and Eddie, two of Lane's men. Gary ordered a beer and sat in a dark corner until the two walked out. He followed. The gangsters took a cab to another bar farther uptown. They seemed to be in high spirits. Again, he had a beer and waited.

One of the two men at the bar glanced at his watch, said something to the other and walked out. The second man stayed at the bar, sipping a shot of Scotch.

After a moment of indecision, Gary got up and followed the first man. When he stepped out on the street, his quarry had vanished. As he stood there, looking around, the door opened behind him and something prodded him in the small of the back.

"All right, wise guy," a voice sneered, "just pretend you're one of them statues. Eddie!"

The first gangster stepped from a doorway into which he had ducked and

\* A photo-electric eye had been installed at the entrance of the building. Anyone entering would break the contact, causing the red light to go on. There was a concealed button by the elevator that connected the green light.

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Doctors say your kidneys contain 15 miles of tiny tubes or filters which help to purify the blood and keep you healthy. Kidneys remove excess acids and poisonous waste from your blood. They help most people pass about 3 pints a day.

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came forward, a twisted grin on his face. As he came closer, the grin was replaced by a startled look and he whistled softly.

"You know who this ginzo is, Dutch?" he asked.

"Yeah, he's the guy that was tailin' us."

"He's more than that. He's the guy that trails around with this Green Lama. This oughta tickle the Hand!" He stepped up and lifted the gun from Gary's holster and slipped it into his own pocket.

"Now you just act like we're old buddies," he said to Gary. "or you'll be holdin' a cross up. Jimmy's over there with his cab," he added to Dutch. He put his fingers in his mouth and whistled shrilly. An independent cab, across the street, pulled away from the curb, U-turned and stopped in front of them.

"Get in, chum," Dutch said, prodding Gary with the gun in his pocket. The three men climbed into the cab.

"Take us to Tanner, Jimmy," Eddie said. The driver nodded and the cab roared away from the curb.

Dutch pulled the snub-nosed .38 from his pocket. "Look, chum," he said to Gary, "I got a notion you might like to tell us a few things about this Green Lama guy. It might be easier to talk to us than to the Hand. He don't like guys what try to clam up."

Gary merely grinned tightly and looked straight ahead.

"Maybe he didn't hear you," Eddie suggested. "You should attract his attention in some nice way."

Dutch lifted the heavy gun and brought it down on top of Gary's head in a glancing blow. It wasn't hard enough to knock him out, or to even cut his scalp. But it was enough to make his head sing.

"Maybe I should apologize for disturbin' him," Dutch said, grinning. He started to raise the gun again.

Just then the cab was passing an intersection. From the side street a cream-colored, low-slung roadster shot out with increasing speed.

The cab driver cursed and yanked on his steering wheel, but it was too late. The roadster catapulted into the side of the cab. There was the grinding clash of steel against steel. The taxi rocked crazily, sideswiped an elevated pillar and turned over in the middle of the street. There was a shot from within the cab.

At the moment the roadster struck the taxi, Gary lunged into action. Both of his arms came up and around the necks of the men on each side of him. As the cab toppled, he brought his arms forward and jerked them sharply together. The two gangsters' heads came together with a crack. At the same time, the car turned over and there was a crash of broken glass. Gary was jarred and scratched by flying splinters, but otherwise unhurt.

He started to reach for the driver and then saw it wasn't necessary. The involuntary twitching of Dutch's trigger finger had sent a bullet through the driver's head. Gary reached up, unlatched the top door and climbed gingerly out.

The roadster had backed off, and was headed up the street again. Its two front fenders were slightly crumpled, one headlamp shattered, the bumper twisted. At the wheel, smiling gently, was the white-haired old lady who had been standing in front of his apartment.

"Are you all right?" she asked him.

"Yeah," Gary answered, surprise making him almost speechless. "But what—"



As the scarf settled over the cop's head, there was a quick, twisted jerk

"Tell the Green Lama," she interrupted, "that you were helped by Magga, the Lady from Lhasa. Good-by." She stepped on the accelerator and the roadster leaped forward. A moment later it whipped around a corner and was gone.

"**M**AGGA again," the Green Lama said when Gary had finished his story. "Then the Alma Palmer-school-teacher role was just that. I wonder who she is? Anything else?"

"Yeah," Gary said. "I took the license number and called the Vehicle

Bureau. Guess what? There ain't any such number and never has been. Phoney plates!"

"Not surprising," the Lama said. "Her actions so far have shown her to be a very clever woman. She would certainly avoid the mistake of traceable plates on her car. Come on." He pulled the cowl of his robe over his head and snapped out the light. The two figures left the room.

It was about an hour and a half later when they parked the car a couple of blocks from Cherry Street in Tanner, N. Y., and got out. The section of the

small town in which they found themselves was well away from the main street. Lights were few and far between and the dim glow cast eerie shadows over the street and houses. The robed Lama seemed to merge with the shadows and become invisible the minute he stepped out of the car.

"There'll probably be a whole gang of them there," Gary said. "We're not going to try to take them all in, are we?"

"No," the Green Lama said. "It might be dangerous even if we could. They still have Dr. Valco and the young lady that Fingers told me about. But perhaps we can learn something."

"Yeah, but what?"

"In Tibet there is a saying that the frightened burro will gallop madly for the table. I think the theory will work with criminals. You go over there—" he pointed to a small candy store across the street on the corner—"and call the local police. Tell them there is a dangerous gang of criminals in the house on Cherry Street. Impress them with the fact that these men will shoot it out with the law. The police will probably take time to round up a few extra citizens with shotguns. That will give us enough time to look around."

"Then when the police arrive, you can fire a few times in the air. That ought to set the police guns off. I think the men inside will probably duck out the back and head for their other place. They have too much to lose by fighting it out. Perhaps we can follow them to the 'stable.'"

"Sounds good," Gary grunted. He crossed the street and was back within five minutes.

"Was that guy excited," he chuckled as he joined the Green Lama. "Probably the worst crime he's had in twenty years is some kids upsetting a privy on

Hallowe'en. We'd better hurry before he beats us out here." The two of them moved swiftly down the street.

As they slipped through the front gate of the Cherry Street house, they could discern the vague figure that was pacing up and down the floor. They slipped along the yard, past a group of rose bushes. It was then that the Lama's keen senses caught a familiar odor. The perfume again!

But even as he attempted to locate the unseen presence, he was aware of some change in the figures inside. Then the lights blinked out.

"Down and away! Fast!" he whispered to Gary. He knew that by some means those inside had been warned of their presence. At the same time he had located the source of the perfume. He dived toward it with all his strength.

His shoulder hit someone, there was a suppressed gasp, and the two of them rolled several feet on the ground, carried by the force of his lunge. The guns cut loose from the house, the bullets ripping through the rose bush where they had stood a minute before.

The Green Lama could feel the small, feminine body next to his trembling.

"Gently," he said in the Pali language. "Is it not written that the frightened pigeon cannot escape from the hawk."

"The Green Lama!" she gasped.

"You should have known better than to remain erect there after the lights went out. Now you are only one up on us."

She laughed softly in the darkness. "But there must be a better way of saving a lady's life than butting her in the stomach," she said.

The guns were still barking from the darkened house. Gary fired back



methodically, changing his position after each shot.

"Who are you?" the Green Lama asked. He tried to pierce the darkness to see her but all he could make out was the dim outlines of her form.

"Magga," she answered.

"And when you are not Magga?" he persisted.

"And who are you, Green Lama?" she countered. He was silent.

UNDER the cover of the next fusillade of shots from the house, she was gone. The Green Lama caught only the faintest rustle of cloth and he sensed rather than saw that she was no longer beside him. He let her go. There was more important work at hand.

From a distance came the shouts of the Tanner police. A shotgun boomed from the street. The firing from the house ceased.

"Gary," the Lama called softly.

"Here," was the whisper from close at hand and a shadow loomed up at his left. They crawled around behind the house.

For several minutes there was intermittent firing and shouting from the street, unanswered from the house. Then there was the noise of the men breaking in the front door of the house. The shouting continued from inside, working down to the basement.

The Green Lama grunted something in Pali. "I never thought of that," he said to Gary. "They must have had a tunnel through the basement! We've wasted an evening. Come." Leading the way, he moved quickly and silently out of the yard and down the street to where they had left their car.

As they got into the car, he bent closer to Gary with an exclamation. "You're wounded!" he said.

"Yeah," Gary said through clenched teeth. "One of them nicked me in the shoulder. It don't amount to much though. I've been hurt worse shaving."

The Green Lama leaned over, pulled back Gary's coat and ripped open the shirt. He took the red scarf from around his own neck and, using a handkerchief, bound up the shoulder. He started the car.

"I think I've got it," the Green Lama said suddenly, when they were halfway back to New York.

"Yeah? What?" Gary asked.

"The way to find the other headquarters. You know where Lane's men congregate when they're in the city, don't you?"

"Sure. At Harry's Palace Bar over on Tenth Avenue."

"All right. Tomorrow you'll go there and pretend to be drunk. Do a lot of maudlin talk about everything and then get confidential. Let the bartender know that you are going to sell the Green Lama out. You're tired of his racket. Brag about knowing how you can put him on the spot. He'll get word to them, won't he?"

"Yeah, but—"

"Then you'll tell him that you can arrange to have me present at a certain place at a certain time where I can be captured. The Lane gunmen will undoubtedly get in touch with you as soon as possible after he calls them. You'll sell me out for a certain sum. You had better ask for some money so it will look legitimate. I'll let them take me and you'll follow. That way we'll find the headquarters and I'll already be on the inside. As soon as the details are set tomorrow, you come to the penthouse and we'll make final arrangements."

"But, look, chief," Gary started to protest.

"No argument, Gary," the Green Lama said affectionately. "We have a proverb here in America about building a better mouse trap. It should be: Bait a better mouse trap and you will catch bigger rats than your neighbor. At the time, I seem to be the best bait for these rats. The Crimson Hand must be stopped!"

They drove the rest of the way to New York in silence.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Kidnapping



THE next day the Green Lama was at his headquarters early in the morning, something unusual for him. He spent the entire day in the special room leading off his main laboratory. It was a small lead-lined room, an up-to-date replica of the radium room of Dr. Harrison Valco. The Lama wore a radiologist's mask and special lead-lined gloves. Hour after hour, he bent over delicate instruments in the small room, experimenting with one thing after another. Night was falling outside when he finally straightened, a faint smile of success on his face.

He had just gone into the big laboratory and stripped off the mask and gloves when the red light flashed on the wall. He stopped and watched intently. A moment later the green light blinked on. He pressed the switch that would send the elevator floorward.

There was a glum expression on Gary Brown's face as he followed the Green Lama into the library.

"Well, I've done it," he announced.

"Good," the Lama said. "Tell me about it."

"Well," Gary began, "I went down

to Harry's Palace like you told me and started stopping all over the bar. It didn't make the bartender any too happy until I started going gabby about you. Then he picked up his ears. When I mentioned about putting you on the spot, he went over and used the phone booth. When he came back, he was all smiles and started dishing out drinks on the house.

"It was damn near an hour before anyone showed up. Then in walks Mike and Fingers—the Crimson Hand must've raided that Ohio jail or something. With them, they got Spike Parri, who used to be with Harlem Joe. They take me over to a booth and start talking friendly.

"I told them I'd put you on the spot for them for five grand, one grand in advance and the rest after they got you. After some argument, they forked over the grand. Here it is."

He pulled a wad of money out of his pocket and held it out.

"Keep it," the Green Lama said. "What then?"

"It's all settled," Gary went on. "I told them I'd see to it that you'd be in that little cigar store just off Sixth Avenue at nine o'clock tonight. You know, the one downtown where you sometimes leave notes for me. I told them you'd be wearing a green overcoat, a green slouch hat and I described the 'backwards' collar with the black embroidery on the front of it."

"I'll be there," the Lama said. "You'll follow?"

"I've already got a good fast car lined up," Gary said. "I rented one from the U-Drive-It this afternoon. I'll park across from the store and if those guys lose me they'll have to fly."

"The man who worries never achieves wisdom," the Green Lama said, with one of his few smiles.

"To hell with that wisdom stuff," Gary retorted. "Just so long as those guys don't try to bump you off."

"Some day," the Lama said, "maybe there will be justice in the world and you and I can go to Tibet and to the peace of the Holy City. In the meantime, run along and complete your arrangements. I will be in the store at nine."

The green and red lights in the laboratory flashed in reverse order as the elevator reached the ground floor and Gary left. The Green Lama pressed another switch that would bring the car back to the penthouse.

It lacked ten minutes of nine when the Green Lama, in the dress of Rev. Pali, strolled down Sixth Avenue. He walked past the cigar store, saw the dark coupe across the street with Gary sitting in it. Near the store on the same side of the street a dark blue sedan was parked, its motor idling. He could see three men in it.

He turned and walked back to the small store and entered. Its solitary occupant was the clerk behind the counter. The Lama asked for a package of gum and fumbled with his change. He heard the door open behind him but did not look around. Something pressed against his spine.

"Take it easy, chum," a voice said. "This is a gun."

The Green Lama held rigidly erect while practiced hands ran over him searching for a gun.

"Clean as a babe," another voice said disgustedly. He moved around to one side. It was Fingers. He leaned over the counter and scowled at the clerk.

"You ain't seen nothin', see!" he said to the frightened man. "If you let one peep outa you after we leave, we'll be back. Get me?"

"Yes, sir," quavered the clerk.

"Okay. Now you, Mr. Green Lama," he said swinging around, hate twisting his face, "will you march out, or do we give it to you here?"

"I'll march," the Lama said quietly. He turned and left the store with one of the men on each side of him. The pressure of the gun was constant against his back.

As they approached the car, the driver swung the back door open. The two gunmen prodded the Lama into the car.

"Get down on the floor," Fingers commanded savagely as he started to sit on the seat. The Green Lama obeyed. The gangsters climbed in and sat down.

"All right, Limpy," the other gunman said. The car roared into life, swung around the corner and headed up Sixth Avenue. It proceeded at a leisurely pace, obviously not wanting to attract attention.

"So you're the rat that paralyzed me," snarled Fingers. "Blind me and turn me over to the cops, willya!" He leaned over, gun in hand, and slashed at the Lama's jaws. The flat side of the gun raked along his cheek. It was a terrific blow, that would have shattered the bone if the Green Lama hadn't seen it coming and rolled his head with it. As it was, he was stunned for a minute.

"Cut it out, Fingers!" the other man said sharply. "That ain't doin' any good an' the Hand wouldn't like it!"

"Okay," Fingers said sullenly. He straightened up in the seat and put his feet on the man lying on the floor.

The car reached Fifty-ninth Street and swung into Central Park. It picked up speed slightly.

"Stop at the first good dark spot," the other gunman said. "We'll wait



Dr. Harrison Valco

until there ain't much traffic, then you can give it to him, Fingers. Don't forget to race your motor, Limpy. Then we can roll him over in the bushes."

The Green Lama started as he heard the gunman. He had been wrong! They weren't going to take him to the headquarters. Instead they evidently had orders to kill him.

"Around the next corner there's a place," Fingers said.

The Green Lama carefully raised one hand until he was touching the door handle. He braced his feet against the opposite door.

The car slowed down to less than thirty miles an hour. It swung around a curve to the right, almost touching the left side of the road. As the car reached the sharpest part of the curve, the Green Lama acted with the speed that was already earning him a name feared throughout the underworld.

His right hand gave the door handle a sharp twist, throwing the door open. His left hand chopped up sharply against Fingers' gun hand. At the same time, he pushed with his feet. The swing of the car going around the curve did the rest. His body catapulted into space.

As he flew through the air, he forced his body to go limp. The speed of the car threw him far enough to miss the

pavement and he landed on the grass with a thud, rolling over and over for several feet.

The grass and his heavy overcoat were enough to break the force of the fall. He picked himself up gingerly and decided the worst that had happened were a few bruises. The big sedan had slowed to a stop not more than thirty feet ahead and the two gunmen were climbing out, cursing.

Quickly, the Green Lama estimated his chances. The gunmen were too far away for him to risk charging them and not far enough to give him a good chance to get away. For the moment the highway was deserted. Something must have delayed Gary.

Ahead there was only the park pond. There was no place to hide; no spot he could wait in ambush to leap out upon them as they ran past. He hesitated for only a second. Then he threw off his heavy overcoat and hat. His suit coat followed.

The two gunmen burst through the shrubbery. Fingers shouted triumphantly. The Green Lama took three running steps and jumped, coming down on the thin ice of the pond. It groaned, then gave away beneath him. He plunged into the icy water.

Fingers was raising his gun to fire, when the Green Lama waved mockingly and disappeared beneath the water. A few bubbles bloomed up where he had disappeared, then the water calmed again.

The two men crouched at the edge of the pond and stared with unbelieving eyes at the hole in the ice.

GARY BROWN had waited in his rented coupe and saw the Green Lama enter the cigar store, followed by Fingers and Dutch. A moment later the three men came out, with the Lama

in the middle, and climbed in the sedan at the curb. The car pulled away. Gary let out his clutch and swung in behind them.

Going up Sixth Avenue, he had no trouble in keeping behind the sedan. But as it shot across Fifty-ninth Street and into the park, he was caught by the changing light. Cursing to himself, he slammed on his brakes and the coupe jerked to a stop.

Racing his motor, he waited impatiently. When the light flashed green, he gunned the coupe across the street and bore down heavily on the gas as he swung into the boulevard.

He was doing fifty when he saw the apparently-empty sedan waiting at the left-hand side of the road. He tramped on the brakes and the heavy coupe slid to a stop behind the bigger car. Gary jumped out before the sound of the motor had died.

"I wouldn't, pal," a voice said behind him, as he started into the park. Gary whirled, his hand going toward his shoulder holster.

"Nix, pal, nix," the voice said ad-

monishingly. It was Limpy, the former policy gangster, standing there in the shadow of the sedan. He was holding an automatic loosely in his hand, aimed at Gary's midriff. Gary let his hand drop to his side.

"That's better," the little gangster said. "Turn around now—slow-like." Gary turned and Limpy came swiftly up behind him and reached around, lifting the gun from Gary's holster.

"You know," the little gunman continued, "I didn't say anything to the boys but I sorta suspected that you wasn't on the level. That's the reason I stayed behind while they went chasin' your friend. Suppose we join them." He prodded with the gun and they walked down through the shrubbery toward the pond.

"A little company dropped in for tea," Limpy called, as they approached the two figures squatting at the edge of the pond.

"He was tailin' us," Limpy explained. "When he seen the sedan he stopped his jalopy, hopped out and was goin' to charge through the mes-

**THE AWAKENING OF MR. A.**

**MR. A.:** Whew! I hate the very thought of having to take a cathartic.

**MR. B.:** You wouldn't if you'd only try Ex-Lax. It tastes swell—just like chocolate.

**MR. A.:** Why, that's what we give to the youngsters. What I need is dynamite!

**MR. B.:** Don't kid yourself! Ex-Lax is plenty effective, but it won't upset you.

**LATER**

**MR. A.:** Boy, I feel like a million this morning! That Ex-Lax sure is great stuff!

**MR. B.:** You said it, pal! We've been using Ex-Lax in our family for 30 years!

The action of Ex-Lax is thorough, yet gentle! No shock. No strain. No weakening after-effects. Just an easy, comfortable bowel movement that brings blessed relief. Try Ex-Lax the next time you need a laxative. It's good for every member of the family.

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quite just like the cowboy always does in the horse operas."

"Okay," Fingers said. "Just keep the gun on him an' we'll take him along for a present to the Hand. Maybe he'll learn what happens to double-crossers!"

"What happened to the other guy? This Lama guy?" Limpy asked.

Fingers cursed fluently. "You know what the screwball done?" he asked. "He sees we're gonna corner him so he jumps on the ice an' it breaks with him. I'm just about to take a shot at him when under the water he goes. He ain't come up yet an' there ain't no other place for him to come out."

"Did the Dutch, eh?" Limpy said.

"I don't know," Fingers answered, scratching his head. "This guy shoulda been dead a couple of times an' then he turns up again. Maybe he's got nine lives like a cat."

"Nuts," said the stolid Dutch. "There ain't no guy can stay under water forever. Not if it's froze, there ain't!"

"Maybe," Fingers answered. "Maybe."

Limpy squatted down with the others, still holding his gun steadily on Gary. The minutes passed. Gary kept watching for a chance to jump the gun, but Limpy talked on without taking his eyes from him.

After a bit, Fingers glanced at his watch and rose. "We been here almost an hour," he said, "I guess maybe the guy's drowned. We'll take this other ginzo along to the Hand. But just the

same," he added darkly, "I'm gonna look around town again tomorrow to see if he's come back to life."

With Gary ahead of them, the three gangsters walked back to the road. They bound Gary and tossed him into the back of the sedan. Dutch got into the coupe and the two cars pulled away.

The gunmen had been gone about thirty minutes when the water in the pond began to eddy and whirl. It gurgled as the heads and shoulders of Dr. Pali broke through the water. The Green Lama was alive.\*

A low laugh broke the stillness of the night as the Green Lama looked around and saw that he was alone. "Om! Ma-ni pad-me Hum!" he murmured softly, as he waded ashore. He picked up his overcoat from the bank and wrapped it about his dripping clothes.

## CHAPTER X

### The Lama Baita a Trap



**JETHRO DUMONT** was up early the next morning. Tsarong brought him his light breakfast and handed him his coat and hat. Downstairs, in front of the building, he hailed a cab and directed it uptown to the Medical Academy.

He spent a couple of hours in the academy going through various books and records.† Finally he left, a faint smile of triumph on his lean, fine-

\* Converts to that group of Buddhists known as Lamaists go through a ritual of stripping off all their clothes, wrapping themselves in a wet sheet and sitting outdoors, in sub-zero weather, for twenty-four hours, with no harmful aftermath. (See any of the books about Tibet written by Mme. David-Neel) The Buddhist monks are supposed to have the knowledge of how to control the body heat. This probably explains the Green Lama's remarkable feat. He had dived under the ice and remained there, taking advantage of the small air pockets, that form between ice and water, for breathing. The exposure to cold, which would have given an ordinary person pneumonia, apparently didn't even chill him.

† Jethro Dumont had always been interested in medicine. At one time while still in college, he had begun to study that subject until the fascination for Oriental religions drew him away. But he was still interested and while in Tibet had continued independently the study of medicine and anatomy.

featured face. From there he took a cab to the offices of the American Medical Society, where he was closeted with one of the officials for several minutes.

From the Society, Dumont proceeded to West Twenty-fourth Street and entered the building that housed the offices of Dr. Harrison Valco.

The door to Dr. Valco's office had been locked and sealed by the District Attorney's office. After some hesitation, Jethro Dumont rang the bell of the office next to Dr. Valco's.

The door opened and a uniformed nurse admitted him.

"Is Dr. Pelham in?" Dumont asked.

"Have you an appointment?"

"No," Jethro admitted, "but I should like to see him for just a minute, if I may. My name is Jethro Dumont."

"I'll see, Mr. Dumont," she said. She vanished into another room to reappear a moment later and motion him in. He walked into the examining room.

Dr. Pelham straightened up from a microscope and greeted him.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," Dumont said, "but I wondered if there had been any information about Dr. Valco. I saw the story in the paper about his kidnapping, but haven't seen anything since."

Dr. Pelham shook his head sadly. "No," he said. "I'm afraid there's no news. I have called the police several times and they keep saying that they are expecting arrests daily, but that's all. I'm afraid Harrison may be dead."

The two of them talked on for several minutes. As Jethro was about to leave, he turned back.

"By the way," he said, "aren't you Dr. Pelham, the famous brain surgeon?"

"I was," Dr. Pelham said, obviously pleased.

"I remember reading," Jethro continued, "the reports of the trepanning job you did on the Archduke of Sylvania. That was a marvelous piece of surgery, sir."

"Thank you," the doctor said. "Yes, I did quite a bit of brain work, but I had to give it up several years ago. My arm and hand, you know." He lifted his hand, almost proudly it seemed, and demonstrated the stiffness of his fingers. "Now I'm just another general practitioner, I'm afraid. Not very interesting."

After several more minutes of general talk about surgery, Jethro Dumont took his leave.

THE Green Lama pressed a certain section of a built-in test tube rack and the rack swung back to reveal a dial telephone.\* He pulled the phone out and dialed a number.

"Is this Harry's Palace?" he asked when a voice answered. He received an affirmative answer. "Do you expect Fingers Jordon in there today?"

"Maybe I do an' maybe I don't," the voice growled. "Who wants to know?"

"I want to leave a message for him," the Green Lama replied.

"Wait a minute," the voice said. Presently a new voice came on the phone.

"Yeah?" it said.

"I want to leave a message for Fingers Jordon," the Lama repeated.

"This is Fingers. Spill it."

\* This was a different instrument than the one connected to the loudspeaker. There was no way of making calls on the latter. The phone back of the rack was listed in the phone book under the name of Nitro & Co., but if you dialed the number nothing happened. The bell had been disconnected.

"I've got some information for you about something that happened last night at a pond in Central Park. You interested?"

"You mean he ain't done for!" gasped Fingers. "Say, who are you?"

"A friend. Are you interested?"

"Sure," Fingers said. "What is it?"

"I can't tell you over the phone. How about meeting me?"

"Maybe. How do I know you ain't—"

"The cops?" the Green Lama laughed shortly. "Hardly. I'll tell you; meet me on the corner at Times Square, in front of the drug store."

"Okay," Fingers said after a hesitation. "When?"

"Make it in an hour. Say, one o'clock. The information will be good enough to get in good with the Hand."

"All right," Fingers said. "But how—"

The Green Lama replaced the receiver gently. He swung the test tube rack back into place. He got out his bottle of radioactive salts, mixed some in water and drank it. He sat down to wait.

At a few minutes before one, dressed as Rev. Pali, he left the penthouse and took a cab to Times Square.

\* \* \*

Fingers was standing in front of the drug store, puffing nervously on a cigarette and glancing up and down the street. His right hand was shoved in his coat pocket.

The Green Lama entered the Times Building, walked in through the drug store and came up behind the unsuspecting gunman. His hands, with long slender forefingers extended, reached up. He jabbed quickly on each side of the gunman's skull, then his fingers flashed down and prodded

briefly on the throat just under the chin.\*

To the casual onlooker it must have appeared as though he was playing a little practical joke on a friend, for as Fingers whirled around, the Lama threw an arm around his shoulder.

Fear and hatred struggled for mastery in Finger's face as he stood there stiffly. Both of his arms were paralyzed and he couldn't speak.

"We meet again," the Green Lama murmured gently. "Our stars seem destined to come together at regular intervals. There, there! Don't strain yourself trying to speak. Your power of speech is temporarily suspended. You'll recover in perhaps twenty minutes. Now, I really hate to do this, but it's quite necessary."

He reached up and pressed two fingers next to the eyeballs. Fingers was blind!

The Green Lama hailed a cab and helped Fingers into it. "My friend is blind, poor fellow," he said to the driver.

"Gee, that must be terrible," the driver said. "Where to—Father?" The last was added as he noticed the ecclesiastical garb of his passenger.

The Green Lama leaned over and whispered an address in the driver's ear. Gears meshed and they were off.

The taxi let them out a couple of doors away from the penthouse. The Lama guided Fingers into the building and upstairs. The shades were drawn in the small room of the penthouse, where he deposited Fingers in a chair.

"You'll be able to talk in a few minutes," the Lama said. "But I'm afraid it'll be a little longer before you can see or use your arms. However, you will need only your tongue for the present."

\* He had touched the Vagus nerve branches that control speech.



The small room was a study with a row of bookshelves around two walls. There were several large easy chairs and, in one corner, a studio couch. The Lama pulled one of the chairs closer to the one Fingers occupied, and sat down.

"Unfortunately," he said, "I'm afraid you won't be able to describe my place to your comrades. I don't doubt but that the thought may have entered your mind, between flashes of fear. Your sight, however, will not return until after you are gone from here. . . . Ah, your voice is returning, eh?" He added the latter as vague sounds came from the blind gunman.

"Damn you." Fingers said with attempted bravado, when he finally managed to route the sounds into regular channels.

"Man who curses never say anything," the Green Lama commented. "Why waste your strength?"

"What do you want?" the gunman asked fearfully, turning his sightless eyes toward the sound of his captor's voice.

"Just a little information, Fingers."

"No!" Fingers almost screamed it. "I ain't got nothin' to tell you! I told you everything before!"

"Maybe. Remember the little game we played just out of Cleveland? Something of that sort might refresh your memory. Like this." He leaned forward and barely touched the tip of his finger along the temple, where the Brocas Center is located.

"Iddle nos gobbernome iknor—Don't!" screamed the gunman.\*

"That was just a reminder," the Green Lama said softly. "Now for our questions. Where is the main headquarters of the Crimson Hand?"

"I don't know," Fingers said. He was shaking as though suffering from a chill. "I swear I don't know. I ain't never been to it!"

"Didn't you go to it the other night when the cops came to the house on Cherry Street?"

"No!"

"Where did you go?" insisted the Green Lama. "I was watching the back door."

"There's a tunnel under the house," the gangster answered. "The Hand had it dug when we first moved in. He also had the house on the corner rented an' the tunnel goes to it. The tunnel is under a small coal box in the basement."

"The house on the corner isn't the headquarters?"

"No." Fingers shook his head. "There ain't nobody there. It's just a way to get outa the other place. I'm tellin' you the truth, I ain't never been to the other joint! But it must be a big place for he's got them trucks stored there too."

"All right," the Green Lama said. "What about Gary Brown?"

"We took him to the Hand at the house on the corner. We're usin' it since the raid the other night. Then later the Hand and Mort took him out an' over to the other place."

"Have they harmed him?"

"No. Maybe somebody cuffed him around a little, but there ain't nothin' permanent been done to him."

"How about the doctor and the girl?" the Lama asked.

Fingers hesitated, moving his head from side to side as though his sightless eyes were looking for an out.

"I think we'll try the left leg first," the Lama said slowly.

\* In this case, the electric shock transmitted had been so slight that the effect had lasted for only a few words. The Brocas Center, you may remember, controls thought transference into words.

"No! I'll tell you! I heard the Hand an' Mort talkin' an' I guess maybe they bunged the doc up a little bit, tryin' to get him to give out with the formula."

"What do you mean, bunged up?"

"Oh, maybe the usual thing. You know, a few cigarette butts on the bottoms of his feet an' things like that."

"And the girl?"

There was an unusual steely quality in the Lama's voice.

"I don't think they done anything to her. But I heard Mort suggestin' that maybe they oughta go to work on her to make the doc spill. Me, I don't know."

"And the Crimson Hand has them all at the other headquarters? And the money too?"

"Yeah."

"Something else," the Green Lama said. "You were present when Dr. Valco was kidnapped?"

"Yeah, sure."

"Do you think that if you were questioned later by the police you could tell them that Gary Brown shot Shag Hennessey in self defense? Or would it be necessary for me to use a little persuasion?"

"Sure," Fingers said eagerly. "I mean I'd tell the cops that. You bet!"

"Who killed the beat patrolman that night?"

"The Hand done that. He's the one that done the shootin' when that plane you was in was shot down, too. He likes to be the trigger man."

"One more thing," the Green Lama said. "Are there any more of the men in town today?"

"Sure," Fingers said. "There's three or four of them over at Harry's place right now."

"Good." The Green Lama rose from his chair. "I'm really sorry, Fingers, but I'm afraid I'll have to cut off your speech again."

"What are you goin' to do with me?" Fingers asked.

"I shall turn you over to the police," the Lama said. Fingers looked positively happy at the news.

The Lama bent over and pressed briefly on both lobes of the thyroid, just under the chin. Fingers was silenced.

"Come on," the Lama said. He helped Fingers from the chair and led him out of the

room.

On the street, he hailed a cab and helped the gunman into the back seat.

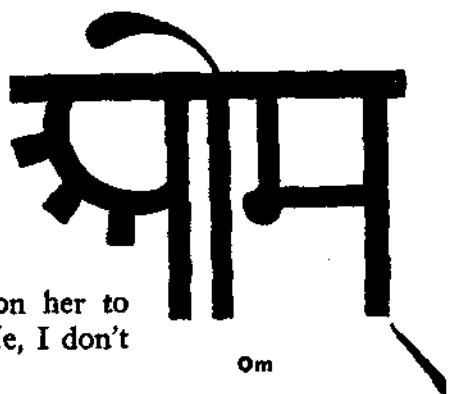
"Here's five dollars," he said to the taxi driver. "Deliver this man to the police headquarters down on Centre Street. Tell the desk sergeant that he's for Lieutenant John Caraway. He'll be expecting you."

"What if the guy tries to get away?" the driver asked, pocketing the bill.

"He won't," the Green Lama promised. He leaned inside the cab and, with one finger, pressed lightly at the base of the gunman's skull. Fingers toppled over on the seat, unconscious.

"He won't give you any trouble now," he said.

"Uh-uh, I guess he won't," the driver said dubiously. He let out his clutch and the cab shot away from the curb. The Green Lama reentered the building and took the elevator upstairs.



Om

**B**ACK in the laboratory, he pulled out the phone and dialed the number of police headquarters. A gruff voice answered.

"Lieutenant Caraway," the Lama said. A moment later another voice came on the wire.

"Yes?" the voice asked.

"Lieutenant Caraway? This is the Green Lama."

"What?" the lieutenant shouted.

"Remember your blood pressure," the Lama said. "How would you like to arrest one of the Crimson Hand's men?"

"How would I like a million dollars," the lieutenant said bitterly. "If this is your idea of a joke—"

"This is no joke, Lieutenant. He will be there in another fifteen or twenty minutes. A cab driver is bringing him."

"You mean he's coming voluntarily?" Caraway gasped.

"Now quite. You will find him unconscious. But he'll recover in a few minutes, if you just leave him alone. His arms may still be paralyzed, but I imagine he'll be all right otherwise. He won't, I'm afraid, be able to tell you where to put your hands on his superior. But he can probably clear up a few other points."

"What—" began Caraway.

"By the way," the Green Lama interrupted, "do you still want Gary Brown?"

"You're damn right I do," the lieutenant said. "Suspected homicide and for breaking jail."

The Lama chuckled softly. "I'll make a deal with you."

"What?"

"If I turn the Crimson Hand over to you, together with his men and all the Cleveland loot, within twenty-four hours, will you squash all the charges against Brown?"

"Will I! I'll do more; I'll give you a job!"

"No, thanks. I'm afraid I wouldn't be able to wear a uniform with the proper amount of dignity," the Lama said dryly. "We shall call it a bargain then?"

"Yeah, but—"

"Om! Ma-ni pad-me Hum!" the Lama whispered into the phone and hung up.

A minute later he again took the receiver from the hook and dialed a number.

"Is Dutch there?" he asked when someone answered the phone. His voice was a perfect replica of Fingers'.

"Yeah, just a minute, Fingers."

The Green Lama waited. It wasn't long until another voice came through the wire.

"Yeah, Fingers? What's up?"

"I gotta talk quick," the Lama said, still in Fingers' voice, speaking low. "That call was a phoney. It was the Green Lama."

"You mean to say he didn't croak last night?" the astounded Dutch asked.

"Uh-uh. He's got me too. Come up behind me an' stuck a roscoe in my back. Then he blindfolded and took me somewhere an' left me locked in this room. I just happened to find this phone."

"But where are you?"

"I don't know. But I heard this Lama talkin' to some guy an' I heard him say he's got a tip on the Hand's hidin' place an' he's gonna serve notice on the Hand to give himself up in twenty-four hours, or he's comin' after him. You better get up to Tanner an' tell the boss."

"Okay," Dutch said, "but—"

"Somebody's comin'," whispered the bogus Fingers. "I gotta hang up—"

## CHAPTER XI

### Calling the Green Lama



IT WAS still early in the evening. Jethro Dumont, a light green dressing gown over his dark suit, sat in an easy chair in his study. He was sipping a cup of Tibetan tea and reading a large book bound in yellow silk. The book was written in Sanskrit. Tsarong was nearby.

A concealed radio was turned on rather low. From the loudspeaker came the strains of *Eine Kleine Nacht Musik* by Mozart. The music seemed to float into the room, contributing a background rather than dominating the room.

"You know, Tsarong," Dumont said, looking up from his book, "there is a wise saying that a greedy man will leave his fortune unguarded if you threaten a penny."

Tsarong's dark eyes were expressionless as he glanced at Dumont. "I have never heard the sagacious proverb," he said gravely, "but it sounds as though it may have come from the same great lips that has said if you threaten the fox's young, she will show you her den."

"Yes, it does sound similar," Dumont agreed and went back to his reading.

Suddenly the music was interrupted, almost in the middle of a note. There was a clash of static, and a harsh voice broke into the program.

"The Crimson Hand," it said, "calling the Green Lama. Are you listening, Green Lama? If so, there is an urgent message for you at Harry's. An urgent message at Harry's for the Green Lama. That is all." The voice ceased, the static was gone.

"... some strange disturbance," the announcer was saying in an excited, baffled tone. "I hope you will pardon it, ladies and gentleman. The program will continue in just a moment."

Jethro Dumont looked up, an irritated expression on his face. "I think you might try another station, Tsarong. There seems to be something wrong."

The Tibetan servant moved over to the bookcase and spun a dial. The noisy beat of a jitterbug tune filled the room.

A jiving downbeat was cut off in the middle. The loudspeaker crackled and spit.

"The Crimson Hand calling the Green Lama. Are you listening Green Lama? If so, there is an urgent message for you at Harry's. An urgent message at—"

"Shut it off, Tsarong," Jethro Dumont said. A switch clicked and the room became silent. "You know, Tsarong, I don't believe the radio is a success. There seems to be disturbances on all the stations." He smiled slightly.

"Well," he went on, rising and placing the book on the desk, "I think I'll go out for a while. My hat and coat, Tsarong."

"At once," Tsarong answered. He glided from the room to return with the heavy coat and Homburg hat.

THE small light over the dressing table, in the Green Lama's laboratory, flashed on and the shadowy figure moved quickly across the room to the bench. He swung the test tube rack back, pulled out the phone and dialed a number.

"Harry's Palace Bar?" he asked as someone answered.

"Yeah."

"This is the Green Lama. Have you a message for me?"

"Yeah. A certain party says he'll make a bargain with you. If you'll give yourself up to him, he'll send three people home."

"How do I know he'll keep his word?"

"You don't! You'll have to take your chances. Either you agree or the deal's off. No ifs and buts!"

"All right, I'll agree. What do I do?"

"Be at my place within thirty minutes. Wear the get-up of that phoney sky-pilot you did the other night. You'll be met."

"All right," the Green Lama said. "I'll be there." He hung up and turned to his wardrobe, changing clothes hurriedly. Out came his makeup kit and his fingers moved deftly over his face in the dark. A moment later he bent down to the mirror and looked into it. The face of Dr. Pali stared back at him. He slipped on the monk's robe instead of an overcoat, letting the hood hang down his back. Apparently satisfied, he switched out the light and left the pent-house.

There were only three men standing at the bar in Harry's place when the Lama walked in. He recognized one of them as the driver of the car the night he had been taken to Central Park. As he came in, the three men silently separated and came warily to meet him from different angles.

"I'll go quietly," he said with a slight smile.

"You're damn right you will," one of the men growled. He ran his hands over the Green Lama to be sure he was unarmed.

"Hurry up, you guys," the bartender said nervously. "Get him out of here before somebody comes in an' queers the works."

"Okay, okay," the gangster said. "Get goin' you!" He prodded the Green Lama in the ribs as he said the latter. Limpy and the other gunman stepped up and took the Lama by the arm. The four of them marched out of the bar to a sedan setting at the curb. Limpy climbed in the front seat, and the Green Lama got in the back with the other men on either side of him. The car jerked forward.

"I hate to do this pal," one of the gunmen said, "but you ain't safe." He brought the butt of his gun crashing down on the Green Lama's head. He tried to roll with the blow, but he wasn't quick enough. He slumped down in the seat, unconscious.

**T**HERE was great activity in an old warehouse in the edge of Tanner, N. Y. Several men were busy gassing up a fleet of cars. Others were loading sacks of money. In the background, several trucks were standing. They were the ones used in the trip from Cleveland.

The space above the ground floor had been partitioned off and made into temporary living quarters. Only one large room was lighted, with heavy sacking hung over the windows to keep the gleam from advertising their presence to the outside world.

In this room there were eight people. Against one wall, tied to chairs, were Evangl Stewart, Dr. Valco and Gary Brown. All three were gagged. Dr. Valco seemed the most exhausted of the three, almost sagging in his bonds. There were a couple of bad burns on his face and one long knife-cut, starting to heal, down his cheek.

Sitting on chairs at a long table, were four of the five gang leaders, Jerry Gatti, Bunny Fairin, Mort Lane and Porky Sheller. They were leaning forward, watching the eighth person.

50

The Crimson Hand strode up and down the floor, stopping occasionally to glance at the watch on his left wrist.

"Those fools," he snarled, "should be here. Does it take them forever to perform a simple little errand? By God, if they slip up once more I'll smash their brains out!"

"Why not go ahead an' get to work on the dame?" Mort Lane asked, jerking a thumb toward Evangl.

"Because I don't want to be interrupted! Stir up the fire!" he pointed to where a couple of logs were blazing merrily in an old-fashioned fire place. One of the men sprang to obey his order.

Somewhere a buzzer rang softly.

"That must be them," the Hand exclaimed. He crossed the room impatiently and pressed a button.

A moment later the door opened and Limpy stuck his head in. "We got him, boss," he announced triumphantly.

"And about time," the masked man snapped. "Well, bring him in!"

Limpy opened the door wider and the other two gunmen pushed the Green Lama into the room. He was still half groggy from the blow on the head, swaying slightly on his feet.

"Well," the Crimson Hand said mockingly, "this is a surprise, my dear Green Lama. But a pleasant one I assure you. Make him comfortable boys."

The gunmen threw the Green Lama on a chair and quickly bound him. They were painstaking with the process, spurred on by the memory of the times he had escaped them.

The Crimson Hand stood in front of the bound Green Lama and laughed. "And you wore your beautiful robe tonight just for us," he said. "Or was it a matter of ego; a need to go to your doom with all the tomfoolery you practiced? I suspect the latter. In order to

make it fitting, Limpy, suppose you adjust the hood of his robe over his head in the usual position."

Limpy stepped up, smiling, and pulled the hood up.

"Ah, that's better," the Hand said, nodding.

"Say, boss," Limpy said. "You know somethin' funny about this guy. Every time you touch him you get a little shock."

"Probably makes himself radioactive," the masked man said. "I suspected as much from the description. Fingers gave of his little chat with our friend." He turned to the Green Lama. "You must pardon my men for being so stupid. I suspect they have never heard of radioactive salts. Ah, ignorance!"

"It has been said," the Green Lama said, speaking for the first time, "that the greatest ignorance sometimes comes from knowing too much."

"Ah," sneered the Hand, "always the gentleman of the cloth, making pretty speeches, eh?" He turned back to his men. "Porky you and these other three go down stairs and help the men make ready. Jerry, you go with them. Bunny and Mort will stay here. I will ring for the rest of you when I want you. When I ring everyone must come up and I shall give them their instructions."

"You think it's safe?" the swarthy Gatti asked.

"But of course. Our friends will be most docile. Go!"

"Because of the stupidity of my men," he continued when the five had filed out, "you have been a source of annoyance, my dear Lama. I think it wise to change my headquarters tonight because of that. But now, with you out of the way, the Crimson Hand shall go on to his appointed goal.

"Dr. Valco is another who has irritated me. It's remarkable what the

human system can sometimes endure. But I believe I have a way of making him give up the formula for the fourth Radium Ray. You are about to view an interesting experience in psychology. All right, Mort, put her on the table."

Mort Lane and Bunny Fairin crossed to the fair girl and loosed her ropes. A low moan escaped through her gag as Lane twisted her arm, forcing her over to the table. There he jerked her over the top of the table, on her back, and held her while Bunny looped the rope around her body.

"Now," the Hand said when they were finished, "you might take the gag from our friends' mouths. It really will make no difference if they scream a little; in fact the little lady's screams might well be entertaining. And only with the gag out, can the good doctor give us his secret." The two men obeyed.

"You—" Dr. Valco began huskily as his gag was taken out.

"Now, now," the masked man interrupted, holding up his crimson-clad hand, "no invectives, if you please, doctor. Now for our instrument." He crossed to the fireplace and pulled out a short poker, its end glowing brightly.

"Don't tell him, Harrison," Evangl said tremulously. "He will probably kill us anyway and I—I can stand a little pain first. It could be worse."

"A brave and spirited girl," the Crimson Hand nodded. "It's really too bad I'm not more susceptible to feminine charms. She has just the right spirit. But we must proceed." He advanced with the poker gripped in his right hand. He bent over Evangl, holding the glowing end of the iron a scant two inches from her cheek. "It's really a pity," he sighed, "to mar such beauty.

Don't you think so, Dr. Valco? Whenever her cries, or perhaps the odor of searing flesh, begins to distress you too much, you may stop it by telling me the formula."

Everyone's eyes were glued, as though mesmerized, to the glowing poker. The two gangsters were breathing hoarsely. Dr. Valco struggled vainly against his ropes. Gary leaned forward, the veins in his forehead standing out as he tried to break the cords that held him. Only the Green Lama was not watching.

He was slowly slipping from the ropes that bound him to the chair.\*

As the last rope dropped from around him, the Lama rose silently to his feet. The two gangsters, their gazes riveted on the girl, were almost directly in front of him, their backs to him. There was no sound as he took the one step forward, and his hands flashed out, the electrified fingers digging in at the base of their skulls.

There was only the faintest of sighs as consciousness slipped from the gunmen. The Green Lama caught them both as they crumpled and lowered them to the floor quietly. He pulled the scarf from around his neck and moved forward. His face was grim.

The Crimson Hand forced the poker a little closer to Evangl's face. Her teeth were closed on the lower lip, until they almost brought blood, as her horrified eyes tried to cling to the poker. The Hand laughed softly.

"Stop!" Dr. Valco suddenly shouted. "I—"

**I**T WAS then that the Green Lama acted, his scarf flicking out and over the masked head.

\* In addition to his training with the Lamas, he had once studied various methods of escapes under Sardo the Great, who used to be billed as King of the Escape Artists. While the gangsters were tying him up, the Green Lama had tensed all of his muscles. This gave him some slack to work with and he had started getting out of the ropes the minute the Crimson Hand's attention was attracted elsewhere.

The doctor's shout had caused the Crimson Hand to turn his head in that direction. Out of the corner of his eye he had seen the flash of movement behind him and even as the scarf was tightening around his throat, he was twisting out of it. The poker dropped from his hand to the floor, and lay there smoking.

As he slipped from the scarf, turning to face the Green Lama, the masked man's hand stabbed at the gun in a shoulder holster. The Green Lama dropped his scarf and sprang toward the Crimson Hand. The gun was out, coming up fast to center on the charging body.

There was no time to reach for a vital nerve. The gun was almost level, the crimson-clad finger was already pressing on the trigger. The Green Lama's fingers found the right wrist, jerked upward. The gun exploded, the bullet going just over the Lama's shoulder.

At the same instance, the Green Lama half turned, and jerked with a surge of powerful muscles. It was the flying mare. Caught off balance, the Crimson Hand's body performed a somersault and crashed against the wall. The gun dropped, the black mask flew from his face.

With one quick bound, the Green Lama was at his side, one hand chopping down at the base of the skull. The figure quivered spasmodically and straightened out on the floor, face up.

"It's Dr. Pelham!" cried Evangl.

"My God!" exclaimed Dr. Valco. "It is Pelham . . ."

The Green Lama hurriedly set the three of them loose. Gary crossed to Evangl's side and helped her sit up. She was almost hysterical, but under his low-voiced admonishing, she calmed.

"But—but—" began Dr. Valco.

"Later," the Green Lama said. "Gary, are there any arms in here. I'm very much afraid we'll have to use something more convincing to subdue the thirty some men downstairs."

"Sure," Gary said, straightening up from the blonde. "There's a couple of Tommy guns over here." He crossed to a closet and yanked it open. There were three submachine guns.

"Do you think you might manage to hold one, Dr. Valco?" the Lama asked. "It's really only for a bluff anyway."

"With pleasure," the stocky doctor said grimly.

The Green Lama gave one of the guns to the doctor, another to Gary and kept the third himself. Then he crossed and pushed the button on the wall.

With an exclamation, Gary hurried from the room.

The group of gangsters below came noisily up in the big freight elevator and trooped toward the lighted room. Half of them were in the rooms under the muzzles of the two guns before the ones in the rear suspected anything. And by that time they were covered by Gary from the rear.

Once they were all lined up, the Green Lama went around to each figure, tapping them at the base of the skull.

"That," he said, "will insure their being out for at least two hours."

"Who—" began the doctor again.

"Not yet," the Green Lama said.

"There are two important things to do. One is notify the police and the other to get you to a hospital for those burns."

He picked up a telephone on a smaller table, asked for long distance and then gave the number of the police station in New York. When they were on the wire, he asked for Lieutenant Caraway.

"This is the Green Lama," he said



when Caraway came on the wire. "Do you still want the Crimson Hand badly enough to keep your promise?"

"You've got him?" the incredulous lieutenant asked.

"Yes."

"Where? How—who—"

"Listen," the Lama said crisply. "You know where Tanner is? . . . Good. There's an old warehouse on the North edge of the town. When you get here, you will find the Crimson Hand and all of his men in the upstairs section. Don't waste time. All you have to do is sneak them into your jurisdiction and arrest them. The money from the Cleveland robbery is downstairs. I will see to it that additional evidence against these men is sent to you tomorrow. You'll keep your word about Gary Brown?"

"Sure, but—"

"Goodby," the Lama said, and hung up.

A FEW minutes later, with Gary at the wheel of the car, they were speeding toward New York. Evangl was sitting beside Gary. The Green Lama was in the back with Dr. Valco, satisfying some of his curiosity.

"I suspected Dr. Pelham early," he was saying, "first because he was always around when things happened to you and he was convenient to your office. But my suspicions really deepened when I learned about his hand. You see, the night you were kidnapped, I found a piece of paper in your office that had evidently been accidentally dropped on the floor. It had come from a large box of Epsom Salts. I couldn't figure what you, a radiologist, would be doing with it. But it made sense with Dr. Pelham's arthritis, since I know hot Epsom Salt baths are often prescribed for that.

"Something seemed wrong too with Dr. Pelham's claim that arthritis had

made it necessary for him to abandon surgery. I have known of surgeons, with far worse cases of arthritis in the hand, to operate successfully. So I checked with medical records and discovered that the American Medical Society had forced him to stop operating. He had been known to be suffering from delusions of grandeur for some time but exhibited no serious symptoms until he tried to operate one day with his hands behind his back, his back to the patient.

"The Society agreed to do nothing so long as Pelham would never perform another operation. Ethics, I suppose. But the decision gnawed at his ego. Then came the desire to avenge himself by gaining complete control of the world. He saw a way in your invention. And by the way, I've discovered a way to treat your new ray so that the lethal quality will be removed without affecting its therapeutic value. I'll give it to you when you're better.

"To return to my story: The crimson glove also fitted in with Pelham's peculiar complexes. Where someone else would have tried to hide the partly-crippled hand, he flaunted it by wearing the crimson glove. And since he could use it for most things, including pulling a trigger, no one suspected that the glove served that purpose. Not even the men working with him.

"Once I was sure of his personality, I was more certain about how to reach him. I knew he was naturally furious with the failure of his attempts to kill me. So that the desire to succeed there was almost as great as the desire to rule. I arranged matters to incite him by capturing Fingers. I thought he might make some such offer to exchange the three of you for me, which he did.

"He used a powerful portable broadcasting unit, which I saw mounted on a

truck as they brought me in, and cut in on every major broadcasting station's wave-length in an attempt to reach me.

"I met his men according to his plan, and the rest you know."

"But, good God, man, how did you manage to do it?" exclaimed the doctor.

"Very easily," the Green Lama said. "The necessary knowledge and ability that was needed have been as much a part of my life as radium has of yours. And what better way of using it than in helping to bring justice and peace to a world already too much troubled with war and strife." The Green Lama, noticing that they had reached New York, leaned over and spoke to Gary.

"Drop me at the corner," he said.

"But, hell," the doctor protested weakly, "you can't just pop off like this. Who are you?"

"The Green Lama," was the soft answer. "Om! Ma-ni pad-me Hum!"

Evangel who had been talking to Gary all the way on the drive turned in her seat. The last few minutes had done much to restore her beauty, and her nerves. "But please don't run off like this," she said. "We haven't thanked—" She broke off as she realized he was gone. The Green Lama had blended with the shadows and vanished.

\* \* \*

It was well after midnight when the Green Lama warily approached the elevator to his penthouse. He was about to enter the elevator when he caught a glimpse of yellow in the mailbox. He opened the box and pulled out a telegram. He spread the yellow form and read.

YOU WERE WONDERFUL. YOU UPHELD ALL THAT I HAD HOPED FOR IN YOU. KEEP IT UP, MY GREEN LAMA. OM! MA-NI PADME HUM!

It was signed "Magga."

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