

Death, *the* Champ



"As you were, boys," growled Owen. "Drop those gats!"

Detective Owen Couldn't Believe that Terry Reis, Fistic Star, Would Stage a Crooked Scrap—But Things Looked Phoney! And Then—

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DETEKTIVE BILL OWEN had a battered nose, cauliflowered ears—and a sock in either fist. True, these manly attributes had been acquired in the line of duty and not in the prize

ring; but nevertheless, they qualified him to speak and act with authority on fights in general and on the one that was on at the Garden that night, in particular.

He had already spoken. Now he

decided to act and to act with the utmost haste.

He removed the stub of his black cigar from his mouth, scowled at it dourly, then tossed it away from him with an irritated gesture. It was hard for him to believe that Terry Reis, the champion, would fake a crooked fight for the benefit of the gamblers; yet no one knew better than Owen that money spoke louder than words.

As he walked down the narrow corridor that led to the champion's dressing room, the roar of the packed crowd in the Garden came to him like the thunder of a thousand subway trains. They were crying for blood! A vague, indefinable something stirred at the detective's heart.

He jostled into sports reporters, columnists, cameramen; nodded to fighters, promoters, managers. About the entire building there was the general excitement, chaos and confusion that always accompanies a championship match.

Then abruptly as he came to a halt before the door to Reis' dressing room, the scowl on his face deepened. Voices came to him from behind the portal—sinister voices raised in anger, voices that held an icy menace.

OWEN'S lips hardened; a sharp glint came to his eyes. He leaned against the jamb, listened a moment. And a moment was enough! His right hand dropped to the pocket of his coat, gripped the butt of the automatic there.

His left went out to the knob of the door. He wrenched it savagely, kicked it violently inward. Dramatic as his entrance had been, it was not half so dramatic as the dynamic tableau upon which he had burst.

Crowded against the far wall, a purple dressing gown over his supple shoulders, stood Terry Reis. His

face was hard, bitter—his eyes challenging. By his side crouched his manager, Eddie Rapp; and in contrast to the champion's, Rapp's face was white and drawn with fear.

And with good reason, too! Before the pair, twin automatics in their hands, stood Duffy Kilbain and Big Bill Martin. And the hungry snouts of those automatics were grinding at the ribs of the champion and his manager.

"As you were, boys!" growled Owen from the doorway. His automatic made a sinister bulge in his pocket. "Drop those gats!"

SLOWLY the twin automatics trickled from reluctant fingers and clattered to the floor. Reis promptly kicked them with the toe of his shoe and sent them slithering across the floor until they were lost beneath a locker.

Kilbain and Martin pivoted slowly. Their eyes flamed with a bitter hate as they took in the figure of the detective leaning in the doorway. For a long minute eyes met, clashed audibly. Then Owen grinned—a grin with no humor in it.

"So there was something back of all the talk?" he sneered.

Kilbain's ham-like hands knotted into hard fists at his side.

"You keep out of this, Owen!" he snarled.

Owen laughed unpleasantly.

"I'm in it up to my neck. But I'm telling you two crooked gamblers that if you don't keep out of it, you'll get it in the neck. I've got a hundred dollars bet on the champ. If he loses, I can take it." His voice suddenly hardened. "But he's got to lose on the level, see?" He turned to Reis. "What were they trying to do?"

Reis shrugged. "You know. Pull a dive in the fifth—or else!"

"I thought so," growled Owen. "And they call themselves gam-

blers! I have another name for them. Rats!"

Eddie Rapp, the champion's manager, wiped the sweat from his brow with a nervous hand.

"I'M glad you got here, Owen," he exhaled with relief. "Get these bums out of here and give the kid a chance to relax."

Owen nodded. "In two minutes, Eddie. But first, I got something to say. Get Hart and Pinelli in here."

Rapp left the dressing room hurriedly, leaving an uncomfortable, tense silence behind him. It was broken a moment later when he returned, trailing Battling Hart, the challenger, and his manager, Pinelli.

"Okay, boys," began Owen. "We're all here. This is not in the book of rules, but it goes just the same. We're going to lay down the rules of this fight right here, instead of in the ring. And they're this. Just one rule. This fight is on the level, see?"

"It always has been as far as I've been concerned," said Reis.

"Sure; you know me, Owen," Battling Hart agreed. "I got everything to win and nothing to lose by fighting on the level."

The detective nodded. "I felt pretty sure of you two boys." He turned to the gamblers. "These are the rats I'm worried about."

Abruptly he jammed the nozzle of his gun into the pit of Kilbain's stomach.

"Listen, Kilbain—and you, too, Martin! There's been a lot of talk about this fight. Crooked talk. It smells to heaven. And your two names are in it all the way. This fight is on the level—and the best man wins, see!"

Kilbain growled something unintelligible under his breath. Martin's eyes became hot pin-points—the eyes of a killer.

Owen's voice became savage.

"I don't care what your connections are—how much drag you got—if there's one little crooked thing about this fight, I'll sock it to you both, all the way! I'll bust your connections wide open! And as for drag—" he paused, jerked his thumb at himself—"it will be me who will be dragging you two pikers up the river. Got that?"

Kilbain nodded sullenly.

"You got us wrong, Bill," he began.

"You're damn right I did," Owen snarled. "I got you at the wrong time when you had the wrong gun on the wrong man!"

"Just a wise guy, eh?" sneered Martin.

Owen looked at him with hard eyes, shook his head patiently. "Not so wise, Martin, as tough. Tough enough to handle you, with or without gloves. Now get out! Both of you. If anything happens to the champ here, or to Hart—you two are it!"

SULLENLY the two gamblers retreated to the door. Owen slammed it behind them, then retrieved their automatics from beneath the lockers. He stowed them into his pocket, then turned to the two fighters.

"Here's wishing you both luck," he said.

"Thanks, Bill," said Reis. "You don't have to worry." He smiled at Hart, his challenger. "We're going in there and fight!"

"Right!" agreed Hart. "And on the level!"

Owen patted them both encouragingly on the back, headed for the door. "I'll be out there watching you—and some others!"

The fight had been the champion's all the way. A good, strong, clean fight.

Battling Hart had been willing enough, ready to mix and trade

blows. But he was simply out-classed.

Crouched down in his seat by the ringside, Detective Owen pulled at his cigar with satisfaction. Never before had he seen Reis with so much on the ball. His footwork was a joy to watch; his timing was perfect, and he packed liquid dynamite in either fist.

It was just a matter of time now until he put over a haymaker. Maybe the next round would see the finish.

OWEN grinned to himself, squinted through the clouds of smoke that fogged the ringside to where Kilbain and Martin were seated. He knew that the two gamblers had hedged their bets on the challenger. But it was one thing to break even on a fight and another to lose a small fortune that would have been theirs, if it hadn't been for the detective's interference.

Their faces were surly, their eyes bitter as they whispered together from crooked lips. Owen knew that they were plotting some particular hell for him. But he wasn't worried too much! He could take care of himself. If they—

The bell rang for the eighth round. He forgot all about the two gamblers, hitched forward in his chair and prepared himself for the finish. And it came more suddenly and dramatically than he had expected.

With the sound of the gong, Reis flashed out of his corner, light on his feet, fresh as a daisy. There was hardly a mark on him save a thin trickle of blood that ran down from a bruised lip.

Battling Hart answered the bell more slowly. It was obvious that he was tiring. Instead of meeting the champion's rush on the balls of his feet, he stood flatfooted, covered up, as Reis licked out with a long right.

It clipped Hart on the side of the jaw, snapped his head back. The blow was a heavy one, stung him into action. He weaved in suddenly, throwing lefts and rights to the champion's heart.

Reis grinned and liked it. He liked a good fight—liked to give the customers their money's worth. After all, wasn't he the champ? He was very confident. Hart had put up a good battle, but Reis would take him now at most any minute.

They stood toe to toe and slugged. Hart's head snapped back again, but with the courage of desperation he continued to bore in. He jolted two swift uppercuts to Reis's jaw. The champion stepped back a moment, and the crowd roared.

They wanted action—blood! And they got it!

THE tight smile still on his lips, Reis feinted Hart into an opening, crossed a right to the heart. Hart countered with a left, tried to land a right, missed and clinched.

The referee was between them in a flash. They broke cleanly, danced around a moment on tense legs, then were at it again with a sudden flurry of savage blows that set the crowd on their ears.

From the gallery the mob raved.

"Atta boy, Reis!"

"Kill him, Hart!"

"Watch his left there, you bum!"

Detective Owen was tense on the edge of his seat. With swift, sure eyes he followed every move of the two gladiators. No question about this fight being crooked. The boys were giving every ounce they had. More, were fighting cleanly, standing toe to toe to each other, taking and giving it.

Beneath the blaze of lights suspended above the arena their glistening bodies stood out in heroic proportions. Typewriters clicked, telegraph keys clattered, excited

radio announcers cried into amplifiers, reporting to a sport loving world a blow by blow description of the battle.

Reis had Hart in the latter's corner now. He was concentrating on the challenger's body. His fists flashed out like leather battering rams, thudded into yielding flesh with solid impacts. He was fresh, confident, sure of himself.

Hart was groggy. There was a wobble to his knees. But with indomitable courage he carried on. In a last wild, desperate effort, he threw his science to the winds, stepped in close, threw his right at Reis' jaw.

The blow found its mark, but it left him wide open. Like a striking cobra, Reis' left flashed out, landed smashingly above Hart's heart. His right was a second behind it. It landed solidly on the point of the challenger's chin. No human could have withstood that twin assault.

Hart went down, pawed about in the resin in his corner, then lay still. The Garden was a bedlam, then hushed to utter silence as the referee waved Reis to his corner and began to count over the prostrate gladiator.

"One—two—three—"

Hart stirred.

"Four—five—six—"

Hart was on one knee. The crowd went mad, tore the roof off the building.

"Seven—eight—"

HART pulled himself up by the ropes. His eyes were glassy; he was punch drunk—out on his feet. But the blood-hungry mob yowled for more!

The two gladiators rushed together. Reis was sick at heart. It was like hammering a defenseless hulk. The fight should have been stopped, but the referee had waved him in. There was only one other way to save the challenger from

merciless punishment. He had to put him away—now!

Hart, driven on by the courage of a lion, weaved in drunkenly. His arms flayed wildly. A blood-smeared glove crashed into Reis' lips. But there was no steam behind the blow.

Reis smiled, set himself for the merciful *coup de grace*. His right shot back; his muscles tensed. Every ounce of his strength was behind the blow as it started for the challenger's bloody chin.

But it never reached its destination!

Reis staggered a moment. A wild, startled look came over his face—the light faded from his eyes.

The howling mob screamed for the kill!

They got it! Reis plunged forward on his face—lay still—ominously still in a crumpled heap on the resin.

The referee began to count.

"One—two—"

Detective Owen catapulted from his seat like a fury. He flung himself toward the ring.

"To hell with counting!" he shouted at the referee. "Reis is out for good—he's dead. Murdered!"

And he was right; at least, in the first instance. And even though the official verdict of the Boxing Commission's doctor was death by heart failure, Owen felt sure that he was right in the second instance.

But how could Reis have been murdered in the spotlight before fifty thousand witnesses? Owen didn't know, but he meant to find out.

He was so sure that the champion's death had been deliberate murder, that he gave orders that everyone was to leave the dressing rooms as soon as possible; that nothing was to be removed from them—until he had been able to make a thorough investigation.

The detectives' room at Headquarters was hot, smoke-fogged

and tense. A green-shaded lamp shone down brilliantly on a battered wooden table. On one side of that table sat Detective Owen. His eyes were hard, bitter, relentless; his granite jaw was grim.

Opposite him sat Kilbain and Martin the gamblers. Drops of sweat beaded their foreheads; fear stared out of their glazed eyes. They had been through the mill. Owen had put the screws to them, and though they hadn't cracked yet—

Behind them in the shadows, sitting in uncomfortable silence unwilling witnesses to the grim scene, sat Eddie Rapp, Battling Hart and his manager, Pinelli.

Owen assaulted the table with his fist. He jabbed out an accusing finger.

"I told you two that if anything happened to the champ you would be *it!*" he snarled. "And, by God, I mean it! He was murdered!"

Kilbain smiled crookedly.

"You're nuts, Owen!" he croaked. "You know the doc said heart failure. How could we kill him before that mob?"

That was the one question that had been bothering Owen, but he didn't admit it.

"I don't give a rap how you did it!" he growled. "You two are going to take the rap!"

"It's a frame," Martin sneered. "You haven't got a thing on us. We didn't kill Reis—if he was killed. But I think you're screwy. It was just one of those things. You were there. It was a fight, wasn't it? It was on the level. Reis just collapsed from punishment."

"Nuts to that! Hart put up a good battle, but he hadn't hurt the champ."

Martin shrugged wearily. "Well, why pick on us?"

"Because you tried to frame the fight. And, by God, you did. Framed it with murder!"

"I want a lawyer!" whined Martin.

"You'll get one when you go on trial," said Owen heavily. "Now I'm going to give you—"

The phone on the edge of the desk clanged raucously. With an impatient gesture he yanked the instrument to him, growled savagely into the mouthpiece.

"Who? Yeah—he's here. Who wants him?" His eyes narrowed suddenly, and his lips pursed in a soundless whistle. "Listen. This is Detective Owen talking. I got a hunch this is murder. Give me the dope on that."

With a hairy fist he ground the receiver against his ear, and as he listened to the flow of hurried words coming over the wire to him, the frown on his brow became deeper and a far away speculative look came into his eyes. He nodded.

"Thanks," he said tersely. "I'll tell him."

He banged down the receiver, heaved his bulk back in the chair, and chewed absent-mindedly on the ragged stub of his cigar. Abruptly, he straightened up.

"You—Rapp! Come here. In the light where I can see you."

EDDIE RAPP, the dead champ's manager, stepped forward nervously. He looked at the detective with apprehensive eyes.

"I—honest to God—"

"Shut up! I haven't accused you of anything yet. But there's one thing you can explain, Eddie. How does it happen that just a week ago you took out a fifty thousand dollar insurance policy on Reis—double indemnity and all that. If he was killed in the ring you collected twice. Answer that one!"

"Why—" It was Rapp's turn to sweat. "Why, it was just good business!"

Owen jumped from his chair. "I'll

say it was good business. Murder for a hundred grand!"

"But you know what the doc said—"

"Shut up!" Owen paced the floor a moment. "It's murder, I tell you. I don't know how it was pulled, but, by heaven, I'll find out. Two crooked gamblers and an insurance policy for a hundred grand. I wonder—"

He broke off abruptly, went to the door, bawled out a swift order.

Two uniformed policemen appeared.

"Street 'em!" he growled.

IT was dark. Cautiously, silently, Detective Owen felt his way forward in the Stygian gloom. The blue steel of a glinting automatic flashed in his right fist. His left was extended before him, groping for the knob of a door. He found it, turned it noiselessly, opened the door a foot, and slipped into the dark interior beyond.

He flattened himself against the wall, waited a tense moment. His gun was ready for instant action. Every nerve was tense, alert. But no alien sound broke the somber, uncanny silence of the abysmal blackness.

Noiselessly, he eased a flashlight from his pocket, depressed the switch, and swung it about him in a swift arc. The tiny beam of light picked out a locker against the far wall, fighting togs, a training table in the center of the floor.

He stepped forward, then suddenly froze. His pulses leaped. An icy finger of death crawled down his spine. Some sixth sense, some premonition of danger, flashed a warning to his brain.

He jumped swiftly to one side, pivoted. But not swiftly enough! A sudden rush of air preceded the blow that crashed into his shoulder. His right arm went dead. His gun

clattered to the floor, followed a moment later by the flashlight.

In a blind fog of pain he grappled, closed with his assailant. His left shot up, found yielding flesh and bone. But there was no steam behind the blow.

Then an arm was raised, swiftly. Blue steel glinted in the night in a short arc, descended. The heavy butt of a revolver collided with his skull.

A bomb exploded in his brain. Vivid flashes of heliotrope split his eyeballs. He felt his knees buckle, knew he was passing out. He fought, more by the exertion of sheer will than bodily strength, against the wave of nausea that swept over him.

Dimly, as from a great distance, he heard a clattering noise—running feet—a deep voice yelling—demanding to know what was the matter—

Then the gun was raised again, descended. The crescendo roar of an express train sounded in his ears, drowning out all else. Then utter blackness. An abysmal void rushed up, engulfed him as he pitched headlong to the floor.

A FEW minutes later, he straightened up slowly, to gaze into a lighted torch in the hands of a night-watchman. Painfully, Owen explored the swelling lump on his head. He swore violently, fluently, felt for his gun and flashlight, found them. The torch had gone out when he had dropped it.

"That lump ain't nothin'," the watchman assured him. "Nothin' to what you'd a' got if I hadn't come along. A big guy had you down an' was gonna do you in. No—I didn't get a look at his face. He ducked his head an' almost knocked me down gettin' out the door the minute he seen me."

Who had been the assailant? Why

had he been there? Why the sudden attack? With a bitter curse, Owen realized that the answer was there in the room—something the fellow had come for. It was still there, if his attacker had not destroyed the evidence.

But the devil of it was, Owen didn't know what that evidence was. There were lots of questions about the murder of Terry Reis—despite the doctor's verdict, Owen still insisted it was murder—that he couldn't answer. But of one thing he was sure. The person who had slugged him was the killer!

The room was exactly as he had first seen it when he entered some few minutes before—exactly as it had been left last night. Nothing was disturbed. Owen dismissed the watchman and went over the room with a fine-tooth comb. He found many things, but not the thing he looked for. Method for murder.

With a sullen growl he started for the door. A pair of boxing gloves was lying on the floor. He had liked Terry Reis—liked him a hell of a lot. And now the kid had made his last fight and lost—lost to the greatest champion of all, Death.

Owen was a sentimentalist at heart. Those leather gloves, the symbol of the champ's last fight, stirred something in his heart. He picked them up, tucked them under his arm. He would keep them as a souvenir. A souvenir of the fight against Death!

THEN a vague thought stirred in his mind. He pounced upon it, elaborated it. Those gloves—lying on the floor. They had been hanging high on the wall just before his assailant landed on him.

His eyes became preternaturally sharp, his brain hot, as he worked it at top speed. Then inspiration struck and something clicked in his

mind that sent him out of there on the run.

A half-hour later, Owen barged impetuously into the office of the Medical Examiner. Dr. Durant looked up from his desk, smiled and shoved a box of cigars across his desk toward the detective. "You still think Reis was murdered?"

"I do that!" growled Owen. "More than before."

He selected a cigar with great care, bit off the end.

"Listen, Doc," he began. "I want you to do me a favor. I know the doctor up at the ringside said it was heart failure; and I know you agreed with that. But, as a pal, perform an autopsy for me?"

Dr. Durant looked puzzled. "You're serious. You've got something?"

OWEN pursed his lips. "I got an idea. If I'm right—somebody will burn for the job!"

Dr. Durant had worked with Owen before. He knew the futility of asking questions.

"What do you want me to test the body for first?" he asked.

"Poison!"

Durant rose from his chair, nodded crisply towards his desk. "There's a box of cigars. Sit down. Wait!"

Owen waited an impatient hour. Then the door opened. He jumped to his feet.

"So what?" he snapped.

Dr. Durant's face was sober.

"You were right." He nodded his head. "There was poison. Murder!"

"What kind of poison?"

"The most swift, sure and deadly—cyanide."

Owen's face was a grim, implacable mask as he started for the door. Durant caught him by the arm. "But, gosh, Owen, how could anyone administer cyanide to him in the ring before fifty thousand

people? It acts instantaneously. It could not have been administered to him before the fight started. Why—why—it's impossible!"

"Yeah?" flung back Owen. "That's what everybody thought."

"But how was it done?"

"I don't know, but I'm going to damn soon find out. What's the test for cyanide?"

"A simple one." Durant scrawled rapidly on a sheet of paper. "Here's all the information you will need."

"Thanks, Doc," said Owen as he stuffed the paper into his pocket. "It looks like you're going to be a witness at a murder trial."

AT PRECISELY eleven o'clock the following morning, Detective Owen strolled casually into Billy Hillman's gymnasium on 42nd St. A bulky, unimportant looking package, wrapped in newspaper, was carried carelessly under one arm.

A cigar cocked jauntily out of one corner of his mouth, he looked genially about him. At the far end of the room, gathered around a ring, was a little knot of men.

They shifted uncomfortably at the detective's approach.

Owen greeted them affably.

"Hi, Kilbain—hi, Martin, nice of you to come."

"Nice, eh?" Kilbain sneered. "Don't hand me that line. We've been tailed ever since you strected us last night. When are you going to take the 'eyes' off us?"

Owen laughed but didn't answer. Battling Hart, the new champion, was punching a bag in the ring. Owen turned to him, waved a friendly greeting, walked over to where Rapp and Pinelli were talking.

They looked up.

"Well, Rapp, anything to say about that insurance policy?"

Rapp ran the point of a dry tongue over drier lips. "Honest to God, Bill—"

"Save it." Owen turned to Hart, who was now skipping rope, jerked his head. "Come here a minute."

Hart dropped the rope, crossed over, and climbed through the ropes. "Still in training, eh?" asked the detective.

The other smiled, nodded his head. "Sure, why not? I'm the champ now."

"Yeah," said Owen. "I'm going to do a little training myself."

He took the package from under his arm, shook off the paper, revealing a pair of boxing gloves.

"You better do some training with your brains," Kilbain sneered.

"Yeah," mocked Martin. "You're all right on the muscle work, but when it comes to the bean—"

Owen laughed.

"Razzing me because I thought one of you bumped Reis? Well, my brainwork might not be as good as my footwork, but it isn't so bad. All I need now is a couple of rounds to stimulate it."

He held up the gloves.

"Recognize these. They were used last night in the fight. I'm keeping 'em for a souvenir. You're first, Kilbain—how about going a couple of rounds with me."

"Why don't you pick on somebody your size?" Kilbain sneered. Owen sized him up. He did have the edge on the gambler.

"But hell," continued the other. "I ought to be able to last one round with you."

Owen nodded.

"No; you'd be a set-up for me." He turned to Martin. "How about you?"

Martin tensed his bulging biceps.

"And how!" he accepted readily. "Nothing would please me better than to take a sock at you. Only I wish I could put a horseshoe into the glove."

Rapp stepped forward. "What about me, Owen?" he offered. "I

wouldn't mind taking a rap at you."

Pinelli, a short, squat Italian, sized up the detective.

"And I think I could take you, myself," he decided. "What do you think of that?"

Owen grinned tolerantly. "I'll give you all a chance later."

Then his eyes became cold. He whirled on the new champ.

"How about you, Hart? These mugs are too easy for me." He shoved the gloves in his hands before the other's nose. "Just a couple of rounds with these gloves. What do you say?"

Hart never said it with words. He lashed out suddenly with his fist. Owen rolled under the blow, ducked, side-stepped—closed. Sudden commotion—chaos!

In two swift, savage blows, Hart gave Owen another cauliflower ear. The detective took it, bored in. His iron fist sank deep into the champion's stomach.

HART grunted, his knee came up in a foul blow, caught the detective in the groin. Owen slumped. Hart wrestled him, mauled him, smashed his fist to the detective's jaw. Then with a sudden movement he wrenched at the gun on Owen's hip. Owen was groggy, but he was just beginning to fight. That savage jerk on the gun in his holster lashed him to furious life. His left hand froze to Hart's wrist, clung there desperately. His right slashed forward in a sledgehammer blow.

Hart's knees buckled.

Owen's fist moved with the speed of a rapier and with the kick of a mule. It landed flush on the point of the champion's chin. He went down slowly, joint by joint. His eyes glazed over. The detective stood panting over him.

"That was the punch Reis was going to give you—just before you murdered him!" he gritted.

He whirled furiously on the others. "Anybody else?"

But no one accepted the challenge. They were too shocked, too dumbfounded by the startling declaration that had followed it.

"**M**URDERED Reis, you said?" whispered Rapp.

"Right!" grated Owen.

"But how? There were a million people there. Coppers, dicks—you were sitting at the ringside."

Owen nodded.

"But he murdered him just the same. Right before our eyes. Hart was foxy, clever. He had plans of his own. Most of all he wanted to be champ. Well, he was, for a day. This is how he did it. He knew that Reis had it all over him like a tent. So before going into the ring he put some cyanide flakes on his shoes. He rubbed those deadly crystals into the resin in his corner.

"Then, in that last round, when he was groggy and Reis knocked him down, he rubbed his gloves in that resin—in that deadly cyanide. One tiny speck of it is deadly!"

"My God!" whispered Pinelli.

"Yes," growled Owen. "Hart's blows never killed Terry Reis. It was the cyanide on his gloves. He brushed them against Terry's lips. There was an open bruise there. And it killed him instantly."

"How did you tumble to all that?" asked Pinelli.

"I wouldn't have tumbled at all if Hart hadn't tried to get rid of the gloves. From then on it was a cinch. That is, to figure out how Reis was killed. But I still didn't know which of you did it.

"So I staged that little training session of mine. Hart was the only one who didn't want to take a crack at me—if I used these gloves."

"Hell!" said Martin with reluctant admiration. "Your brain is as good as your sock."