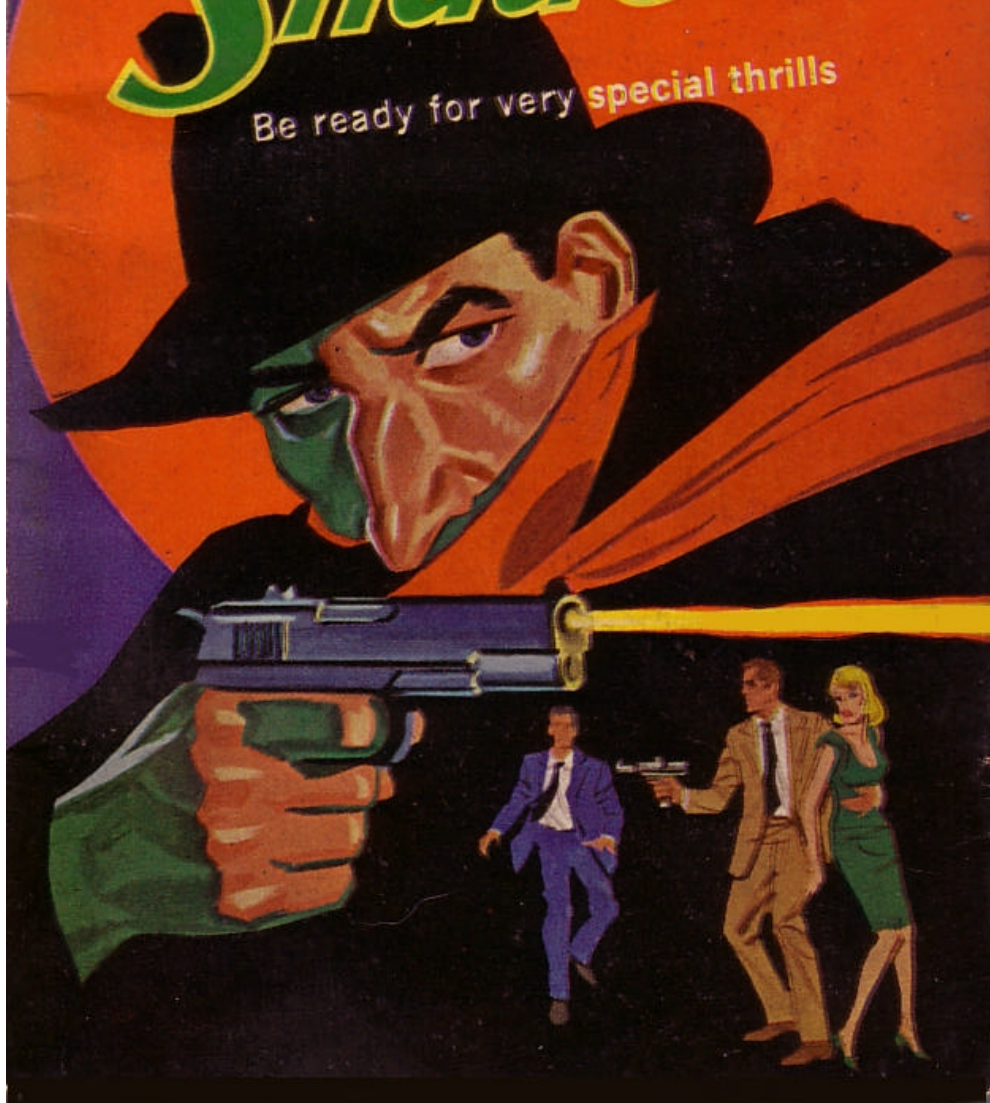


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The Night of the Shadow

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MAN-EATER

Cranston had gone nearly a full mile through the thick jungle growth when he tripped on the thick vine that lay across the faint path. A vine thick as a man's arm suddenly whipped up from the jungle floor and wrapped itself around Cranston's waist. The vine that had tripped him was wound tight around his ankle. Another vine seemed to strike like a snake and fasten itself on Cranston's wrist as he struggled to release the vine around his ankle.

The vines began to pull at him, began to draw him to the left of the trail. The vines ended fifty feet away in a thick, enormous flowerlike growth in the shape of a cup--a cup that was wide open, revealing a lining as red as blood. The cup opened and closed like a mouth--a hungry mouth!

The powerful vines drew Lamont Cranston, THE SHADOW, steadily toward the gaping mouth of the meat-eating plant.

The Night of the Shadow

MAXWELL GRANT

1

THE MAN staggered as he walked.

A tall and slender man, dark haired. The man half-ran, leaning forward from the waist, as if someone had given him a push and he was unable to stop, could only stagger on like a weary creature about to fall. He swayed, almost fell many times, but somehow held on and moved steadily forward in his half-run, half-stagger. His arms dangled like sticks on a string. He crossed the side streets without looking right or left as if unaware that there were cars. Drivers cursed at him. He did not hear them.

From time to time he looked up to see where he was going. To see where he was. His eyes were glazed. Eyes of a certain pain, and of more. Drugged eyes. Eyes that had seen horror, felt pain, and known no sleep for many hours. In the eyes there was a hopeless hope--as if the man knew that he would never reach his goal, but would never stop trying to reach the goal. Eyes that told that the man knew that if he ever stopped moving he would not move again.

Park Avenue in New York City is a wide avenue with two lanes of traffic on either side of a center strip that is planted in grass and fenced. At Christmas there are Christmas trees with lights stretching its entire length until it ends as the New York Central Tracks come up from beneath it at 96th Street. It is never deserted. There is always traffic; the taxicabs like to use Park Avenue. Now, near midnight, the cars streamed past without stop while the green lights stretched on into the distance.

The tall man, staggering, raising his head only to look ahead toward his goal, did not notice the dark green car that came out of a cross street and turned north behind him. The car could not drive too fast in the traffic. But it tried to move ahead, and drove in the lane closest to the curb. Once it almost reached the staggering man, only to be thwarted by a red light.

The light turned green and the car moved ahead again. The staggering man, swaying, did not notice. The car gained, came close--and the man turned into a tall office building. He neither paused nor hesitated. He turned at the same half-run and entered the lobby. Outside, the car was caught by surprise and could not stop in the flow of traffic. It went on looking for a place to park.

Inside the bright night lobby of the tall office building the uniformed night guard looked up from where he sat at a desk with the time sheet on a clipboard in front of him. He started to smile at the tall thin man to indicate that he wanted the man to sign the time sheet. Then he stopped smiling. He had seen the wild eyes of the dark-haired man, the sway and stagger as the man approached him. The guard stood, but hesitated. He was a simple guard in an office building, he had not drawn his pistol in twelve years.

The guard had not dealt with trouble in his life. He went for his pistol. He was too late. The long hesitation had cost him his chance. The staggering man was on him. There was a pistol in the hand of the tall man. With what was nearly his last strength the man raised the pistol and brought it down on the head of the guard. The surprised guard dropped like a stone.

The tall man swayed, almost fell, recovered himself and staggered on past the fallen guard and into the single night elevator. The elevator doors closed. The elevator began its ascent. Below in the lobby three men walked in. They were small, dark-skinned men. They looked at the guard and at each other.

The low buzzing sound filled the room of blue light. A formless room without windows or walls or ceiling or doors. A space of blue light, no more, the light itself seeming to come from nowhere. In the room there was only a series of long electronic consoles, and a solitary man who sat at the largest of the instruments. The room itself was silent except for the now sudden buzzing.

A room that did not exist.

The blue room would not be found on any floor plan of any building. It was not listed on any directory. It had no known entrance or exit. One of a series of blue-lighted rooms that did not exist to the knowledge of anyone but a few. And yet the rooms were there, hidden high in the office building on Park Avenue, where, at this moment, the tall thin man was staggering out of the elevator on the floor occupied by *Lamont Cranston Enterprises, Inc.* The man swayed, held to the wall, moved along the corridor.

The solitary man in the blue room sat alert as the buzzer sounded. He touched a button on the console in front of him. A television screen showed an immediate picture.

It was a picture of the corridor and the tall, dark-haired man who now held to the wall as he staggered toward the dark doors of the offices of *Lamont Cranston Enterprises, Inc.* The man fell to his knees as the silent man in the blue room watched. The tall man struggled again to his feet, lurched forward.

Behind the staggering man the elevator door opened again. The three small, dark men stepped out. Each carried a large, peculiar-looking pistol.

The solitary man in the blue room bent forward to a speaking grid.

"Burbank alert! Burbank alerting to strangers in corridor. One appears injured. Three pursuers are armed."

There was an instant of silence. Then a deep, yet soft voice answered from the console.

"Report acknowledged. Continue surveillance."

In the corridor the lurching man had turned now to face the three small dark men. The three moved forward cautiously. The tall man held his pistol on them. They watched the pistol. They inched toward the tall man. They spoke, the three dark little men, in some strange language.

The tall man tried to hold his pistol steady. The man tried to pull the trigger.

He could not. He swayed, lurched against the wall, fell forward onto his knees.

The three small men moved closer. The lead man took careful aim with his odd pistol and squeezed the trigger. There was a sharp spitting sound, a *pffft* like the crack of a whip. The man on his knees jerked convulsively, slid sideways, fell over and lay crumpled on his side. The small man who had shot his strange gun aimed again.

"No!"

The command came like a sharp blow in the dim night corridor of the office building. The command of an unseen voice. The small dark-skinned man who had been about to shoot again jerked his head up. His pistol came up. His black eyes searched the empty corridor for the source of the sudden command.

"You cannot see me!"

Again the voice sounded. A strong voice, and yet low. A voice of command that had no need to shout to hold the three small men in check in the silent corridor. The three men all looked at each other, and then up and down the deserted corridor. Their eyes showed a sudden terror. The leader, the one who had shot the tall man, tried to show power.

"Who are you? What do you want?"

The small man spoke good English, clear English and yet with a peculiar accent. The other two held their odd pistols and continued to watch the empty corridor. The leader barked an order in some strange language. They nodded, and began to spread out in the corridor.

An eerie laugh echoed up and down the corridor.

"Fools! No man can defeat The Shadow! Lay down your weapons! Now!"

The three small men said nothing. They only looked wildly around them for the unseen source of the mocking voice. At this moment, the tall man who lay on the floor suddenly groaned, moved, struggled to rise. The leader of the three attackers whirled, aimed his ugly pistol again at the tall, thin man.

He never fired.

The secret door in the side wall of the corridor opened and closed so swiftly none of the three men saw it. What they saw was the great black-shrouded shape that seemed to rise up out of the floor of the silent corridor, to appear before them in its wide blackness as if by magic. They saw the bright, burning eyes beneath the brim of a black slouch hat. They saw the hawk nose that jutted above the high collar of the black cloak that blended into the dim shadows of the late night corridor. They saw the long, accusing finger with the red fire-opal ring glowing like some flaming beacon.

One of them screamed.

A hoarse, broken scream of terror. The leader turned again--too late.

The giant black shape moved soundlessly like a bird of prey through the corridor and seemed to flow over the leader with his strange gun. A black shape that floated to and over the man and left him lying on the floor, his pistol clattering away across the dim corridor.

The two other attackers tried to escape. The black-shrouded figure bounded through the corridor, the black cloak streaming out like great wings. The second of the small, dark men fell with a choked scream as The Shadow reached him, as the hand of The Shadow slashed out and down across his neck. The man lay on the floor of the dim corridor and did not move again.

The third man almost reached the elevator, heard The Shadow behind him, and turned to try to defend himself. His odd-looking pistol came up, shot once; and missed in his fear and haste. The laugh of The Shadow reverberated through the dim corridor. His long fingers reached out like claws of steel, held the small man by the throat. The small man squirmed. Held high with his feet dangling in empty air he tried to fire again. Then he slumped unconscious in the hand of The Shadow as the steel fingers squeezed.

The corridor became silent.

The three men lay where they had fallen. One was dead, his neck broken. The Shadow stood alone with his fiery eyes blazing in the dim light and the silence. He listened for a moment. There was no sound. Then he glided like a phantom to the tall thin man who was weakly crawling on the floor of the corridor. His black-garbed figure bent down over the man.

The man was dying, would soon be dead--but was not yet dead. The Shadow removed the thick air-gun dart the leader of the three small attackers had shot into the neck of the dying man. The Shadow touched the man, spoke softly.

"Who are you?"

The man moved his head from side to side like an insect trying to find the light. He opened his eyes. The man's eyes stared upward--but they did not see! The Shadow bent low, looked into the eyes. The tall man was all but blind, what was left of his sight fading rapidly even as The Shadow watched.

"Why were you coming to Lamont Cranston?"

The man blinked as if to try to see the soft-voiced figure above him in the dim corridor. Then he seemed to nod, shake his head as if he had been expecting to be blind. The man licked his lips that were dry now. His voice was a croak.

"Ah . . . wha . . . Ahhh taaggh . . ."

The man waited. The Shadow stared at him. The man was waiting for an answer--an answer to some question the man thought he had asked. The man could not see The Shadow above him, and lay there waiting for some answer to some question that his dying mind told him he had asked.

The Shadow guessed. "Yes, I am Lamont Cranston. You were coming to my offices."

The dying man nodded weakly, licked his dry lips again, spoke in his hoarse croak.

"Ahhhhhggggg . . . gggaaaabbbb . . . mmmmmuhhhhuhh . . ."

The man's weak hand reached up, touched The Shadow, held onto The Shadow's cloak as if urging the importance, the urgency of his message. But there was no message that even The Shadow could understand. Only gibberish. A babbling gibberish from the blind and dying man that made no sense.

"Ahhhhh . . . uuuuggghhhh!"

The Shadow tried to hear, to understand, but there was no way. The man was frantic with the importance of his words, but there were no words. The dry lips of the man moved, and the voice croaked with a sound that had in it all the urgency of fear and terror, of the heroic effort the man had made to reach Lamont Cranston. None of it could help. The words, the sounds that came from the dying man, were gibberish. Whatever the man wanted so urgently to say could not be said. How far he had come, where he had come from, why he had come to Lamont Cranston, could not be told by the man who croaked out his frantic gibberish.

As if, suddenly, he knew this, the man gave a moan. A low, hopeless moan of fear and despair. It was the last sound that came. The tall, thin man moaned in his despair, his eyes glazed, he shuddered once, and fell back on the hard floor of the silent corridors.

The man was dead.

2

THERE was no more sound in the dim corridor of the tall office building above Park Avenue in New York. The man lay dead. He was now beyond hope or pain. The Shadow looked down at his dead face.

His fiery eyes studied the face of the dead man who had been trying so hard to reach Lamont Cranston. It was not a face he knew. He had never seen the face before. Not as The Shadow, and not as any of the many alter-egos the dark Avenger presented to the world to hide his true identity. His photographic memory was perfect. Once he had seen a man he never forgot. This was not a face he had ever seen before, dead or alive.

Yet the man had given his life in a desperate attempt to reach Lamont Cranston with a message. A message, a report, some story that had been worth the risk of his life, worth the effort to reach Cranston despite his condition--because The Shadow knew as he studied the body that the tall man had not died from the air-gun wound alone--he had been dying before he was shot.

The Shadow could not surmise the real cause of death. What strange evil had killed him, and had first rendered him blind and unable to speak intelligibly?

Was that the message the dead man had wanted so desperately to tell Lamont Cranston? And why Cranston? How did the man know Lamont Cranston when Cranston did not know him? A dying man on his last strength tried to reach a man he had never known? How and why? The Shadow could not tell. His burning eyes studied the man's body, every detail, every mark on the dead face. He studied the man's clothes--an ordinary business suit, a white shirt, a simple striped tie, dark shoes, dark socks. Nothing! But not quite nothing. The Shadow peered down at the body. The suit was an ordinary suit, but it was not of American cut. The vast data that filled the mind of The Shadow said that the suit had been made not in the United States but in South America. In Brazil! The Shadow was sure--the man had come from Brazil. His eyes blazed, and then he saw the ring.

The dead man wore a ring on his left hand. A strange ring. A special and grotesque ring formed of solid gold, carved into the shape of a great twined snake. A primitive ring made of a single gold nugget hollowed out into a ring by hand and carved into the shape of a thick snake--an Anaconda! The Shadow bent down and took the ring from the dead hand. He examined it, and his fiery eyes glowed. He recognized this ring. It was one of the sacred gold Anaconda rings of the Jarro Indians of the upper Amazon Basin. The man had come from Brazil, and had been at some time in the land of the Jarro--a fierce tribe of headhunters who gave their rings only to those who could share their bloody and secret rites. Which meant that the dead man had lived long in the far back country, up the small tributary rivers of the Amazon where the Jarro ruled. There was no other explanation--the Jarro admitted a man to their rites only by blood ritual after many, many years of watching him prove he was a man. Not more than ten outsiders in history had been admitted to the rites of the Jarro and lived. One was Kent Allard.

The ring in his hand, The Shadow's eyes glowed with an understanding that was coming clear. The dead man had been looking for Kent Allard, not Lamont Cranston! That . . .

The low groan came from behind The Shadow. The black-garbed figure turned in the dim corridor. The leader of the three small attackers was regaining consciousness. The Shadow glided to the man, bent down, squeezed the pressure points on the man's neck. The dark-skinned attacker slumped unconscious again. Now The Shadow checked the other two. One was dead, his

neck broken by the blow of The Shadow. The third was still alive but unconscious. The Shadow turned his fiery eyes on the glowing red fire-opal girasol ring. Almost at once another man appeared in the dim corridor. A man dressed in the uniform of a chauffeur, but with the swift, catlike movements of the trained agent in the war for justice. He carried an automatic, but, seeing there was no danger, he replaced the weapon in the hidden holster inside his chauffeur's uniform and looked at The Shadow.

"Take this one into the small room, Stanley," The Shadow commanded, and indicated the unconscious leader of the attackers.

Stanley bent, picked up the fallen man as if he were no larger than a child.

"We will leave the others here," The Shadow said. "It is possible that the police can trace the murdered man."

"Won't they want to know what he was doing here, Chief?" Stanley said, the unconscious attacker held easily in his arms.

"We don't know what he was doing here, Stanley," The Shadow said. "Commissioner Weston will not press Lamont Cranston. When you have imprisoned that man, call the police anonymously and report the killings. Then meet in Lamont Cranston's private office. Alert Margo to be there."

Stanley nodded, turned, and seemed to vanish through the wall of the corridor with his burden. The Shadow let his fiery eyes survey the silent corridor once more. He looked at the dead men and the one who was still alive. There was nothing more to be learned in the dim corridor. The Shadow moved and faded from the corridor.

In the corridor now there was only death.

The blue room was silent, unmoving. A hazy blue light without walls or ceiling. In the blue light, The Shadow appeared. For a moment he stood there looking down at the unconscious form of the leader of the three attackers, his fiery eyes stabbing into the supine form. The man stirred, groaned. The eyes of The Shadow bored into the brain of the man. The man stopped moving, was silent, lay now with a peaceful smile on his sleeping face. The Shadow turned and melted into the hazy blue light.

The blue room was empty of all but the peaceful man.

The Shadow reappeared.

But it was not The Shadow who now stood there. It was a stranger with different clothes and a different face.

He was smaller than The Shadow, shorter and stockier. The man seemed this different, but actually he was none of these things. In place of the piercing eyes of The Shadow, the new man's eyes were hooded and quiet. His broader face was impassive. The face of a man accustomed to authority and power, but who was basically quiet and thoughtful. A man of deliberation rather than action. His immobile face and half-closed eyes were softened, passive, with none of the alert and steely power that marked the face of The Shadow. Yet none of these things were true. The man who now stood where The Shadow had stood was an illusion, a creation of the power, skill, training and controlled mind of The Shadow. Behind the facade the man presented to the world were all the powers of The Shadow, all the endless years of training and contemplation in the Orient that had made him The Shadow--except one power.

This man was Lamont Cranston, wealthy socialite, international businessman, friend of Police Commissioner Weston of New York and fellow member of the powerful and exclusive Cobalt Club with the Commissioner. And behind the self-created illusion of Cranston, behind the physical changes actually performed by the infinite muscular control of The Shadow, were all

the powers--the super hearing, the ultra-keen sight, the secret powers learned in the Orient, the trained and skilled muscles that could break a log or a neck in a single blow--except the one power. The ultimate power of The Shadow to cloud the minds of men and render them helpless to resist him, to invade their minds with the mist of power that placed all their will in his hands, belonged to The Shadow, only to The Shadow, and only when he was The Shadow. The power, given to The Shadow so long ago in the Orient by the great Master Chen T'a Tze himself, was of the mind but required the great black cloak, the black slouch hat, the fire-opal girasol ring to be brought into play. The source of the strange and potent power was unknown even to Chen T'a Tze, but it was in the trained concentration of The Shadow's mind, as it had been in the mind of the Master himself until passed on. It could not be learned, it could be used by only one man in each generation, and it had come to The Shadow with the cloak, the dark hat, and the burning red ring from the dying hands of Chen T'a Tze on a bright dawn long ago in a hidden monastery in the Orient when the Master had smiled and breathed his last. Now it belonged to only The Shadow, this strange and ultimate power, and The Shadow had used it well.

Beyond this single power, the man who stood now in the blue room was The Shadow in his major alter-ego--Lamont Cranston. His face calm and impassive, Cranston looked down at the sleeping prisoner, turned and faded into the blue light of the room. The light seemed to part, a wall opened, and he stood in a dark and narrow passageway. Cranston moved silently along the passageway until he reached a smooth and dim wall. He touched the wall. There was a faint sound, but nothing appeared to happen. Then Cranston walked into the wall and through it. There was no wall, only the electronic illusion of a wall. Cranston disappeared.

On the other side of the optical illusion wall he stood in a tiny cubicle. This time when he touched the wall of the cubicle there was a whirring sound and the wall swung out. Cranston stepped through.

Margo Lane and the chauffeur, Stanley, looked up from where they were seated to watch Lamont Cranston step out of the opening behind the bookcase. The bookcase closed behind him leaving no trace of the opening behind it, or of the passageways and hidden blue rooms so cleverly integrated into the offices of *Lamont Cranston Enterprises, Inc.* that no one had ever detected their existence, or guessed that the bright and efficient business offices were no more than a facade to cover the hidden rooms that were the central headquarters of The Shadow's far-flung organization. Cranston walked quietly to his elegant desk and sat down to face his two primary agents. His secretary and Number One Agent, Margo Lane; and his chauffeur-bodyguard--and Number Two agent, Stanley.

"I think the murdered man was looking for Kent Allard," Cranston said quietly.

Margo Lane listened intently, her slim legs crossed, her dark hair framing her intelligent face. She was a striking woman, the type of woman who made the heads of men turn as they passed. She was beautiful, but it was more than that. Not tall, the poise of her lithe body made her seem taller than she was. There was a power in her eyes, in the carriage of her slim body. An inner power that was clear even as she sat quietly now in the richly decorated private office of Lamont Cranston. Part of her quiet efficiency, as both private secretary and principal assistant to The Shadow, was natural, a force she had been born with, and part was from her years of work and training with The Shadow. Margo had come a long way from her home in Denver, Colorado, to be the right hand of The Shadow. On the way she had learned much, had worked at many things, including the brief career on the stage that had given her both her poise and her uncanny ability with disguise--an ability that stood her in good stead with the organization of The Shadow.

She was a woman who never seemed to tire, was never surprised by a sudden midnight summons from her Chief.

"But you don't know him, Lamont?" Margo said.

Cranston shook his head. "No, I never saw him before. Not as Cranston, and not as Kent Allard. But there is no doubt that he was trying to reach someone with a message, and I think that someone would have to be Allard. You know, Margo, as Kent Allard I have often been up the Amazon."

Margo smiled. "I don't think we'll forget that Jarro country very soon, Lamont."

Stanley laughed. "Some of those Jarro men took a big fancy to you, Margo. That sub-chief had you all but married to him. What they want, they take. Lucky for you they don't think as fast as they act."

"A strong people," Margo said.

"A good people," Cranston said evenly. "And this dead man had some relation to them. He must have known the name of Kent Allard, and have known that as Cranston I often back Allard's expeditions."

Margo nodded. "That seems logical, Lamont."

"Some message for Allard," Cranston said. "Important enough to have him risk his life, to get killed. Important enough to someone else for them to send three killers--even though the man was already dying!"

"You don't know what was wrong with him?" Margo said.

"No, some obscure malady it seems. Perhaps a drug, fatal but relatively slow acting." Cranston leaned across his desk. "He came here, Margo, on his last legs and knowing that killers were after him. Almost as if he had escaped from them and was making a desperate effort to reach the only man he could think of. You will note that he did not go to the police."

"Which implies that his story either would not impress the police, would not involve them, or perhaps would not be believed by them," Margo said.

"It was impressive and believable to someone, Margo," Cranston said grimly. "They sent those three killers."

Stanley seemed puzzled. The chauffeur-bodyguard-agent rubbed his chin and narrowed his eyes as he listened to his Boss. Now he burst out.

"Those killers weren't Jarro's, Boss. They're not even South American from the look of them."

Cranston agreed. "No, they're not, Stanley, and that brings up another problem. Those three men were Malaysian. I recognized the dialect and the accent. They are Malaysians from up the peninsula, but they've been around Singapore quite some time, the accent of their English gives them away."

Margo thought for a moment. "There aren't many Malaysians in New York, Lamont, or even in the country."

"No," Cranston said. "I had the same thought. They were imported, Margo, sent here for one purpose and one purpose only--to stop that man from reaching us! Or from reaching anyone. I don't think they knew who he was trying to reach or they would more likely have been waiting here for him rather than following him. So we have a mystery that involves both Brazil and the Malay Peninsula, probably Singapore."

Margo was silent for a moment. Stanley watched her and his impassive Boss. Cranston waited for whatever was on Margo's mind. Over the years he had learned to trust the judgment, the mind, of his number one agent and close associate and friend. When Margo looked up at him her eyes were firm as if she had made a decision.

"Lamont, is this for us? We don't know who the man was, or why he was coming here. We cannot waste our power on things that may have little importance."

Cranston nodded slowly, his hooded eyes almost hidden as he thought. "Yes, Margo you may be right. And yet I feel that there is something behind this that smells of evil. But I agree that we cannot be ruled by our desire to help everyone, it must be something that needs The Shadow."

"That was what I meant, Lamont," Margo said quietly.

Cranston nodded. "I know, Margo. But the man came here, he came for our help. The Shadow cannot turn his back on such an appeal. He risked everything, and lost everything, Margo, and at least we owe him an attempt to learn just what is involved."

Margo smiled. "Of course, Lamont, I wasn't thinking clearly. We must try."

"Yes, Margo, we must try. There is some evil here, an evil that can make a man blind, render him unable to speak anything but meaningless gibberish."

"What do you want us to do, Boss?" Stanley said.

Cranston's hooded eyes were thoughtful. "I think, Stanley, I want you to contact Shrevvy and the other of our agents here in New York. I want you all to spread out and see if you can trace either the dead man or his attackers. Who are they exactly, where did they come from, how did they get to the city? All of that."

"Right," Stanley said. "I've taken pictures of them, I'll get copies made."

Cranston turned to Margo. "You, Margo, had better stay with the police. Explain that I am away on business, you were here. You had the trouble reported. Weston will give us no trouble, of course, but I'd like you to stay with the police for a time just to see if they learn anything, especially the identity of the dead man. Keep your ears and eyes open for any connection to Brazil or Malaysia."

"I will, Lamont," Margo said.

Cranston turned again to Stanley. "I think you can safely make a start with the same thing--any connections to Brazil or Malaysia. Ships that have come from either country. The airlines. Private planes. You know what to do, Stanley."

Stanley nodded. Cranston's hooded eyes became grim in his impassive face. The wealthy socialite and businessman was silent for a long minute.

"I will try to learn all I can from our prisoner. I have grave doubts that he will reveal much, the three men are unlikely to be more than hired assassins."

"They may know more than they think," Margo said.

"That one is the leader," Stanley said.

"Yes, there may be a chance," Cranston agreed, and his eyes suddenly flashed with the hidden power of The Shadow. "But if not, I have a plan that may work for us--or for The Shadow."

A disguised light began to blink on Cranston's desk. There was a faint but insistent buzzing sound. Cranston nodded to his two agents. The light and the buzzing were the alarms that said someone was in the corridor. Cranston flipped a concealed switch. The cold, crisp voice of the man at the communications console in the hidden blue room came into the elegant office of Cranston.

"Burbank alert. Police arriving in the corridor."

Cranston bent to a speaker. "Very good. Remain at post to coordinate work of agents in New York. Stanley will give details. In the meantime, search files for any recent trouble, or unusual events in Malaysia and Brazil. Contact our man in Singapore to be alert."

"Acknowledge," Burbank's crisp voice said.

The office became silent. Cranston nodded to Margo Lane.

"You better go out and delay the police. Be cooperative, Margo, but tell them nothing just yet."

Margo left. Cranston listened to her voice out in the corridor for a few moments. Then he nodded to Stanley. The chauffeur-bodyguard-agent walked from the private office of his Boss into a small side office where he would start his work. Lamont Cranston sat behind his desk for a few more minutes listening to the police in the corridor. Then he stood and walked to the wall and the bookcase. He touched the bookcase. It swung open. Cranston vanished through the wall and the bookcase closed.

The private office was empty. In the corridor, Margo Lane agreed to go with the police to make her statement.

3

DAI ABDUL CHINNAH had killed many men. When ordered, or for the proper price. It had not surprised him to be asked to kill again. That the man who was to be killed was so great a distance from Singapore as the city of New York was, for Dai, a pleasant bonus. He admitted to Comrade Kyoto that there was in him a weakness to see the great city so many talked about. That had been what made his pulse swift as Comrade Kyoto placed the three of them aboard the jet. The killing would be as nothing. It was so ordered by Comrade Kyoto, and, in addition, the price was quite proper.

Dai had marveled at the great city. It was, indeed, a thing of magnificence. Ah, there was now no wonder that its inhabitants walked so tall, with such arrogance, when they chanced to be in Singapore. It was unfortunate that so fine a city should be doomed by the logic and necessity of history, as Dai knew it to be from the many speeches he had heard. The city had pleased Dai beyond his weakest dreams. There only remained for him to be blessed to see Moscow and Peking, and then he would be a great man, more even than *Hadji*. He scorned the old men with their green turbans, the great *Hadji* who had been to the holy city, and yet, as he admitted to Comrade Kyoto, there was an envy in it, an envy that would be relieved once he had been to these greater cities than ever Mecca could be. The *Hadji* had never been to New York! And Dai was well pleased with the city.

He was less pleased with the kill. First there had been the difficulty in locating the man. The fool who was to hold the man had inexcusably allowed him to escape. For such an offense the fool should have died; would have died if Dai had not been under strict orders that the fool was not to be interfered with. Then, of course, there had been the trouble of locating the man in such a great and strange city. His fellow assassins had been of little help, fools that they were--country men, unversed in learning of any kind, unimpressed by the great city. But, with the help of Allah, (a tale for children though Allah was, of course) he had located the tall man. There had been the difficulty of parking the car, the time lost waiting for the elevator. But in the end the kill had been done. Dai was quite sure of that. He recalled clearly that he had shot the man with a dart. There could be no doubt. Still . . .

Where he sat, Dai recalled that he had meant to shoot again. He had been stopped. Yes. He looked around him at the blue light. A poor room, without silks or teak. An empty room with nothing that a man could see and know, nothing but this poor blue light that was of no value. For what purpose was a room with blue light so poor a man could see nothing? Yes, wait, there had been a man, *something*, that had stopped him from firing again. A giant, all black. Some black demon, the country men would say and quake with fear, but he, Dai Abdul Chinnah, knew there were no demons. Yet, the black shape was much as a demon was. Now Dai recalled the flying shape, the power that seemed too strong to stop. He had shot the demon, but the demon had not fallen. Still, he had killed the tall man, of that he was certain. Now, the problem was only one of where he was and how he would escape. He assumed that they, the enemy, had captured him. They would, of course, come to torture him soon. That much he was quite sure of. The problem was how to kill them when they came? He knew he had no weapon. He would have to employ his skill with his hands and feet, and rely on surprise. Dai smiled to himself-he was fortunate that the room was so dim, lighted only by the stupid blue light. Such a foolish light. Undoubtedly

intended to weaken him, to fill him with the proper fear for the beginning of the torture. They would learn that Dai Abdul Chinnah did not become fearful as easily as they imagined.

Dai rose to his feet. The fools had not tied him in any way. He looked around the blue room, considering where he could best hide. He began to walk around the room. After a time he was puzzled--there were still no walls, only the blue light, and yet he seemed unable to move farther when he reached certain points. As if there were invisible walls! And there was no cover, nothing to conceal him. He found no doors. It was as if the blue light itself were solid. He could not penetrate it. This puzzled Dai, even worried him. What power was this that he could not penetrate light? Such a thing he did not comprehend. He had heard of the evil tricks of the capitalists, the hypnotic lies they used to enslave a man. This, then, was one of the tricks. But a man could defeat tricks, and Dai stood in the blue room considering just how he would defeat them when they came to torture him. He had no doubts of his ability, and did not flinch when the unseen laugh came low in the blue light.

"You cannot escape, Dai Chinnah!"

Dai remembered now that there had been a strange voice that came from nowhere. A voice that had mocked him in the corridor. A voice he could not see, and then the black demon had suddenly come from nowhere. A voice and a black demon. Dai now looked for the owner of the voice.

"You hide, black man?" Dai said with a sneer.

The Shadow laughed again. "No, Dai, I do not hide. You do not have the eyes to see me. I am here, in front of you. Look, Dai Chinnah, and you will see."

Dai looked slowly all around him. He saw only the hazy blue light. He began to feel perhaps a little uneasy. He shook his head to clear it of such womanly sensations. Who feared what was not visible before one?

"That which lives and is real I can see," Dai said evenly. "If I cannot see, then you do not live, you are not real. The tall man is dead, that is enough. I have done my job. I say no more."

It was a trick that had helped Dai before this. To pretend to stand silent, uninterested, aloof--while his eyes moved quickly all around to find the source of the voice.

"To see me will not help you, Dai Chinnah," The Shadow said, his voice growing stronger, more serious. "The tall man is dead. Who was he, Dai Chinnah? Why did you kill the tall man? Who sent you?"

Dai smiled, said nothing. He folded his thin arms across his chest. His brown face was set in silence. He stood there as the picture of a man who would say no more no matter what was done to him. There was a silence in the blue room. Dai did not move a muscle. The Shadow did not speak. Dai's eyes flickered. The silence continued. Finally, The Shadow spoke.

"You wish to see me? Very well. Look at me!"

The blue haze seemed to shiver, part, and the great black figure of The Shadow stood there in the room. The black cloak faded off into the blue light. The fiery eyes burned like coals beneath the brim of the wide slouch hat. The hawk nose jutted like the blade of a sword above the collar of the black cloak. On a long finger that pointed through the blue light at the small Malaysian was the glowing fire-opal girasol ring.

Dai Chinnah paled for an instant--this was, indeed, a demon!

Then the small Malaysian regained his control. He stared at The Shadow without fear or wonder. His lips curled in a half sneer.

"I see you," Dai said. "You are one man."

"More than one man, Dai Chinnah! I am The Shadow."

Dai Chinnah shrugged. "Is a man afraid of shadows?"

"Does a man kill the sick and feeble?" The Shadow said.

"The sick get well," Dai said. "No enemy is feeble."

"He was, then, your enemy?"

"There were orders. A man takes orders."

"A man knows the reason for his orders," The Shadow demanded.

Dai folded his arms again. "I speak no more. You will bring the tortures, I say no more."

The laugh of The Shadow was low and mocking. "You will say more, Dai Chinnah, and there will be no torture."

Dai Chinnah only smiled. He stood smiling with his arms folded like a thin brown statue. He felt the burning eyes of The Shadow on him, and deliberately let his own eyes turn slowly to meet the gaze of The Avenger. For a moment they stood there in the blue light. Then Dai Chinnah seemed to sway, waver in his statuelike pose. The small Malaysian shook his head. Dai unfolded his arms, brushed his hand across his eyes. The small, arrogant man blinked, rubbed his eyes again. The Shadow's eyes blazed up as he watched. His power was reaching out.

Dai Chinnah did not understand. There was a mist in his mind. Soft fingers of mist that seemed to be reaching into his mind, touching his brain. Delicate fingers of power that seemed to touch and paralyze his brain, to soothe his mind until he felt control slipping from him. A mist in his mind that sapped all his will until he felt powerless to control the working of his mind. Dai fought against the insidious cloud that filled his brain. He shook his head, tried to keep control, tried to resist the delicate fingers that seemed as strong as steel. But he could not. He felt all his strength to resist draining away as the cloud thickened in his mind.

The voice of The Shadow was low. "You are Dai Abdul Chinnah. You are from Singapore?"

"Yes," Dai heard himself say. He did not want to say the word yes, but his brain said it.

"You were sent to kill a man?"

"Yes," Dai said.

"Who was the man?"

"I do not know. Names do not matter. He was an enemy. I was sent to kill him."

"Who sent you?"

"Comrade Kyoto."

"Why did Comrade Kyoto want the man killed?"

"I do not know," Dai said.

"You kill without knowing why or who?" The Shadow demanded.

Dai laughed. "It was the order of Comrade Kyoto. We do not ask who or why. The order is enough."

For a time The Shadow studied the small Malaysian. Dai stood with a smile on his thin brown face. His mind was clouded, in the full control of The Shadow, but that did not change the basic pattern of the mind. It was amusing to Dai that anyone could ask who and why a man had been killed. The order of Comrade Kyoto was enough, everyone should have known that. That was the way it was, the way of the world.

"Comrade Kyoto is your leader?" The Shadow said.

"Yes. Comrade Kyoto is Cell Chief."

"In Singapore?"

"Yes."

"You have done your job?"

"Yes. I shot the man. The job is done."

"Now you will go where?"

"To Singapore."

"How will you go to Singapore?" The Shadow asked.

"I will meet a man here in the great city. The rest I do not know. He will send me back," Dai said.

The Shadow studied the small killer. Dai Chinnah knew no more. The Shadow would learn no more from the Malaysian. He had been sent from Singapore to kill the tall man. The tall man had been recently in Brazil, and yet the killers had come from Singapore. The trail led, then, to Malaysia not Brazil. And Dai Chinnah was to be returned to Malaysia by some route and method he did not know. Whoever was behind this was careful and well-organized. The eyes of The Shadow blazed as he stared hard at the small killer. Dai Chinnah blinked, swayed again.

"You will be released, Dai Abdul Chinnah. You will not remember this room, or my questions, or The Shadow. You will not know that you have been captured and interrogated. You will find yourself on the street in front of the building. You will think you have done your job and escaped cleverly by a back stairway while your companions were caught by the police."

"I . . . I escaped," Dai said.

The Shadow nodded. "You did your job, you killed the tall man before he could reach anyone, and you escaped by a back stairway."

"Yes," Dai said. "I killed him and escaped."

The Shadow watched the small, dark killer for another moment, and then turned and vanished into the hazy blue light of the concealed room high above the city.

Dai Abdul Chinnah stood without moving.

Moments later Stanley appeared and took the arm of the small Malaysian. They disappeared into the blue light.

Dai Abdul Chinnah stood alone on the dark side street next to the tall office building. In this late hour there was little traffic on the crosstown street, but cars and taxicabs moved on Park Avenue up at the corner. For a minute or two Dai stood there in complete calm. No one passed.

Suddenly, Dai moved. He moved quickly, in a half crouch, and hid in the shadows of the building. He moved fast, looked wildly around him, as if he were being closely pursued. He looked at the side door of the building, and then quickly up and down the dark street. He breathed heavily as if he had been running. His ugly air pistol was in his right hand. He crouched against the building in the shadows and alertly watched everything around him as he caught his breath. His mind told him that it had been a close escape from the police, a long run down the back stairway to the street.

But he had killed the tall man, and had made good his escape from the police who had caught his two partners high up in the office building. The police had not observed his escape or they would be pursuing him now, and the dark city street was quiet and empty. Dai smiled to himself. As usual, he had done his job well. He did not waste an instant of sympathy or regret for his two fallen comrades. What happened to them was their own fault, a man took care of himself. Dai would give them no more thought. They had failed--they had been caught. There was no time in this world to waste on failure. He, Dai, had succeeded, there would be much credit and reward when he returned to Singapore and reported to Comrade Kyoto.

Now he had to make his way safely back to Singapore.

The small Malaysian put his air pistol into its shoulder holster. He looked once more up and down the dark street. Then he left the shadows of the building and walked away from Park

Avenue toward Lexington Avenue. He walked cautiously, watching all the time. He reached the corner of Lexington Avenue. Here he was particularly careful, but there were no police in sight. And his eyes lighted as he saw his good fortune. A taxicab was coming along Lexington Avenue with its top light on to show that it was empty! He would not, of course, risk returning to the car they had come up in. No, the police would have found the car by now where it was parked on Park Avenue. The taxicab was what he needed, and here was one directly before him. He waved to the taxi. The driver saw him, pulled to the curb, and Dai climbed in. He quickly gave the driver the address on the lower West Side where he had been instructed to go. The taxi drove away.

The taxi drove down Lexington Avenue as far as Twenty-third Street, and then turned west toward the Chelsea district. Late in the night the wide crosstown street was dark. Here and there the night people of the city flitted furtively among the shadows: a drunk weaving his careful way eastward; a drifter hunched in his thin coat and fearful of the police. Once the taxi passed two men neither drunk nor drifting but who moved more furtively than anyone as they walked quickly in the shadows leaving a carefully cut window behind them in a small jewelry store. The taxi passed the old Chelsea Hotel with its iron balconies and turned south again soon after on Hudson Street. The taxi driver concentrated on his work, Dai said nothing in the back seat. The small Malaysian glanced carefully back from time to time through the rear window. He was certain that there was no pursuit. Dai was pleased with his own cleverness. Comrade Kyoto, and his representative here in the great city, would honor his good work. Dai was satisfied.

The taxi driver reached the address on Hudson Street that the small Malaysian had given. The driver stopped and reached to flip off his meter. Dai Chinnah stopped him with a sharp word. The driver looked back.

"Go forward," Dai said. "I will inform you where to go. Go very slow, yes?"

The driver showed no surprise. He nodded, reset his cap on his head, and started up again. He drove slowly down Hudson Street. Dai Chinnah continued to smile to himself. He was proud to be part of so clever an organization. The address was given, but was not the correct address so that if, by chance, there were those who heard the address, they would be led most certainly to the incorrect building. Since there was no one following, the location to which Dai was actually going would remain unknown. Comrade Kyoto considered everything. It was an honor to work with Comrade Kyoto. Dai leaned forward.

"You will turn now right," the small Malaysian said.

The driver turned on Horatio Street. Dai sat back again. The taxi cruised slowly along Horatio Street toward the now close river. On the last narrow block before the river, Dai again leaned forward and spoke.

"Stop now."

The driver stopped before a darkened garage. The block was a dark and quiet block, with some garages and some elegant red brick townhouses with neat white trim. There were some shabby tenements, their brick darkened almost to black. A mixed block typical of the area. Far down at the end of the block tall warehouse buildings towered at the edge of the river, and the elevated highway passed above the street.

"Here?" the taxi driver said, looking at the dark garage.

"Yes. Here is your money," Dai said.

The small Malaysian paid the driver and got out of the taxi in front of the dark garage. He stood on the sidewalk until the taxi drove off and around the corner. Then Dai crossed the street to a dark tenement building, entered, and climbed the stairs to the second floor. He went down

the narrow hallway of the second floor and knocked on a shabby brown door. There was no answer. Dai opened the unlocked door and entered. The sleazy tenement room was empty. Dai sat down, took out a cigarette, lighted the cigarette, and smiled as he waited.

Dai would not have smiled if he had been on the street. The instant the small Malaysian disappeared into the tenement across the street from the garage, a small man appeared at the corner of the block. His thin face and dark eyes were fixed toward the building where Dai Chinnah had vanished. His taxi driver's cap was pulled low over his eyes. He wore a taxi driver's leather jacket. He was the driver who had just driven Dai Chinnah from Park Avenue. He smiled as he watched the Malaysian go into the building across the street from the garage. He waited a few moments, but no light went on in the building. The driver turned and walked to where his taxi was parked just around the corner from Horatio Street. He got into his taxi and touched a portion of the dashboard. A small light glowed above the normal-seeming radio. But it was not a normal radio. The driver bent close to the radio.

"Moe Shrevnitz calling Control Central. Come in Control Central. Agent Shrevnitz reporting."

The cold, crisp voice of Burbank came from the radio. "Report, Agent Shrevnitz."

"Subject Dai Chinnah is in a tenement on Horatio Street. He is unaware of his capture, seems pleased with himself. I am going to continue observance."

"Very good, Agent Shrevnitz. Over and out," Burbank's crisp voice said.

In the silent blue room, the communications agent of The Shadow touched a button on his console. The voice of The Shadow now came into the blue room.

"Report," The Shadow said from somewhere out in the night of the city.

"Shrevvie reports Dai Chinnah in a tenement on Horatio Street. Shrevvie is continuing surveillance," Burbank reported.

"Very good," the distant voice of The Shadow said. Somewhere in the city the fiery eyes glowed brightly beneath the black slouch hat. The plan had worked. Now it was time for The Shadow to take action.

His great black shape moved silently and blended into the night.

4

DAI CHINNAH sat at his ease in the dark room. The small Malaysian smoked his fifth cigarette, and had his feet up on a bare wood table. He had rummaged in the tiny room and found a bottle of gin. He drank the gin from the bottle and smiled with pleasure as he smoked and waited for his contact. He was in no hurry and was a patient man. Comrade Kyoto had arranged his return, he was content that Comrade Kyoto would make no mistakes. His contact would be here soon, it was only a matter of waiting. He had enough to smoke, and the bottle of gin. What more could a man want after the end of a successful assassination?

No, Dai Chinnah was content and in no hurry. He enjoyed his gin, a liquid he had acquired a strong taste for long ago when he had washed dishes at an English gentlemen's bar in Singapore. But what he enjoyed particularly was the success of his assignment. It was good to sit with the glow of success. Dai began to compose his report. He would present every detail to Comrade Kyoto when he returned, perhaps adding a touch or two to increase the honor if not the reward. The reward was proper, but the more honor he could gain the better. He would describe first the loss of the tall man through the stupidity of the important American. Then the location of the tall man through his own cleverness, the chase, the careful avoidance of suspicion, the final scene in the dim corridor of the office building. He was not yet sure whether or not he should report . . . Dai stopped, blinked. What was he about to wonder whether or not he should report? In his mind there was a faint, misty recollection of something. Some strange occurrence, there in the corridor, and . . . later? Dai shook his head, drank more gin. It was all so misty. What had happened in the corridor? Had anything happened? He recalled, clearly, that he and his partners had caught up to the tall man; that the tall man had had a pistol; that the tall man had been on his knees; that he, Dai, had shot the tall man. Twice. No . . . Yes . . . He had shot twice. Or had he only intended to shoot twice? No, he had shot twice. He had seen the man die. He had tested the body. Dai nodded. Yes, he was sure. The strange sense of something else happening must be some confused memory from the past. Yes, that had to be the case. The entire scene in the corridor was very clear in his mind. Even to the sudden arrival of the police and his clever escape down the back stairs. Yes, he . . .

Dai lowered the gin bottle. His mind came alert. He stopped framing his report and listened. He had heard a sound. The sound did not come from below where the entrance to the street was, but from above--someone was coming down the stairs outside the dark room. Dai drew his air pistol and moved into the darkest corner of the room. The sound of footsteps, light and cautious footsteps, stopped directly outside the door to the dark room. Dai watched the door knob. It turned. The door opened and a tall thin man stepped quickly into the room. The man stood, unarmed, looking around the room in the darkness. He then leaned down and turned on a small table lamp. Dai Chinnah stepped out with his pistol aimed. The tall man looked at Dai.

"You are Dai Abdul Chinnah?" the man said.

But Dai was staring at the man's face. The man's eyes were dark, almost black. And that was all Dai could see--the tall man wore a handkerchief over his face that covered all but his eyes in the manner of the bandits in old Western movies. A wide-brimmed fedora hat was pulled down low over the black eyes of the tall man, and his business suit was a dark and neutral grey. On his left hand Dai saw a large gold signet ring.

"Who are you?" Dai said.

"Your contact. The code word is Mekong," the masked man said.

"Yes," Dai said, and lowered his pistol. He smiled at the man who had the handkerchief over his face. "You are afraid to show your face?"

"I have my reasons, Dai Chinnah," the masked man said. "You have done the job successfully?"

"Yes," Dai said with a smile. "The man is dead as ordered."

"And you were not caught?" the man said quietly.

"Would I be here if I had been caught?" Dai said.

"But your partners were caught," the man said, and suddenly his voice was hard, ominous. "Your partners failed to escape, Dai Chinnah. One is dead, and the other is in the hands of the police."

Dai shrugged. "Can I escape for them? The man I was to kill is killed. I do not ask that I am protected by partners, should I protect them? One must escape to report."

"No one asks that you protect your partners, Dai Chinnah. As you say, your victim is dead, a job done. But what one thinks about is how you escaped when the others did not? It was a single corridor. The police seem to have arrived suddenly. Yet you escaped, you were not even pursued. Can you explain this?"

Dai blinked. The masked man watched the small Malaysian. His eyes, almost black above the handkerchief, were fixed on the face of the Malaysian. Dai stared back, his mouth working, a look of indignation on his face. Could he explain how he escaped? Did this stranger who was the contact sent by Comrade Kyoto doubt him? To ask if he could explain how he escaped and why the police were not pursuing him? Well, better to explain and satisfy the fool. Dai smiled.

"We followed him up the elevator. In the corridor we caught him, before he could reach the office of this *Lamont Cranston Company*. He was very weak. He fell. He tried to shoot us. I shot him in the neck with the air gun. Then I shot . . ." Dai stopped, blinked. The small killer hesitated. Had he shot the second time? He . . . he was sure . . . "I . . . I shot a second time. The man was dead, of that I am sure. Then . . ." Dai stopped again. He shook his head to clear it of the peculiar sensations. It was nothing the small Malaysian could place, but his mind told him one thing, and some strange hidden, shadowy impression told him that something else had happened. But what? Nothing could have happened that he did not remember. "Then, as we searched the man, the police came. They came up in the elevator, yes. That guard in the lobby must have called them. Ah, that was a mistake, I admit. I thought the guard was dead, but I see now that he was not."

The masked man spoke quietly. "So you are sure that it was the guard who called the police? Do you *know* that it was the guard?"

"Who else . . ." Dai again shook his head. What was wrong with him? Why did he have this strange sensation that more had happened than he could remember? No, nothing had happened. It was as he said. "Who else could have called them?"

"Yes, who else?" the tall masked man said.

Dai waved his hand, sure now. "The guard called the police. They came. They surprised us. As Allah would have it, I was at that moment down the corridor near the stairway. I saw them, they did not see me. They were too blinded by the shots of my two partners. I slipped through the doorway unseen and ran down the stairs to the street. They did not see me at all. There was no pursuit. I reached the street, became convinced that there was no one behind me, walked to Lexington Avenue, and caught a taxicab for here."

Dai smiled at the masked man. "I did not return to the car, naturally, since it was clear that the police would soon learn of it. In the taxi I was safe."

"Safe?" the masked man said. "Ah, yes. You were safe while one of your partners was captured by the police and the other killed."

"Should I then have allowed them to capture me?" Dai cried.

"No," the masked man said, "but none should have been taken by the police!"

Dai nodded. "Of course, if there had been time I would have killed the one who was caught, but I could not reveal that I too was there. Be at peace, we know how not to talk. The police will learn nothing."

The black eyes of the man glinted above his handkerchief mask. "No, the police will learn nothing, that will be seen to, Dai Chinnah. But what will the men following you learn!?"

The silence in the small and dark room was like the silence of a vacuum, the silence of an empty tomb where no one breathed. Dai Chinnah did not even blink, nor did he breathe. The man in the handkerchief mask simply stood and let his words roll over Dai, sink into the brain of the small killer.

"No one followed me! Do you think I am a fool? There was no one who followed the taxi. When we reached the address I had given, it was a false address--no one could have known where I was going. When we reached this street, I stopped before the garage across the street. Only when there was no one to see did I come here!"

"No one followed you, Dai Chinnah?" the tall masked man said.

"It was not possible!"

"But it was possible. It has happened. Even now we are being watched!"

"By the Prophet I swear . . ."

"No, Dai Chinnah, consider the driver of the taxicab!" the tall man with the hidden face said in a voice that was as sharp and cold as steel.

Dai Chinnah's legs almost buckled. "The . . . driver? But how . . ."

"How? You fool! You looked for a taxi and you found one, just at hand, yes? You were pleased to find a taxi so easily, yes? It was just there! You never considered that perhaps it was too fortunate? That the taxi was there specially to pick you up! You fool, fool! What better way to follow a man than make him ride in a taxi with his follower!"

"The driver?" Dai said.

"The driver you stupid fool!" the masked man shouted, and then, suddenly, he changed. His eyes above the handkerchief that hid his face became deadly "Or are you a fool? How did you escape the police? What did happen? Perhaps you are not a fool, but only a traitor! A paid assassin will serve any master! Did they pay you?"

"Pay?" Dai said, stared, a certain sudden fear now on his dark face. "I . . . no! I am loyal. Ask Comrade Kyoto! The taxi driver? It is not . . ."

"But it is! And how? How did he know to pick you up? Who sent him to spy on . . ."

Both men heard it at the same instant. A faint noise like a door opening and closing, a movement of air in the dark room lighted by its single light. A faint passage of air as if some spirit had entered and passed through the room that, with its one feeble light, was as dark as a tunnel in its hidden corners. The two men looked, searched the room with their eyes. In one of the darker corners there seemed to be an even blacker shadow. Then the mocking laugh seemed to fill the room like a mist of low sound.

"I sent him to spy on you! I avenge all the innocent victims of men such as you!"

The voice was deep and strong and seemed to come from all corners of the room at once. Dai Chinnah was without voice. The small Malaysian showed the strange struggle on his face. His mind, clouded and rendered without memory, now battled with the vague impressions dredged up by the sudden appearance of the black-garbed Avenger, the sound of a voice his subconscious still remembered but could not bring to his conscious memory. The tall man with the concealed face was the first to find his voice.

"Who are you? Where are you?"

The Shadow's voice was grim. "I am The Shadow, and I know the evil that lurks in the hearts of men! The Shadow knows!"

The masked man peered, searched the room with his eyes. Then he saw the movement, the movement that was as if the darkness of the room itself was moving. A blackness moved closer, and then there were the eyes. Two fiery eyes that burned beneath a dark hat. The scythelike nose above the black collar of the great flowing cloak that faded off into the darkness out of the circle of feeble light. The red glow of the fire-opal girasol ring on the long finger that pointed like a rapier.

"See me, you who hide your face, and be afraid! No man can resist The Shadow! I allowed this killer to reach you! I come to avenge the murder of a man. You will tell me who the man was, why he was killed, what great secret he was bringing!"

The dark eyes glittered above the mask. "I do not fear a single man no matter what he calls himself. You know very little! There are two of us and one of you!"

The eyes of The Shadow flashed. "Do you think that it will help you? No!"

"Let us see!" the man in the mask said sharply. "Chinnah! Your gun!"

Dai Chinnah reached into his coat, under his coat, to where his air-pistol rested in its shoulder holster. At the same instant the tall man with the concealed face hurled himself sideways against the wall of the room away from both door and windows, and clawed in his pocket for his weapon. The Shadow moved like a wraith with a speed that was like the speed of light itself. There was now no time to use his powers, no time to cloud the minds of the two men who faced him. Instead he moved faster than the eye could see, faster than a hand could reach a weapon. He was upon Dai Chinnah, knocking the air pistol clattering across the room, hurling the small Malaysian killer to the floor of the dark room. He whirled to attack the masked man. His eyes blazed in fury and power.

The man with his face hidden behind the handkerchief saw the incredible quickness of The Shadow, the power of his attack, and stood against the far wall with his pistol in his hand. The man paled, but his gun came up. The Shadow seemed to vanish into the dark of the room. The man fired at nothing. The mocking laugh of The Shadow came from the flickering shadows. The man fired again. The Shadow mocked. The man searched the small room but could not see The Shadow. Suddenly the man turned, raised his pistol again, and shot twice.

Dai Chinnah, trying to rise from the floor, was slammed into the wall by the force of the two shots. The small Malaysian bounced from the wall and sprawled face down in a widening pool of his own blood.

The Shadow raised up in the room like a great black shape coming out of the floor. He glided toward the masked man.

The masked man vanished through the wall. The room was suddenly without sound or motion.

Then The Shadow reached the wall. His eyes studied the blank wall. He saw the thin break where the secret door closed to form the wall. So the room of the innocent tenement was a

special room with a prepared secret escape passage. The Shadow turned once to look at the prostrate form of Dai Chinnah. He knew beyond doubt that the Malaysian was dead. He turned again to the wall and concentrated the powers of his mind. There was a click, a faint whirring sound, and the secret door slid open. The Shadow passed through.

Behind the wall The Shadow found himself in a narrow passage. At the end away from the street there were narrow steps that led downward. The Shadow knew now that he faced a strong organization, an organization that was prepared for all emergencies, and that did not leave men who could tell about it. Dai Chinnah had known too much, and had failed! Whoever was behind this did not allow men to fail and live. There was far more behind this than The Shadow could yet guess.

His looming black shape moved like a soundless phantom down the narrow stairs. At the bottom there was another passage. And at the end of the passage another wall. The Shadow focused his powers on the wall. The wall parted. The Shadow went through the opening and found himself in an alley in the dark night of the city. It was a narrow alley that was closed in on all sides--an areaway behind the buildings rather than an alley. An empty space in which nothing moved. Doors led into all the buildings. They were all closed, there was no sign of the man who had his face hidden. The man had vanished--but not from The Shadow.

The tall, black-shrouded Avenger stood in the dark and silent areaway and listened. He concentrated all his powers to raise the level of his hearing until he could hear the faint squeals of the rats scurrying deep down in the sewers under the city. He heard a distant swish of water as a small boat passed far out on the river. Faint, he heard the voices of three men arguing loudly on a pier far across the river in New Jersey. Much closer he heard sounds inside the buildings. In the tenement he had just left he heard the low groan of a man unable to sleep, tossing in his bed. In front of him, in the building across the dark areaway, he heard the sound of someone, man or woman, seated at a table and drinking a can of beer--there was the unmistakable hiss of a beer can opening, the gulping, the resting of the can on the table. It was a lonely sound in the dark night of the city. And he heard what he listened for--soft, swift footsteps climbing the stairs inside the building to his left. It was a tall building, taller than the others. A warehouse that went up seven stories. It was a large building with a high flat roof. The quick footsteps were moving rapidly up the stairs--footsteps The Shadow recognized as those of the man with the hidden face.

Quickly, The Shadow glided to the door into the warehouse building and went to the foot of the stairs that mounted upward into the gloom of the warehouse interior. He began to climb. He leaped up the stairs two and three at a time like some giant bird that flew soundlessly without touching the stairs. His quick feet made no sound. Ahead, high above, the fast footsteps of the masked killer reached the top and went through a door out onto the roof. The Shadow raced on and up in the dark stairwell. His sharp hearing, raised to its highest point by the concentration of his powers, heard the masked man go across the roof--and stop. There was no more sound from the roof. The Shadow raced upward and reached the top landing. The door to the roof was low. He ducked through it and emerged on the flat roof of the building.

The roof was tar and small stones. There was a low parapet around the entire wide open area. In three places on the flat surface there were entrances into the building below, set like small shacks, square and dark, on the flat roof. They jutted up, the entrances into the building from the roof, and there were shadows all around them where a man could hide. The Shadow, coming out of one of the entrances, remained in these shadows. He stood there unmoving, his fiery eyes surveying the roof in a quick glance. Taller than all the buildings around it, the roof of the warehouse did not touch any other roof. On two sides there were sheer drops to the ground

below. On the other two sides the adjoining buildings were at least two stories lower, a drop too great to be leaped down. The Shadow's fiery eyes blazed.

There was no way off the roof except the three entrances into the building below--and The Shadow could see the two he was not hidden near!

His sharp eyes searched the roof. He saw nothing. The man with the handkerchief over his face was on the roof, he knew that. If he could not see the man, then the man had to be concealed behind . . . The Shadow heard the whine, and cough and sudden roar of a powerful motor. There was a whirring sound like a swirling wind. Dust began to blow across the roof. The sound came from the area of the roof that was out of sight behind one of the entrance structures. The Shadow knew in an instant what it was--a helicopter hidden on the roof! This, then, was how the man with the hidden face had arrived in the tenement without being seen by Shrevvie! And it was how the man would escape.

The Shadow bounded across the roof, his great black cloak streaming out. He reached the cover of the entrance, and his hard, fiery eyes peered around the corner. The masked man was already in the helicopter. Another man sat at the controls. It was the type of private helicopter that had a solid cabin--it did not permit a view beneath it. The Shadow watched it slowly lift off. In a single great leap The Shadow reached the rising vehicle. He was out of sight of anyone in the cabin. As the hovering craft lifted higher, The Shadow grasped its undercarriage and swung up. He sat on the flat pontoon landing gear and clung to the pontoon struts. Invisible from above, he held grimly as the helicopter lifted and banked away above the city.

Moments later the helicopter was high above the night city with the black form of The Shadow riding unseen on the landing gear.

5

The helicopter flew through the night across the city. First it rose up and winged east over the tall skyscrapers of Manhattan. The Shadow, riding the undercarriage like some ancient wizard, looked down at the shining water of the East River below. The piers jutted out into the silvery river, the bridges rose up like the constructions of insects in the night. Brooklyn was a vast grey pattern of low apartment buildings with few lights at this late hour to show that anyone was alive where three million people had their homes. Over Brooklyn the helicopter flew steadily east above a vast and yawning cemetery and out beyond the city limits into the suburbs of Nassau County. The Shadow watched below, observing their direction, and clung unseen from above.

The helicopter flew on across Nassau County and into the sparser areas of Suffolk County. The houses below grew fewer the parkways came closer together, off to the right the long line of beach and surf seemed to close in. Along the great bay to the south the dark towns of Suffolk County lay sleeping in the late night. Soon, the lights were no longer on the parkways below, and far ahead The Shadow could see the split in the island at the beginning of Peconic Bay. Riverhead came into view. Far to the east a faint grey light began to tinge the horizon. The Shadow's fiery eyes watched the line of the dawn. Daylight was no friend to the Avenger now. There would be people wherever they were going and in the daylight his black-shrouded figure would be seen where he rode on the undercarriage with his cloak whipping in the wind. If the day came too soon he would have to climb up and subdue the masked man and the pilot in the cabin before they landed.

At that instant as if to answer his thoughts The Shadow felt the helicopter bank sharply in a left turn. It slid down the sky. Riverhead was still ahead in the distance and below was the desolate waste of scrub oak and scrub pine that filled the center of Long Island. The Shadow clung to the undercarriage, lying flat now along the length of the pontoon. As the helicopter slid sideways and down, the sky darkened. Here nearer the ground, the faint light of dawn had not yet reached. The eyes of The Shadow smiled with satisfaction. On the ground itself there would still be darkness; it would still be night. He let his eyes search, raising up again under the cover of the night close to the earth. Suddenly he saw it--a small airfield!

It was little more than a field set deep in the pine barrens of the island. No road led to it except a narrow dirt track that wound tortuously among the ragged scrub trees. The only highway was ten miles to the south, The Shadow judged. From the air it was one of many such private little air fields that dotted the area for the use of the wealthy and for crop dusting aircraft. It had a single hanger and a small shack for an office building. At the end of the runway there was a mobile control tower trailer. Nothing seemed to move. Two ancient biplanes used for crop dusting lined wing to wing before the hanger. A simple shabby airfield, partly needed and partly left over from the days when a hundred small operators built the fields in the hope of being one end of a transatlantic run. One of many such fields--with two special aspects few eyes but those of The Shadow would have noticed from the air. The runway, primitive as it seemed, was much longer than the runways usually built for such an airport. And half-hidden under a low shed near the runway was what The Shadow knew to be a small, twin-engined jet aircraft!

The Shadow's eyes blazed up as he noted the half-hidden jet. A jet on such an airport? It could mean only one thing--that those who owned and used the jet had some special reason for not flying into one of the major airports. A jet would not find it easy to land or take off from such

a field, even with the long runway, and there had to be a good reason for it to risk such a field. The reason was undoubtedly the same reason that caused the man who had killed Dai Chinnah to wear a handkerchief over his face. The owners and operators of the jet had good reason for secrecy, for remaining hidden. And that good reason had to be involved with the death of a tall man in the corridor outside the offices of Lamont Cranston Enterprises, Inc. Wherever the three killers had come from, the jet below was designed to take them back. Instead, it would have, probably, only one passenger--the

tall man in the business suit who did not want to show his face even to his own hired killer.

As The Shadow thought all this, the helicopter flew low to the field, hovered, and began to set down. There was no one close to the craft as it settled to earth. The field was still pitch black with that deeper darkness that covers the land just before the dawn reaches it. The Shadow slid off the undercarriage and faded into the dark.

The tall man who concealed his face stepped from the helicopter. The pilot of the helicopter followed him. The tall man had the handkerchief over his face, wore his hat pulled low, the collar of his coat turned up. He strode quickly across the field toward the wooden shack that was the office. The pilot walked rapidly behind him. Neither of them noticed the dark shape of The Shadow behind them, or the burning eyes that watched their every step. The two men reached the wooden hut and went inside. The Shadow floated through the night to the window of the shack. Unseen, he watched. The two men stood with two others who had obviously been waiting for them. The tall man with the concealed face was talking, was clearly the leader. He talked and the other two listened. They listened gravely, and when the tall masked man had finished, one of them spoke. He raised his voice as she spoke. "You think Dai Chinnah sold out?"

"I do not know," the masked man said, "but he allowed himself to be followed by someone, and that was enough. He had to be silenced. There is too much at stake, and I cannot allow my position to be jeopardized in any way. You understand the reason I cannot show my face even to members of the group. No must know me. If I am not known to you, you cannot tell. Dai Chinnah led someone to us, he died!"

"Of course," the second man said. "But Comrade Kyoto will be displeased."

"To the devil with Comrade Kyoto! He does not give the orders. I am displeased with Comrade Kyoto for sending three such bunglers!"

"They did the job," the first man said.

"Did they?" the masked leader said. "Can we be sure? No, we cannot be sure. That is why I must report at once, and leave you two to watch."

"He could not have talked," the second man said. "You know that as well as we do. He was unable to speak from the side effects. He must have been blind by the time he reached that building and that floor."

"Our police contact reports he was killed in the corridor, he never reached anyone," the first man said.

"This may all be true, I tend to agree that it is, and we will not take any drastic action to change our plans. But we must be sure," the masked leader said. "I want to know just who he was trying to reach. This Lamont Cranston appears to be of no real importance."

"Kent Allard," the second man said. "We know he once worked on some arrangements for an Allard expedition. This Cranston finances some of Allard's expeditions, too."

"Have we located Allard?" the leader demanded.

"No, so far we cannot locate him at all. It is rumored that he is on an expedition in the Sahara Desert. But it does not matter. Allard knows nothing, the man never reached him or this Cranston. We are safe."

"Again I say perhaps," the leader said, his mouth moving under the handkerchief that covered his face. "But someone followed Dai Chinnah. Someone knew enough, and was curious enough, to follow Chinnah. The man in the room wore a disguise so that I could not recognize him. He spoke a lot of nonsense, but he knew that Dai had assassinated the man in that corridor! Success is so near, we must be extra careful. You understand? It was a mistake to let Drake have . . ."

The masked leader stopped. They all stood as if frozen. A loud alarm was ringing in the building. In the distance there was sudden bright light in the growing dawn. Searchlights had been turned on. There was a sound of gunfire. The masked leader sprang to a small intercom.

"Yes! What is it?"

A distant voice was excited. Gunfire sounded loud through the intercom. "Two men in a black car, a Rolls-Royce from the look of it! They came down the dirt road! They attempted to enter the field!"

"Who are they?"

"We don't know. Orders?" "Kill them! Now!"

"Yes sir!" the voice snapped. "They're pinned down. Well get them quick."

At the window The Shadow watched as the masked leader switched off his intercom. All four men took out their weapons. They did not know who was attacking them--but The Shadow knew! It had to be Stanley and one of his other men. How or why they were here, The Shadow did not know, and there was no time to learn now. Already the four men had run from the shack and were climbing into a jeep that had been hidden in the hanger.

The Shadow stepped from where he was hidden, an automatic in each hand, and shot the tires of the jeep.

The jeep careened wildly across the field, all direction gone. One man was hurled out as the driver of the jeep fought for control. The Shadow found a second jeep, climbed in, and raced away toward the sound of the firing. Stanley needed his help, all else could wait now. The black-cloaked Avenger bent low over the steering wheel as he drove as fast as the jeep would go toward where the searchlights and the firing told him that Stanley needed his help. The dawn was just greying the field, and the landing strip was smooth and straight. The Shadow rapidly neared the scene of the action. The runway ended, and he slowed slightly as the jeep bounced onto the dirt road. The men who had Stanley pinned down heard the jeep but only glanced at it--they were sure that it was their own jeep, and that their leader was in it. The Shadow skidded to a stop and leaped out.

His piercing eyes took in the situation at a glance. The Rolls-Royce had been coming along the road when it had tripped the alarm and alerted the guards. The guards had opened fire. Stanley had deftly skidded the Rolls into a small ditch, where it stood upright as a cover for Stanley and whoever was with him. The Shadow could see them crouched behind the Rolls, still firing back but unable to move an inch from where they were--and already some of the guards were working their way around to a small hill where they would have a clear shot down behind the Rolls-Royce. The Shadow counted seven guards. Four in front and three working around to the side.

The Shadow did not hesitate a second. He bounded unseen through the grey light of the dawn. The first action had to be to stop the three who were circling unseen by Stanley. The Shadow came upon them just as they were preparing to crawl up the hill to a point where they could take

Stanley in the side. They were so sure of success that they did not see or hear The Shadow until he opened fire. An automatic in each hand, The Shadow cut them down with a withering fire. One had time to turn, and no more. All three died under the hail of bullets from the blazing automatics of The Shadow without firing a shot. The Shadow turned and raced back toward where the other four were still pouring fire, from submachine guns into the Rolls-Royce. This time they had warning, they had heard the unexpected firing on the flank.

In the grey dawn The Shadow moved cautiously, blending with the bushes and the uneven terrain like a shifting trick of the dim dawn light itself. The four guards watched the Rolls-Royce and all around them at the same time. The leader of the guards ordered his men to keep up the fire on the Rolls, while he stood alert and ready to deal with any attack from some other direction. He stood in the dawn, the leader, and searched all around. He saw nothing but the shadows of the bushes and trees in the shifting grey light. But he was alert. The Shadow could not risk a direct attack. Where he crouched low in small hollows of the terrain, the black-garbed Avenger did not have a clear shot at the four men. There was a wide area of open ground to be crossed before he could come close enough to have a good shot. Stanley and the man with him could not raise up, had no direct shot. The eyes of The Shadow considered the situation. Then his gaunt face moved in a faint smile.

His mouth opened and a loud, sharp cry came out. A cry like the scream of a mountain lion; the startling cry of some unknown monster of the dawn. The screaming cry echoed across the empty pine barrens in the grey dawn light.

The leader of the guards jumped up to stare in the direction of the sound. The cry had startled the guard, brought an instant reflex action of alert readiness. For one instant the leader of the guards stood in full view out of his cover. The Shadow's automatics blazed.

The guard was hurled backward, dead before he hit the dirt.

There was a silence.

The Shadow glided through the dawn among the trees and bushes to a new position behind the remaining three guards.

The animal scream came again from his mouth, close and terrifying. A savage scream all teeth and wild claws.

Another guard rose to search the dawn for the animal that could make such a horrible sound.

The Shadow's automatics blazed and the guard spun as if struck by a great hammer and sprawled in the dirt.

Now the last two guards broke and ran. The Shadow emitted his scream again. The guards ran away from the terrible sound in the dawn. They ran straight past the Rolls-Royce, forgetting in their terror that there was danger as great as any other there behind the Rolls-Royce. The Shadow bounded after them with his great black cloak streaming out in the dawn. He did not have to. Stanley stood up from behind the Rolls-Royce and cut the two men down with one well-placed shot each.

The dawn became quiet.

The Shadow walked to the Rolls-Royce. Stanley wiped blood from a flesh wound on his cheek and smiled at The Shadow.

"Close, Chief," the chauffeur-bodyguard-agent said. "You came just in time."

The Shadow looked behind the Rolls-Royce. He saw the second man with Stanley lying on the ground. The man smiled. It was Shrevvie still in his taxi driver's clothes. The small, peppery taxi driver-agent grinned up at The Shadow and held his left arm. The arm hung useless, a trickle of blood coming from a hole in his leather jacket.

"To the rescue, Chief," Shrevvie said, smiling through his pain. "Just a scratch, but I think maybe it broke the arm."

The Shadow bent down over the small agent and examined the arm. The wound was simple and clean, but the arm was broken, as Shrevvie had guessed. The Shadow looked into the eyes of his agent. Shrevvie grinned, but there was pain in his eyes. The Shadow took a small ampoule from inside his cloak--an ampoule with a small hypodermic needle attached to it. He injected the morphine into Shrevvie's arm. Then he stood up. The Rolls-Royce was riddled with bullets, its windshield smashed, but it seemed in condition to operate.

"Stanley will set the arm when we return. Remain quiet, Shrevvie. Come, Stanley, our work is not finished!"

The Shadow entered the Rolls-Royce. Stanley got behind the wheel. The big car lurched from the ditch back onto the dirt road.

"Quickly, Stanley, I hope there is still time! Drive to the far end of the field!" The Shadow commanded.

Stanley drove to the runway and gunned the powerful engine of the great car. They roared down the runway. The Shadow's fiery eyes stared ahead. The battle to help Stanley and Shrevvie had taken much time. He did not know how badly the four in the jeep had been hurt, if they had been hurt at all. Precious time had been lost. The Shadow saw one of the four men lying on the runway where he had fallen when hurled from the careening jeep. There was no one else, and even as the great black car tore down the landing strip the sound of jet engines filled the dawn. Far to the east the sun was rising in a sky tinged with blood. The Shadow peered ahead and saw the twin-engined jet. It was poised on the end of the runway. Even as the Rolls-Royce raced close to the jet, it began to move. The pilot was an expert, and before Stanley could turn the Rolls to block the path of the jet it had roared past.

The Shadow leaned out the window, his automatics in his hands. Stanley hurled the big car into a sharp turn. The Shadow sent a hail of bullets after the jet. Stanley roared in pursuit. The guns of The Shadow blazed.

The jet neither slowed nor changed direction. It pulled away, reached the end of the runway, and rose into the air. With a sharp upturn it began to climb in a high angle. Moments later it was a speck high up and far away flying south and still climbing. The rising sun glinted on the silver wings, and then the jet was gone.

Stanley brought the Rolls-Royce to a halt. The Shadow stared after the vanished jet. They had escaped, but The Shadow owed his first duty to his men, and he wasted no time on regrets. His low voice spoke quietly.

"Return to the hangar, Stanley."

There was nothing in the hangar. Only the helicopter, stripped of all clues as to the identity of the masked man and his men. The two crop-dusting biplanes still stood on the apron in front of the hangar. The Shadow found nothing in the hangar or on the one man who lay out on the runway. This man was dead. He had no identification, his fingerprints, The Shadow knew, would give no clues. The shack-office yielded no more. The intercom equipment stood silent. There was nothing else in the office.

"Come, Stanley," The Shadow commanded.

In the Rolls-Royce they drove back and picked up Shrevvie. Stanley set the taxi driver's broken arm, using boards found in the hangar. The Shadow and Stanley helped Shrevvie into the rear seat of the big car. Stanley got behind the wheel. The Shadow got into the back seat beside

Shrevvie. The Rolls moved slowly now along the dirt road. When they reached the paved highway, Stanley turned to ask The Shadow for orders.

The Shadow was gone. In the back seat it was no longer The Shadow who sat beside Shrevvie, it was Lamont Cranston. The impassive face and hooded eyes of the wealthy socialite and businessman were serious.

"To New York, Stanley," Cranston said.

"Yes, Boss," Stanley said.

The great black car turned west. Cranston lighted a cigarette, gave one to Shrevvie, and his hooded eyes became thoughtful.

"How did you happen to be at the field, Stanley?" Cranston asked.

"Tracing those three killers," Stanley explained. "I picked up their trail. It wasn't hard, they were pretty distinctive. The trail led us here. They came in by plane to here. Shrevvie and I found the field. I guess we got careless. The place looked so deserted. We ran right into that alarm system."

"You should have been more cautious, Stanley," Cranston said.

"Yeh, we let them get away from you."

"It can't be helped. I have learned a certain amount. I know there is some kind of group, and they have some project. That must be what the tall man wanted to tell Allard. Whatever it is, it is to happen soon. We have little time."

"And I let them escape," Stanley said.

Shrevvie spoke up. "The police found the body of that little Malaysian. Did you kill him, Boss?"

"No, he was killed by his own people. They are a ruthless group, as well as efficient. There is something very evil about to happen, Shrevvie, and we may not have much time to prevent it!"

"We'll prevent it, Boss," Shrevvie said through the fog of the morphine.

"Yes," Cranston said, and his eyes blazed for an instant with the fire of The Shadow. "We will prevent it! Stanley, alert Burbank to have Margo in my office. We must move with speed now."

Stanley touched his dashboard and spoke softly. Cranston sat back, his hooded eyes deep in thought. He was thinking of the tall leader in the mask. Somewhere the man was laughing in his jet, sure he was secure. He would learn better very soon.

The great black Rolls-Royce raced on toward the west and New York City. Behind the car the sun was up now.

6

THE PRIVATE OFFICE of Lamont Cranston was bright with afternoon sun when the meeting began. There was an air of concern on all their faces. Lamont Cranston sat behind his desk with a faint frown on his normally impassive face. Stanley stood at the window that overlooked the city that shined in the sun. Margo sat in a deep leather easy chair, her slim legs crossed, one leg moving nervously as she listened to the report made by Cranston of the events of the night before. Stanley was angry with himself as Cranston finished.

"It was my fault," the Chauffeur-bodyguard said. "I got stupid and careless. Too eager, damn it."

"It couldn't be helped, Stanley," Cranston said. "You had no reason to expect such tight security at such a deserted field. They are a very careful group, whoever they are. Not one of those dead guards had any identification, none of them had any record in New York or Washington. They are completely unidentified."

"So are the two men the police got, Lamont," Margo said, "But not the victim. The police identified him. It seems he was Juan Silva y Rubio, a Brazilian!"

"From Brazil?" Cranston said quickly.

Margo's eyes frowned. "Well, yes and no. He was a Brazilian, and he spent most of his life there. But according to his boss he had not been in Brazil for some time. Drake . . ."

"Drake?" Cranston said, remembering the name from the night before at the airfield near Riverhead. Drake had been a name used by the leader with the concealed face.

"Yes, Lamont, Morris K. Drake, president and chief stockholder of *National Bio-Chemical Inc.* It's a very big bio-chemical company based in New Jersey but with branches in many countries. It gets quite a number of vegetable raw materials from Brazil. Drake told the police that that was why he hired a Brazilian as his personal assistant."

"Silva y Rubio was his personal assistant here?" Cranston said.

Margo nodded. "Yes, he was. Drake says that the dead man had not been back to Brazil for a long time. He said that the last time he saw Silva y Rubio was three days ago in his office on Madison Avenue. He said that after that the man vanished. He could offer no explanation about why anyone would want to kill his assistant, or why his assistant appeared to be trying to reach these offices. But, Lamont, the police found one fact--Silva y Rubio had been in Asia less than six months ago. Washington had that. No record of Singapore, but he went to Hong Kong and Jakarta."

"In Asia? What did Drake say about that?" Cranston snapped.

"He admitted it, *after* the police had learned about it. He said that Silva y Rubio went on many trips. It was his primary job to make field trips for Drake. He was a jungle expert, Lamont."

Cranston rubbed his smooth chin. "Which explains the Jarro ring, and his knowledge of Kent Allard. What did Burbank learn about recent unusual troubles in Brazil or Malaysia?"

"Nothing, Lamont. No record of any such happenings," Margo said. "But I have one more important fact that Malay killer who was taken alive by the police was found dead in his cell just an hour after his capture!"

Cranston blinked. "Dead? In his cell?"

"Hanged, Lamont. It looked like a suicide, the police will list it as such, but I'm not sure. I think he was murdered."

There was a pause in the office. At the window Stanley turned to look at Margo. Cranston was impassive, but his hands rubbed his chin furiously. Margo seemed to be seeing the dead man and the cell. She nodded slowly as if more sure than ever that the man had been killed by someone somehow even though in jail.

"I'm sure he was murdered." Cranston agreed. "That masked leader was quite sure the police would learn nothing. We are up against a big, clever, ruthless organization, Margo. They have some project that is about to come to fruition, and I think it will not be a project for good! Silva y Rubio was trying very hard to reach someone who would know what he had to tell might mean. Almost certainly that someone was Kent Allard. Whatever he had to tell was worth the risk of his life. I know that whatever it is, Margo, it has some connection to his blindness and inability to speak anything but gibberish. I have a strong feeling that whatever it is, it is very dangerous for the whole world--this is not a small operation."

"But we're still in the dark," Stanley said. "Where do we start, Boss?"

Cranston smiled. "Not quite in the dark, Stanley. We know that what is going to happen, and soon, will probably happen in one of two areas: Malaysia or Brazil. Possibly in both. At the moment I don't know why two such widely separated areas should be the keys, but they have to be. There is, if you notice, one thing both areas have in common."

"Jungle," Margo said. "They're both jungle areas."

Cranston nodded. "Yes, they are both jungle areas. Both have remote sections. The major difference is that Malaysia is smaller and is more populous and closer to urban areas. The Jarro country, if that is involved, is far more remote."

"Malaysia is also much closer to Communist countries, Lamont," Margo pointed out. "You said that that hired Malay killer talked about a Comrade Kyoto. Apparently a Japanese and a Communist."

"Yes, I have not overlooked that," Cranston said. "It is why I think we will do best to investigate in Malaysia first. It seems that the trail will be more recent there. The fact that Silva y Rubio has been in Asia recently tends to confirm that."

"Unless Mr. Drake is lying," Margo said.

"Unless Drake is lying," Cranston said. "Which is why I think we will cover both areas at the same time. First, though, I will have Burbank run a check on Mr. Morris K. Drake. After that, Margo, we will have to start our fishing."

"Without knowing what we're fishing for, Lamont," Margo said.

Cranston was grim behind his hooded eyes. "True, Margo, but we know the waters to fish in, and we know that our fish have something they very much want to hide. We also know that one fish is named Comrade Kyoto, that another has a face he does not want to reveal even to his own people, and that Silva y Rubio was in possession of enough information to be killed."

Stanley frowned at the window. "It's not much, Boss. Brazil and Malaysia are big places."

"I think it will be enough, Stanley," Cranston said, and once more his eyes flashed with the brief fire of The Shadow.

It was now time for the small but powerful organization of The Shadow to gather its far-flung resources and begin its work.

In the dim light of his Central Communications blue room, Burbank placed a programmed card into the special computer. The small but advanced machine began to whirl. Moments later

Burbank took a card from the discharge of the computer and placed it in a read-out printer next to the computer. A large sheet of paper came out of the read-out printer. Burbank took the sheet to his communications console. There, in the silence and blue light, the Chief of Communications for the organization of The Shadow read the sheet. Then Burbank pressed a button, a tape machine began to turn, and he began to read the data into the tape recorder for eventual transmission to every agent of The Shadow across the world.

"Morris K. Drake, born Racine, Wisconsin, January 2, 1902 Normal public education, won scholarship to Yale University given by local businessmen's club for business initiative. After Yale, Drake joined staff of Newmarket Mining Co. This is a giant international holding company with interests all over the world. While in the employ of Newmarket, Drake was sent to Katanga in the Belgian Congo. There, through means still unknown, Drake took control of a small American mining company, Digby Mines Inc., which was about to be bought by Newmarket. However, after two years of negotiations during which time Drake's control was not known to Newmarket, Digby Mines was not bought, and, instead, Digby gained control of two rich tungsten mines formerly leased by Newmarket. Much is obscure about this transaction, and Drake's part in it, but the end result was that Drake emerged as president of Digby, the small company became larger, and Drake was honored as a young businessman of the year.

"One year later, Drake sold Digby Mines to Newmarket for a large profit. There was some talk at the time of the whole deal being an almost illegal coup by Drake, which ended with him selling back to Newmarket what Newmarket had really owned! With his proceeds from the sale of Digby Mines, Drake bought control of Bio-Chemical Products Inc., changed the name to National Bio-Chemical, Inc., and built it into a giant international corporation with interests all over the world. Since then there have been many rumors of sharp dealings by Drake and his company, but he has been honored with business awards many times. He belongs to many clubs and fraternal societies, is a member of the International Club of Businessmen, is considered a leading businessman in the world.

"Drake has the reputation of being a hard man in business, but fair. He is not well liked by those who have done business with him, is said to be interested in the acquisition of money and power for its own sake. He is rumored to wield much influence in the governments of certain small, underdeveloped nations in Africa and Asia. There is reason to suspect him of certain political ambitions. His personal life seems almost austere: he is not married, neither smokes nor drinks. His big vice appears to be gambling for large stakes, and the collection of priceless objects of art, furniture, etc.

"His recent activities have not been publicized as they once were. He is known to take many trips. In the last two years the day-to-day activities of his company have been run largely by his assistants. He likes to operate through a staff of assistants who are little more than errand boys whom he sends everywhere. Some of his recent trips are shrouded in complete obscurity, final destination unknown."

Burbank stopped speaking. He pressed a button on the console. The tape began to playback. The information on Drake was on its way to all the agents of The Shadow throughout the world. Lamont Cranston, in his private office, listened to the results of the investigation of Drake, and when it was over he sat in thought for a time. Then he leaned over a small ring he wore on his left hand.

"Harry Vincent. Come in Agent Vincent."

Morris K. Drake, alone, walked quickly from the loading area at JFK airport through the covered ramp, and into the giant jet aircraft. Drake walked fast, nervously, his dark eyes looking all around the jet as if searching for someone. Then he took his seat in the first class section forward.

Drake was a stocky man of average height. He wore an expensive suit of normal cut. His hair was dark, greying at the temples, and was worn in a short, severe military cut. He held himself erect as a soldier. There were now only two things about him that were distinctive. One was his eyes--the cold, deep eyes of a man who constantly has, behind those eyes, plans for some large project that will make him bigger, or richer, or stronger. The second thing was his hands--they moved in his lap like small creatures with a life of their own. Drake was nervous. Nervous and alert. He watched every person who followed him aboard the giant intercontinental jet. He watched, particularly, the man who sat down beside him.

This man noticed how Drake stared. He smiled at the stocky executive, extended his hand.

"Vincent, Harry Vincent," the man said to Drake. "Going to Rio. I'm on vacation, first in five years."

Drake nodded. "Morris Drake. Rio also. I have business."

"Business before pleasure, I always say," Harry Vincent said. Drake watched him. But there seemed to be nothing suspicious about this Vincent. Drake noted the travel folders, the eager way Vincent looked around the jet, the open manner as Vincent greeted the stewardess, nodded to anyone who looked at him. A typical small businessman on vacation. And yet, Drake knew the value of caution. So he watched Vincent carefully even as he listened to the eager tourist talk that Vincent made without let up. Vincent talked like a running faucet. Drake listened, nodded, let his suspicions become lulled. He became so involved with Harry Vincent that he never did notice the other two people.

One was a beautiful blonde woman. She was not tall, but her lithe body made her seem taller than she was. Her green dress was tight and revealing. The dress, a tropical silk, was short and her legs showed smooth and tanned far above her knees. Most of the men stared at her the moment she boarded the jet and walked to her seat three rows behind Drake and Vincent in the first class compartment. She stared back, a thin smile on her full lips that showed that she knew that men stared, and that she liked men to stare. She wore dark glasses, and her face had the long, thin look of an international actress. Some men asked the stewardess who she was. The stewardess, smiling, said that she was Miss Delphine Faust, a German actress and former Miss Universe contestant. The woman looked every inch what she was supposed to be, and the more daring of the men on the jet made mental vows to know her by the time the jet reached Rio. These bold men sat with daydreams of their days, and nights, with Delphine Faust long after the jet had taken off and was high above the sea on its way to Brazil. Delphine Faust had no such dreams on her mind. Her mind was concentrated on the seat ahead where Harry Vincent and Morris K. Drake sat--Vincent talking like an eager and not-too-bright tourist, Drake listening to the stream of empty words. Because she was not an actress or a beauty contest winner. She was not Miss Delphine Faust. She was Margo Lane in one of her disguises, and she was on her way to Brazil for more than sun and the admiration of men.

The second of the two people Drake should have noticed but did not, was a small man with a deeply tanned face and a thin mustache. He sat far back in the first class section. He did not talk to anyone. He took his cocktail when the stewardess brought it, and he drank it without looking at it. His eyes were fixed on the people in front of him. First he had watched Morris K. Drake. Then he shifted his gaze from the executive to the chattering Harry Vincent. He seemed very

interested in Harry Vincent. He did not look at the beautiful blonde Miss Delphine Faust. This in itself was strange. He was the only man on the jet who did not look at Miss Faust.

In the heat of Singapore the elegant bar of the swank Plantation Club was an oasis of cool and quiet. Outside, in the narrow and sweltering streets of the notorious city that had once been the jewel of British Colonialism, the polyglot people who had come from all corners of the earth swarmed in great crowds in the sun. In the quiet Plantation Club all was cool and dim and peaceful. The Club was one of the last havens for the dispossessed Colonial rulers. No native had ever entered this bar, except as a servant, with the exception, recently, of a few wealthy Malaysians and Chinese--not in peacetime. Here the former rulers still ruled. They had lost control, political power, and superiority, but they still held the strings of business in their pale hands, they still owned the country in the real, if not political sense, they still stood at the bar sipping their gin slings sure of themselves and of the protection of their distant Government. They were down, but they were very far from out, and quietly through the city there were friendly officials with soldiers to prove how far from out they were.

At this moment the bar was as deserted as the streets outside were crowded. The barman, a small Malay in an immaculate white jacket, sat quietly in the corner of the bar carefully watching his only two customers to be ready to leap instantly to fulfill their wishes. He did not like his job, but he needed it, and it was a far better job than most of his compatriots had. It was cool and clean and easy. A little subservience could be endured.

The second man was a heavy-set man with a ruddy face and the watery eyes of too much gin. Beneath the ruddy skin of the man there was a faint yellow tinge, a yellow tinge in the corners of the watery eyes, that indicated the presence of malaria. The man drank his gin sling, wiped his bushy mustache, and seemed to gaze into space as if looking for the good old days.

The third man was a tall man with a ramrod-straight carriage. He stood at the bar without leaning, without bending at all. He also had a thick mustache, pale on his long upper lip. There was no need to see the small colored ribbon of a medal in his lapel to know that here was an ex-soldier. An ex-professional-soldier from all his manner. His eyes were blue and hard-piercing eyes that had stared down many a subordinate, and even superior. A long scar on his left cheek showed that he had not been a desk soldier. Beneath his impeccable white suit there were other ugly scars, from bullet and kris, bayonet and barong, to prove that he had been a soldier for a long time. The ribbon in his lapel, a simple maroon ribbon, proved that he had been a very good soldier indeed--it was the ribbon of the Victoria Cross.

This third man was Colonel Wilfred Price-Jones, V.C., O.B.E., British Army-retired. The second man, the one with the signs of too much gin and too much malaria, was Roderick MacErlean, a planter of rubber and miner of tin.

The small Malay was Selah Dagah, but he did not matter here in the Plantation Club.

"Quiet these days," Colonel Price-Jones said.

"Too quiet," MacErlean said. "Most of the old chaps are gone, or they have to work. Even in the heat. Get out myself if I could liquidate, especially now that Singapore is for Sukarno! At least it's a bit better up country. Some respect left."

"Not much." Colonel Price-Jones said. "Bloody lascars think they can do the work of white men! Fools. We made a mistake, or Whitehall did. Should have knocked the bloody beggars down. Force, that was the ticket. Natives and bloody Communists, that's what we got for our help. Ruddy swamp without us!"

MacErlean nodded moodily. "The world moves on. Still, I do well enough. Couldn't live like this by half at home."

"Wouldn't know what to do at home, been out here too long," Price-Jones said. "That's my point, MacErlean. This is my country, you see? Just like Kenya for the colonists, this is *my* country as much as the bloody natives!"

"I see your point," MacErlean agreed.

"Right. South Africa, now they know how to do it. I'm even thinking of going there. Offer my services. Hitler too. Not that I hold with the beggar, typical German arrogance, went much too far. But he had some good ideas, I say. Ruddy Germans never did know when to stop. Had to slap them down, you know? Still, he had some ideas how to deal with people. He could have handled the bloody Commies, I say."

"We might have made a bit of a mistake there," MacErlean agreed. "Not the little monkeys though. Had to stop them."

"The Nips? Of course, greedy little swine. No question there. Why, they wanted it all," Price-Jones said.

The two men drank their gin, talked happily, and ignored the small Malay who heard every word and showed on his face that he felt a mixture of hate and triumph. He hated these arrogant, bigoted strangers who had come to rule and rob his country, who treated men with darker skins like dirt. Yet he was happy to hear how they had lost, how they sputtered in their hatred because they were now powerless in the face of his people! He liked his job, the money, but he hated the smile he had to give when they summoned him as they did now.

"Two more," Col. Price-Jones said. The ex-colonel smiled wearily at MacErlean. Then his eyes hardened for an instant. MacErlean was staring at a ring on the colonel's finger. It was a gold ring with a red stone, a fire-opal. The red stone was glowing now. MacErlean stared at it. Price-Jones held it up.

"Trick of the light," the ex-colonel said. "Got it in the Punjab, years back. Gaudy little thing, but I like it. Does odd tricks like that."

The colonel looked at his watch, drank down his drink in a single gulp. MacErlean watched the tall ex-soldier get up. Price-Jones, dropped money onto the bar without looking at the Malay barman. Then he tossed a few coins.

"For the service," Price-Jones said in a curt voice. "Well, MacErlean, it's been pleasant. Must run, appointment. May be back soon though. My round if you're still here."

Without another word, and with a sharp military turn, the ramrod-erect ex-colonel strode briskly out of the bar. He walked through the lobby of the Club and out into the street, nodding to acquaintances as he passed with a stiff, sharp nod of his head. In the hot street he pushed his way arrogantly through the crowd, drawing angry stares from the natives that he pushed aside, and reached a small shop in a narrow side street of the teeming city. The Chinese merchant looked up as the ex-colonel entered. He nodded as if welcoming an old customer, and informed the colonel that his order was in the back room and the colonel could "Go first and inspect the order if he liked." The colonel nodded a curt acknowledgment. Two Malaysians in the shop stared at the former colonial officer with a kind of hatred at his arrogant manner. Price-Jones seemed to hardly notice the anger as he strode on into the back room.

Once inside something odd happened. Colonel Price-Jones stopped in his tracks, turned back, and observed the entire shop closely through a tiny hole in the wall beside the curtained doorway. His manner changed completely from that of an arrogant colonial soldier of extreme snobbery and bad manners, to that of the alert soldier. Satisfied that the shop contained nothing

but the two Malays who had hated him, the colonel turned again and crossed quickly to the far wall of the back room. There he stopped before a silk tapestry that hung on the wall. He touched the wall at a point behind the tapestry. The wall slid open. The colonel stepped through the opening. It closed behind him.

He stood now in a small, blue-lighted room. He was not at all the same man. In place of the bristling arrogance, there was only quick alertness. His hard eyes had softened and become eager and alert. His ramrod bearing softened with his eyes, and he moved with a kind of soldierly anticipation to a small electronic console that stood in the blue-lighted room. As he sat down at the console, a smile replaced the habitual sneer of the ex-colonial soldier. He reached out and flicked a switch. There was a faint hum in the blue room. The colonel bent low.

"Agent Fifteen reporting on signal. Price-Jones in Singapore. Come in, Chief."

The voice that spoke these words was the greatest change of all. The voice of Price-Jones was now low and quiet, and yet eager. All the clipped arrogance was gone. In its place was the voice of a dedicated man.

"Agent Fifteen give recognition signal."

The voice was low and strong and seemed to fill the room as it came from the speaker of the electronic console. It was the voice of The Shadow.

"All men are ends in themselves," Price-Jones said.

"Evil cannot exist for long," The Shadow's voice said.

"Ten and ten and twenty-five," Price-Jones said.

"When do the swallows fly?" The Shadow said.

"In late spring," Price-Jones said.

"Very well, Colonel," the voice of The Shadow said. "Now you must listen carefully to what I tell you. There is work to do."

Ex-Colonel Wilfred Price-Jones, V.C., O.B.E., leaned forward eagerly but seriously as he listened to the voice of The Shadow explain all the details of the events far away in New York.

7

IT WAS a day later when Colonel Wilfred Price-Jones again walked into the bar of The Plantation Club. Behind the bar, Selah Daggah looked up and did not smile. He hated the former colonial officer perhaps more than any other member of the club of foreign snobs and parasites. But the bar-man knew his job. He did not smile, but he came forward quickly to serve the colonel. Price-Jones ignored him, as fitted the character he assumed in Singapore, and looked closely around the bar. It was the evening, and the bar was much more crowded than it had been the day before. From one end of the bar, and at all the tables, sat the former rulers and present economic owners of the colony. Uniformly they were drinking and complaining. Price-Jones saw the man he wanted, and carried his drink to the table where his man sat with another disgruntled former colonial who had lost not one shilling in money, although a great deal in influential power--and that annoyed all of them.

The man Price-Jones had wanted to talk to looked up. His name was Rogers Beecham, he was an ex-Navy man, and the owner of a large rubber plantation up the peninsula. When he saw Price-Jones he nodded.

"Join us, Colonel," Beecham said. "You know MacErlean, I think?"

Price-Jones nodded recognition of the planter, MacErlean, with whom he had been talking the day before when the summons of The Shadow had come. MacErlean had not forgotten. He looked at the red-stone ring on the hand of Price-Jones. It was not now glowing.

"Damnedest thing, eh? Glows when the light strikes it a certain way." MacErlean said.

Price-Jones sat down. "I'll give the dark people one thing, they can find odd stones. Got it in the Punjab, or did I mention that?"

The colonel continued his act of bigot and snob, but his mind was working on his present assignment for The Shadow. His job was to locate anyone who had known the three killers who went to New York, and to trace Comrade Kyoto if that were possible. His day's work had now led him back to the Plantation Club. Most things in Singapore led, at some point, to The Plantation Club--which was why Colonel Price-Jones was there so often. His work for The Shadow was the dedication of his life. He had seen enough evil and injustice in his years in the army, and now he worked only for justice, for The Shadow, and to work for The Shadow he had to know all that happened in Singapore. The Plantation Club was where to find out what was happening. No one knew of his true work, the cover of ex-colonial bigot was believed by all. All the snobs and bigots of the Club liked to talk to Price-Jones. Now it was Beecham he wanted to make talk, because his hard day's work had unearthed only one solid fact--Dai Abdul Chinnah had worked for many years on the plantation of Rogers Beecham!

"You mentioned the Punjab a few times, Colonel," Rogers Beecham said with a smile.

Price-Jones frowned. "I expect I did, bloody bore, eh? Still, that's about all we have now, what? The past?"

"Unless we can get the beggars fighting each other," MacErlean said. "Might be done, too, eh? Sukarno and the ruddy Malays!"

Price-Jones looked knowingly at Rogers Beecham. "I doubt it, MacErlean. Not sure we'd really like it."

"Not like it? Them having at each other?" MacErlean said.

Beecham sipped his whisky. "What the colonel means is that if Sukarno gets back in over in Indonesia, it will be with Communists. If the Army stays in power there, they'll not fight Malaysia. No matter how you look at it, we lose."

"Our best bet is with the Army there and here," Price-Jones said. "You can trust the generals, they know where their interests lie--with us! The trouble with these nationalist types is that they end up with the Reds all the time."

"Not here," MacErlean said. "We beat the Reds here. You should know that, Colonel."

Price-Jones shrugged. "Yes, we defeated them, ran them out, but don't you believe it's over. No, with these beggars you never know what they're thinking. Heard of a strange one over in New York just the other day. The New York Police contacted our people here about it. Seems they found this chap dead in a tenement room. No one knew how he got there, or how he even got into the States. No idea why. Name was Dai Chinnah, and that was all they could find out. Our lads say he was right here less than four days ago. Now how did he get all the way there, and why? Very odd thing that."

Beecham sat up straight. "Dai Chinnah? You're sure, Colonel?"

Price-Jones nodded. "Quite sure, Beecham. Dai Abdul Chinnah. Did you know him?"

The voice of the ex-colonel was all innocence. Beecham did not answer for a moment. Then the planter nodded, lighted a cigarette, blew smoke and took a drink of his whisky.

"I knew him. Never forget him," Beecham said. "You don't forget ones like Dai. He was born right in my village, what was my village. His father and mine were friends. His father was a boss boy, the best type, you know what I mean. Hard worker, polite, clean, did his job and made the others do their jobs. Never had a minute's trouble with old Abdul Chinnah. The good Malay type."

Beecham lighted a fresh cigarette from the stub of the first, stubbed out the old butt thoughtfully. "Dai was another kettle of fish. Nothing but trouble from the day he was old enough to work the rubber. Mixed up in everything. Just before the war it was some kind of Nationalist underground. The Japs came and Dai sort of joined them for a time--anything to defeat the white man, eh?"

"Of course, the Nips soon disillusioned Dai and all the other Nationalists. Not that he fought them, at least not that I know of. No, he just seemed to vanish. That suited me, I was too busy getting away from the Nips myself. Had to spend the war back in England, horrible climate. Anyway, came back after the war and started up again--and there was Dai. Full of stories about fighting the Nips. Not that I believed them, those stories."

Beecham blew smoke, drained his drink. Colonel Price-Jones waved to the barman. Beecham went on without waiting for his whiskey. "Strangely, Dai was good for a time after that. All through the first years of the Communist troubles. I thought he had really changed, learned his lesson. Then we had a nasty do, a massacre of our loyal workers. Obviously the work of local Reds. We cleared them off, of course. After it was over, Dai was gone. No doubt he was one of the local Reds all along, we got it out of prisoners. Sent out an alarm, of course, but in all the years of the mop-up no one ever reported Dai. The authorities finally decided he was dead, but I always doubted that. Now you say he is dead at last. Good riddance, I say."

The barman came with the drinks. Beecham drank his whisky as if he needed to wash a bad taste from his mouth. Price-Jones paid the barman, drank his own gin sling, and guided the talk into the channels he wanted.

"Strange. You never knew what happened to him after he left your plantation?" the ex-colonel said.

"Not a word. What happens to all of them? Joined a Communist Unit, I suppose. Took to the bush when it ended. Sat out there still trying to make trouble. I'll say one thing, what ever took Dai to New York was probably some violence. He was that type. A violent man. Clever, too. He was a known Communist, and a wanted man, for over nine years--and no one every caught him. Still, I'm not so sure it was all his cleverness."

Price-Jones drank his gin sling. "He had help?"

Beecham nodded. "There were rumors. Our massacre was more than a local idea. We were sure at the time that a pretty high Red mucky-muck was running the show. Not a Malay, either. Some foreigner. Probably a Chinese Red. Anyway, I think this top Red must have taken Dai on as a personal retainer, or something like that."

"A lot of foreigners in the Red Command," MacErlean said. "All high up, of course. Trust them, eh?"

"Bloody Red Colonials, what?" Beecham said.

The three men had a good laugh at that. Price-Jones laughed as loudly as the others, but behind his laughter his mind was at work. He had learned little, beyond the fact that Dai Abdul Chinnah was a Communist which did not surprise him. But he had learned one thing of importance--that Dai had been in a Red unit in the village of Beecham's plantation. It was a step on the trail. With this in mind, the Colonel continued to join the laughter of the others, and waved to the barman for another round of drinks.

The ex-major was a small, wiry man with fifteen years of service in Malaysia, twelve of those years in the long and bloody action against the communists in the jungles. A successful action, one of the few successful actions against Communist irregulars since World War II, but one that had taken a big toll even among the winners. The major had been in Intelligence, the toll it had taken of him was in the glazed and horror-stricken aspect of his nervous eyes. Now, as Price-Jones sat with him in his office where he was an adviser to the present Government, and, of course, still a British Intelligence agent, he let his eyes look inside and turn back to those bloody days.

"Beecham's village, Colonel? Yes, you wouldn't know about that area. You were up north, I believe?"

"Far north, Rhys," Price-Jones said.

Major Rhys David nodded. "You had the jungle and the war, we had the slaughter. A terrible massacre at Beecham's village. I remember Dai Chinnah. Beecham is right, he wasn't too bright. No, there was outside control."

"Peking?" Price-Jones said.

"Perhaps, but I think not. Moscow is more like it in those days, and by way of Tokyo, I'm afraid."

Price-Jones waited, said, "Tokyo?"

"Yes," Major Rhys David said. "You know I was with MI-5 at the time. Well, we did a pretty thorough follow-up on that affair in Beecham's village. It had been a very good undercover job of organizing, so we were especially interested. What we found was most interesting. This Dai Chinnah was a strong force in the setup, the muscle you might say. But we had definite proof that the brains of the operations was a Japanese Communist."

Price-Jones watched Major Rhys David light a cigarette with shaky hands. The small major looked at his hands, and then sighed. He smoked, smiled at Price-Jones.

"I admire your nerves, Colonel. Well, there is all I know. We had definite proof that the brains was a Japanese Communist. How or why a Japanese Red got here, I don't know. We never

did catch him. All we could find out was his code name--Baron Kobe. When we finally mopped them all up, he either got away or was dead."

Price-Jones brushed his thick mustache. "You mean that MI-5 doesn't know which? Come on, Rhys, you know better. MI-5 does not leave a mystery like that. There are records of men like your Baron Kobe."

Rhys David smiled. "All right, Colonel. But not in this case, and don't think we didn't try. In fact, between us, I'm still trying. Baron Kobe vanished, there were no records. There were no prisoners who knew him by sight! There were no records in Tokyo that led to any Baron Kobe. There was no trace, Colonel, and there still isn't."

"Which means that Baron Kobe arranged it all, planned his own disappearance," Price-Jones said slowly.

Major David nodded. "That's how we see it. But it wasn't easy, Colonel. As far as I know, Baron Kobe was the only foreign Communist we did not identify. Which means, in MI-5's opinion, that Kobe had some special situation going for him. Something that made it easy for him to vanish, and made it almost certain we would overlook him."

"Double identity," Price-Jones said. "Someone well known to our side."

"That's what I think," Major David said, "and that's what makes me think he is still around somewhere. There are a lot of Japs still around, many of them helped us during the war so we let them stay."

"You think this Baron Kobe might be one of them?"

"I think so, Colonel. One of our supposed friends."

"Do you think he is still an active Communist?"

"I don't know," Major David said. "I'm not sure he ever was, Colonel. I don't know if Beecham told you, but that massacre in his village was also a robbery. Buried money, silver, jewels, and all that. When the massacre was over, it was gone."

"The Communists steal for funds," Price-Jones said.

"True, Colonel. It could have been for that. But Baron Kobe seemed like a man who took care of himself," Major Rhys David said.

Colonel Price-Jones nodded. The mustachioed ex-officer and agent of The Shadow was thinking about the vanished Baron Kobe. He thought he knew the one place he could carry the search on a few steps farther. It was not a place that he could mention to Major Rhys David.

Sluggish water lapped in the dark night against the slimy pilings of the low pier. Colonel Price-Jones felt eyes watching him as he walked along the deserted and dilapidated pier toward the dark junk that was moored at the end. His hand was in his pocket and on his small automatic. In this part of Singapore the eyes could belong to anyone. They could be the wary eyes of Ling Soo's men, or they could be the eyes of one of the thousand nameless men who would kill a man for the clothes he wore. This was the end, the bottom, the dung heap of humanity where the price of a suit taken from a dead body would bring one more week of life, two nights in one of the hidden opium dens, a woman to make a man feel human for one more hour. So Colonel Price-Jones walked quietly, alertly, with his hand on his automatic in his pocket--the safety off.

The thin, shadowy figure seemed to materialize from the night in front of him. An armed man who wore the black pajamalike clothes of the Chinese.

"What do you want?" the thin black figure said in Cantonese.

"I will see Ling Soo," Price-Jones said in the same language.

"Who can say where is Ling Soo," the man said, his Sten Gun aimed steadily at Price-Jones.

"Colonel Price-Jones knows the location of Ling Soo. The honorable Ling will welcome his friend," the colonel said.

"You will remain. This one will ascertain the present home of the honorable Ling," the man said, and vanished as silently as he had appeared.

Price-Jones waited. He did not attempt to move. He made no sudden gestures. The eyes were still watching him. A false move would bring instant death. Ling Soo and his men took no chances of any kind. The life of a bandit was brief if he took chances. Each time Price-Jones came to Ling Soo he could not be sure of how he would be greeted. The Chinese bandit leader changed like a spring wind. But if there was an ex-Communist leader somewhere in Malaysia, especially an ex-Communist leader who might still be active in the Party or on his own, Ling Soo would know it. And, more important, for the proper price Ling Soo would sell any kind of information about anyone--except to the authorities.

The thin shadowy figure materialized again. "Come."

Colonel Price-Jones followed the silent figure along the pier to the darkened junk. Nothing moved on the junk, there was no sign of life. The junk itself looked like a derelict, a wreck tied to the shabby pier in the sluggish backwater of the harbor. There was nothing to indicate that the junk was anything but one of many derelict junks rotting along the waterfront of the city. Nothing to indicate what Price-Jones knew--that this was anything but a simple junk. Beneath the rotting wood there was a skin of steel, guns, and the headquarters of Ling Soo, the most notorious pirate still operating.

"Up," the thin guide said.

Price-Jones climbed up to the deck of the junk. There was still no hint as to the real identity of the junk.

"Down," the guide said.

Price-Jones went down a narrow companionway. Below decks the rot was even more marked, the wreckage even more pronounced. Until he entered a low door, a small passage, another door, and stood in a narrow but comfortable cabin where a small, slender Chinese lounged on a couch of cushions. The Chinese wore the same black pajamalike suit, but of silk. He wore no decoration of any kind except a thin, drooping mustache and a long barreled Luger in a holster. His age was impossible to tell, but Price-Jones knew that he was a man about forty-five. His eyes were shrewd and strong as he waved the colonel to a second couch. This was Ling Soo. Colonel Price-Jones sat down.

"A courtesy call, Colonel?" Ling Soo said in smooth English with a trace of British accent.

Price-Jones smiled. "You know better, Soo. I've told you many times. When I come as anything but a seeker of information, and willing to pay, I'll come to put an end to your banditry."

"Fair enough, Colonel," Ling Soo said with a faint smile. "I take it, then, you wish information since you came alone."

"You imply that I can't take you alone?" Price-Jones smiled.

"You are too good a soldier to require an answer to that," the bandit leader said with a return smile. "Do you know, Colonel, that you have long intrigued me. You are not what you seem. I am a judge of men, and you are far from the bigoted ex-colonial bemoaning the end of empire. No, you are acting. I would very much like to know why, and what you really do."

"The day I end your career, Soo, I'll tell you," Price-Jones said.

Ling Soo laughed. "Good. I like that. To your questions."

"Baron Kobe," Price-Jones said.

Ling Soo sat up slowly, his eyes very dark and shrewd. "Ah, now that is expensive information. There are many who look very hard and very long for Baron Kobe. There are many who say he is dead. There are others who say he is in Moscow or Peking."

"What do you say?"

"The price will be, let us say, five thousand dollars American."

"No banditry on me, Soo. One thousand American."

"Twenty-five hundred American."

"I want information, not assassination," Price-Jones said. "One thousand pounds British."

"Done," Ling Soo said. "You will deposit it as usual?"

"Of course. You trust me?"

Ling Soo shrugged. "I trust you because you know I would have you killed if you failed to make the payment."

"Tell me about Baron Kobe," Price-Jones said.

Ling Soo lighted a long Russian cigarette. He offered one to Price-Jones and lighted it. The thin Chinese blew a cloud of smoke as he began to speak.

"I imagine you know his history as Baron Kobe? Yes, good. Well, he escaped so easily because he was, in reality, a Japanese officer. Or, to be more precise, he was a British agent in the Japanese Army. He played the double game all through the war. As a matter of fact I'm not sure he wasn't a double agent all the time. The best of both sides all through the war. He was stationed right here in Singapore after the Japs took it."

"The best of both sides?" Price-Jones said. "You mean you think he was working in fact for both sides, not just for one side while pretending to work for the other?"

"That's the way I read him," Ling Soo said with a shrug that said that nothing in all the world of double-dealing would ever surprise the bandit chief. "Of course, later it became clear he was a triple agent! After the war he was allowed to settle here, even given protection and a medal for his work for the British. Then Baron Kobe showed up--it was him. It seems he must have also been a secret Soviet agent all the time! I think he even had some connections to the Sorge ring in Tokyo. Anyway, Colonel, during the Communist war here he became a high adviser."

Price-Jones fingered his thick mustache, was silent in the small but elegant room hidden inside the dilapidated old junk. The thin bandit was also silent, lost in thoughts of Baron Kobe--thoughts that, his eyes showed, had a good deal of admiration in them for the clever and devious Japanese.

"He was quite a man," Price-Jones said.

"Was and still is, Colonel," Ling Soo said. "Men like him always survive. Triple agent, yes, but always in reality only one agent--his own! In his various roles he managed to salt away plenty for himself, believe me. When it became clear that the Reds were going to lose in Malaysia, he pulled out neatly. I imagine he's still a Red agent, he'd talk them into that. And I know he's still a respected, and protected, citizen of our dear country."

"Then he's still in Malaysia?" Price-Jones said.

"In Singapore," Ling Soo said. "And still a Communist?"

"Officially, Colonel. In the eyes of Moscow and Peking. He heads one of the underground cells in the city," the bandit said. "Unofficially, who knows what he is?"

"Yes, who knows?" Price-Jones said. "And his name?"

Ling Soo smiled. "He has many names, Colonel, but his local name, the one he used in the Japanese Army, is Captain Kyoto!"

Price-Jones stood up. "Thank you, Soo, that is what I wanted to know. I can handle the rest."

The thin, elegant bandit nodded. "Of course, Colonel, but a word of advice? Do you plan to locate Captain Kyoto? Perhaps learn what he is doing now?"

"Yes," Price-Jones said.

"Then be very careful, my friend. Be extremely careful," the bandit leader said, and he was not smiling now.

"Is he that dangerous?" Price-Jones said.

"Yes," Ling Soo said, "he is that dangerous. But it is not even Captain Kyoto alone you must be careful about, Colonel. He has friends now. Friends even more dangerous than he is, I think."

Price-Jones nodded. "I'll be careful, Soo."

But the colonel felt a faint chill as he retraced his steps through the shabby passages of the junk. Ling Soo did not warn without reason.

In the dark night, alone again on the pier with the sluggish water lapping, Colonel Price-Jones wondered what could be so dangerous even Ling Soo feared it?

8

SOME HOURS later that night, after another visit to the almost deserted Plantation Club, Colonel Wilfred Price-Jones reached his house in an elegant and still restricted suburb of Singapore. The colonel had had a long and busy day and night, but he now knew both who Captain Kyoto was and where he was to be found in the city. He had also learned two other important facts: that Captain Kyoto was respected and totally unsuspected by the old British Authorities and new Malaysian Authorities; and that the less public and less legal elements of the city were both afraid and suspicious of Kyoto. He learned that Captain Kyoto was up to something--no one knew just what, but they were afraid of it.

Colonel Price-Jones walked up his verandah and entered his house still thinking about Captain Kyoto and the warning of Ling Soo. The bandit did not warn without reason. If Ling Soo warned, then Kyoto was involved in some highly dangerous project. The colonel pondered just where to start looking next as he reached for the light in his living room. His hand stopped in mid-air. He sensed something in the room. A presence, a sensation that he was not alone in the dark room. But he did not reach for his pistol or become wary. The presence in the room was not hostile. The colonel sensed the waves of power reaching out to him, and knew at once who was in his living room waiting for him.

"Chief?" Price-Jones said softly.

There was a faint movement of the shadows. Two blazing eyes appeared to float in the dark of the room. A glowing red stone matched the fire-opal ring on the colonel's finger.

"Are you prepared to report, Colonel Price-Jones," the low voice of The Shadow asked.

The colonel watched the black shape of The Shadow emerge from the dark corner of the living room of his house. He felt the power of his chief, and he smiled now to see the fiery eyes and hawk nose beneath the wide brim of the black slouch hat. The black cloak of The Avenger faded off into the dark as if The Shadow was part of the night itself. Price-Jones approached his chief.

"I am ready," the colonel said. "I do not have all I wanted to have. You came quickly."

"Speed is important, Colonel," The Shadow said. "Time is a major factor now. We must learn what is to happen, and when, and where. We must learn quickly if we are to stop it. What have you to report?"

The Colonel sat down on a long bamboo couch. The Shadow sat facing him. When he sat, The Shadow seemed to vanish again. The wide brim of his slouch hat shaded his blazing eyes and in the room, had there been anyone to see, it looked as if Colonel Price-Jones sat alone and talked to himself.

"I have not learned what is happening, but I have learned that there is *something*, and that it is very dangerous. I have located the Comrade Kyoto referred to by Dai Abdul Chinnah. He is . . ."

In the dark, and seemingly empty room, Colonel Price-Jones explained all the details of his actions since he had first been alerted by The Shadow. The cloaked Avenger sat in silence and listened to the report, his eyes blazing up from time to time.

"A triple agent?" The Shadow said sharply. "And he is now connected to a Communist cell here in Singapore?"

"So I am told. There seems to be a strong feeling that Kyoto is really concerned with nothing but himself, his own survival and triumph."

The eyes of The Shadow burned. "Yes, Colonel, and that is the most dangerous type of man in the world. Go on."

Price-Jones continued his report.

Caught up in its perpetual holiday mood, Rio De Janeiro took little notice of the American tourist and vacationer, Harry Vincent. It took somewhat more interest in the beautiful and talented Miss Delphine Faust. But Miss Faust appeared to have little interest in the available men of Rio. Strangely, she seemed to give most of her time to the American, Harry Vincent, and the other American, Morris K. Drake.

The acquaintance struck up by Vincent with Drake on the jet soon led to an acquaintance of both men with Miss Faust. It all seemed so natural. Vincent got to know Drake on the jet. Vincent, it turned out, had worked with people who knew Miss Faust, so, once in the hotel in Rio, Mr. Morris K. Drake and Miss Faust were soon friends. Drake was aloof at first, even suspicious, but Miss Faust had the equipment and charm to change that. By the middle of the first night Drake was enjoying himself thoroughly.

"I don't often meet such a beautiful woman, Miss Faust," Drake said, a little deeper in drink than he was accustomed to as a non-drinker. But it had seemed so rude to refuse to have at least one drink with the beautiful Delphine Faust. Drake had now had two.

"I don't believe you, Morris," Delphine Faust said. "I have heard of your power in business, and power attracts women. There is something fascinating about a ruthless man, a man who can get what he wants from other men, who *takes* what he wants!"

"I suppose there is," Drake agreed. "What do you think, Vincent?"

"I'm the weak type," Harry Vincent said, pretending to be a lot drunker than he was. "I was hoping that Delphine would like weak men, the kind she can mother."

Delphine Faust looked coldly at Vincent. "A man who can joke about the truth does not interest me, Mr. Vincent. You, I think, are a weak man. No, I like a man who does things."

Some hours later, two more drinks in the non-drinking Morris K. Drake, the stocky executive had his hands on the beautiful Miss Faust.

"Delphine," Drake said, now in the Delphine stage, "You like power? Well, I've got some business down here that means real power! I mean *power*! Got to take a little trip, doesn't matter where, but when it's over you'll see power! Yessir. Little trip up the river and then . . . sky's the limit! Peanuts up to now, you wait."

"I'll wait, Morris," Miss Faust said. "Unless I could go with you. I've never been up river. How far do you go?"

"No," Drake said. "Can't take anyone. Long way. But you wait, yessir."

Harry Vincent said, "Not tomorrow, I hope? We've got that little date at roulette, remember?"

Drake nodded. "Sure, sure. We'll murder that wheel!"

Soon after, with nothing more said of interest to the very interested Harry Vincent and Delphine Faust, Morris Drake passed out. The two disguised agents of The Shadow helped Drake to his room and left him. They returned to Harry Vincent's room. In the hotel room, Margo lighted a cigarette. She removed her blonde wig. She looked at Harry Vincent.

"Power, a lot of power," Margo said.

"And up-river," Harry Vincent said. "Probably Jarro country."

Margo nodded. "It looks like the chief was right. But we have to know a lot more. We must locate where Drake is going, if not why, before we apply for the permit for Kent Allard to make another expedition."

"We'll learn that tomorrow, I'm certain. Once I get him gambling, and you get him drinking again," Harry Vincent said.

Margo nodded, smiled. "Yes, he seems to like Miss Delphine Faust, and for a teetotaler she makes him drink a lot. Tomorrow we'll find out. By then the chief may know more in Singapore."

But Harry Vincent would not have been so sure of tomorrow and Margo would not have smiled, if they could have witnessed the scene taking place that instant in the hotel room of Morris K. Drake.

The small man with the deeply tanned face and thin mustache, who had been so interested in Drake and Vincent on the jet, had watched the progress of Drake's flirtation with the beautiful Miss Delphine Faust all night. Less than ten minutes after Drake had been left in his room by Harry Vincent and the disguised Margo, this small man appeared in the corridor. He was not alone. Three small, dark men were with him. They looked very much like the three killers of Juan Silva y Rubio. They were armed with the same evil-looking air guns. They wasted no time in the corridor, nor did they knock on the door of Drake's room. The thin man with the mustache opened the door with a skeleton key. The four men went into the room. They found Drake in an alcoholic sleep. They moved quickly. Two of them picked up the inert form of the executive. The other two swiftly stripped the room of all the drunken man's possessions. Moments later, the room as bare as it had been before Drake arrived, the leader motioned to his three companions, and they silently carried Drake and all he owned out of the suite, down the service elevator, and into a car parked in an alley.

The car drove silently through the city to a large house on the outskirts. There they hustled the now-awake Morris Drake into the house despite his protests. They locked the executive in a room. Drake roared his angry protests.

"What do you think you're doing! Do you know who I am? I'll have your hides for . . ." Drake raged.

The small man with the mustache turned only once to look back at Drake. "We know who you are, Mr. Drake. That is the only reason you are not dead now! You have been stupid, twice stupid, but you are still alive. Be grateful. How long you stay alive is up to the Doctor and my Chief. Now sleep it off."

The small man left Morris K. Drake still raging, but with a certain look of fear in his eyes. He locked Drake into the room. Then the small man went to a large short-wave radio set. He worked dials, bent low over the speaker.

"Calling Kyoto. Come in Kyoto. Calling Kyoto!"

Captain Tadeki Kyoto was taller than most Japanese men. He stood over five feet ten inches tall, and was slim and hard as befitted a man who had been a soldier all his life, if not always in the same Army or for the same country or cause. For a man who had lived so long undercover, he had a remarkably calm face behind his glasses. His slightly protuberant teeth barely showed as he calmly took the report from Brazil on the indiscretions of Morris K. Drake.

"Keep him with you. Take him to the Base tomorrow. Kill the two who were questioning him," Kyoto said, and flicked a switch to end the two-way radio communication. He did not wait for an acknowledgment. He was accustomed to giving an order and having it done without question.

He sat for a moment in the small room of the cottage on the edge of the former European section of Singapore. It was a comfortable cottage, if small, and was the gift of a grateful British

Government. This often caused Kyoto to smile in silent amusement. As Captain Kyoto he had enjoyed working for the British against his trusting Japanese Army, and as Baron Kobe he had equally enjoyed working for the Communists against the trusting British Army. Now he enjoyed working for himself against the trusting Communists. Tadeki Kyoto believed that the greatest stupidity in all the world was to trust anyone. It gave him pleasure to betray any trust he could manage to create. He cared only for himself, for his actual person, and cared so little for anything else that he had even almost forgotten that he had a real name--not Kyoto and not Kobe. A name connected to parents who trusted him, and he enjoyed betraying them, too.

The moment of thought over, Kyoto stood up briskly. It was night again, evening, in Singapore, and Captain Kyoto had a report to make. He took his pistols, two, and his knife, and left his small cottage. He walked out into the evening. He took deep breaths of the night air, smiling as if he felt it was a fine clear night. He enjoyed the night. He stood there for some time experiencing the joys of just breathing on a clear night. He lighted a long Russian cigarette and smoked and looked at his watch to be sure of his time.

This reminded him of the report that had just reached him from Brazil, and that made him begin to wonder about the two strangers he had just ordered killed. Who were they? First that idiot Drake let Silva y Rubio learn too much, then he let him escape, and now two strangers were pumping Drake and the American executive was too stupid to know that he was being pumped. But who were they? How had they learned about Drake? How much did they know? Kyoto was worried about that. Not about the two strangers in Rio, they would be dead and of no importance, but about who had sent them? There was a problem. Kyoto continued to smoke, and breathe in the clear night air, and think about the problem. He was too busy to notice the faint movement of the shadows of the night near his cottage. Far too busy to see the two glowing eyes that watched him from the darkness.

The Shadow, an unseen black shape in the night, watched the Japanese. He had been unable to come close enough in time to hear the radio report the Japanese had taken, but he had noted the preparations for leaving, and judged quickly that Kyoto was going to make a report somewhere. Now he watched Kyoto enjoying the evening, smoking, and looking at his watch. The Shadow waited. He could take Kyoto at any time, but he had the strong conviction that Kyoto was not the power behind whatever was about to happen. He wanted the Japanese to lead him to the real leaders of the group that had killed Silva y Rubio to silence him. So he waited in the night, and watched the Japanese. He watched Kyoto look once more at his watch, throw away his cigarette, and turn to walk to his car.

Kyoto strode briskly to his car unaware of the eyes that watched him, or of the great black shape that seemed to float through the night. The Japanese was thinking of Drake and the troubles in Brazil. He reached his car and stepped in behind the wheel. As he placed the key in the ignition, he glanced up into his rearview mirror. For a moment Kyoto froze. He showed no alarm or surprise on his impassive face, but his eyes flickered. He thought he had seen a vague movement in the night--a movement of the night itself. As if the dark shadows had come alive and moved for a brief instant.

Kyoto drew one of his pistols and stepped quickly out. He searched the night behind the car. Then he smiled. There was no cover behind the car, it was all open land, and there was nothing there. The Japanese shook his head as he let his eyes search the night. Nothing at all but the shadows of the night itself. He was getting old. He pocketed his pistol again and climbed back into the car. He started the engine and once again glanced quickly into the rearview mirror. He

smiled and shook his head--once more it had seemed for an instant that the shadows had moved and come up behind the car. Still smiling he started the car and drove off.

The Shadow, a vague black shape in the darkness, clung to the rear of the car as it speeded away in the night.

Margo Lane, as herself again, and Harry Vincent, drove out of Rio on the highway toward Brasilia. The new capital of Brazil was inland, and the new highway wound through much empty, even wild, country with sweeping half-jungle vistas and great drops beside the roadway.

They were leaving Rio for the same reason that Margo was once more herself and Delphine Faust was abandoned--because Drake had vanished in the night and there was nothing more they could do in Rio. With the loss of the American executive, and after no one could find him for them, they were forced to change back to the plan of Kent Allard's expedition. They had immediately applied for the permit for the expedition, explaining to the officials in Rio that they were the advance party, that Allard himself would join them soon.

"Of course, Miss Lane," the official of the Interior Department had said. "We all know Mr. Allard well, we greatly respect his work. It will indeed be an honor to grant him again a permit to explore our interior. You know precisely where he wishes to go so that I can prepare my report?"

"The Jarro country to start," Harry Vincent said quietly. "You know Mr. Allard, he likes to start but can't say just where he might finish."

"A true explorer!" the official exclaimed, and then the man frowned. "However, Jarro country is some difficulty. The Jarro are most dangerous."

"Not to Kent Allard," Margo said. "You know he is a blood brother."

"Of course, of course," the official said. "We all honor the achievements of Senhor Allard. Alas, the matter is not entirely in my hands. The Jarro have been, shall we say, restless of late, yes? Trips to their country must be cleared by the Military as well as by my Minister. I regret the inconvenience this will cause, but it cannot be helped at this time."

"The Military?" Margo said. "Isn't that unusual?"

"True, true, a new regulation confined to the country of the Jarro. The military may perhaps explain. I am sure that for Senhor Allard, General Diaz will make an exception."

"Where do we see General Diaz?" Harry Vincent said. "I gather he's in the War Ministry?"

"Assistant Minister of War. Alas, he is in Brasilia at the moment," the official said.

"And the Interior Minister?" Margo said.

The official shrugged. "Also, I fear, in Brasilia. I am sure they will be in Rio at some time very soon."

Margo, aware of the meaning of "very soon" in Latin American countries, decided to hire a car and drive to Brasilia. Margo drove as fast as possible along the wide and empty modern highway. The wide and wild land stretched on all sides in great sweeping vistas as they drove. There were few cars. Lulled by the steady driving, the monotony of being all but alone on the highway, the vast land that stretched in the sun on all sides, neither Margo nor Harry Vincent noticed the two cars coming up steadily from behind them. It was Harry who saw them first in the outside mirror.

"Margo! Look behind."

Margo looked. The two cars were maintaining a steady side-by-side speed. "They are gaining, and they look like they're blocking the road from the rear. Harry, I don't like the look of it. We haven't seen a car in hours!"

"Somebody got to Drake, Margo, we know that," Harry said. The agent was cocking his automatic, preparing.

"No cars for hours behind us, now all at once two driving side by side," Margo said. "Two cars, and . . ."

"Three!" Harry said, and pointed ahead.

A large truck had come into sight from the other direction, from in front of them. The truck now swerved, crossed over into the west-bound lane, and parked crosswise across the highway. Four men jumped from the truck. They ranged themselves in front of the truck facing the oncoming Harry and Margo. They were all armed.

Margo looked quickly behind.

The two cars were still gaining, and now she would have to slow down for the truck. She looked quickly all around. There were no turns or side roads. She could not drive off the road to the right. There was a high hill that would stop the car and the pursuers would be on them in seconds. To the left there was a long, sloping drop on the far side of the eastbound lanes of the highway, and then nothing but wild country with neither village nor house anywhere in sight. Margo decided in a split second as the car sped toward the truck that blocked the lanes. She swerved the car, bounced across the divider, and roared past the parked truck on the east-bound lane.

"Lucky this is Brazil!" Harry shouted. "No traffic coming the other way!"

"Very lucky . . ." Margo began.

She got no farther. As she raced in the east-bound lane past the truck, the four men opened fire.

Bullets smashed through the windows, ripped into the metal and seats of the car. Margo crouched low and drove on. Harry Vincent ducked and returned the fire through his opened window. They were past the truck and going away.

The tire blew with a loud report. Margo fought the steering wheel.

The car slowed and swerved, careened wildly across the empty highway. Margo battled, held the car on the road, but it was no use. With a sickening lurch the car hit the side of the road, bounced, teetered, and stopped upright fifteen yards down the slope from the highway.

Instantly, Margo and Harry Vincent were out of the car. Margo carried her small attaché case. Harry carried only his automatic and what he was wearing. Up on the road the other two cars had arrived. Men poured across the road toward the wrecked car down the slope. There were trees only a few yards down the slope.

Margo and Harry Vincent split up and each ran separately for the cover of the trees. Behind them, the attackers plunged down the slope in pursuit.

In the Malay night the car of Captain Tadeki Kyoto pulled to a stop in front of a tall iron gate. Two men guarded the gate. They came with guns to inspect Captain Kyoto. When they saw who it was they gave the closed-fist salute with their left hands and stepped back. The gate opened. Captain Kyoto drove on through into the grounds that were closed behind a high wall. The guards stared after the car. It seemed for an instant that there was some dark object on the back of the car, but in the next instant the guards laughed and realized they had seen only a trick of the light and shadows. Where he clung to the car, The Shadow's eyes blazed with sardonic amusement.

The car drove on up the curving driveway of the old plantation mansion, wound among thick jungle growth and tall jungle trees. At last it slowed and stopped in front of a large, low

plantation house that had a wide verandah running all around it. Captain Kyoto got out and strode up the steps. He was welcomed by three men on the verandah. They all turned and walked into the house.

None of them saw the black shadow that moved silently from the car, went across the gravel of the drive, and seemed to float in the night over the flower beds and up onto the verandah at the side. The black shape crouched at a window of the house, and two fiery eyes blazed as they peered into the room through the window.

9

WHAT THE EYES of The Shadow saw as he crouched on the verandah of the plantation house was a large, low room built for the heat of the tropics in a time when the colonial rulers built for their own comfort. The room was shaded, low, and well ventilated. Long *punkah* fans hung overhead where in the colonial days they had been pulled to-and-fro by natives sitting outside in the heat. Rattan couches and chairs were arranged in the room, and there was a long bamboo table in the center. It was the table that made the eyes of The Shadow blaze. The table--and the men around it.

There were five men around the long table. They sat at their ease, drinks in their hands that had been brought by a Malaysian with a submachine gun over his back, a bucket of ice and a pitcher of some kind of drink on the table. But they were not at ease, and they were not having a quiet party. There was a heavy air of tension, and the five men watched each other like hawks. It was Captain Kyoto who did the talking at first. The Shadow, with his super hearing, heard it all clearly.

"Drake came to Rio as ordered. But the fool allowed himself to be followed. Worse, he allowed two people to get close to him, question him. They got him drunk. They were most friendly--and they asked many questions. I had him taken by my men, and the two strangers will be disposed of by now. But I do not like the fact that there were two who had that much interest in Drake. They . . ."

The Shadow listened to the report, and watched the four other men. The report told him for the first time of the danger that was close to Margo and Harry Vincent. The Shadow's eyes blazed with concern, but he had work to do now. Margo and Harry Vincent were trained and experienced agents of the Avenger, soldiers in the battle against evil, and they could take care of their own crises--or know that they had accepted the risk if they failed. The Shadow had his task, and his eyes narrowed to points of fire beneath the wide brim of the slouch hat as he studied the other four men around the long table in the low-ceilinged room of the plantation house.

The man at the head of the table, facing The Shadow, was a big and incredibly fat man. His great bulk filled and overflowed the wide rattan armchair in which he sat. His hands and arms were like something unreal; the hands like small, fat animals that moved on the table like annoyed creatures; the arms like two massive logs wrapped in bulging cloth. His face was as big as a pale moon, the features sunk in a sea of pale flesh. His mouth was large and thin like the mouth of snake. From his manner, and from where he sat, he was clearly the most important of the five--and the grotesque face was familiar to The Shadow. As he watched, The Avenger tried to search his photographic memory, but for once he could not instantly place the familiarity. Then the fat man spoke.

"So! First Drake brings the fool Silva y Rubio with him, and now this! I am annoyed. Very annoyed. Our entire project is in danger. I have a mind to cancel the whole arrangement! What, have I worked to be betrayed by sheer stupidity!"

The fat man glared at the others. The man to the left of the fat man was small and dark-haired. He sat perched in his chair, his thin hands twisting nervously. But his eyes were hard and as cold as ice. He wore a tiny red rosette in his lapel; the ribbon of the Legion of Honor. As if to confirm his Gallic identity, he spoke now with a heavy French accent.

"Perhaps we do not have to worry. Captain Kyoto has said it will be handled with dispatch."

The fat man glared. "But who sent these two? Eh? Two people we can kill. But who sent them? How much is known? Silva y Rubio learned of our project through the stupidity of our people in Brazil. Who did he tell? Can we be sure?"

The third man was heavy-faced and thick-necked. His eyes were faintly Mongol. He wore no tie, and his chest hair protruded from the open collar of his peasant shirt. He spoke with a Russian accent, and he looked at the fifth man when he spoke.

"That this Silva learned so much was regrettable, yes, but we are sure that he spoke to no one, he could not speak. If those two people were sent to spy on Drake, it could have been from no more than a suspicion that *something* was to happen," the Russian analyzed accurately. "That the Brazilian should never have learned so much is obvious, but we waste time with recriminations. I say we must move faster rather than think to abandon our project. No, we have too much to lose."

The fat man nodded. "Very well," and he glared straight down the table at the fifth man, "but there must be no more errors!"

The fifth man sat at the other end of the table. It was to him that all their complaints seemed to be directed. He was a tall man, thin and stiff as a ramrod. The Shadow could see only his back, a back stiff with anger at the criticism directed at him now. A back that The Shadow recognized! It was, he was sure, the masked leader from New York. No longer masked, here with the leaders of the Group, but with his back turned to The Shadow. The Avenger, crouched at the window, could only hope that the man would turn his head. There were other windows, but where the tall man sat he was in complete shadow, and the black-cloaked crime fighter did not want to leave the window where he was even for an instant while they talked.

The fifth man was angry. "Am I to be blamed? Did I bring this fool Drake into the project? No! That, my good Doctor, was your work!"

The fat man called the Doctor snarled. "Of course it was my work! We need Drake's production facilities, you fool! Men who have the biochemical facilities, and who do not care how they make money and gain power, are not so easy to find! Drake was needed, vital, but it was your province to prevent such mistakes as Silva y Rubio learning too much!"

"Drake brought him! Drake vouched for him! Am I to suspect everyone?" the fifth man roared!

Captain Kyoto smiled. "No, my friend, but you are to suspect all men you are not sure of. To watch at least. In a project such as ours there can be no mistakes. You have made two already. I have had to correct them."

"And allow your men to be killed and captured!" the fifth man snapped.

"They did their work," Kyoto said.

"And I had to make sure they could not talk," the fifth man said.

The fat Doctor slammed his massive fist on the table. "Enough! The mistakes have been made. Now the question is only how bad they were, and what can we expect. Already Drake has been followed. Presumably by the same people who attacked at Riverhead. We know they were stopped from further pursuit at Riverhead. Kyoto says they can no longer follow Drake. We have taken precautions to see that they cannot locate the project by chance. The captured men of Kyoto have been neutralized. Are there any more weak points? Is there any way that we can now be traced further?"

"No," the tall, thin fifth man said, his back still to The Shadow at the window.

"No," Kyoto said. "It is all secure now. We are in no more danger of discovery. I will guarantee that."

The fat Doctor nodded. "Good."

At the window in the dark night, The Shadow smiled to himself. His fiery eyes blazed in the jungle night. Captain, or Comrade, Kyoto had much to learn, would know soon how wrong he was. The other men would be shocked to know how little Kyoto could now guarantee. But The Shadow had made a more important discovery than the overconfidence of Kyoto. From the discussion, and from the appearance of the men at the long table, he knew that this was no meeting of a Communist cell. Ling Soo, as reported by Price-Jones, had been right. Tadeki Kyoto had more on his mind, and in his plans, than the underground work of a single Communist cell. Whatever the Project was it had nothing to do with Communism! Yet Kyoto was a Communist, and one of the men at the long table was a Russian. The Shadow knew now that what these men had in mind was going to affect both sides of the Iron Curtain!

"So," the fat Doctor said. "Are your facilities ready to produce, Monsieur Canet?"

"They are," the small Frenchman said. "I have prepared full security. My workers will have no knowledge of what they produce."

The doctor looked at the Russian. "You are ready to engage in negotiations, Vronski?"

"I am ready," Vronski said.

"And the final stage will be 'go' soon?" the doctor said to the tall, thin man The Shadow could not see.

"We are prepared as soon as you make the last shipment," the tall man said.

The fat doctor stood. "Then we go to the laboratory. The final preliminaries are finished, we are ready to ship. One or two minor tests remain. I suggest we stay together now. We will all go to the laboratory."

The five men stood up. The Shadow, at the window, strained to see the face of the fifth man. But the tall man did not turn as they walked toward the door, and in the next instant the lights went out.

The Shadow glided soundlessly from the window and vanished into the thick jungle growth around the house. He bent low over his ring radio on the left hand.

"Come in, Price-Jones."

The voice of the colonel came from the ring. "Price-Jones standing by."

The Shadow described his present location. "There will be more than one car this time, I cannot risk riding one of their cars. Meet me at once at the crossroads on the highway to Traganore. They must pass that point. Hurry."

"I am close behind you. I'll be there in two minutes," Price-Jones answered.

The Shadow nodded in the night, his eyes watching the five men who waited in front of the plantation house for their cars. Then The Shadow asked, "Any report on Margo and Harry Vincent?"

"Burbank has made no contact for a day," Price-Jones reported.

"Very well. Go to your post."

The Shadow stood and glided away in the night to his meeting with Price-Jones. He would be there before the five men passed.

Margo and Harry Vincent entered the trees at two separate points. Their pursuers paused momentarily, and then split up into groups of four each to follow each of the agents. Soon all of them had faded into the thick forest of trees, leaving the highway silent with its deserted truck, cars and the wrecked car down the slope. Birds flew high, and there were the cries of unseen animals.

Margo plunged steadily ahead through the dense undergrowth. She kept her eyes on the distant sun that could be seen from time to time through the high trees. She moved in a careful wide circle, eventually intending to work her way back to the road. But first there were her pursuers to deal with. She could hear them crashing through the underbrush behind her. They were making no attempt to move silently. Margo smiled. They were too sure of themselves and their ability to catch her. She knew that there were four of them, and she began her plans to escape them.

From the sounds behind her she knew that they were attempting to encircle and cut her off. Two seemed still directly behind her, one moving faster on her right, the fourth coming up on her left. She began to make a trail anyone could follow. After fifty yards of this, she stopped and opened her attaché case. She removed two small canisters no bigger than a spool of thread each, and dug tiny holes in the trail. She buried both canisters very close to the surface, closed her attaché case, moved ahead for another ten yards, then crouched low in the brush and waited. She could hear the two men on the right and left moving noisily to cut her off. She opened her attaché case again and took out a small gas mask. She placed it over her face and waited. She did not have to wait long.

Two men came into sight following her trail eagerly. Each man was armed with a submachine gun. Their eyes were on the ground, following the clear trail. Margo suddenly jumped up, noisily, and pretended to be panicstricken. She turned to run away. The two men raised their guns and ran after her. In their haste they plunged along the trail. There were two faint pops. Clouds of gas rose from the tiny canisters up into their faces. The two men opened their mouths to scream, made half-turns to evade the gas--and collapsed in heaps on the trail. Margo turned and ran back through the thick clouds of gas, her gas mask on. She did not pause to check the two fallen men, the gas was instantly deadly. Both men had died without time for a single scream.

Margo raced back in the other direction. Behind her the other two who had been circling had heard the sounds of their partners running, and now closed in to close their trap. When they did they would find their dead companions. Margo crashed on until she heard the two men stop. They had found the bodies. Now they would be cautious. Too cautious, and the hunted would become the hunter. Margo opened her attaché case and took out a thin spool of wire. She bent down over her trail and stretched a length of the wire across the trail four inches above the ground. She attached one end of the wire to a low sapling, the other end to a hand grenade. She hid the grenade under tufts of grass. Then she closed her attaché case and moved on. Some ten yards away she left the trail, circled back, and climbed a low tree almost directly over the grenade. In the tree she waited with her pistol in her hand.

The two men came cautiously down the trail--one a good ten yards in front of the other. Both men searched the ground, the brush on either side, and the trees very carefully. Margo smiled as she observed their caution. They moved like men stepping on eggshells, their eyes alert, their submachine guns ready. No one could hide in the brush and surprise both of them at once. She had expected exactly that. She watched as they came--and the lead man saw the wire across the trail. The man stopped, held up his hand. Then he grinned at his own cleverness and waved the second man forward. Both men bent down over the wire. They traced to the left and found where it was tied to the tree. They then traced to the right, and the lead man grunted with satisfaction as he found the grenade. Both men stood together and looked down at the grenade trap they had evaded so well by their caution. With such a trap left behind, it never occurred to them that Margo was not far ahead on the trail running for her life. It was their last mistake. Margo shot

them both where they stood. The shots echoed through the silent jungle sending great flights of birds screaming into the air.

Margo climbed down and retraced her steps through the thick brush and high, towering trees. She had come far into the forest, and it was some time before she emerged, again on the steep slope that led up to the wrecked car and the highway. She surveyed the scene carefully. All was quiet. If any other cars had passed they had not stopped. The wrecked car was not visible from the highway, and the presence of parked cars was not unusual on the road from Rio to Brasilia. Margo climbed carefully back to the wreck of her car. It was hopeless, it would not drive again on its own without repairs. Margo continued on up the slope through the sun-browned grass. The truck and two cars stood there empty. She looked at her watch. An hour and a half had passed. She had seen nothing of Harry Vincent since they had split up. She sat down on the grass to wait. She would give Harry an hour, and then she would have to go ahead alone. It was standard procedure for agents of The Shadow. They could give each other all possible help up to a point--the point at which the work took over. The battle against evil allowed no relaxation, and no time wasted on useless aid to each other. The work came first, and Harry knew that as well as she did.

She gave him an hour. Once during that hour she heard firing far off to the south. Then silence. Harry did not appear. The four men who had pursued Harry did not come back. Margo waited until the hour was up. Then she stood up and inspected one of the two cars. The keys were gone, but that did not matter. She took a special key from her attaché case, inserted it in the ignition, and started the car. She was worried about Harry, he should have been back, but she knew that he could take care of himself. They had the prearranged meeting place in Kent Allard's base camp in a village on the Amazon in case they were separated. Now she would have to go ahead alone and hope that Harry would be at the base camp when she arrived there.

She drove as fast as she could, but did not reach Brasilia until just before dark. She knew by the hour that no Government offices would be open. Her visit to General Diaz and the Interior Minister would have to be postponed until tomorrow, but there was work to be done. She wanted to contact the people at Kent Allard's base camp, and she wanted to call in to Burbank and talk to The Shadow, make her report. She drove to the hotel and checked in. The clerk smiled at her.

"Ah, Miss Lane, yes," the clerk said. "We have your room as reserved. Boy!"

The bellboy took her up in the elevator and left her in her room, after waiting politely for his tip. Margo smiled as the boy thanked her in profuse Portuguese for her munificent tip. She continued to smile for a moment after the boy was gone. Then she turned to open her attaché case and get down to work. She had much to report, and much that she wanted to learn of the future plans of The Shadow. She carried the attaché case to the desk in the room. She bent to open it--and she stopped.

She raised up and stood facing the mirror.

The small man with the deeply tanned face and thin mustache stood in the doorway to the bedroom of Margo's suite. He held a pistol with a thick and ugly silencer on it. Margo watched him in the mirror without turning around. The small man smiled easily.

"You are so persistent, Miss Lane. Or should I say Miss Faust," the dapper little man said. "A most excellent job of disguise, I admit. But we really must neutralize you."

Margo's hand moved slowly to open her attaché case.

The small man fired once. The silenced gun spat, *pfffttt*, and the attaché case leaped from the desk and fell to the floor. The dapper little man shook his head, rubbed his mustache with his free hand.

"Charming! You never give up. You must tell me how you managed to elude my men on the highway. Also where your friend Mr. Vincent is at this moment."

Margo's eyes flashed. She knew, at least, that Harry had made his escape. And he would not come here. She turned to face the small man. The man saw her eyes.

"Ah, I have told you that Mr. Vincent is safe. Stupid of me!" the dapper little man said. "I see I am dealing with someone who is no amateur. Good! I like the challenge. Never fear, we will locate Mr. Vincent. But not here, eh? No, of course not. Two experts such as you would have an all-clear signal that must be given-a sort of fail-safe sign, eh? I could make you tell me."

"No," Margo said. "You could not. Why not kill me now and get it over?"

"Kill you? Never, Miss Lane. You will do a lot of talking before we kill you," the swarthy little man said. "We particularly must know who sent you."

The small man waited. Margo said nothing. The small man shrugged and waved his pistol.

"Then I suggest we go."

Margo walked ahead of the small man into the hall. Two other men were waiting. They all walked toward the rear stairs of the hotel. The small man walked smiling behind Margo, his pistol in his pocket but trained on her back.

10

COLONEL WILFRED PRICE-JONES drove the big black car carefully along the back road. The night was dark in the thick jungle of the Malay interior, but the clock on the dashboard glowed green and showed that the dawn was not far off. From time to time on the long trip from the outskirts of Singapore, the big car had passed sleeping villages and the pale-lighted fields of a nation at peace after many years of turmoil. Twice the car had crossed small rivers that ran down toward the sea that lay to the left and not far away. The car had passed no one awake, and for a long time now had passed no villages, no houses at all. It was a deserted and desolate land of jungle and green hills that the man seated in the front seat beside Price-Jones looked out at in the night.

The Shadow had met Price-Jones at the crossroads on the highway to Traganore. Since then they had been following the three cars that had left the plantation on the outskirts of Singapore and turned north. It had been simple to follow the trail of special paint that dripped from the car of Captain Kyoto. Placed on the car by The Shadow while he had ridden it to the plantation, the container of special paint left a trail that could be followed only by the eyes of The Shadow--or the eyes of the man who now sat beside Price-Jones. With the dawn about to break, it was no longer The Shadow who rode in the car with the Colonel, it was Lamont Cranston. The wealthy socialite had explained the necessary change to Price-Jones as they drove following the trail of unseen paint that allowed them to stay far enough behind to cause no suspicion.

"The Shadow would be too conspicuous in daylight in this country, Colonel," Cranston had said when he appeared in the place of the black-cloaked Avenger, the garments of The Shadow secure again inside the secret pockets of Cranston's suit. "Also, we may well have to explain our presence, we are certainly entering the area where our quarry have greatest influence. Cranston has reason to be here. He is, officially, on a business trip to inspect the rubber situation. Stanley is in Singapore to make this very plain in case anyone investigates. For Cranston to be here would be quite plausible."

Price-Jones had nodded. "It is well-known that we are friends. I think we may very well run into observers as soon as it's light."

"I am sure of it," Cranston said. "This is no minor project, they have shown good organization. They'll be careful, Colonel."

Now Cranston watched the green jungle hills to the right and left of the narrow dirt road as the dawn seemed to leap up as it does in tropical lands. His hooded eyes were impassive, but he was thinking hard about two problems. It had been some time now since Burbank had reported any contact with Margo or Harry Vincent, and he sensed that The Shadow was needed in Brazil. But first he had to follow this trail of the five men to its destination. All he could hope for now was that this "laboratory" would somehow lead him to enough knowledge to send him to Brazil knowing at last what it was they were looking for. He knew that it was not a Communist plot, and that it somehow involved chemical or biochemical manufacturing. The involvement of the Frenchman, Canet, and the American, Morris K. Drake, left little doubt that something chemical or bio-chemical was at the root of the project. A project so important to someone that Silva y Rubio, the personal assistant to Drake, had risked and lost his life to try to tell someone about it. And a project that was very near fruition now. All this Cranston thought as he watched the dawn burst over the green jungle growth of Malaysia, watched the sun seem to rise straight up and bright.

"Look!" Price-Jones said.

Cranston looked to the left where the colonel pointed. Two small Malaysians, peasants from all appearances, stood in a small field hacked from the jungle. They had cotton trousers rolled up to their knees, and they worked with hoes. But they were not peasants. It was too early for them to be in the field, and the keen eyes of Cranston saw the weapons hidden under their clothes. The two men were guards of some kind.

Price-Jones nodded to the right a few hundred feet farther on along the dirt back road. Two more peasants were busy in their fields. Cranston watched them closely. They did not appear to be alarmed, only watchful. Cranston considered this. It meant that to be seen on this road was not in itself alarming to the guards. Which meant that the mysterious laboratory must be on some other road.

"Be ready to look for a turnoff, Colonel," Cranston said. Price-Jones nodded. The Colonel drove carefully through the new sunny morning. Cranston watched the trail that was invisible to any eyes but his. The road wound among the green jungle hills. The big car continued to pass peasants in their fields. These peasants looked at them without surprise. It was clear to Cranston that these peasants had been alerted to the presence of the car. They watched, but they were not startled. Three times they passed abandoned rubber plantations, the jungle growing back over the rows of rubber trees. More than once they passed fields of dead vegetation, wide swaths of barren land in the midst of the green and luxuriant jungle growth. Cranston looked at these bare areas. They did not appear to have been burned over, nor did they seem to have been cut clear. It looked more like some natural phenomenon, a plant disease of some kind, and yet the areas were so neat and clear cut. Cranston was puzzled as he noted the barren areas. Some were clear and denuded completely. Others showed the returning growth of the jungle beginning to creep back over them. Cranston's hooded eyes were troubled as he looked at the bare areas. There was something strange about the neat way the vegetation had been cleared. For one thing, there appeared to be little plantation activity in the area--almost as if the neighborhood had been abandoned, and yet here were many cleared fields.

"There, Lamont!" Price-Jones said softly.

It was a half-hidden side road. Cranston looked at it, and at the trail of paint that only he could see. The trail led off down the side road. Cranston looked quickly to the left where the road led. The sea was not more than five miles off to the left.

"Drive on past it," Cranston said.

Price-Jones drove on without either slackening or increasing the speed of the black car. To anyone watching, and Cranston was sure that someone was indeed watching, it seemed that the two men in the car had no interest at all in the side road. The big car drove on steadily in the direction of the village of Tinang. Less than half a mile up the road the car came around a curve and skidded to a halt. Two Malay policemen stood in the road with their hands raised to halt the car. One was a sergeant. The sergeant came to the car while his companion watched them with his rifle ready. He leaned in, all smiles and polite words.

"Good morning, sir. Very sorry, but this is a controlled area. May I know your business here?"

Price-Jones snapped in his best colonial manner. "Colonel Price-Jones and Mr. Lamont Cranston on a trip to Tinang on business. I was not aware that the area was controlled."

"New regulation, sir," the Sergeant said politely, "Do you have identification? Perhaps a pass?"

Price-Jones scowled. "Damned cheek! Here are my papers. Mr. Cranston, we might as well humor the sergeant."

The two men handed their papers to the sergeant. They both had impeccable papers from both the Interior Department and the office of the Prime Minister himself.

"As for a pass," Price-Jones said testily, "we were not informed that one was needed. As you can see, I have a *carte blanche* pass for the entire country. And I suggest you do not delay Mr. Cranston, Malaysia needs business. You can check with the Prime Minister's office in Kuala Lumpur."

The sergeant carefully examined the papers. Then he handed them back. "You will wait for a moment, sir."

The sergeant went to his other soldier. The soldier turned and revealed a large walkie-talkie on his back. The sergeant cranked the instrument and talked for a time. Then he listened, nodded, and walked back to the car where Price-Jones waited in feigned annoyance. The sergeant saluted.

"My apologies, sir. You may go ahead. I suggest you stay close to Tinang, though. There are bandits in the hills, they have been active lately."

Price-Jones nodded, and stepped on the accelerator. The big car leaped ahead and soon left the two Malay soldiers behind. Price-Jones spoke without looking at Cranston.

"If they were police I'll join the Reds."

"No," Cranston said, "they were not police. That walkie-talkie can't have a range above ten miles. I think our friends were checking on us. And I think we satisfied them."

"What now, Lamont?"

Cranston looked behind, and then ahead. The two bogus policemen were out of sight behind, there were no peasants or open fields in sight ahead.

"Pull off the road and hide the car," Cranston said.

Price-Jones found an opening in the heavy growth and pulled off the left side of the road. He drove the car slowly into the brush until it was totally hidden from the road. The two men got out, each took a pistol and checked it, and then Cranston led the way back toward the side road where the trail had turned off. They moved cautiously and silently, making slow progress through the dense jungle growth. The sun was higher now and the heat in the steaming jungle was intense. The two men moved ahead in silence, guided only by Cranston's unerring sense of direction. Twice they crouched deep in the thick fernlike growth as groups of peasants passed--peasants armed with rifles. The groups of armed peasants passed in silence, each led by a single man who carefully searched the jungle with his eyes. Cranston's eyes flashed with the fire of The Shadow as he watched the armed men from deep within the heavy jungle growth--the men were obviously on patrol, and that meant that something was near that did not want the eyes of strangers to see it!

At last they reached the side road some half a mile in from the main dirt road. Cranston saw the invisible path leading away to their right toward the sea. He motioned to Price-Jones to indicate that they would follow the narrow side road but not on it. Through the heat of the jungle day they continued their silent trek through the thick growth. Nothing passed on the narrow road that was little more than a track. But, slowly, the jungle began to thin. There were more open fields. The two men moved warily through the open spaces, and Price-Jones looked at the open fields with surprise.

"Wheat!" Price-Jones said. "Wheat growing here! Lamont, I never heard of wheat growing in Malaysia. And corn, too!"

Cranston pointed to a flooded field. "A rice field. And over there is what looks like a field of potatoes."

Price-Jones said it. "Lamont, it looks like some kind of agricultural test station! As if these are test fields of some kind."

"Exactly," Cranston said, his hooded eyes impassive as ever despite the faint movement of his mouth that betrayed his concern over the sight of these strange fields. "Do you remember the bare fields we passed earlier?"

"You think there is a connection?" Price-Jones said.

"I'm sure of it," Cranston said grimly.

The jungle had thinned now to almost nothing. All around the two men there were the open fields planted with many crops that had no business being planted in Malaya. In the distance they could now hear the sound of the sea, and they felt the force of a steady wind that blew off the sea. They moved more warily. There was little cover now, and they watched on all sides. There was still no sign of buildings or other marks of human habitation, not even the thatched huts of the natives. There had been no signs of life since the last patrol back near the main dirt road through the area. But both men knew that these fields had been planned, laid out and planted by men. Many men from the size and number of the fields. So they moved as low to the ground as possible, taking advantage of any cover that the fields afforded. They were crouched low and moving out into the open once more when Cranston saw the spheres.

"Colonel! Look there!" Cranston hissed low.

They were enormous, bubblelike spheres. Transparent as gigantic soap bubbles in the bright and hot sun. They seemed to float on the wind from the sea. But they did not float haphazardly. They seemed to float as if by a predetermined plan. There were four of them, and they floated in the silent sun and heat side by side so that they covered the entire width of a field of corn directly in front of Cranston and Price-Jones. They moved lazily, shining in the sun, transparent so that the light passed through them. They were as large as artificial satellites, perhaps ten feet across the diameter, and they floated at a definite level some five feet above the ground.

"They can't be empty," Cranston said from where he crouched low in a field of wheat and watched the bubblelike spheres sailing gently in the sun across the field of corn ahead.

"They seem empty, Lamont," Price-Jones said from where he crouched beside Cranston.

"No, the air pressure would burst them if they were empty," Cranston said quietly, "and if they were filled with air they would not float so steadily, they would drop to the ground. If they were filled with some gas much lighter than air they would float up and out of sight. If they were filled with a gas heavier than air they would fall. No, they must be filled with some gas just barely lighter than air to float so steadily at that height."

"What do you think they are, Lamont?"

Cranston shook his head, his face impassive as ever. "I don't know, Colonel."

"They must be made of some kind of plastic," Price-Jones said.

"Perhaps they are weather balloons of some type. This does look like an agricultural test installation, and they use weather balloons sometimes."

"Possibly," Cranston said, but his hooded eyes were not convinced. He continued to study the strange giant spheres as they moved steadily on the wind.

"You'll notice, Colonel," Cranston said slowly, "that the wind is quite steady here."

"West wind, almost always at this time of year, Lamont," Price-Jones said. "Blows from the sea, from the islands out there. You can pretty well count on it until monsoon season."

Cranston nodded. "Yes, I think whoever is floating those spheres knows that. The way they are moving has to be planned, Colonel. They . . ."

Cranston stopped in mid-sentence. He cocked his head to listen. Price-Jones listened also. It was very faint, but there was now an unmistakable sound in the hot and sunny day. A faint hum like the distant sound of bees. Almost a whine, a high-pitched whine so faint it could only just be heard by Price-Jones. To the sharp ears of Cranston, ears with the hearing of The Shadow, the sound was clear and definite--a high-pitched whining buzz sounding like some giant bee very far away. As the two men crouched there in the wheat field the sound seemed to suddenly rise even higher in pitch until Price-Jones could no longer hear it.

"It's gone!" the Colonel said.

"No," Cranston said, "it is still there. It is growing much stronger and higher. I . . . look! The spheres!"

The four gigantic bubblelike spheres had suddenly stopped moving. They seemed to float suspended. They had begun to shiver, to shake and quiver in the bright sunlight as if being shaken by some giant hand. They shook more and more, hovered in the single spot. Then, as Cranston and Price-Jones watched, the four spheres all suddenly burst at once with low popping sounds. One instant they were there, four gigantic transparent spheres quivering in the bright sunlight, and the next instant they were gone!

Where the spheres had been, a pale green cloud began to spread low across the ground in the corn field. The cloud lay close to the ground and spread very slowly in all directions.

Tendrils of the green vapor began to creep along the earth of the field toward where Cranston and Price-Jones crouched and watched. The wealthy socialite waited until the gas had reached the edge of the cornfield. Then he touched Price-Jones.

"We had better leave," Cranston said.

The two men turned and crawled away through the wheat until they reached the edge of the wheat field. A large section of jungle left unchanged for some reason. Cranston had seen the cover. It seemed to lead toward the sea.

Cranston nodded to Price-Jones.

"That whining sound came from down in the direction of the sea, Colonel. I think we will find what we are looking for that way, and not far now."

"I'm ready, Lamont," Price-Jones said.

Cranston led the way into the thick jungle growth. Instantly the two men were once more plunged into the dank gloom of the heavy jungle growth. But they were out of sight now, and Cranston stood and led the way at a faster pace. They had gone nearly a full mile when Cranston tripped on the thick vine that lay across the faint path in the jungle. Price-Jones bent to help Cranston up from where he had fallen.

A vine as thick as a man's arm suddenly whipped up from the jungle floor and wrapped itself around the colonel's waist.

The vine that had tripped Cranston was wound tight around the socialite's ankle.

Another vine seemed to strike like a snake and fasten itself on Cranston's wrist as he pulled at the vine around his ankle.

Price-Jones battled two heavy vines that whipped at his arms.

The two men struggled in silence for a long minute. Then they each looked at the other. The vines whipped up and out of the jungle growth. Cranston stopped struggling for a moment. The vines began to pull at him, began to draw him and Price-Jones to the left of the trail. The two men looked in the direction they were being drawn.

The vines ended fifty feet away in a thick, enormous flower-like growth in the shape of a cup-a cup that was wide open, had long furlike hairs lining its outer edge and an inside lining as red as blood and wet with some sticky liquid. The cup opened and closed like a mouth, an eating mouth!

The vines drew the two men toward the gaping mouth of the meat-eating plant.

In silence they battled the powerful tendrils of vine that locked them in a viselike grip while the hungry mouth waited for its food.

THE VILLAGE was set at a bend in a wide stretch of the great Amazon River. It was a small village with buildings of rough wood and roofed by the jungle plants. Two structures dominated the entire village. The first was the trading store with its long pier jutting out into the mighty river. Behind the store itself was the solid house of the trader, and three more houses of modern and substantial construction that housed the Brazilian officials whose job it was to patrol the vast area near the village and pass on any travelers who wanted to proceed up the river from this point into the still wild and even unexplored areas of the Amazon Basin.

The second structure that dominated the village was also a group of buildings rather than a single house. It was set back some distance from the shore, and stood in a large open space cleared from the ever-encroaching jungle. It was a compound--consisting of a palisade fence, animal cages, an area for the landing of a helicopter, two or three stout sheds to house the helicopter and other equipment, and two rambling single story houses. It was the base camp of Kent Allard. The famous explorer maintained it at all times, leaving it under the care of a caretaker and three other men when he was not there. The caretaker, Joa da Cunha, was a part-African, part-Indian, part-Portuguese man of over sixty, still as straight as a tree and with muscled arms as thick as branches. Joa da Cunha knew the up-river country as well as any man alive, his Indian blood was Jivaro, and he was initiated into the mysteries of many of the shadowy tribes that lived in the still primitive wilderness of the Amazon. He was the best expedition chief Allard had ever found, and to Joa no man on earth could stand in esteem beside Kent Allard. He was only happy when Allard was with him, was about to enter the vast wilderness once more. Joa da Cunha was happy now--an expedition was planned.

The compound bustled with furious activity. The word had come, and Joa was driving his three helpers to do more than was possible. Joa himself was hiring the men necessary for such an expedition--a full trek into the country of the dreaded Jarro. Joa's eyes glowed at the thought. Here was action, and his eyes judged each applicant for the jobs with gimlet suspicion. None but the best men would do for Kent Allard's party, and only the bravest, strongest and most skillful could be trusted in the country of the Jarro. And there was the factor of time. Mr. Allard was due any day. First Miss Margo and Mr. Harry would arrive, and then the boss himself. When the boss came they would start as soon as all was ready, and Joa had every intention of that being within one hour of his arrival! So he drove his men, was ruthless in his interrogation of applicants, was constantly on the radiophone to the trading store to hurry the supplies up river from Belem, and watched every hour for the seaplane, helicopter or boat that would bring Margo and Harry Vincent.

Harry Vincent came by helicopter--but he did not come to the village. He landed some miles away, came through the jungle, and watched the village and the compound from a tall tree on a small hillock just outside the village. He used binoculars to watch, and he was careful to not be seen. What he saw made him know how right he had been.

Harry had escaped the four pursuers on the highway, but it had taken him longer than it had taken Margo. His pursuers had been more wary, perhaps because, like so many violent men, they made the fatal error of underestimating the deadliness of a woman. So that it was not his pursuers who were unduly wary, but Margo's who had been unduly careless. Whatever the case, he had been forced to dispose of his own pursuers one at a time, leaving the last to wander still alive, but

alone, in the forest while Harry worked his way back to the highway. On the highway he had found one car, and Margo, gone. He took the other car and drove on to Brasilia. There he had gone to the hotel and learned that Margo had checked in. But the safe sign was not out. Harry was wary. By a few casual questions he learned the danger--Margo had checked in, yes, but she had also gone out with some "friends." Harry knew that if the "friends" had really been friends the safe sign would have been there. It was not. Worried about Margo, but more worried about the success of the work, he quickly left the hotel to prevent his own capture. It was a wise precaution. He was followed from the hotel. Alert, Harry lost the two men who were after him. He knew that if Margo could she would get a message to the base camp on the Amazon. He hired a plane and the helicopter and flew to the camp. But, again, he was careful, and made his landing miles away and his approach on foot. In the tree, his binoculars trained on the compound, he saw the wisdom of his wariness.

He saw the same two men who had followed him in Brasilia. They were standing casually in the group of applicants for the jobs with the expedition. They were in no hurry to be interviewed by Joa, and in the mob they were not noticed. Harry saw other men lounging near the compound who did not look like simple native workers. Finally, Harry saw and recognized the small, swarthy man with the thin mustache who had been on the jet from New York. Harry watched this dapper man through his binoculars for a long time. Now he knew how Drake had been taken from them, and how Margo and himself had been spotted. The dapper little man had been following them all the way from New York--or, more likely, he had been following Drake! The man had been watching Drake, and had observed the efforts of Margo and Harry to get close to Drake. Harry swore to himself. He and Margo had been too careless, they should have guessed that someone might be watching Drake after what had happened to Silva y Rubio. All right, they had made a mistake, and it looked like the enemy had Margo, but it also looked like they were anxious to catch him, Harry. Then he and Margo had maybe been getting too close--the Jarro country! They were too anxious to stop the expedition, their men all over the village and the compound. At least he now knew that much, and he could warn The Shadow when he arrived. And he could do one thing more, he could save much time by clearing the expedition through the Interior Ministry and the Military.

Harry climbed down from his tree and turned back the way he had come. He moved fast through the dank Amazon Basin jungle to the helicopter. He climbed in and started the powerful rotors. The helicopter lifted off and swung sharply away to the south and east, flying low over the trackless and endless green of the Amazon jungle. He reached Teresina and changed to his hired light plane for the long flight back to Brasilia. He arrived in Brasilia early the next morning after two stops at bush airports to refuel. Every time Harry flew in Brazil he was again amazed and chastened by the size of the giant country, the vast green carpet of the jungle below, the endless great rivers, the jagged back country areas, and the lush spreading savanahs. But this time he could not spend time admiring the land. He reached Brasilia and went straight to the office of the Minister of The Interior.

The minister, a smallish and pleasant man, gave him no trouble. There would be no problem for Senhor Allard to travel to Jarro country as far as the Minister, and the entire Department of the Interior, was concerned. Far from it. The Interior Department knew and loved Senhor Allard, however. . . .

"The matter is, sadly, not entirely in my hands. You must secure the permission of General Diaz. I think there will be no trouble for Senhor Allard."

"Can you give me a note of introduction to General Diaz?" Harry suggested.

"Of course! Consider it done. But, alas, General Diaz is not at the instant in Brasilia. He is on an inspection tour of the back country. Still, he is expected shortly. You must go and inspect our beautiful city while you are waiting."

Harry smiled to show his appreciation of the beautiful new capital city of Brazil, but inside he was thinking hard: Was this the normal Latin wait, wait, wait? Or was he receiving a polite runaround? It began to look as if someone in power did not want the Jarro country visited!

When he left, Harry returned to his room and contacted Burbank to report his suspicions to The Shadow. Burbank took the report. Harry signed off and sat alone in his room wondering how The Shadow was progressing in Malaysia. Then he decided to take the customary *siesta*. He was tired, and he slept.

He would not have slept had he known how The Shadow was really progressing in Malaysia!

The giant vines were like steel bands around the arms and legs of Lamont Cranston. Already Price-Jones, unable to battle as hard, was being drawn close to the gaping red mouth of the carnivorous plant. Cranston struggled in the grip of the vines, but his mind was thinking coolly. Bullets

would be of no value, the plant was not an animal, it had no vital organs. On the other hand it was a plant, and therefore had no bones or muscles in its tendrils. The vines would break if cut and bent against the direction of their strength. The problem was to reach the knife he carried inside his suit. He still had one leg free, his trained agility having kept the one leg free from a vine that still thrashed for it. But both his hands were caught at the wrist.

Cranston concentrated. He focused all the power of the mind of The Shadow into his right arm. He tensed the muscles of his right arm and hand. Then, in a sudden surge, he made his effort. He did not attempt to break the grip of the vine, even The Shadow did not have unlimited strength and the vine was massively strong. Instead, he narrowed his hand suddenly into half its width, partly with his strength and power, and partly with the ancient Oriental fakirs' trick of yoga. It was a skill, a trick, used by many fakirs and many escape artists like Harry Houdini to escape bonds. The difference here was that the vine responded almost instantly to stimulus. The instant the vine felt loss of contact with his arm it would tighten. It was here that the power and skill of only The Shadow could have escaped. One instant the vine held his wrist like a vise, the next instant, under the surge of power from his mind into his trained muscles, his wrist and hand seemed to shrink, he instantly pulled, and before the vine could react, his right hand was free.

The vine responded, thrashed to regain its grip. Cranston caught the vine that held his left hand, pulled it sharply to him with his strength, and, using the power of both hands in opposite directions, snapped the vine off just below his wrist. Both hands were free.

Other tendrils of vine snaked out of the jungle floor to recapture his arms. He fought them off, now that he was aware of them, with his left hand, and reached quickly for his knife with his right hand. It was a large clasp knife he carried. He snapped it open. He slashed three vines in quick succession. They snaked up again. He bent and cut both the vines holding his legs, vines much too thick to break. Once they were cut he suddenly used all his strength to move toward the yawning red mouth that was the center of the carnivorous plant. He went against the power of the vines that were constructed to prevent the escape of a victim away from the plant mouth. Cut as they were, the fibers of the vine had no strength in this direction. They both snapped at his feet and Cranston was completely free.

But not yet safe.

The plant reacted violently, sending other tendrils of vine to recapture him. He slashed them, broke them, trampled them. He picked up pieces of cut vine and let the other vines wrap around them. The plant reacted to any stimulus, it had neither eyes nor brain, and the tendrils wrapped around anything that they touched. Soon he had the plant battling with itself!

He ran to where Price-Jones was almost in the gaping red maw of the horrible plant. With his knife he slashed, cut and tore at the heavy vines close to the writhing mouth that, sensing food, was opening and closing like the slaving mouth of some blind monster. He slashed the mouth itself, sending red liquid oozing down its side. A sticky liquid that drenched Price-Jones and himself. He cut and hacked, tearing at the vines that held the colonel. All this time no sound had escaped Price-Jones. Aware that the more he struggled, the harder the vines would hold, the colonel had remained still, being slowly drawn to the mouth of the carnivorous plant as Cranston hacked. But at last one of Price-Jones' hands came free. The colonel joined the fight. Together the two men finally broke the vines, cut the slobbering plant mouth into pieces, cut down deep into the central ganglia of fibers that controlled the tendril vines, and the vines suddenly went limp and loose.

The plant lay slack.

"Close," Price-Jones said. "Lucky you were with me, Lamont. I don't think any other man alive could have beaten the thing. I've seen them before, deadly man traps."

"It was too near for comfort, Colonel. I feel very little sense of triumph," Cranston said grimly. "I suggest that we . . ."

The thin vine snaked out of the brush, whipped close to the ground toward Cranston's leg.

Cranston held a thick stick out in front of the vine. The vine wrapped around the stick, pulled. Then the vine dropped the stick, flicked like a snake in search of living flesh.

Other vines snaked in from both sides of the two men. Cranston looked to the right beyond the one plant he had destroyed, and then to the left. Price-Jones fought off the vines using the bush-knife he carried for clearing brush. But the vines kept coming. Cranston spoke low.

"Quick, Colonel, run this way!"

Cranston led the way not back to the safety from which they had come, but ahead toward their goal.

At one point four giant vines rose up in their path. They towered and waved, striking out like great snakes. With his amazing speed, Cranston deftly dodged them, left them writhing on the ground behind him. Price-Jones cut down the two in front of him with his bush knife. Both men broke clear. They stopped and looked behind them to where the vines flicked and groped like blind creatures but could reach no farther from their cavernous red mouths. Cranston looked again to the right and to the left in the gloom of the jungle. Vines lay quiet, or flicked idly in both directions into the distance.

"A line of them, perhaps across the entire patch of jungle," Cranston said. "Would you say that was normal, Colonel?"

"I would say it was very abnormal, Lamont," Price-Jones said as he looked at the tendrils from the hidden flesh-eating plants. "Normally you find one or two in a large area, no more. These are too close, too many of them."

"As if planted," Cranston said.

Price-Jones nodded. "Yes. I'd say it was a kind of trap. A line of defense, you could say."

"A line of defense exactly," Cranston said grimly. "I expect that most men caught in them would scream, call for help. Then the guards could easily find them."

"But we got through," Price-Jones said.

"Yes, we got through," Cranston said, "but I doubt whether it will be the last trap. We'll have to keep our eyes open now."

Price-Jones nodded, and the two men continued through the gloom of the jungle toward the sea. The sound of water breaking on rocks was faint but unmistakable now. The steady breeze did not reach into the jungle, but high up the tops of the dark trees moved gently. Cranston and Price-Jones were very careful, but there were no more traps, no sign of activity or even life since the giant bubblelike spheres had floated so silently in the hot air to burst and release their faint green vapor. Cranston's impassive face watched everything, studied the dim growth of jungle. There was no more sign of activity. Beyond the wide strip of heavy growth they were using for cover the open fields of crops that were not native to the Malay Peninsula stretched all around. And yet the socialite had the feeling that they were being watched, observed. His super vision and hearing located nothing. Still, he was uneasy--something was very strange about this seemingly innocent Agricultural Station. Somehow, the key was the giant spheres--but what did they mean?

"Lamont!" Price-Jones whispered, suddenly crouched low in the jungle growth.

Cranston saw the thinning of the jungle, the brighter sunlight ahead--and the low building across the open space beyond the jungle edge. It was a long, single storey building without windows, and seemed to merge into a low hillside. There were two other smaller outlying buildings that seemed to be normal plantation buildings--single storey structures made of local materials and with palm-thatched roofs. Cranston, studying the buildings, saw that the main building, the low concrete structure without windows, was camouflaged on top and would not be seen from above. This was the building Cranston watched.

And as he watched the roof of the building seemed to open, a wide rectangular space opened, and four more of the giant spheres came out one at a time. They floated slowly up, hovered in the bright sun, and then settled to exactly five feet above the ground. The wind seemed to catch them and they sailed off across the fields in precise line exactly five feet above the ground. Cranston watched them go. He turned to Price-Jones.

"That must be our goal, Colonel. Now we must get inside."

Price-Jones studied the building. "No windows and no doors from the look of it."

"There has to be an entrance."

"How do we get close? That's open land all the way," Price-Jones said.

Cranston pointed to the right. A grove of trees stretched in a straight line from the edge of the jungle almost to the building. They seemed to border some kind of water. Cranston wasted no more time on words, but led Price-Jones through the edge of the jungle to the line of trees. They did border a kind of stream that ran down toward the sea. The two men followed the trees, keeping low and hidden. From time to time Cranston stopped and looked around. He still felt that they were somehow being watched. But even his super vision could detect nothing specific. As they approached the corner of the concrete building they moved more cautiously than ever. Close, the building was even larger than they had thought. Its blank walls stretched out of sight from the corner in both directions until the side wall blended into the small hill.

"Underground," Price-Jones said. "The entrance must be some kind of tunnel."

"Yes," Cranston agreed.

The socialite let his hooded eyes study the ground along both walls. He saw a heavy growth of trees and bushes one-third of the way along the side wall. The line of trees that bordered the stream led directly to this clump. Cranston considered, and guessed that the avenue of trees, and

the clump, were designed to camouflage any activities from aerial observation. Which meant that, if he were right, the clump of trees should conceal an entrance!

"Come on," Cranston said.

Price-Jones followed his Chief along the avenue of trees until they reached the clump.

The opening was large and set in concrete. It was like a small pillbox with a door, a steel door. Cranston inspected the door. It was locked. There was no key hole and no visible lock.

"Electronic," Price-Jones said.

Cranston nodded and reached into his pocket for a tiny square instrument. He held the instrument against the door and pressed a button. The dial of the instrument moved steadily upward. When the dial registered three-quarters of its full range there was a low click and the door slid open. Cranston and Price-Jones went through. They found themselves in a sloping tunnel. Cranston and Price-Jones walked down the slope of the tunnel in the pitch dark. After a time the tunnel leveled and there was light ahead. They reached the light and saw a long, narrow room. They entered the room warily. Suddenly there was noise ahead, the sound of voices. Cranston looked around. There was a door to the left.

"Quick!" Cranston hissed.

The socialite and Price-Jones opened the door and jumped through. They closed the door behind them. The voices grew close outside the door in the long room. Cranston and Price-Jones tensed where they stood behind the door they had come through. The voices passed and went away in the direction of the hidden tunnel entrance. Cranston smiled and looked around the room they were now in. It was a strange room. Its light was weak and indirect, a silver-blue light of great intensity. In the center of the room there were mountings for instruments. Around the opposite wall there were more doors--doors with glass panels in them as if for observation of what went on in the room. The room itself had a round curved ceiling. The left wall of the narrow side of the room was blank and flat. But it was the right narrow wall that Cranston stared at.

The right end of the room was screened, and behind the screen there seemed to be a giant propeller!

"Colonel! This is a wind tunnel! They must . . ."

Cranston got no farther. He saw the faces at the glass plates in the doors in the opposite long wall. Faces that smiled.

The propeller behind the screen began to turn. Cranston tried to open the door they had come in through. It was locked.

"Quick!" Cranston cried.

He ran toward the blank wall. Price-Jones followed. The propeller fan turned faster. A great wind filled the room. "Against the wall!" Cranston cried. "The wind will smash us against the wall if we try to fight it!"

The fan turned faster. The force of the wind in the room began to shake the walls. Cranston and Price-Jones flattened against the blank wall at the far end from the fan. The wind rose higher and higher, tearing their clothes, smashing against them.

They stood against the wall, their arms out, spread-eagled flat by the power of the wind that was so strong even Cranston could not fight it. Cranston could not move. The force of the incredible wind pressed him against the wall as if held by some giant hand. He could barely breathe. The wind blew so hard there was no way to breathe. He sucked for air. It was no use.

The two men slumped unconscious, pinned like flies to the wall.

The faces at the glassed doors watched.

After a time the wind stopped and the door opened. The faces came into the wind tunnel. They were led by the grotesquely fat doctor. The fat man smiled as he looked at the two unconscious men who had fallen to the floor when the wind stopped.

12

LAMONT CRANSTON revived almost the instant the wind stopped. The moment he could breathe again he was fully conscious and alert. He flickered his hooded eyes open. He saw the obscenely fat doctor approaching with his smile, and he saw the Japanese, Kyoto, behind the doctor. He closed his eyes and concentrated to perform his shallow-breathing that would make them think him still unconscious. He knew that only the powers of The Shadow had enabled him to revive so quickly. They would expect him to be still unconscious. They would not be suspicious, and, for now, Cranston would let them think they had him captured and helpless.

The fat man bent over Cranston and Price-Jones. "So this is Lamont Cranston," he said. "It seems we have a formidable opponent, gentlemen."

"What about the other one?" the Frenchman, Carnet, said. "Colonel Price-Jones, as the guards reported," Captain Kyoto said. "I know of him. A typical ex-colonial type. Spends his time at The Plantation Club bemoaning the old days when we lesser races bowed low when he passed."

The monstrous doctor rubbed his fat chins. "I wonder, Kyoto? They did not come here accidentally. Perhaps your colonel is a bit more than he seems."

"Kill them and forget it," Kyoto snapped.

"Yes, of course, but not quite yet," the fat doctor said, and motioned abruptly. Six Malaysian guards came quickly into the room. "Pick them up and take them to Room 19."

Cranston felt himself lifted and carried away out of the wind tunnel. His hooded eyes barely open, he watched where he was being taken. He saw the well-lighted corridors of the building, the chemical and biological laboratories through their glassed doors, the offices and sleeping quarters. But he was thinking of something else--he was thinking of what a wind tunnel was doing here in this remote laboratory? There was only one answer, and it related to the giant bubblelike transparent spheres. The spheres were carried by wind, and the wind tunnel must have been used for early tests to determine the exact flight pattern of the spheres under various wind conditions! Then whatever the project was, the spheres were at the heart of it. Cranston was still considering this when he was dropped to the floor in a small, well-lighted room that had no windows and a steel door. He saw the monstrously fat doctor, Kyoto, and the Frenchman, Carnet, standing over him. They were not aware that he was conscious.

"They will revive soon," the doctor said. "Why not kill them now?" Kyoto said.

"Yes," Carnet said. "Kill them at once. We are almost at the final stage!"

The doctor shook his head sadly. "Surrounded by fools. Has it escaped your attention, gentlemen, the peculiar facts here? Consider. Silva y Rubio, assistant to our friend Drake, learned of Windwar, of its methods and purpose, and risked his life to escape and tell someone. The person he chose to try to reach was somehow connected to Lamont Cranston Enterprises. We are sure that the Brazilian did not talk--yet Cranston is here! In addition, the woman we have in Brazil is Margo Lane, secretary to Lamont Cranston! No, this is much too much. The Lane woman followed Drake. But how did Cranston get *here*?"

"He could not have followed us!" Kyoto said.

"But he did, you fool!" the grotesquely fat man said. "I am not fool enough to think that our work has gone entirely unseen! No, for someone with an organization we could be found, and we have been. Which means that Mr. Cranston here is much more than he seems, and has some kind of organization. I would guess that our *pukkah* colonel belongs to that organization."

The doctor stopped and looked down at Cranston. Price-Jones was beginning to stir. Cranston also pretended to be coming out of the unconscious state. The fat doctor rubbed his chin.

"The question now is just what organization are we dealing with, and is Cranston its head or only another member," the doctor said.

"We have ways of learning," Carnet said.

"True. But direct questioning, a little fear, is sometimes quicker," the fat man said.

Cranston stirred, groaned, but now he was suddenly thinking of something more important than the threat of torture he had just heard. He had recognized the fat doctor! The unusual failure of his photographic memory and total-recall mind had occurred for a good reason--the doctor had been bearded and not fat when The Shadow had last heard of him. Doctor Rudolf Mannheim! There was no doubt now. The mind of The Shadow, alert behind the hooded eyes of Lamont Cranston, had at last analyzed and recognized Mannheim. Dr. Rudolf Mannheim, the high-ranking Nazi, the agricultural expert of Hitler's Third Reich! And Cranston now understood both his failure in recognition at first, and the reason for the complete change in Mannheim. The Doctor was high on the list of wanted war criminals--and had been listed as missing and presumed dead for all the years since the war. But, like Eichmann, he had at last been found! Found alive, well, and at the head of some diabolical project called-Windwar! But what was Project Windwar? What was the faint greenish gas inside the giant spheres that moved on the wind, that were burst and the gas released by some distant whine.

"Ah, our friends awake," the grotesquely fat Mannheim said quietly. "Sit them up, Kyoto!"

Cranston was picked up and sat in a chair. A weak and groggy Price-Jones sat in a chair beside him. Kyoto and Carnet were across the room against the wall. Two armed guards stood silent in the cell-like room. Dr. Rudolf Mannheim stood over them, smiled. Then the hulking mass of flesh pulled up a chair, sat down, and beamed at Cranston and Price-Jones as the chair groaned under his vast bulk.

"So, Mr. Lamont Cranston, we have the pleasure of meeting. And Colonel Wilfred Price-Jones! I must say I am honored by a visit from such distinguished gentlemen."

"What the devil do you mean by . . ." Price-Jones began to say angrily.

The doctor waved a fat hand. "Please, Colonel, no bluster. We are not your old natives. You did not stumble into our laboratory, and our wind tunnel, by accident. No, my dear Colonel, I think you are much more than you want the world to think you are, eh? Tell me, how did you learn about us? How much do you know, eh? That is the question. How much do you actually know, and how many more of you are there?"

The obese doctor looked speculatively at Price-Jones, but it was Cranston who answered.

"We know about Windwar and about the spheres, Mannheim," the socialite said.

Mannheim cocked a fat eyebrow. "So?"

Kyoto burst out. "They know! You heard him, Doctor! He knows the code name and about the spheres. Kill them now!"

"How could he know that much? It is impossible! He must know all, they must know it all. The Lane woman was in Brazil after Drake!" Carnet the Frenchman said.

"Kill them now, Doctor!" Kyoto hissed again.

Mannheim still watched Cranston. Now he waved his horribly fat hand. "Tut, gentlemen, let us not be hasty. If they know all, then it is imperative that we know who else knows. On the other hand they may not know as much as it sounds. In which case we should know that also. However, Mr. Cranston seems to know one fact I find exceedingly interesting. How do you know who I am, Mr. Cranston?"

Cranston realized that he had partially made a mistake--or that it looked like a mistake. It was, actually, a calculated risk. He was sure that Mannheim would be more than surprised to know that Cranston knew who he was--and that it would distract him from Price-Jones, and perhaps even from the immediate concern. At least it could make the obese German make a mistake.

"Who doesn't know Dr. Rudolf Mannheim, The *Reichs-Farmer*!"

Mannheim smiled. "A clever name, true. But there are a great many who do not know that Rudolf Mannheim is alive, or that I am he."

"I tell you, Doc, he knows too much!" Kyoto said.

"Quiet!" Mannheim snapped, his pig eyes set in the deep layers of fat and fixed on Cranston. "Tell me how you know who I am! And do not lie, I'll know if you lie."

Cranston smiled. "As it happens I have many business dealings all over the world, quite a few in agriculture. I was an expert with the Nuremberg Courts and the Occupation Forces after the war. The name and face of Rudolf Mannheim was something I got to know so well I dreamed about you. You've changed, yes, but I recognized you--especially since the fields we came through were obviously test fields, the work of agronomists!"

Mannheim studied Cranston. Then the grotesquely fat man nodded. "It sounds true, with the rather amazing proviso that you could recognize me now. Still, it is possible, I admit that." And Mannheim continued to study Cranston. "You know who I am. Very well. The question still is what else do you know? You are, I think, a clever man, Mr. Cranston. You are also very observant, and you have an incredible memory. You also have many friends to judge by the fact that we have been annoyed by questioners in both Brazil and here."

Cranston broke in. "What have you done with Margo?"

Mannheim waved impatiently. "That is of no importance now. Let us see what you do know. First, the spheres. That is nothing. You saw them as you came here. We had not yet become aware of you at that time, our normal work continued. Hence, you saw the spheres. The name of our project, Windwar, is more puzzling. How did you learn that name? Would you care to tell me?"

Cranston's face was impassive. "I think I'll let you worry about that."

"So?" Mannheim said softly. "That, I think, is a mistake, Mr. Cranston. Without knowing how you know, I must assume that you know far too much as Comrade Kyoto here insists." Mannheim paused and smiled humorlessly. "Or perhaps you don't quite know as much as you say. You are a clever man. But how much do you know? If you really knew more than you have told us, as you are trying to imply, why would you come here? And with only the colonel? No, you came here *to learn what we are doing*. Which means that you do not know. You sent your secretary to question Drake in Brazil, which also means that you are trying to find out what Projects Windwar is. If you knew, Miss Lane would not have resorted to such a clever, but essentially slow, disguise and method of questioning Drake."

Mannheim smiled again. "No, I do not think that you know much yet. If you did, you would not be here. If you knew anything of importance you would not be searching so diligently. You would not have risked coming this close to us. You could not have learned anything from Silva y Rubio, or you would have learned everything, eh? I do not think that the Brazilian, in his condition, would have wasted his last breath on my name, the name of Windwar, the location of this laboratory. No, he would have gasped out the important details, not the trivia."

Cranston listened as the fat doctor talked on. He had no interest in the essentially correct analysis of Mannheim, that much he had expected. Mannheim was no fool. But, like all fanatics, Mannheim was unknowingly telling Cranston much. He had already told Cranston, without

meaning to, that Project Windwar had some strong connection to agriculture. But most important, Mannheim had told him one major fact--the heart, the center, of the Project was not here in Malaysia. Despite the presence of Mannheim and all the others, the vital part of Windwar was somewhere else. And that somewhere else had to be Brazil! Unaware of what he had told Cranston, Mannheim went on talking.

"You see, though, we are quite certain that the Brazilian could have gasped out nothing! I assume that you were there when he died, eh? That can be the only explanation of how you are here. You somehow traced the killers of Rubio." Mannheim sighed deep inside his mammoth body of fat. "There are always such risks, as my Fuhrer learned. The risks of having an organization. One must have men, and one must use them. This, alas, leaves one open to the errors and stupidities of those men. Somehow, you traced the killers of the Brazilian to us."

Captain Kyoto was angry. "That is not possible! One was killed. One died in prison, that we know. The other was killed before he could . . ."

Mannheim smiled as Kyoto stopped. "Yes, Captain Kyoto, we are not sure about the third, are we? Dai Abdul Chinnah. Our friend in Brazil reported that Dai was followed. He reported that there was something odd about Dai escaping the police when the other two failed to escape. It strikes me now that perhaps Dai talked *before* he met our friend from Brazil! Then there was that strange person in black, eh?"

Kyoto was silent for a long moment. Then the Japanese nodded sharply. "Yes, it is possible. It is the only way this one could have traced us. Dai could have been traced to me."

Mannheim smiled. "Ah, Japanese candor when faced with the truth. Yes, Kyoto, I believe you are our weak point this time. You must be more careful in the future."

Kyoto merely bowed his head. Mannheim turned again to Cranston and Price-Jones. Mannheim seemed to be thinking of just what measures to use to learn what he wanted to know.

"However, none of this comes to the vital point--how can we be sure just how much, or how little, you know. It is not a matter of life and death, you understand? You must die, both of you. You know far too much no matter how little. It is only a question of how you die; of a long and painful death, or a quick and painless one, eh? You could save yourselves much pain by telling us just what you do know, and who else knows. Otherwise . . ." Mannheim shrugged, smiled. "You have seen Silva y Rubio? Yes, of course. What you saw is an interesting little byproduct of our Project. Trivial, really, a mere plaything. But quite useful. It is a most peculiar poison that renders the victim blind and unable to speak anything but gibberish. Eventually it kills. I am told that by varying dosage it can be quite painful. Then we have many other methods. My associate, Captain Kyoto there, is a master of the methods of pain. Oh, he is most expert. I have never seen him kill a subject before they told us what we needed to know. I have never, in the end, seen anyone fail to talk. Usually, gentlemen, they tend to talk at very great length after Comrade Kyoto has completed his ministrations. Believe me, make your death as easy as possible since you will tell us what we must know in the end anyway."

Mannheim stopped, waited, looked from Cranston to Price-Jones and back again to Cranston. "No? Come, gentlemen, what do you hope for? Some miraculous rescue? What can help you here? We know that you came alone. If anyone is following you, they will not find you. And if by chance they do stumble upon us they will only share your fate. We are watching all roads here. Who do you expect? That strange creature in black? Come, come, what can he do for you here even if he appeared? Tell me who he is, that man in black, eh? I want to know just exactly how you got here, who else knows about Windwar, and the names of the other members of your organization."

Cranston sat silent. Price-Jones glared at the obese doctor. Mannheim sat placidly and waited another minute. The long, slow ticking of a single minute in the cell-like room. No one moved. Mannheim waited. Then the grotesque fat man stood up, his flesh shaking like a mass of thick jelly. He waved his fat hand in a single abrupt motion.

"Take them!"

Without again looking at them, Mannheim turned and waddled from the room without a glance back. Carnet followed the doctor. Kyoto stood alone in the room with the two silent guards and his two victims. Price-Jones licked his lips as if they were dry, but the ex-colonel's eyes were firm and unyielding. Cranston's face remained as impassive as ever.

Kyoto continued to stare at them for some time. Cranston smiled to himself behind his hooded eyes. The Japanese was working on their nerves. The socialite allowed himself some nervous moves. He made his hands sweat and wiped them on his trousers. Kyoto smiled. Cranston pretended that he was trying to hide his sweating palms. Kyoto spoke to the guards. They turned and left the cell-like room. Kyoto let his cold eyes fix on Cranston and Price-Jones.

"In five minutes I return. Think carefully. When I return, it will be too late," Kyoto said.

The Japanese spun on his heel and walked from the room. The door closed and locked.

The two prisoners were left alone to sweat, to wonder what Kyoto would bring when he returned.

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THE FIVE minutes passed.

The sound of feet came along the corridor outside the room where Cranston and Price-Jones waited. The sound of feet and of something else--a squealing of metal wheels. Something was being wheeled toward the room. The squealing was high-pitched. A grating sound that was jagged on raw nerves.

The sounds stopped outside the door.

There was a silence, a long pause.

Then the door was flung open and Kyoto stepped into the room, turned without looking at the prisoners, and motioned sharply to the two guards in the corridor. The guards wheeled a strange looking cart into the room. On the cart there was a blowtorch, some long, thin knives, and an electronic instrument of some kind. Kyoto turned back to face his victims--and stopped.

Only Price-Jones sat before the Japanese.

Kyoto stared.

That instant all the light in the room went out.

Kyoto cried out, "The light, I . . . !"

Behind the Japanese the door to the room slammed shut in the dark. The room was now pitch dark. The two guards began to swear. Kyoto shouted.

"Be ready! Watch them!"

The two guards held their weapons ready, but in the sudden dark they could see nothing.

The eerie laugh was low and chilling in the dark room.

"What! Who . . . ?" Kyoto blurted.

The weird laugh echoed low again. There was a faint sound and two burning eyes seemed to appear from nowhere. The two eyes and a hawk nose were illumined beneath the wide brim of a black slouch hat. Below the hawk nose there was a high collar and a black cloak that faded off into the dark. A long finger pointed at Kyoto, a glowing red fire-opal on the finger. In the other hand The Shadow held the electronic instrument he had used to turn out all light in the room.

"Who . . ." Kyoto began. "Who . . . ?"

The Shadow mocked. "You come to strike fear, Tadeki Kyoto, but it is fear that now strikes you!"

Kyoto swore, pulled himself together. "Who are you? How did you get in here!"

"I am called The Shadow, Tadeki Kyoto, and there are no secrets from The Shadow. No walls can stop The Shadow." Kyoto stared, licked his dry lips. "Cranston! What have you done with Cranston?"

The voice of The Shadow was harsh. "Do not worry about Cranston, worry about yourself! The weed of crime bears bitter fruit, Tadeki Kyoto."

As if this threat brought him back to his senses, Kyoto suddenly laughed his own laugh. The Japanese narrowed his hard eyes and looked at the macabre shape of The Shadow. Kyoto turned to his men.

"Kill him! Kill them all, now!"

The two guards had been staring at The Shadow, fear naked in their dark eyes. Now, as Kyoto commanded them to kill, the fiery eyes of The Shadow turned to them. A chilling smile showed in the blaze of his eyes as he watched the guards. He watched them try to raise their rifles.

Nothing happened. They seemed unable to move, unable to obey the commands of Kyoto. The Shadow's eyes glowed. Since they had entered the room the power of his mind to cloud the minds of men had been at work on the two guards. They stood as if in a deep fog, a deep trance. Their wills were gone. They could do nothing but stand and hear in their clouded minds the silent commands of The Shadow. They had no minds of their own. Their minds belonged to The Shadow, to the power of his brain and will that reached unseen with silent fingers of force that left them powerless, their minds in a deep and pleasant mist. Their bodies and their minds were detached, unable to work together in the grip of the power of The Shadow.

Kyoto screamed. "Shoot! Kill him, you fools! There, you can see him! Kill him!"

The laugh of The Shadow mocked the Japanese. The power of his mind reached out to invade the brain of Kyoto. Thin fingers of his power delicately touched the brain of the Japanese. As if aware of what was happening, or aware that *something* was happening to him, Kyoto suddenly emitted a loud, harsh cry: *eee-yaghhhh!*

Kyoto charged, leaped high for a deadly *karate* side-kick. The Shadow moved faster than the eye could follow. Kyoto was in the air, his kick aimed. He kicked out at the dark shape of The Shadow.

The kick never landed.

When the kick lashed out, The Shadow was not there. Kyoto landed, recovered expertly, prepared to attack again. The edge of The Shadow's hand caught him full across the neck. There was a snap. Kyoto dropped dead to the floor of the dark room. The Japanese uttered one choked cry and lay dead on the floor. The two guards made no move. They watched as if uninterested in anything that had happened. Their eyes looked curiously at the body of Kyoto, and then looked away toward The Shadow as if for orders as to what to do next. Price-Jones was on his feet. The Colonel also waited for orders.

"We must locate the others, especially Mannheim!" The Shadow said, and he ordered the guards. "Open the door. You will walk in front of us to where Doctor Mannheim is!"

"We do not know where the Doctor is," one of the guards said.

"Take me where he might be," The Shadow commanded.

"Yes," the two guards said at once.

The guards opened the door into the corridor. Price-Jones and the back-shrouded shape of The Shadow followed them. In the corridor the guards turned to the right. They moved carefully along the corridor. Fifty yards along the corridor there was a cross corridor. Three of Mannheim's Malay guards were coming down the side corridor. They smiled a greeting to their fellow guards until they saw Price-Jones and The Shadow. Then the leader of the three barked a challenge.

"Stop! Why do you take . . ."

The two guards with The Shadow opened fire. Their comrades returned the fire. In an instant the corridor was a battlefield. The sound of the firing echoed up and down the corridors of the secret headquarters. Moments later all three of the attacking guards were dead. One of the guards with The Shadow remained alive and unhurt. The Shadow commanded urgently.

"Quick! Where we will find Mannheim!"

The Shadow urged the surviving guard on along the main corridor. Speed was vital. The shots would have been heard in all parts of the building. The Shadow and Price-Jones hurried along behind the guard. Suddenly a voice boomed out over a loudspeaker. It was the voice of Mannheim.

"They are escaped! Stop them! The one in black, capture him!"

The Shadow realized that Mannheim must have a closed-circuit television system and had seen him. The Avenger bounded ahead to the single guard.

"Where is the main power source?"

"Ahead," the guard said. "The next corridor left."

"Hurry!" The Shadow commanded.

They turned into the left corridor. Guards ran up along the main corridor. Price-Jones, with weapons taken from the fallen guards, covered the rear. The Shadow reached the main power room. He concentrated the power of his mind on the power room. There was a flash and all the lights went out. The corridors were now dark, all electric power shut off. In the darkness The Shadow, his piercing eyes able to see as clearly as if it were day, urged the guard and Price-Jones along. There were the sounds of panic in the corridors and darkened rooms of the hidden building. Caught by surprise, the guards did not yet have their emergency lights ready. From time to time, as they moved in silence along the dark passages, The Shadow and his companions saw the beams of flashlights in the distance down side corridors. From time to time they came across milling groups of guards that The Shadow disposed of like some unseen arm of the dark itself. At last they reached a large room filled with equipment.

"Here," the last guard said. "Control room."

But the room was empty. The eyes of The Shadow took in the room at a glance. He saw the television monitors. This, then, was where Mannheim had been just before the power failed. But the horribly fat ex-Nazi was no longer in the room. No one was in the room. The Shadow turned to the guard.

"Where else? Quick!"

"His office. The laboratory," the guard said.

"Hurry!" The Shadow commanded.

They moved again along the dark corridors. But now the eyes of The Shadow glowed with question. He stopped them. Price-Jones watched his chief. The Shadow was listening. Price-Jones listened.

There was no sound anywhere.

Price-Jones listened. "Too quiet, Chief!"

"Yes, Colonel, much too quiet. Hurry!"

They moved on in the now silent dark corridors of the building. It was an eerie silence. Nothing seemed to move anywhere. The sounds of their feet echoed in the dark. The eyes of The Shadow blazed as he listened to the silence.

"All gone so quickly! How could they leave so quickly? Guard, where have they gone?"

"I don't know," the guard said. "They were ready. Today was the leaving day."

"Quick then, Colonel!" The Shadow cried.

Moments later they reached the dark and deserted laboratory. One look and The Shadow knew what had happened. The laboratory was stripped. Empty packing crates littered the floor. The laboratory had been packed and ready to move. He glided across the deserted laboratory to the office of Doctor Mannheim. It, too, was stripped. The file cabinets were empty. The desk was empty. The Shadow's eyes burned in anger. He spoke to Price-Jones.

"They were ready to move. Undoubtedly everything was loaded. When I destroyed the power Mannheim decided to run rather than fight. There is no time to lose, Colonel."

The Shadow spoke to the guard. "How did they leave? Where is the way out?"

"Only the tunnel and the elevators," the guard said. "The tunnel is too far, and the elevators could not operate without power," The Shadow said grimly. "There must be . . ."

He stopped. His keen ears had heard a sound. A faint banging sound. The Shadow glided away in the direction of the sound. The guard and Price-Jones followed. The sound came from down a short corridor that led from the laboratory. The Shadow floated in the dark along the corridor until he came to a doorway. He opened the door and stepped into a small room that had been a storeroom but that was empty now. He saw the man across the room banging frantically on the wall. It was Carnet, the Frenchman!

The Shadow moved soundlessly toward the frantic Frenchman. But the guard and Price-Jones could not be as soundless and the small man heard them. Carnet jumped around. There was a pistol in his hand. His eyes were wild with fear and panic. The man had lost all reason, all sense of rational thinking. The Shadow had seen men like this before--the merchants of death, the men with power over other men, who are faced at last with power that can destroy them, with the potential of their own deaths, and who crack into small, gibbering pieces. Fear was in control of the mind of Carnet. There was no time for any course but one.

The Shadow shot Carnet a split second before the Frenchman fired.

Carnet fell back against the wall, pitched forward onto his face, and lay still. His bullet had gone harmlessly wild over the head of Price-Jones. The Shadow went to the man quickly, but his instantaneous shot had been too good. Carnet was dead. The Shadow stood and looked at the wall with his fiery eyes. In the dark his long, sensitive fingers touched the wall, moved across it feeling.

"He must have been left behind by some accident, Colonel," The Shadow said. "I was certain there would be some emergency escape exit closer than the tunnel we entered through. Carnet knew the exit, but not how to operate it. It is typical of men like these that they would not care who they left behind to escape as best he could."

"They run like the rats they are, the lice!" Price-Jones said.

The Shadow shook his head. "No, I don't think Mannheim is a coward. I believe that it suited him to abandon this laboratory rather than waste the time and effort in attempting to recapture us. He did not know exactly how we escaped, or what his men would face. I think he was ready to abandon this phase of Project Windwar, and simply took advantage of that fact to leave immediately. That way, Colonel, he could be sure there would be no mistakes, no more accidents, and that we would learn nothing further!"

Price-Jones nodded. "Of course. Simply good logistics. I would do the same myself. So he eludes us?"

The Shadow's eyes blazed. "Perhaps not!"

The long fingers of The Shadow had detected the faint hairline crack in the metal wall of the storeroom. He concentrated his mind, all his power, on the wall. Suddenly, it slid open. The Shadow smiled his triumphant smile.

"So, the emergency exit works on its own power source! Mannheim is very careful and thorough. Let us see how quick he is!"

The Avenger turned, ordered the guard to remain where he was. Then he beckoned to Price-Jones, and the two men went through the opening in the wall. As they climbed the narrow flight of spiral stairs that mounted upward, Price-Jones held one rifle and carried another over his back. The Shadow had an automatic in each hand, the guns taken from their secret hiding places where they had not been found under the innocent suit of Lamont Cranston. The Avenger mounted swiftly up the spiral stairs. The stairs did not go far. They ended at a small metal door. This door was not locked. The Shadow went through followed by Price-Jones.

The two men stood in the bright sunlight, The Shadow a strange and macabre shape in flowing black in the glaring light. They were on the crest of the hill behind the building and above the sea that broke far below on a rocky cliff. At first they saw nothing. The empty sea dotted with islands, the barren hill, the deserted fields stretching in the sun to the edge of the green jungle. Then The Shadow pointed his long arm.

"There!"

To the right and below, on the sea, three large motor boats bobbed close to shore. A long pier jutted out to where the last of the boats was tied to it. The other two boats were already underway, circling just beyond the edge of the pier. Men crowded the decks of all three boats.

"Come!" The Shadow said sharply.

Price-Jones followed the black-garbed Avenger down a narrow trail in the cliff face that seemed to lead to the pier. It was a steep and narrow trail. They could not move fast. When they finally came out of the trail the pier was still some five hundred yards away and the last boat was speeding off. The Shadow and Price-Jones reached the pier. They saw the grotesquely fat figure of Mannheim standing in the stern of the last boat. Beside him they saw the Russian and the tall man whose face was still not known to them. The boats headed out toward one of the many islands. As The Shadow watched, a large jet aircraft appeared from the north and circled the distant island ready to land.

"There must be an airstrip on that island," Price-Jones said. "Probably one of the ones built during the war by the Japanese to base their naval aircraft that worked against our ships out in the Bay of Bengal."

"Yes," The Shadow said, but his eyes were watching the men on the distant boats. "They seem to be watching us, Colonel. They seem to expect something."

The distance was now too far for Price-Jones to see. The Shadow continued to stare. Far out on the last boat he saw Mannheim give an order. The boat stopped, bobbed on the waves. Mannheim gestured to someone to bring him something. The eyes of The Shadow blazed up. He whirled and looked around. His long finger pointed to a path to the left.

"Quick, Colonel, run along that path! Hurry!"

Price-Jones ran. The Shadow ran behind him. The two men pounded along the path. They had gone perhaps a hundred yards when The Shadow saw a dark cave opening in the cliff face.

"Inside! Quick!" The Avenger hissed.

Price-Jones dived into the cave. The Shadow came behind him. Inside they crouched close to the mouth. They waited. There was no sound anywhere.

Then the whole earth seemed to move, surge upward. The cave shook.

A gigantic explosion rocked the ground, filled the air with an incredible roar.

Rocks showered down inside the cave.

Trees were knocked over outside as if axed. Rocks fell into the sea. Price-Jones and The Shadow crouched inside the small cave. At last the rocking stopped, the trees ceased shuddering, rocks stopped falling, and the great explosion faded to a distant echo. The Shadow motioned to Price-Jones. The two men cautiously left the cave and retraced their steps to the pier. The Shadow crouched low.

"Stay hidden, Colonel," the Avenger said.

Out on the sea the last boat still bobbed on the waves. The pier itself had collapsed. Up on the hill where the laboratory had been, a great column of smoke rose into the hot sunlight. Price-Jones looked at the smoke and the shattered pier.

"They've blown it all up!" the Colonel said.

The Shadow nodded. "Yes, Colonel. I should have expected that. They think they have destroyed us too. Good! We will let them think that. They are going to the final stage of Project Windwar. I think The Shadow will be there too. Perhaps with a small surprise for them!"

The eyes of the Avenger glowed in the shadow of the jungle edge as he gazed out at the motorboat that now turned and sped away toward the island and the waiting jet. On the boat Mannheim seemed to throw back his enormous head and laugh. The Shadow watched from his hidden vantage point.

"They have escaped for now. But they will not escape me again. Come!"

The black-cloaked Avenger turned abruptly and disappeared into the jungle toward where they had left their car.

HARRY VINCENT stood at the Brasilia airport with the assistant Minister of the Interior beside him. They watched the giant jet land. People got off, but neither Harry nor the Brazilian official moved. Then they saw the man emerge. They hurried forward, the assistant Minister assuming his prepared smile of greeting for the distinguished arrival.

The man they walked toward had dark hair brushed straight back without a parting. He wore a dark mustache under his thick nose. He wore a khaki bush jacket, whipcord trousers tucked into high jungle boots, and a soft-brimmed jungle hat. He carried a leather rifle case that he would not allow out of his hands. He was not a tall man, considerably shorter-seeming than Lamont Cranston, but he had powerful shoulders slightly bent over from the years of carrying heavy loads through the unexplored lands of the world. He saw Harry Vincent and the Assistant Minister, and began to walk toward them. When he walked he had a pronounced limp that had come, everyone thought, from a tiger attack many years ago in the High Himalayas.

"Kent!" Harry Vincent said as he reached to shake hands with the powerful, limping newcomer.

"Ah, Senhor Allard! I am to welcome you once again to Brazil," the Assistant Minister said.

Kent Allard smiled and shook hands. The world-famous explorer and sportsman listened to the flowery welcome of the Brazilian official with appropriate solemnity. His eyes were alert and restless-very like the eyes of The Shadow, but without the fire. The fire lurked hidden behind the facade of Kent Allard. It was there, in the cover of this alternate alter-ego of The Shadow, but hidden as were the black cloak and slouch hat and girasol ring secreted inside the safari clothes of Allard. The official had no idea that he was talking, actually, to the mysterious Shadow. But Harry Vincent knew, and his eyes told his chief that he had a report to make once they could escape the Assistant Minister. Allard took care of that.

"My profound respects to the Minister and the Government," Allard said formally to the Assistant Minister. "You can say that I hope to provide the Government with more information on the Jarro country as I did the last time. I also may undertake some studies of the Peruvian border area. Now, if you will pardon me, I am tired and we have to be off early tomorrow."

The Assistant Minister bowed. "Of course, Senhor Allard, you will forgive me. I think there will be no more delays. I have the pleasure to inform you that General Diaz has returned and will see you at your convenience."

"My thanks to you, the minister, and the general. That is welcome news indeed. We are anxious to be underway from my base camp. Tell the general I will be to see him after siesta."

"I will so tell General Diaz. Again, may I extend the full hospitality of my country. You are in a second home, Senhor Allard."

Allard bowed. The assistant minister bowed. Then Allard was able to follow Harry Vincent to the rented car that Harry had provided for the trip to the hotel. The trip was uneventful, but the two men did not speak in front of the hired driver. It was not until they had checked Allard into the hotel, and were safely in the rooms that they carefully checked for microphones, that Harry reported all that had happened in Brazil. Allard, in turn, told Harry what had happened in Malaysia.

"So there it is. Project Windwar is some scheme that involves chemicals and agriculture. The laboratory is destroyed, and I am sure that Mannheim thinks he has also destroyed Cranston,

Price-Jones, and The Shadow. I left Price-Jones following up any loose ends just in case we have difficulties here. But I am now convinced that the final stage of the project is to take place here in Brazil, probably in Jarro country."

Harry nodded. "And you think that they have Margo somewhere in Jarro country?"

"If she is alive, Harry," Kent Allard said. Allard, alias Lamont Cranston, actually The Shadow, had a grim look on his face as he said this. He knew Margo to be a prisoner of Mannheim's men, but he could not be sure that she was alive.

"Then we better get up there," Harry said.

Allard nodded. "You say they are still watching the base camp in the village?"

"As far as I know. I have been here waiting for you and General Diaz. I have remained hidden. It is me they are looking for, I'm sure."

Again Allard nodded. "Then we will change our base. I can get word to Joa safely, we need him with us. But instead of using the camp, we'll fly farther up-river and take the helicopters in from there."

"Right," Harry said.

Allard looked at his watch. "I said we would call on Diaz for our permit after siesta. In the meantime you can give me all the details of these men who took Margo."

Allard lay on the bed and listened as Harry went over all the details of their enemies again. The famous explorer seemed calm and quiet, his heavy face a picture of repose. But it was only the facade he presented. Underneath, the mind of The Shadow thought about Mannheim, and hoped that there was time to stop whatever Windwar was. He thought about Margo, and hoped that there was time!

The afternoon had cooled by the time Kent Allard and Harry Vincent were ushered into the outer office of General Diaz. The female receptionist asked them to wait, and spoke efficiently into an interoffice telephone. Moments later a heavy-set man in the resplendent uniform of a full-Colonel in the Brazilian Army came out of the inner office. He introduced himself as General Diaz's aide, and apologized for the slight delay.

"The general is completing an important telephone call, he will be ready for you in a moment. In the meantime, if you do not mind, you can wait in the office of Colonel Garcia, who is myself."

The colonel conducted Allard and Harry Vincent into the office next to that of General Diaz. They sat down, and the Colonel asked polite questions concerning the projected expedition of Allard's.

"Yes," Allard said, "I plan to do a complete exploration of the Jarro country this time, and then perhaps go across to the Mascadero Region on the Peruvian border. Little work has been done there." And, casually, "Just why is the Jarro country now under the military?"

"No, no," Colonel Garcia protested. "Not *under* the military. We are quite sensitive to that here, Mr. Allard. It is only that the Jarro have been acting strangely of late, and General Diaz thought it wise to keep some control. I do not know the details, but General Diaz has made more than one personal inspection. I'm sure that he can acquaint you with all the present conditions, and that for you there will be no problem."

Allard nodded politely to the Colonel's assurances, but behind his formal manner he was alert. The delicate senses of The Shadow sensed that they were being watched. It was not a specific suspicion, but Allard *knew* that the office of Colonel Garcia was not only wired with microphones, but was also being observed from some secret observation device. The question

that filled Allard's mind, that his hidden person of The Shadow considered now, was whether or not this was normal procedure for all visitors to General Diaz, only those interested in Jarro country, or specifically Allard and/or Harry Vincent? He had no further chance to think about this. The connecting door opened, and General Diaz himself came into the office. The general was all smiles as he warmly shook hands with Kent Allard and Harry.

"Ah, gentlemen, I am consumed with apologies. But there was a call, most vital and most secret, you understand. Now, I find that you wish permission to enter Jarro country again. Good! Of course you, Mr. Allard, have my full permission. I will put it into writing instantly. Garcia, prepare the papers!"

Garcia left the office to secure the needed forms. Allard watched General Diaz. He had never met the general in his many trips to Brazil. He was aware that the general had occupied his high post only for a year, that he had been promoted from colonel only three years ago. So he studied the man. The general was tall and thin. A smiling affable man, but there was something cold about his eyes. Diaz smiled, but his eyes were grim. There was a quick nervousness that did not fit his affable manner. He was very tall, and very thin, and there was something about his voice! The voice was familiar to Kent Allard!

But the voice was not familiar to Allard *as Allard*. It was a voice familiar to The Shadow! A voice that he had heard first muffled by a handkerchief. Later he had heard it in the room of the plantation outside Singapore. He knew now who General Diaz was, he did not need to see the heavy gold signet ring that the masked man in New York had so carelessly worn while covering his face so carefully. The masked leader of the Project Windwar group was General Diaz! Now Allard knew why they had been watched and by whom. There were only two questions now--did Colonel Garcia know, and what must The Shadow do. The colonel returned almost at that instant to answer the first question.

"The papers are in order, General. Your signature only is needed," Garcia said.

"Excellent, Garcia," Diaz said, took the paper and bent to sign it. "You understand, Mr. Allard, it is not really in my power to keep anyone out of Jarro country. It is just what you might call a clearance. I have taken personal interest in the Jarro." The general talked as if to lull everyone while he signed. Then, without looking up, he said quietly. "I think you had an errand to do, Garcia. I think we are finished here, why not do it now and then you can return to your lovely wife for the day."

Garcia smiled happily. "Thank you sir, I will. Mr. Allard and Mr. Vincent, I wish you a good trip. Grant me the honor of speaking with you when you return."

"Of course, Colonel Garcia," Kent Allard said. He watched as the colonel left and closed the door. Garcia did not know about Diaz and Project Windwar. Whatever interest the general had in the scheme, it was his own. His second question, what to do about Diaz, was a great problem, and he did not think that the general would give him much time to decide. He could expose the general, but that might not be believed, and there was no certainty that exposure of Diaz would lead him to Mannheim and Windwar, to say nothing of Margo. After all, he did not yet even know exactly what Windwar was. No, the risk must be taken. He must allow Diaz to think that he had captured Allard and Harry Vincent. It was clear now that Brazil was the location of Project Windwar, of the final phase Mannheim had spoken of in Malaysia. Not only Brazil, but the Jarro country. It was more than clear that the military concern with the Jarro was not really the concern of the Brazilian Army, but of General Diaz alone. Somehow Diaz had masked his private activities behind his official position, and had succeeded in convincing, and fooling, the Brazilian Government and Military. If Diaz was now again in Brazil, then Doctor Mannheim

could not be far off. Time was of the essence, and there might not be time to expose Diaz and still stop Windwar and save Margo. No, Kent Allard, and The Shadow, would have to risk the short way--to be captured again and taken to Mannheim and his Project. He could only wait for the move of Diaz to come. He did not have long to wait.

Almost as soon as Colonel Garcia had gone, General Diaz finished signing the permit with a flourish of his pen. The tall, thin general stood up. He smiled at Allard.

"So, there we are!" Diaz said. "Tell me, Mr. Allard, how is your friend Lamont Cranston?"

Kent Allard pretended to be startled. "Cranston? I . . . I haven't seen him lately."

Diaz smiled at the obvious lie of Allard. "So? Then you know nothing of Project Windwar?"

"Windwar? No, what exactly is it?" Allard said.

Harry Vincent, not aware of the identity of General Diaz, was really startled. Harry jumped a foot, then swore at Diaz. The general laughed and barked a quick command. Four men suddenly appeared in the room through the connecting door to Diaz's office. They were dressed as Brazilian soldiers, but they were not soldiers, and they were not really Brazilians in the usual sense of the term. Allard recognized them instantly--they were Jarro Indians. Harry Vincent had no time to recognize them even if he had been able to. The sturdy agent of The Shadow, unaware of his chief's decision to allow the capture, attempted to draw his pistol from its secret holster inside his coat. The four Jarro were on him at once. They were small dark men with the faint Oriental features of the Amerindian, but they were incredibly strong--a peculiarity of the Jarro, their strength and endurance. They pinioned Harry's arms instantly. Diaz watched Allard, but the disguised Shadow made no move.

"So," Diaz said. "Perhaps we now have you all, yes? And could it be that we now have the leader?"

"Leader? I don't know what the devil you're talking about, General Diaz. What is the meaning of all this?" Allard demanded.

Diaz sneered. The general waved his hand in anger.

"Do not fence with me! I know that there is some organization that is trying to stop Windwar! You, and Cranston, and Colonel Price-Jones, and this Harry Vincent, and the woman Margo Lane. Do you think we are fools? Do you think that we cannot see you at work?"

"I intend to report this, Diaz," Allard said.

Diaz stared, and then the General laughed aloud.

"So, you continue to play a game, yes? No matter. You wanted to know exactly what Project Windwar is, Mr. Allard. It is a project that will make a few men very, very rich. That much I will tell you."

"I gather you are one of the few," Allard said drily, watching the general carefully.

"Yes, I will be rich," Diaz said, and the eyes of the tall thin man suddenly flashed with a macabre kind of joy. "But that is of no real importance. It is the power that counts! Yes, the power. Project Windwar, Mr. Allard, will give us unlimited power, world power. There will be no one who can stand against us once they learn what we have, what we can do!"

Diaz stopped, smiled. "And they will know soon, Mr. Allard. They will know very soon what we can do!"

Diaz paced behind the desk of Colonel Garcia. His hands waved as he spoke. "That is what Project Windwar is! Riches and power, what more is there in the world? Project Windwar will make the world tremble. And Project Windwar is also your death sentence, Mr. Allard!"

As he spoke the last words, Diaz stopped pacing. An ugly pistol had appeared in his hand as if by magic. The pistol spat twice--sounds like sharp puffs of breath, the sibilant crack of a small whip.

Harry Vincent went down without a sound.

Kent Allard felt a sharp sting on his neck. In the instant he was aware of a tiny dart sticking in his neck. The dart that had been shot with deadly accuracy from the air pistol of Diaz. There had been no sound that could have been heard beyond the office. There was no outcry of the shot men. Harry Vincent fell. Kent Allard stood for a moment, all the power of his secret skills and strengths battling. He felt the powerful drug coursing through him. The dart had been tipped with some poison. Allard fought alone as Diaz watched. His brain knew what the poison was--a paralytic poison. He knew, but he could do nothing. Even the power of The Shadow could not overcome the paralysis.

Kent Allard fell to the floor.

He lay rigid, his eyes open and staring. He was no longer pretending. The Shadow lay paralyzed.

15

BUT THE SHADOW was not helpless.

The powerful Indian poison drug paralyzed his body as it did the body of any ordinary man. But it did not paralyze the mind of The Shadow as it would have paralyzed the mind of any normal man. He could not move, and as Kent Allard he did not have the power to cloud the minds of men, but his brain remained clear. He calculated that the poison shot into him would remain potent for a period of some ten hours. For Harry it would be far longer. But the body and nervous system of The Shadow had been trained and conditioned over many long years at the feet of Chen T'a Tze in the hidden stronghold of The Master in the Orient. He would be powerless for ten hours. Until then he could do nothing, but he was aware of all that was happening to him.

He saw General Diaz motion to the four Jarro. Hands picked him up and carried him into the next office, the office of Diaz himself. There was a pause, and then he was carried through a secret side door and down a flight of stairs. The sun was still hot in the narrow and hidden alley behind the building. There was a car--the official car of General Diaz. Allard was placed inside. The car door closed. The car moved off. On the floor Allard could see only the bright sky of Brasilia.

The car drove for less than half an hour. The hands picked him up again and he was carried through the blazing sun into the shade of a building with a high, arching roof--an aircraft hanger. He was carried across the high-arching hanger and up a small flight of steps into some kind of aircraft. He heard them bring Harry in behind him, and the door of the plane closed. The plane began to roll slowly out of the hanger. In the sunlight through the windows it stopped again. There was a silence, and voices talking far ahead where the pilot's cabin must be. There was a sharp whine, coughing of an engine, and then the engine throbbed into life. The plane was not a jet. It was an older propeller-driven craft, and Allard counted two engines. Probably a DC-3 from the size of it. The plane moved ahead under its own power. Moments later it stopped, the engines throbbed higher and higher, the plane shivered with pent-up power, and then it was off down the runway and lifted up into the air. From the angle of sunlight, Allard knew that they were flying north and west--toward the distant Amazon River.

The sunlight faded and darkness came and still they flew on north and west. Allard felt the paralytic effect of the Indian poison wearing off and still they flew over the vast and trackless land of Brazil. His paralysis was completely gone, he had full control of his muscles and senses again, before the plane made a sharp turn and now flew almost directly west. Where he lay under the eyes of the four silent Jarro guards, Allard could not move to find out where they were, but his perfect sense of direction told him that the Amazon River was probably below and the DC-3 was now following the great waterway deep into the heart of the Amazon wilderness. From the elapsed time, the direction, and what he knew to be the cruising speed of a DC-3, Allard calculated just about where they were. If he was right, the Jarro country was still ten hours away--and the fuel of a DC-3 would not be sufficient to reach that far. They would have to come down somewhere. It was possible that the Project Windwar gang had a way station, but it was not likely. They had undoubtedly chosen Brazil because they could use the influence and power of Diaz to both cover their activities, and as a help in furthering their scheme. Allard made a rapid review of his knowledge of the Amazon. There was a small military airfield at the edge of the

river at Jarama do Norte. If they were going to use that they would start to land within minutes. Allard looked carefully toward where Harry lay. He saw the eyelids twitch on his agent. Harry was starting to come out of the effects of the poison.

The DC-3 began to turn, circle, and go down.

Allard waited. The plane leveled off and tilted down as it came in for a landing at Jarama Do Norte. Allard still waited as the plane taxied to a stop. The four Jarro made no move. Allard heard voices in the pilot's cabin speaking in Portuguese. He understood. General Diaz was ordering a refueling. Diaz was also telling someone, probably the base commandant, that the Jarro country was now completely off limits. The general wanted anyone who was going there stopped and held until his return. The commandant of the base, a simple captain, assured the general that no one would escape his watch. The general was sure that the captain would do his job. There was then a silence as the refueling proceeded. The four Jarro guards got out to stretch their legs after the unaccustomed ride. Allard turned quickly and touched Harry Vincent. The agent remained motionless.

"Harry! I am quite free and unaffected now. Can you hear me?" Allard whispered. He received no answering signal.

Allard judged that it would be at least ten more hours before Harry came out from under the full effects of the poison.

"Listen to me, Harry," Allard whispered quickly. "I do not want them to know I am free, but I also do not yet want to escape. You understand?"

A glimmer of understanding shone in Harry's eyes.

"I want them to take us to their headquarters. Only after we get there will we consider escape. Until then, even if you feel the effects wearing off, do not let them know it. Make no attempt to escape. You understand?"

Allard nodded and smiled. Then he heard the guards returning. He went back to his position and lay down as he had been. The four Jarro returned, looked at their two paralyzed prisoners, and sat again in the exact places they had occupied ever since leaving Brasilia. Up in the pilot's cabin the commandant of Jarama Do Norte wished the general a good trip. Diaz repeated his order about the closing of the Jarro country. The engines of the DC-3 started, and the plane taxied out. Moments later it was racing down the runway and was airborne. It climbed sharply to avoid the trees that surrounded the river outpost, and set a steady course due west again. Allard lay where he had been placed, as paralyzed and helpless as Harry as far as anyone who looked could tell.

The hours passed.

Twice Diaz came back to inspect his prisoners. Once he bent and jabbed each of them with a sharp knife point. Neither flinched. Harry because he was really unable to feel the pain, and Allard because he had expected some test and had assumed a state of self-induced paralysis. It was a skill of muscle and nerve control that had stood The Shadow in good stead before this. Diaz smiled his satisfaction down at his prisoners. Then he returned to the pilot's cabin.

Once they made a turn to the northwest again. It was, Allard was sure, to follow the Rio Jarro from which the Jarro took their name. The tributary of the mighty Amazon was a giant river in its own right--one of the most obscure of the major tributaries and the last to be explored and mapped. Few men had traveled its entire length. One of them was Kent Allard. There were only a few hours left, no more than two at the most. Allard waited.

Exactly one hour and fifty minutes later the plane began to descend. Allard now knew where they were going. This far up the Rio Jarro was the major village of the tribe, Tintlalla. The major

village nestled in the profuse jungle close to the Rio Jarro and at the foot of Mount Pilar at the beginning of the Sierra Tinta. Mount Pilar itself, honeycombed with caves, was sacred to the Jarro. The great altar of the savage tribe was set at the base of the mountain a mile from Tintlalla.

The plane came down.

Carried by the two Jarro disguised as Brazilian soldiers, Allard saw the small but adequate landing strip carved from the jungle at the base of Mount Pilar. Only a small strip of the runway showed from the air, the major part being hidden beneath trees that had been carefully trained to cover it. In such a remote region the small open area would go unnoticed. The region was dotted with such open clearings as the jungle gave way to the Sierra Tinta.

Allard also saw two bombers lined up on the runway. They were old World War II bombers of the B-17 type. But it was not the bombers themselves that Allard watched closely. It was the trucks beside them loaded with flat canvaslike objects of transparent plastic. In the morning light, Allard had no doubt what they were. They were the giant plastic spheres in their deflated state. They were being loaded into the bombers! Not far away stood three tank trucks of the type used to transport chemicals. And the rear section of both B-17's had been modified into shapes like long liquid storage tanks.

This was all Allard had time to see before he was carried into a large concrete building completely hidden by the jungle above. Inside the building the Jarro carried him along dim corridors. He smelled the odor of chemical solvents. They passed through long rooms crammed with the pressurized metal spheres and cylinders used to carry chemicals under pressure. Allard saw that many of the cylinders bore the name of National Bio-Chemical, Inc. Others were stenciled with the name, Carnet et Cie. Allard saw these chemical containers, and he was beginning to understand the situation. Malaysia had been the test laboratory--this was the factory of Windwar.

Somewhere not too far away he could hear the sound of large machines.

From time to time as he was carried along he saw small fork-lift trucks moving toward the sound of the machines, each truck carrying cylinders of chemicals under pressure.

This, then, was where the materials of Project Windwar were put together. Various chemicals were made by Drake's company in America, and by Carnet's company in France, and were shipped here to be made into whatever was used in Windwar! Somehow, he had to learn what these chemicals were--and what they became.

Then they were in a long and darker corridor. There was nothing more to see.

Kent Allard lay on the stone floor of the dark room where he had been dropped. He knew that Harry Vincent lay on the floor beside him, but even his eyes could not see yet. The door had clanged shut behind the guards, and the room was totally black. But it was not empty!

Allard sensed at once that there was someone else in the room with them.

For a long minute he could not see.

Then his night vision cleared and he saw the form seated against the wall. She sat stiffly, aware that someone else was now with her but unable to see anything in the darkness of the rock-walled room. Allard made sure that no one could be watching. Then he crawled to her.

"Margo," he said softly.

Margo showed no alarm or surprise. She sat quietly against the wall and looked toward the unseen voice.

"Chief? I expected you," she said.

Allard could see the pain deep in her eyes. There were no marks on her beautiful face, but the lines of torture were clear in the drawn aspect of her face. The memory of pain was clear in her eyes. She held her body in that rigid manner that came as a result of great pain--memory of pain, and fear of new pain, and the hatred for your own body that comes with torture. Your body has betrayed you, and your body is afraid of the return of the pain.

"They tortured you?" Allard said.

"Yes," Margo said. "Very modern torture. A machine. No marks, no blood, nothing broken at all. Just a small electronic machine. They attach things at the right places. They turn on the machine. They dial all the degrees of pain they need. Very modern. Very efficient. The Chinese was bad. But Diaz and the fat man, they are experts. The fat man is very good. He knows all about pain."

"Easy, Margo," Allard said quietly.

"It hurt, Chief," Margo said suddenly, her voice cracking for an instant like the voice of some small girl child.

"It's all right now," Allard said. "We'll get you out."

Margo shook her head, angry with herself. "I'm all right. Oh, they were good with that machine, but it doesn't have the psychological effect. Computer pain. It lacks the suspense, the horror, the imagination of real torture. I told them nothing! Nothing!"

She spat out the last words. There was a sneer on her lips. Almost a laugh. It was close to hysteria, the sneer and the almost laugh. She shook herself again, tried to relax the rigid muscles of her body. But her muscles had locked against the pain. They were afraid, they would not relax. Allard reached out. His strong hands began to massage her neck and shoulders with subtle pressures he had learned from the great Chen T'a Tze himself many years ago in the Orient.

"Talk," he said as he massaged.

"They brought me here in a plane. They were in the room, waiting. The hotel manager must be in with them. They brought me here and they went to try to find Harry. After they brought me here they went to work on me. Drake is here. He was furious to see me. I don't think they quite trust him now. He knows that and it scares him. He wants the money and the power, but he's afraid of them. The Chinese directed it all at first. Then Diaz came, and the fat man. Diaz seems a lot like the masked man in New York you described to me."

"He is the man, Margo," Allard said. His strong fingers worked on her back, eased the muscles made so rigid by the hours of torture.

"There is an Englishman, too. Some kind of meteorological expert. He used to work for the British Air Force. The Chinese is a scientist. He was a Communist, the Chinese man, but I don't think he is working for the Reds here."

"No, Margo," Allard said. He worked and could feel her body relax as his fingers massaged. "No one here is for anyone but himself. They are an evil group devoted only to their own gain, their own power."

"I know. Some project that will make them all rich, will give them power. I heard Diaz say that."

"Is there anyone else?"

"There were two Germans here when I came, one is a chemist. The other acts like a soldier. When Diaz and the fat monster came there was a Russian with them, too. I think he was once some kind of high official in the Soviet Agricultural Office."

Allard nodded. "I would not be surprised, Margo. This whole affair has some connection to agriculture." He could feel all her tense muscles now relax. "What did they ask you?"

"Mostly questions about you, about the organization. They wanted to know how we traced them, what we knew about Drake, what we knew about Windwar. They wanted to know who else knew what we knew, how many were in our organization, who our leader was. I told them nothing!"

"Of course not," Allard said.

She smiled in the dark of the room. He felt all her muscles loose and relaxed now. It was time to think of the next matter--the end of Project Windwar. But first he had to learn what the project was.

"Harry is here with me, Margo. He is still paralyzed from the poison, but he will be out of it soon. They took all our weapons, of course, but they did not know that they were dealing with The Shadow! I have two small pistols concealed where they could not find them. I want you and Harry to take them. When I go I will leave the door locked in case they come to check. If they do, you know how to handle them. Use the pistols only if you must. If there is any trouble, Harry has his radio ring and you must call me at once!"

"Yes, Chief. Don't worry. Harry and I will be all right now. I won't use the pistols."

"Good. I shall not be long."

Margo smiled. She watched Allard search in his clothes and draw out the two pistols. She took them, and watched as he next drew out a tiny picklock. He moved to the steel door. For a moment Margo could see him vaguely in the dark working at the door.

Then he was gone.

Margo went to Harry. Harry smiled up at her and moved his arm. They both listened, but there was no sound anywhere now.

16

THE GIANT ROOM in the hidden building hummed with activity. Half-naked Jarro Indians worked under the watchful eyes of three men in European clothes. The Jarro worked sullenly. It was not in their culture to do such work: stirring great vats; pouring bags of chemicals; lifting the steel cylinders into place where they were connected and regulated by one of the three Europeans. The vats themselves bubbled and exuded a foul odor of decay. The sullen Jarro continued to work. The Europeans watched. None of them saw the great black shape that glided into the room.

They did not see the two piercing eyes that watched from a dark corner of the dimly lighted room. The Shadow saw them, and he understood the sullenness of the Jarro. He also understood that here was the heart of Project Windwar--and that the room was dim because whatever was being made in the great vats was affected by light. He saw the giant vats with their bubbling grey fluid inside. And the long drying kilns where the fluid was poured into trays and dried. Beyond the kilns other Jarro worked to dump the trays of dry grey crystals into a conveyor belt. The belt moved through the room from all the kilns. It went to a tall stainless steel reactor where the grey crystals were dumped automatically into the reaction chamber. What came out was a hose that led to a long, pressurized tank. The Shadows' eyes blazed up as he looked at the tank. It was a pressure vessel for storing gas! The Avenger knew that the gas inside the tank was green, was the same gas that had seeped from the exploded giant spheres in Malaysia, and was the deadly instrument of Windwar!

Unseen, the shrouded black figure of The Shadow glided through the busy room in the dim and shadowy light. He reached the glass door of the laboratory. A man worked inside. A Chinese! The man was bent over a glass biological test chamber. The Shadow watched. From time to time the man turned the valve of a small steel cylinder set on the floor and beside the test chamber. As The Shadow watched he saw that each time the man turned the valve there was a flow of greenish gas through the glass tube into the test chamber. Other test chambers were spread around the laboratory. The Shadow silently opened the glass door and closed it behind him. The Chinese never looked up. Engrossed in his work, the scientist never heard the entry of The Shadow. There was a shade on the glass of the door. The Shadow pulled the shade down. He was alone in the laboratory with the Chinese.

The great black figure glided forward.

The power of his mind reached out to take hold of the brain of the Chinese scientist. An unseen mist that reached to cloud the mind of the man to learn at last the secret of Windwar. At that instant the man turned. His eyes widened, his mouth hung open, as he stared at the towering black shape with the glowing eyes that seemed to pierce him like two sharp knives. The Shadow laughed.

"A final test before the beginning?" The Shadow said mockingly.

The man brushed at his eyes as the mist of the power of The Shadow filled his mind. Clouded, his trained scientist's brain fought. The Shadow stepped closer, his long arm raised to point the fire-opal girasol at the Chinese. The man reacted automatically. He stepped back. He struck the glass tube that led from the cylinder of greenish gas to the test chamber. The tube broke.

Terror filled the eyes of the Chinese.

He was instantly enveloped in the cloud of greenish gas that poured under pressure from the cylinder.

The valve had been open! The Chinese screamed.

Faster than the eye could see, The Shadow whipped a small gas mask from beneath the folds of his great black cloak. He placed it over his nose and mouth. Then he moved swiftly to the screaming man.

No screams came now from the open mouth.

The man staggered, slumped against the laboratory bench. There had been one scream and then no more. The man stood as if already dead. The Shadow listened, but outside the silent laboratory there were no sounds but the normal sounds. The scream had not been heard--or perhaps screams were common from this laboratory. The Shadow fixed his glowing eyes on the Chinese. The man still stood slumped against the laboratory bench. The power of the mind of The Shadow reached out again.

"Tell me what is Project Windwar!" The Shadow demanded.

The man did not move. He still stood there as if afraid to move. He did not fall or move. His eyes stared open and clear straight at The Shadow.

"Tell me! When is the day of Windwar!" The Shadow said harshly.

The man stared at him. The Shadow looked into the man's eyes. They were open, looking straight at The Shadow--and yet it was as if the man could not see him now. The Shadow moved closer. The man did not flinch. It was as if the man were blind! The Shadow had a shiver of horror.

"Tell me!" he intoned again.

The Chinese opened his mouth.

"Aaaagggghhhhhh . . . mmmmm . . . llllnunmm . . ."

Gibberish!

The Shadow's burning eyes watched the man, watched him try to speak.

"Aaaaaa . . . gggggg . . . mmmmm . . . gggghhhhhh . . ."

The man could not speak. Could speak nothing but a thick and garbled gibberish.

And the man was already blind!

All exactly as Silva y Rubio--but so much quicker. The Shadow knew now that this was an effect of the greenish gas. Mannheim had talked of this effect as a byproduct. A drug, Mannheim had said. So they made a weaker drug from the gas and used it to produce these terrible effects. Only the Chinese had taken a full dose of the gas itself, and the effect was almost instantaneous! Was this Windwar? This horrible effect of the greenish gas? Blindness, inability to speak, and finally . . .

The Chinese gave a single final despairing croak.

"Aaaagggghhhhhh . . ."

The Chinese fell dead to the floor.

The Shadow stood in the now silent room, his gas mask covering his nose and mouth, and only his fiery eyes showing as he looked at the dead man. The gas finally killed. It had killed Silva y Rubio, and now it had killed the Chinese. But it was the weaker drug made from the gas that had eventually killed the Brazilian before he could reach Cranston. The Chinese had received a full dose of gas. He had died much faster. Now The Shadow looked at him. He felt no pity. He felt only cold and alarmed and angry. Cold and alarmed at what he now knew Project Windwar could do. Angry that the man had died before he could tell the details of Windwar. The Avenger would have to learn for himself, and he did not know how much time there was left.

He began to search the laboratory. He knew now what the green gas could do to men. The horror of it was enough to chill even the blood of The Shadow. But it was no horror at all to what his fiery eyes soon saw. A byproduct, Mannheim had said. A toy, a plaything! Gibberish, blindness and death--only a toy to Mannheim. And as The Shadow searched the silent laboratory he knew that Doctor Rudolf Mannheim had spoken the truth!

The real horror of Project Windwar slowly became clear and naked to the blazing eyes of The Shadow.

In the test chamber where the dead Chinese had been working there were many small trays, each in a separate sealed section with a gas inlet from the cylinder of green gas. In each small tray there was a miniature planting--corn, wheat, rice, miniature trees. Where the gas had not been injected into the chamber the plants grew normally. But where the gas had been injected there was a hairy grey mold that spread over all the plants even as The Shadow watched. The speed of the mold growth was incredible, a growth, a spreading of mold, visible even to the naked eye as the Avenger watched! Where the mold had dried--there was nothing left growing. In a matter of hours the mold destroyed all plant life!

The Shadow stared at the test chambers. His black-garbed form moved again from chamber to chamber. There could be no doubt. The grey mold was created instantly on the plants by the greenish gas. It grew and spread at an incredible rate. All that it touched withered and died. Instantly! This, then, was Project Windwar. A gas that could destroy the crops of the world! This was the full truth of Windwar!

But The Shadow was wrong.

Open on the laboratory bench beside the test chamber where the dead scientist had been working was the laboratory record book. The Shadow studied the record of experiments. An hour passed.

A slow, silent hour.

At the end of the hour The Shadow knew the complete horror--he knew the aim and purpose of Project Windwar. And he knew that there was no more time.

The record of experiments told the entire menace of the plan of this group of evil men. The gas created the mold the instant it touched plant growth. The mold destroyed all it touched in hours. It spread like wildfire--*but only to a specific limit!* The gas, and the mold, could be precisely controlled! The mold did not grow by itself, it was a fungus growth induced only where the gas touched. By controlling the amount of gas, by estimating the wind and weather exactly, the giant plastic spheres could be floated to precise places, burst by remote control, and the gas would cover an exact area--and no more!

The destruction of food plants could be totally controlled from a distance. The destruction could be done exactly where it was desired, and only where desired. It could not be prevented. There was no defense. Place, time, and extent of destruction could be exactly controlled by those who had the weapon. *Controlled!* There was the final horror. The Shadow closed the laboratory book and sat for a long minute staring at the closed book with his burning eyes.

Project Windwar gave the diabolical group complete control of the food of the world!

Project Windwar gave them the power to bring famine to any country they wanted to.

Project Windwar could blackmail the world!

And there was no time left. The first demonstration was to begin today! Now! The Shadow remembered the two B-17 bombers with their tanks of gas and their loads of giant spheres ready to be filled and dropped!

What more terrifying demonstration could there be than what they planned to begin today--the destruction, the laying waste, of a vast section of the impenetrable Amazon jungle!

It was a demonstration the whole world could see, photograph, know and understand the horror of! A thousand square miles of jungle turned into a barren dessert in a matter of hours! The whole world would tremble, would have to surrender. And there was nothing to stop them. Nothing but The Shadow.

The Avenger stood up in the silent laboratory. Only he could stop them now. The last entry in the laboratory book told him what he must do. There was to be the final planning meeting in less than ten minutes. The Chinese scientist was commanded to be there.

But it was The Shadow who would be there.

In the long room of the building the leaders of Project Windwar sat around the long table. The late morning sun of the tropical Amazon Basin was hot through the tall windows that filled the left wall. The men who sat at the long table had no interest in the sun or the green land outside the window. They did not look out at the blue mountains of the Sierra Tinta hazy in the distance. They did not wonder at the towering peak of Mount Pilar that hung high over the building. They were interested only in power and wealth--and destruction.

"So, the day has come at last," Doctor Mannheim said. The grotesquely fat man sat in a tall chair at the head of the long table. General Diaz sat tall and thin in full uniform to the right of the doctor. A short, heavy, pale-faced German sat to the left of Mannheim down the table. The pale German wore the tunic of an officer in the Nazi Gestapo, a tunic covered with medals and the red Swastika armband. The pale German was proud of his former organization.

Another German, small and nondescript, sat next to General Diaz. This was the former German chemist. Next to him sat Morris K. Drake, red-faced and nervous. Opposite Drake, the bull-like Russian agricultural expert sat glowering across at Drake. An empty chair waited for the Chinese scientist. A thin Englishman completed the table. He was the only one who occasionally looked out the windows--he was the meteorological expert, and weather was his business.

Two empty chairs at the end of the table gave mute testimony to the missing two men--Captain Tadeki Kyoto and the Frenchman Carnet. The obese Mannheim thought of them.

"Two of our company are not here, alas, but there are risks to all great undertakings. I am desolate at our loss, but the plan will not suffer. Monsieur Carnet's principle associate, Monsieur Truffault, assures me that his supplies will continue as usual with no loss of production. That is vital in case our first demonstration is not sufficient persuasion. They must know we are fully prepared to carry out our threats, that we have the materials. Comrade Kyoto is less vital, his place will be well filled by his assistant, Senhor Matto, who is now still at his post at the compound of Kent Allard."

"And we have Allard," General Diaz said.

"Yes, we have them all now, I'm sure," Mannheim said. "Later we will interrogate them again to be sure, but now we have our final moment to complete. Gentlemen, I cannot tell you how I feel at this last instant. I have waited and planned this for so many years, since I first discovered the Windwar fungus mold at the end of the war."

"We have all waited," the thin English meteorological expert said quietly.

Mannheim nodded his horribly fleshy head. "Yes, we have all waited and worked hard."

"Then let's get to it," Morris Drake said nervously. "What are we waiting for?"

Mannheim let his pig eyes move in their folds of fat to look at Drake. "We are waiting, Mr. Drake, for Chou En Kim. He should be here any moment. He has worked hard, also. Without Chou, Herr Keller there, and Commissar Vronski, I could not have developed the Windwar gas so quickly or so well. Without you, Mr. Drake, and Monsieur Carnet, we could not have completed production so quickly. Without Mr. Glendower we would not have tamed the spheres to the wind so well. Hauptman Rupert has been my right hand through it all. General Diaz has made this final stage possible, in addition to being, soon, our chief spokesman to the world. I have found that the world will listen better to a general. No, we have all done our work, and we are all the means of negotiating with the world that will soon know our power! A world that will, after this day, belong to us!"

"Yes!" Diaz cried. "Yes!"

They all took up the cry. Through the long room it echoed. The cry of "Yes! Yes! Yes!" The cry of, "The world will be ours! We will rule! We will be richer than anyone ever dreamed!" They shouted, all eager and excited. Mannheim watched them with a thin smile on his fleshy face.

"It is a good thing that we all value power and wealth above all else," Mannheim said. "There are those who would have shunned the project, but we are all men who know the world for what it is! And it will belong to us!"

Diaz waved his thin hands. The eyes of the general shined with greed and desire. "No more waiting. Let us plan now! The final details. My bombers are ready. The gas is loaded, the spheres are in the bomb bays ready to be filled and dropped!"

"The wind is precisely right over the target," the Englishman Glendower cried.

"The target is exactly selected," Vronski cried. "I am ready to appear at the Kremlin! They will listen to me. They will do as I command!"

"I am ready to go to Washington," Drake shouted.

"The chemicals are all prepared," Herr Keller called out.

"I am ready to speak at the United Nations," Diaz cried.

"Now!" the Gestapo-man Rupert exclaimed.

Mannheim watched them all, saw their eager and greedy eyes. The eyes of the obese doctor, sunk in flesh, glowed with the fire of triumph. He let them cry out. He smiled. At last he raised his fat arms for silence.

"Very well, gentlemen, everyone to his post. The bombers go in ten minutes. Glendower will make his final weather check. Chou En Kim is adjusting the final concentration. We are ready! We have no more work. Each man to his job. Tomorrow we will rule . . ."

The grotesquely fat doctor stopped. There was a noise at the door. Loud, frantic voices. The door burst open and two of the three Europeans who supervised the production of the gas materials ran into the long conference room. They were pale as death.

"Dr. Chou is dead! The gas!"

"The lab was full of the gas. Supervisor Kubek is dead!"

"The production room is full of the gas, the storage tank was opened!"

Another man ran into the room. "The prisoners are missing!"

"The Jarro are dead all over the production room!"

"Someone opened the storage tank!"

"The prisoners have escaped!"

Mannheim roared above the pandemonium. His massive form towered like a mound of flesh. His voice rose above all the other frantic voices. Other men ran into the room. Mannheim shouted.

"Silence!"

There was an instant silence. Mannheim glared.

"Chou dead?" Mannheim said. "The prisoners escaped? How is it possible? It is not . . ."

The eerie laugh seemed to echo and reverberate through the long and silent room. No one spoke or moved. The laugh came again--a chilling, macabre laugh that filled the room. They all looked toward a far corner where the sun cast heavy shadows in the late morning. They saw a shape, a black shape, and two burning eyes that seemed to transfix them all. The laugh rose high and cold once more in the stunned room. General Diaz stared at the looming shape in the shadows of the room.

"The man in black!" Diaz whispered.

Mannheim swore. "Impossible! He is dead! In Malaysia!"

"No," Diaz said. "He is the man in black! He killed Dr. Chou! He released the prisoners!"

Mannheim stared at the shape of The Shadow that loomed clear and yet unclear among the shadows in the corner. The Shadow seemed to be there and yet not there, a shifting trick of light, a shadow.

"How long have you listened?" Mannheim said.

The Shadow laughed. "Long enough, Doctor Rudolf Mannheim. I know all! I heard all!"

"He killed Chou! He destroyed the production room!" Diaz cried.

The Shadow's voice was hard and strong. "Yes, General Diaz, I killed Chou En Kim, I released the prisoners to destroy your production room! Now I will destroy all of you!"

"No," Mannheim said softly. "Tomorrow we rule the world!"

The Shadow mocked. "Tomorrow, Rudolf Mannheim, you will rule a graveyard!"

"You will not stop us now!" Mannheim cried.

The fat doctor suddenly touched the long table. A cloud of white smoke filled the room. Thick white smoke. Steel shutters slammed into place over the windows and doors. Everyone in the room began to scream and shout. The Shadow bounded from his dark corner into the heart of the smoke. Men in panic blocked his way, stumbling in the thick white smoke. At last The Shadow burst through into the clear.

The clear side of the room was empty. A door stood open.

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THE SMOKE cleared from the room. The two European supervisors, the Jarro guards, the soldiers of Project Windwar stumbled around the room.

All the leaders were gone.

The Shadow raced through the single open door. He ran along a corridor, his great black cloak streaming out. All around him the soldiers of Windwar, abandoned in crisis by their leaders, milled in frantic circles. They were in panic. Explosions from the production room rocked the building. The soldiers did not try to stop The Shadow as he bounded out of the building into the noon sunlight of the tropical jungle. Harry Vincent and Margo lay on the ground firing at a small, fast vehicle that raced toward the foot of Mount Pilar. The vehicle vanished into a narrow jungle road.

"Quick! Follow them!" The Shadow commanded.

Harry and Margo jumped up. The great black figure of The Shadow seemed to fly across the open space in the bright sun toward the jungle road where the vehicle had vanished. Harry and Margo ran behind The Avenger. They plunged into the jungle along the narrow road. Under the thick Amazon growth there was no sound. The jungle was silent as if no one moved anywhere. The Shadow and his agents ran on. The marks of the vehicle were clear on the soft jungle earth. They ran nearly half a mile when the path turned and led them straight toward the foot of Mount Pilar at the place where its massive bulk came down near the Rio Jarro. They ran on--and then The Shadow stopped. He stood in the dim jungle with his fiery eyes glowing as he listened.

The sound rang through the jungle, echoed from the rock of Mount Pilar.

A great gong being struck.

The gong boomed out in slow, regular reverberations. Each time it was struck the ground itself seemed to shake.

"Hurry!" The Shadow cried.

The black-shrouded Avenger raced again along the jungle road. The gong was being struck straight ahead. Harry and Margo ran after The Shadow as he flew through the dim jungle light with the great cloak streaming out like the wings of some giant bird of prey. The gong continued to boom out its steady strokes. The jungle was thinning, light had appeared ahead, when they all heard the new sound that first blended with the slow strokes of the gong, and then rose above the booming bell-like sound.

A sound like the distant rumble of a surf on a rocky shore.

A steady, building rumble that seemed to flow through the jungle from all sides.

It was all around The Shadow and his agents. Like a wave building and building.

The Shadow came out of the jungle at the end of the narrow road. Harry and Margo stood beside him. They all looked straight ahead. The scene was like the macabre tableaux in some grotesque museum. Suspended in an instant like a frozen painting of terror.

The vehicle they had been following was parked empty at the base of Mount Pilar. All around it was a great open space of bare earth where even the grass had been trampled. The space spread in a wide semicircle around the foot of the mountain cliff. In the very center of the long side of the semicircle, at the base of the mountain cliff itself, was a mammoth stone. The stone was square, set into the mountain, and its top was flat. A flight of steps had been carved into the side

of the stone leading up to the broad flat top. On both sides of the great stone a wide ledge had been carved into the high cliff itself. Smaller stones were set in rows on this ledge.

It was the great altar of the Jarro!

The leaders of Project Windwar were seated on the stones on the ledge on either side of the altar. On the right sat General Diaz, Commissar Vronski and Morris Drake. On the left The Shadow saw the former Gestapo man Rupert, Keller, and Glendower the Englishman. They were all leaning tensely forward. They were looking up at the flat top of the mammoth altar, and down at the wide space of open ground that surrounded the altar. The cliff towered above them.

On the top of the altar stood the grotesquely fat Doctor Mannheim. Harry and Margo gasped.

The fantastically fat man stood in a flowing red robe, a pointed red hat on his thick head, his fat arms spread wide, his pig eyes flashing deep in their folds of flesh. His mouth was open, shouting.

"Children of The Jarro!"

The fat and monstrous figure on top of the great stone altar was shouting in Portuguese. He called on the Jarro. And the Jarro answered.

Summoned by the great gong that stood below the altar, the dusky men of the Jarro had come. This was the sound like the breaking of the sea--the Jarro coming from all parts of the jungle near the great mountain. They poured out of the jungle and gathered in a milling group in the open space at the base of the altar. They stood there shoulder-to-shoulder, hundreds of them, the sun on their rippling muscles. They wore their feathered headdresses, gaudy colors flashing in the sun. The skulls of their enemies hung around their necks. Gold decorated their dusky arms. In their hands they carried their darts and blowguns, their spears and long gleaming knives. Their dark eyes looked up at the obese red figure of Doctor Mannheim on their altar.

"Children of The Jarro! An enemy is here! A river Devil! An enemy of me, your Red God!"

The fat doctor shouted in Portuguese. The Jarro roared. The Shadow watched from the edge of the jungle. His eyes blazed. Now he knew how Mannheim and his cohorts had made the Jarro work for them. Somehow the doctor, probably with the aid of Diaz, had made himself a supernatural figure to the Jarro.

"Kill the enemy of the Red God!" Mannheim shouted. The Jarro roared.

"Kill the Devil in black! Kill his family!"

The Jarro roared. To the savages, only families helped each other, therefore they were children of the Red God and Harry and Margo were the family of The Shadow.

"I, the Red God, give you power!" Mannheim shouted in the Portuguese that they understood as a second language. The Jarro roared, stamped the ground in their symbol of attack. Mannheim stood tall and mammoth on the altar in his red robe. His hands spread wide. Then he made a throwing motion with his right hand. There was a puff of red smoke and a snake appeared in his hand. The snake writhed and twisted. Mannheim threw the snake into the air. There was a loud bang, another puff of red smoke where the snake turned in the air, and the snake fell all the way down to the ground in front of the Jarro and lay dead.

The Jarro roared, stamped, waved their weapons.

At the edge of the jungle The Shadow watched Mannheim's tricks. Simple tricks, the theatrical skills of an accomplished amateur magician. The Shadow watched the fat doctor whipping the Jarro into a frenzy--and still he made no move. Harry and Margo looked at their chief. They looked at Mannheim and at the Jarro being whipped into greater and greater frenzy. They looked at each other, worried, and still The Shadow made no move.

"Chief, don't you . . ." Margo began.

"Not yet, Margo," The Shadow said quietly.

On the altar Mannheim made colored cloths appear from the sleeves of his red robe, changed the colors, made the cloths vanish. He drew a dagger from his ear and hurled it into the dirt before the mob of Jarro. He produced a skull from his other ear and swallowed it whole!

The Jarro roared, a savage rising roar.

"I am your Red God! My power is of the river and the wind!" Mannheim shouted in Portuguese. "These are my family," he motioned to all the Windwar leaders ranged on the ledge. "The black Devil would destroy us! Now you will destroy . . ."

At the edge of the jungle The Shadow spoke softly to Harry and Margo. "Harry, return quickly, but unseen, to the airfield. Do not let them use the B-17's. Margo, remain here on watch."

"And you, Chief?" Margo said.

The Shadow smiled behind the high black collar of his cloak. His fiery eyes flashed power.

"I go to defeat a god. Now, Margo!"

And The Shadow bounded suddenly out into the open space between the altar and the throng of stamping, roaring Jarro warriors.

Mannheim saw him, pointed. "There! There is the black Devil! Kill him!"

The Jarro roared savagely and moved in a mob toward The Shadow.

On the ledge the leaders of Windwar were all standing. In his red robes on the altar, Mannheim smiled as he watched The Shadow with the Jarro bearing down on him.

The Shadow turned; bounded to the sheer cliff wall of the mountain--and began to swarm up the sheer stone face like a human fly.

The Jarro stopped, stared.

The Shadow, using his steel-like fingers and incredible muscular control, swarmed up the sheer rock face like a lizard. He went up higher than the altar to where his sharp eyes had seen a tiny crevice that ran all around the mountain. Clinging to this, a crevice so small no one else could see it, The Shadow moved along the cliff face until he was directly over Mannheim and the altar. Mannheim watched him. The doctor had a pistol beneath his robes, but he did not dare fire. The Jarro knew that a gun was only a gun, it would have been a sign of weakness, of not being, after all, a god, if Mannheim had had to use a pistol. Some of the Jarro shot their poison darts, but the thick folds of The Shadow's robe protected him.

He seemed to hang on the cliff wall unsupported and look down on the throng of Jarro and the altar below.

"Jarro!" The Avenger shouted. "The Red God is a false God!"

The Shadow spoke not in Portuguese, but in the native language of the Jarro. A strange and difficult language known to very few outside the tribe. So few that the Jarro would not believe that any man they did not know would speak in Jarro, *could* speak in Jarro. They did not know that behind the glowing eyes and hawk nose, behind the slouch hat and great black cloak, was a man who did know the language--Kent Allard. They knew only that this weird black Devil spoke their language--and they stopped and stared up at the creature that could climb sheer walls and speak their language.

"The Red God tricks you! Look!" The Shadow cried down.

He produced a snake from his ear, hurled it into the air. There was a puff of white smoke and the snake vanished. (A simple. Trick--a piece of rope and a long strip of plastic explosive. A simple trick created in a few seconds while he had watched from the edge of the jungle, using rope and explosive he had hidden in his clothes at all times.)

The Jarro moaned as they watched.

Mannheim, unable to understand the language, could only guess what The Shadow was doing. The doctor, unable to use a gun, was helpless as he stared up. Diaz jumped to the altar.

"Kill him, Mannheim! Before he turns them against us!"

"Don't be a fool!" Mannheim hissed. "I must do some more tricks to . . ."

The doctor got no farther. Up on the cliff wall The Shadow performed some more simple tricks of making objects appear and disappear. His fiery eyes stared down. He had the Jarro all watching him, all amazed, all in a combination of fear and awe at this Devil who could climb walls and speak Jarro. The Shadow concentrated every nerve and muscle and cell of his body into his power to cloud the minds of men. He sent the power out and down to the throng of Jarro. The savage warriors had the simple minds of the uncomplicated and unsophisticated. The power of The Shadow reached out like a thick mist and enfolded all their brains. Then, as they stared up unaware of the cloud on their minds, they all moaned in fear and awe.

To their clouded minds The Shadow seemed to leave the wall and stand in space.

The Shadow knew the Jarro, and he knew their legend of the great God who walked on air. Now he induced the vision in their clouded minds. They fell on their knees, moaning in a sudden supernatural ecstasy. The Shadow's voice boomed out in their own language.

"The river does not flow up the mountain! You have been told lies!"

On the altar Mannheim stared down in sudden fear as the Jarro went to their knees. He could not understand the words, but he saw what was happening as clear as day. So did General Diaz. The tall, thin, traitorous officer drew his pistol, aimed up at The Shadow.

"No!" Mannheim cried out.

Diaz shot.

The bullet missed The Shadow. High on the cliff The Shadow laughed. His chilling laugh echoed from the mountain like the mirth of the mountain itself, the laughter of the gods. His long finger pointed down at Diaz and the others with the glowing red girasol ring glinting in the sun.

"Strangers!" he said in Jarro.

It was the worst word in the Jarro language. It meant enemy, and unknown human, and not-god, and dangerous animal. It meant all that was foreign and hated by the Jarro. It meant, now, that Mannheim, Diaz and all the leaders of Windwar were not gods but only men--strangers, enemies! Gods did not use guns!

The Jarro were deadly silent for a moment.

Diaz aimed to fire again.

The blowgun dart struck him in the side of the neck. His dying fingers fired convulsively. The bullet went wild, ricocheted from the stone mountain, and struck down into the silent throng of Jarro.

The Jarro understood bullets. So did Doctor Mannheim. The horribly fat man knew what the bullets would do to the Jarro. They roared a great shout of savage hate and violence and swarmed toward the altar and the leaders of Windwar. They saw, now, only strangers who had forced them to work, forced them to be fools. They had no fear of men, only of gods. They poured across the narrow space toward the altar. Doctor Mannheim had not waited, and he did not stay to try to stop The Shadow. He looked once down at the advancing throng of Jarro--and vanished in a puff of red smoke! On the ledge Morris Drake fell with a spear through him.

Diaz was already dead.

Commissar Vronski and ex-Gestapo man Rupert were quicker than the others. They leaped down and ran frantically into the jungle. A howling mob of Jarro pounded in pursuit.

The Englishman Glendower drew a pistol and tried to fight. He killed two Jarro. They then swarmed up over the ledge and hacked him to pieces with their long, shining knives.

The German chemist Keller jumped down--and writhed spitted on a spear.

The Shadow swarmed down from the mountain side. Under the cloud of his power, angered by Diaz's shots, the Jarro would hunt down the Windwar people--all of them. They would need no more orders from him, and they would not think about him until their savage anger had cooled. And they would not think about Mannheim! The doctor had vanished, the Jarro would kill what they could see. But The Shadow thought about Mannheim.

He swarmed down the mountain and leaped to the top of the altar. All around him the Jarro were hacking at the bodies of the dead Windwar leaders. Others were still pouring into the jungle in pursuit of Vronski and Rupert. On the altar The Shadow let his piercing eyes study the flat surface. There was a loose slab in the center. The Shadow bent down. A very small piece of the stone surface next to the slab was also loose. The Shadow touched it.

The great slab in the center tilted down and revealed a dark hole beneath it. The Shadow's eyes glowed. It was the sacrifice stone--where victims stood and vanished when the Jarro priests struck them down. The Shadow leaped down into the pit. He found himself in a small, square chamber filled with earthenware pots, rusted knives, the bones of animals.

He saw the low opening to the left--in the direction of the river.

The Avenger plunged into the opening. It was a long, low passage that ran through the mountain. He followed it as swiftly as he could. A few minutes passed, and then there was light ahead. The Shadow peered out from the tunnel into the sunlight. He saw that the tunnel opened onto a wide stone platform directly above the Rio Jarro. The river was wide here, and far out a small seaplane bobbed on the surface of the water. A rubber raft had put out from the plane and was being paddled into shore by one man.

Doctor Rudolf Mannheim stood at the edge of the stone platform waiting to be picked up by the rubber raft. Suddenly he heard The Shadow and whirled. His pistol was in his hand. He fired twice. The bullets struck close to the head of The Shadow as he ducked back. He drew his automatics and fired once in return. His bullet struck Mannheim in the arm. The Doctor staggered from the force.

The grotesquely fat ex-Nazi fired twice more.

The Shadow ducked back.

Mannheim did not wait for another shot. The fat man leaped from the platform into the river.

The Shadow bounded out into the light and glided to the edge of the platform. The man in the rubber raft stopped paddling, picked up a rifle, and fired at The Shadow to cover his leader. Mannheim swam powerfully and amazingly well for a fat man with an arm wound. There was a faint trail of blood.

The Shadow shouted. "Mannheim! Return! Swim back! Return quickly!"

The man in the boat fired. The Shadow had to flatten on the rock platform. Mannheim swam on. The Shadow watched and waited--he knew what this platform at the end of the tunnel was. It was where the priests of the Jarro disposed of the bodies of their sacrifice victims. The fiery eyes of the Avenger watched as Doctor Mannheim swam on toward the rubber raft that waited to take him to the seaplane and to safety.

Mannheim almost reached the raft.

The doctor was only ten feet away, swimming well, and then the river boiled.

One instant the great fat body was swimming, and the next instant the surface of the river was a raging maelstrom of water and blood, and no more than an instant after that--Mannheim was gone.

Once his great fat arm came out of the water--but it was no longer fat. It was not an arm. It was a skeleton of white bones with strips of flesh and blood.

The *piranha* had come.

The Rio Jarro was infested with *piranha*, the voracious fish that could eat a cow to the skeleton in minutes.

Rudolf Mannheim was gone. No body floated to the surface. There was no body now. The grotesquely fat man was a skeleton at the bottom of the Rio Jarro.

The Shadow stood and looked out to where the slick of blood floated on the wide river. The man in the raft was paddling fast back to the seaplane. Already the boats of the Jarro were putting out toward the plane they had spotted. The man reached the plane and it roared away down the river. The Jarro blocked his path. He tried to lift too soon. The plane rose a foot, two feet, and plunged over onto its nose. It exploded in a sheet of flame.

Debris lay on the river.

The slick of blood still floated where Mannheim had died.

The chilling laugh of The Shadow echoed across the river and through the silent jungle. Windwar was destroyed.

Three days later, Lamont Cranston, Margo and Harry Vincent sat in the office of the Minister of War. The minister was pale and shaken.

"Diaz! It is so hard to believe. He was like a brother to me. That he would try to do such a thing!"

"Greed can corrupt almost anyone," Lamont Cranston said quietly, his hooded eyes half-hidden in his passive face.

The minister nodded. "Yes, how true. At least I am glad that your friend Senhor Allard is continuing his expedition. Thanks to his information we have arrested all the men at his base camp, including the Senhor Matto who was a leader."

Cranston smiled. "Kent wanted to go on into the Peruvian jungle area. Of course, he had to help calm his friends the Jarro first. They were very angry. I'm afraid the Jarro killed them all, burned everything. There were no records left."

"But the evidence was there," the minister said. "I shudder. A whole jungle laid waste! What a diabolical plot to blackmail the world."

"And it almost succeeded even at the end," Harry Vincent said. "Margo and I just barely stopped Vronski and Rupert from getting those B-17's off the ground."

"The Jarro got to Vronski, but we managed to take Rupert alive," Margo said. "He knows nothing of the formula for the fungus gas, but he told everything about their plans."

The minister nodded. "Plans that are completely ended. I must thank you all, the world should thank you."

Cranston waved a hand. "Thank Kent, Margo and Harry here. I just flew down to help mop up. They did it all alone."

"Yes . . ." the minister began, and stopped. "Yes, but the Jarro talk of a black devil, a great black shadow that came to walk on the air and save them. Where can they have gotten such an idea?"

Margo shrugged, her eyes hidden. "The jungle is full of Shadows, Minister."

The minister looked at Margo. The office was very silent. Cranston only smiled. Harry Vincent studied his fingernails. The minister studied Margo shrewdly for a long moment. Then he shrugged politely.

"As you say, Miss Lane, the jungle is indeed full of shadows."

Two hours later Lamont Cranston, Margo and Harry Vincent were on the jet for America. They were quiet for some time. Then Margo spoke.

"Were any records found in Singapore, Lamont."

Cranston shook his head. "No, nothing. Nothing anywhere to give us Doctor Mannheim's secret fungus gas. It is gone."

"It's too bad," Harry Vincent said.

"No, Harry, it is good. The gas could only work for evil. It is good that it is gone."

And the hooded eyes of Cranston flashed once with the power of The Shadow. The Avenger had made very sure that the gas of Project Windwar was gone--totally destroyed with all its leaders.

"Windwar is totally over," Cranston said softly. "We have avenged Silva y Rubio. He died trying to save the world. Now he is avenged."

In the giant jet there were those who, later, said they had heard a strange low laugh.

THE END

CAN YOU BELIEVE

secret trap doors?
Maylasian killers?
sacred rings?
strange, silent guns
that whisper death?
Amazon River Indians?
organic warfare?
Margo Lane?
Lamont Cranston?
THE SHADOW?

**WOULD
WE PUT
YOU ON?**

**THE
SHADOW
KNOWS...**