

***FRANK
L. PACKARD***



***THE FURTHER
ADVENTURES
OF JIMMIE
DALE***

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The Further Adventures of Jimmie Dale

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CHAPTER I. SMARLINGHUE

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A diminutive gas-jet's sickly, yellow flame illuminated the room with poverty-stricken inadequacy; high up on the wall, bordering the ceiling, the moonlight, as though contemptuous of its artificial competitor, streamed in through a small, square window, and laid a white, flickering path to the door across a filthy and disreputable rag of carpet; also, through a rent in the roller shade, which was drawn over a sort of antiquated French window that opened on a level with the floor and in line with the top-light, the moonlight disclosed a narrow and squalid courtyard without.

In one corner of the room stood a battered easel, while against the wall near it, and upon the floor, were a number of canvases of different sizes. A cot bed, unmade, its covers dirty and in disorder, occupied the wall space opposite the door. In the centre of the mean and uninviting apartment stood a table, its top littered with odds and ends, amongst which the remains of a meal, dishes and food, fraternised gregariously with a painter's palette, brushes and paint tubes. A chair or two, long since disabled, and a rickety washstand completed the appointments.

The moonlight's path across the floor wavered suddenly, the door opened, was locked again, and with a quick, catlike step a man moved along the side of the wall where the shadows lay thickest near the door, dropped on his knees, and began to fumble hurriedly with the base-board of the wall, pausing at every alternate second to listen intently.

A minute passed. A section of the base-board was lifted out, the man's hand was thrust inside—and emerged again with a large roll of banknotes. He turned his head for a quick glance around the room, his eyes, burning out of a gaunt, hollow-cheeked, pallid face, held on the torn window shade—and then, in almost frantic haste, he thrust the banknotes back inside the wall, and began to replace the base-board. But it was not the window shade, nor yet the courtyard without with which he was concerned—it was the sound of a heavy footstep outside the door.

And now the door was tried. The man on the floor, working with desperate energy to replace the base-board, coughed in an asthmatic, wheezing way, as there came the imperative smashing of a fist upon the door panels, coupled with a gruff, curt demand for admittance. Again the man coughed—to drown perhaps the slight rasping sound as the base-board slid back into place—and, rising to his feet, shuffled hastily to the door and unlocked it.

The door was flung violently open from without, a heavy-built, clean-shaven, sharp-featured man stepped into the room, slammed the door shut behind him, re-locked it, and swept a shrewd, inquisitive, suspicious glance about the place.

“It took you a damned long time to open that door, *Mister Smarlinghue!*” he said sharply.

The man addressed touched his lips with the tip of his tongue nervously, shrank back, and made no reply.

The lapel of the visitor's coat thrown carelessly back displayed a police shield on the vest beneath; and now,

completing a preliminary survey of the surroundings, the man's eyes narrowed on Smarlinghue.

"I guess you know who I am, don't you? Heard of me perhaps, too—eh? Clancy of headquarters is my name!" He laughed menacingly, unpleasantly.

Smarlinghue's clothes were threadbare and ill-fitting; his coat was a size too small for him, and from the short sleeves protruded blatantly the frayed and soiled wristbands of his shirt. He twined his hands together anxiously, and retreated further back into the room.

"I haven't done anything, honest to God, I haven't!" he whined.

"Ain't, eh?" The other laughed again. "No, of course not! Nobody ever did! But now I'm here—just dropped in socially, you know—I'll have a look around."

He began to move about the room. Smarlinghue, still twining his hands in a helpless, frightened way, still circling his lips nervously with the tip of his tongue, followed the other's movements in miserable apprehension with his eyes.

Clancy, as he had introduced himself, shot up the roller shade, peered out into the courtyard, yanked the shade down again with a callous jerk that almost tore it from its fastenings, and strode over toward the easel, contemptuously kicking a chair that happened to be in his way over onto the floor. Reaching the easel he picked up the canvas that rested upon it, stared at it for a moment—and with a grunt of disdain flung it away from him to the ground.

There was a crash as it struck the floor, a ripping sound as the canvas split, and with a pitiful cry Smarlinghue

rushed forward and snatched it up.

“It—it was sold,” he choked. “I—I was to get the money to-morrow. I have had bad luck for a month—nothing sold but this—and now—and now—” He drew himself up suddenly, and, with the ruined painting clutched to his breast, shook his other fist wildly. “You have no right here!” he screamed in fury. “Do you hear! I have not done anything! I tell you, I have not done anything! You have no right here! I will make you pay for this! I will! I will!” His voice was rising in a shrill falsetto. “I will make you—”

“You hold your tongue,” growled Clancy savagely, “or I’ll give you something more than an old chromo to make a row about! I don’t want any mass meeting of your kind of citizens. Get that?” He caught Smarlinghue roughly by the shoulder, and pushed him into a chair near the table. “Sit down there, and close your jaw!”

Cowed, Smarlinghue’s voice dropped to a mumble, and he let the torn canvas slip from his fingers to the floor.

Clancy laughed gruffly, pulled another chair to the opposite side of the table, sat down himself, and eyed Smarlinghue coldly for a moment.

“Sold it, eh?” he observed grimly. “How much were you going to get for it?”

A cunning gleam flashed in Smarlinghue’s eyes—and vanished instantly. He wet his lips with his tongue again.

“Ten dollars,” he said hoarsely.

Clancy brushed aside the litter on the table, and nonchalantly laid down a ten-dollar bill.

With a sharp little cry that brought on a fit of coughing, Smarlinghue stretched out his hand for the money eagerly.

Clancy drew the money back out of reach.

“Oh, no, nothing like that!” he drawled unpleasantly. “Don’t make the mistake of taking me for a fool. I’m not buying any ten-cent art treasures at ten dollars a throw!”

Smarlinghue’s eyes remained greedily riveted on the ten-dollar note. He began to twine his hands together once more.

“I don’t know what you mean,” he muttered tremulously.

“Don’t you!” retorted the other shortly. “Well, I mean exactly what I say. I’m not buying any pictures, I’m buying—*you*. I have been keeping an eye on you for the last three or four months. You’re just the guy I’ve been looking for. As far as I can make out, there ain’t a dive or a roost in the Bad Lands where you don’t get the glad hand—eh?”

“I—I haven’t done anything! Not a thing! I—I swear I haven’t!” Smarlinghue burst out frantically.

“Aw, forget it!” Clancy permitted a thin smile to flicker contemptuously across his lips. “You’ve got a whole lot of friends that I’m interested in. Get the idea? There ain’t a crook in New York that’s shy of you. You got a ‘stand-in’ everywhere.” He held up the ten-dollar bill. “There’s more of these—plenty of ‘em.”

Smarlinghue pushed back his chair now in a frightened sort of way.

“You—you mean you want me for—for a stool pigeon?” he faltered.

“You got it!” said Clancy bluntly.

Smarlinghue’s eyes roved about the room in a furtive, terror-stricken glance, his hand passed aimlessly over his eyes, and he crouched low down in his chair.

“No, no!” he whispered. “No, no—for God’s sake, Mr. Clancy, don’t ask me to do that! I can’t—I can’t! I—I wouldn’t be any good, I—I can’t! I—I won’t!”

Clancy thrust head and shoulders aggressively across the table.

“You will—if you know what’s good for you!” he said evenly. “And, what’s more, there’s a little job you’re going to break your hand in on to-night.”

“No! No, no! I can’t! I can’t!” Smarlinghue flung out his arms imploringly.

Clancy lowered his voice.

“Cut that out!” he snapped viciously. “What’s the matter with you! You’ll be well paid for it—*and have police protection*. You ought to know what that’ll mean to you—eh? You live like a gutter-snipe here—half starved most of the time, for all you can get out of those ungodly daubs!”

A curious dignity came to Smarlinghue. He sat upright.

“It is my art,” he said. “I have starved for it many years. Some day I will get recognition. Some day I—”

“Art—hell!” sneered Clancy; and then he laughed coarsely, as, his fingers prodding under the miscellany of articles on the table, he suddenly held up a hypodermic syringe. “This is *your* art, my bucko! Why, you poor boob, don’t you think I know you! Cocaine’s the one thing on earth you live for. You’re stewed to the eyes with it now. Here, just watch me! Suppose”—he caught the syringe in a quick grip between the fingers of both hands—“suppose I just put this little toy out of commission now, and—”

With a shrill screech, Smarlinghue sprang from his chair, and clawed like a demented man at the other’s hands for

possession of the hypodermic.

Clancy surrendered the syringe with a mocking grin, and shoved Smarlinghue backward into his chair again.

“Oh, yes; you’re an artist all right—a coke artist!” he remarked coolly. “But that’s what makes you solid in every den in New York, and that’s how you come in useful—to me. Well, what do you say?”

There was a hunted look in Smarlinghue’s eyes.

“They’d—they’d kill me,” he said huskily.

“Sure, they would!” agreed Clancy easily. “If they found you out it would be good-night, all right—that’s what you’re getting paid for. But”—his voice hardened—“if you don’t come across, I’ll tell you what I’ll do to you. I’ll—”

“You can’t do anything! Not a thing!” Smarlinghue cried wildly. “You haven’t anything on me at all. I’ve never done a thing, not a single—”

“Oh, I guess there’s enough to make you sweat,” Clancy cut in brutally. “You give me the icy paw, and I’ll see that the tip leaks out from the right quarters that you *are* a stool pigeon. That’ll take care of your finish, too, won’t it—good and plenty!”

Smarlinghue stared miserably. Again and again his tongue circled his lips. Twice he tried to speak—and only succeeded in mumbling inarticulately.

Clancy got up from the table, walked around it, and, standing over the crouched figure in the chair, tapped with his finger on the hypodermic in Smarlinghue’s hands.

“And that ain’t all,” he announced with a malicious grin. “You come in and play the game with me, or I’ll fix it so that

you'll never get another squirt of dope if you had a million bucks to buy it with—ah, I thought that would get you!”

Smarlinghue was on his feet. The terror of the damned was in his face.

“No! No! My God—no—not that! You—you wouldn't do that!” He reached out his arms to the other.

“You know—I've gone too far to do without it. If I didn't have it, I—”

“I've seen a few of them in that sort of jim-jams,” said Clancy malevolently. “You can't tell me anything about it. If you appreciate it, that's enough—it's up to you. You heard what I said. If you're looking for that particular kind of hell, go to it. Only don't kid yourself. When I pass the word to put the screws on, the lid's down for keeps. Well, what's the answer? Coming across? Quick now! I haven't got all night to spend here!”

Smarlinghue's hands were trembling violently; he sat down in his chair in a pitiful, uncertain way.

“Yes, yes!” he whispered. “Yes! I got to do it. I'll do it, Mr. Clancy, I'll do it! I'll—I'll do anything!”

A half leer, half scowl was on Clancy's face, as he stood regarding the other.

“I thought you would!” he grunted roughly. “Well then, we'll get down to business—and *to-night's* business. You know the back entrance to Malay John's hang-out?”

Smarlinghue's eyes widened a little in a startled way. He nodded his head.

“Very good,” said Clancy gruffly. “*You'll* have no trouble in getting in there. And once in there you'll have no trouble in getting up to Malay's private den. I've been wised up that

Malay and a few of his pals are getting ready to pull off a little game uptown. I want the dope on it—*all* of it. They've been meeting in Malay's den for the last few nights—understand? They drift in between half past eleven and twelve—you get there a little *before* halfpast eleven. You haven't anything to be afraid of, so don't lose your nerve. Malay himself is away this evening and won't be back before midnight; and the door won't be locked, as otherwise the others couldn't get in. Everything's clear for you. Savvy? Once you're in the room, there's plenty of places to hide—and that's all you've got to do, except keep your ears and eyes open. Get the lay?"

Again Smarlinghue nodded—unhappily this time.

"All right!" said Clancy crisply. "I'm not coming around here any more—*unless I have to*. It might put you in bad. You can make your reports and get your orders through Whitie Karn at his dance hall."

"Whitie Karn!" The exclamation seemed to come involuntarily, in a quick, frightened way from Smarlinghue.

Clancy's lips twisted in a smile.

"Kind of a jolt—eh—Smarlinghue? You didn't suspect he was one of *us*, did you?—and there's more than Whitie Karn. Well, it will teach you to be careful. Suppose Whitie, for instance, passed the word that you were a snitch—eh? It won't do you any harm to keep that in mind once in a while." He moved over to the door. "Well, good-night, Smarlinghue! I guess you understand, don't you? You ought to be a pretty valuable man, and I expect a lot from you. If I don't get it—" He shrugged his shoulders, held Smarlinghue

for an instant with half-closed, threatening eyes—and then the door closed behind him.

Smarlinghue did not move. The steps receded from the door, and died away along the passage. A minute, two minutes went by. Suddenly Smarlinghue pushed back the wristband of his shirt, and pricked the skin with the needle of the hypodermic. The door, without a sound, swung wide open. Clancy stood in the doorway.

“Good-night again, Smarlinghue,” he said coolly.

The hypodermic fell clattering to the floor; Smarlinghue jumped nervously in his chair.

Clancy laughed—significantly; and, without closing the door this time, strode away again. His steps echoed back from the passageway, the front door opened and shut, his boot heel rang on the pavement without—and all was silence.

Smarlinghue rose from his chair, shuffled across the room, closed the door and locked it, then shuffled back again to the roller shade over the little French window, and, taking a pin from the lapel of his coat, fastened the rent together.

A passing cloud for a moment obscured the moonrays from the top-light; the gas-jet choked with air, spluttered, burning with a tiny, blue, hissing flame; then the white path lay across the floor again, and the yellow flare of gas spurted up into its pitiful fulness—and in Smarlinghue’s stead stood another man. Gone were the stooping shoulders, gone the hollow cheeks, the thin, extended lips, the widened nostrils, as the little distorting pieces of wax were removed; and out of the metamorphosis, hard and

grim, set like chiselled marble, was revealed the face of—
Jimmie Dale.



CHAPTER II. THE WARNING

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For a moment Jimmie Dale stood there hesitant, the long, slim, tapering fingers curled into the palms of his hands, his fists clenched tightly, a dull red suffusing his cheeks and burning through the masterly created pallor of his make-up; and then slowly as though his mind were in dismay, he walked across the room, turned off the gas, and going to the cot flung himself down upon it.

What was he to do? What ghastly irony had prompted Clancy to sort *him* out for a police spy? If he refused, if he attempted to stall on Clancy, Clancy's threat to stamp him in the eyes of the underworld as a snitch meant ruin and disaster, absolute and final, for "Smarlinghue" would then have to disappear; on the other hand, to be allied with the police increased his present risks a thousandfold—and they were already hazardous enough! It meant constant surveillance by the police that would hamper him, rob him of his freedom of movement, adding difficulties and perils innumerable to the enacting of this new dual personality of his.

Jimmie Dale's hands clenched more fiercely. It was an impossible situation—it was untenable. That he could play his role in the underworld with only the underworld to reckon with—yes; but with the police as well, watching him in his character of a poor, drug-wrecked artist, constantly in touch with him, likely at any moment to make the discovery that Smarlinghue and Jimmie Dale, the millionaire clubman, a leader in New York's most exclusive set, were one and the

same—*no!* And yet what was he to do? With the Gray Seal it had been different. Then, police and underworld alike were openly allied as common enemies against him—but none had known who the Gray Seal was until that night when the Magpie had roused the Bad Lands like a hive of swarming hornets with the news that the Gray Seal was Larry the Bat; none had known until that night when it was accepted as a fact that Larry the Bat, and therefore the Gray Seal, had perished miserably in the tenement fire.

Around the squalid room, lighted now only by the moonrays, Jimmie Dale's eyes travelled slowly, abstractedly. Yes, in that one particular it was different; but here was the New Sanctuary, and again he was living the old life in close, intimate companionship with the underworld—the old life that only six months ago he had thought to have done with forever!

He turned his face suddenly to the wall, and lay very still—only his hands still remained tightly clenched, and the hard, set look on his face grew harder still.

Six months ago, like some mocking illusion, like some phantom of unreality that jeered at him, it seemed now, he had lived for a few short weeks in a dreamland of wondrous happiness, a happiness that all his own great wealth had never been able to bring him, a happiness that no wealth could ever buy—the joy of her—the glad promise that for always their lives would be lived together—and then, as though she had vanished utterly from the face of the earth, she was gone.

The Tocsin! Marie LaSalle to the world, she was always, and always would be, the Tocsin to him. *Gone!* A hand

unclenched and passed heavily across his eyes and flirted the hair back from his forehead. She had taken her place in her own world again; her fortune had been restored to her, its management placed in the hands of a trust company; the interior of the mansion on Fifth Avenue, with its sliding walls and secret passages, that had served as headquarters for the Crime Club, was in the process of reconstruction—and she had disappeared.

It had come suddenly, and yet—as he understood now, though then he had only attributed it to an exaggerated prudence on her part—not without warning. In the three weeks that had intervened between the night of the fire in the old Sanctuary and her disappearance, she had permitted him to see her only at such times and at such intervals as would be consistent with the most casual of acquaintanceships. He remembered well enough now her answer to his constant protests, an answer that was always the same. “Jimmie,” she had said, “a sudden intimacy between us would undo all that you have done—you know that. It would not only renew, but would be almost proof positive to those who are left of the Crime Club that their suspicions of Jimmie Dale were justified, and from that as a starting point it would not take a very clever brain to identify Jimmie Dale as Larry the Bat—and the Gray Seal. Don’t you see! You never knew me before all the misery and trouble came—there was nothing between us then. To see too much of each other now, to have too much in common now would only be to court disaster. Our intimacy must appear to come gradually, to come naturally. We must wait—a year at least—Jimmie.”

A year! And within a few hours following the last occasion on which she had said that, Jason, his butler, had laid the morning mail upon the breakfast table, and he had found her note.

It seemed as though he were living that moment over again now, as he lay here on the cot in the darkness—his eagerness as he had recognised the well-known hand amongst the pile of correspondence, the thrill akin to tenderness with which he had opened the note; and then the utter misery of it all, the room swirling about him, the blind agony in which he had risen from his chair, and, as he had groped his way from the room, the sudden, pitiful anxiety on the faithful old Jason's face, which, even in his own distress, he had not failed to note and understand and be grateful for.

There had been only a few words in the note, and those few carefully chosen, guarded, like the notes of old, lest they should fall into a stranger's hand; but he had read only too clearly between the lines. She had had only far too much more reason for fear than she had admitted to him; and those fears had crystallised into realities. One sentence in the note stood out above all others, a sentence that had lived with him since that morning months ago, the words seeming to visualise her, high in her courage, brave in the unselfishness of her love: "Jimmie, I must not, I cannot, I will not bring you into the shadows again; I must fight this out alone."

He recalled the feverish haste in which he had acted that morning—the one thought that had possessed him being to reach her if possible before she could put her designs into

execution. Benson, his chauffeur, reckless of speed laws, had rushed him to the hotel where, pending the remodelling of the Fifth Avenue mansion, she had taken rooms. Here, he learned that she had given up her apartments on the previous afternoon, and that it was understood she had left for an extended travel tour, and that her baggage had been taken to the Pennsylvania Station. From the hotel he had gone to the trust company in whose hands she had placed the management of her estate. With a few additional details, disquieting rather than otherwise, it was the story of the hotel over again. They did not know where she was, except that she had told them she was going away for a long trip, had given them the fullest powers to handle her affairs, and, on the previous afternoon, had drawn a very large sum of money before leaving the institution.

He had returned then, like a man dazed, to his home on Riverside Drive, and had locked himself in his den to think it out. She had covered her tracks well—and had done it in a masterly way because she had done it simply. It was possible that she had actually gone away for a trip; but it was more probable that she had not. He had had, of course, no means of knowing; but the sort of peril that threatened her, his intuition told him, was not such as to be diverted by the mere expedient of absenting herself from New York temporarily; and, besides, she had said that she would *fight* it out. She could hardly do that in the *person* of Marie LaSalle, or away from New York. She was clever, resourceful, resolute and fearless—and those very traits opened a vista of possibilities that left his mind staggering blindly as in a maze. She was gone—and alone in the face of deadly

menace. He remembered then the curious, unnatural calmness underlying the mad whirling of his brain at the thought that that was not literally true, that she was not, nor would she ever be alone—while he lived. It was only a question of *how* he could help her. It had seemed almost certain that the danger threatening her came from one of two sources—either from those who were left of the Crime Club, relentless, savage for vengeance on account of the ruin and disaster that had overtaken them; or else from the Magpie, and behind the Magpie, massed like some Satanic phalanx, every denizen of the underworld, for Silver Mag had disappeared coincidentally with Larry the Bat, coincidentally with the Magpie's attempted robbery of the supposed Henry LaSalle's safe, to which plot she was held by the underworld to be a party, coincidentally with the dispersion of the Crime Club, *and coincidentally with the reappearance of the heiress Marie LaSalle*—and, further, Silver Mag stood condemned to death in the Bad Lands as the accomplice of the Gray Seal. But Silver Mag had disappeared. Had the underworld, prompted by the Magpie, solved the riddle—did it know, or guess, or suspect that Silver Mag was Marie LaSalle?

Which was it? The Crime Club, or the Magpie? Here again he could not know, though he inclined to the belief that it was the latter; but here, in either case, the means of knowing, of helping her, the way, the road, was clearly defined—and the road was the road to the underworld. But Larry the Bat was dead and the road was barred. And then a half finished painting standing on an easel at the rear of his den had brought him inspiration. It was one of his hobbies—

and it swung wide again for him the door of the underworld. None, in a broken-down, disappointed, drug-shattered artist, would recognise Larry the Bat! The only similarity between the two—the one thing that must of necessity be the same in order to explain plausibly his intimacy with the dens and lairs of Crimeland, the one thing that would, if nothing more, assure an unsuspecting, tolerant acceptance of his presence there, was that, like Larry the Bat, he would assume the rôle of a confirmed dope fiend; but as there were many dope fiends, thousands of them in the Bad Lands, that point of similarity, even if Larry the Bat were not believed to be dead, held little, if any, risk. For the rest, it was easy enough; and so there had come into being these wretched quarters here, the New Sanctuary—and Smarlinghue.

But the mere assumption of a new rôle was not all—it was not there that the difficulty lay; it was in gaining for Smarlinghue the *confidence* of the underworld that Larry the Bat had once held. And that had taken time—was not even yet an accomplished fact. The intimate, personal acquaintance of Larry the Bat with every crook and dive in Gangland had aided him, as Smarlinghue, to gain an initial foothold, but his complete establishment there had necessarily had to be of Smarlinghue's own making. And it had taken time. Six months had gone now, six months that, as far as the Tocsin was concerned, had been barren of results mainly, he encouraged himself to believe, because his efforts had been always limited and held in check; six months of anxious, careful building, and now, just as he was regaining the old-time confidence that Larry the Bat had enjoyed, just as he was reaching that point where the

whispered secrets of the underworld once more reached his ears and there was a promise of success if, indeed, she were still alive, had come this thing to-night that spelt ruin to his hopes and ultimate disaster to himself.

If she were still alive! The thought came flashing back; and with a low, involuntary moan, mingling anguish of mind with a bitter, merciless fury, he turned restlessly upon the cot. If she were still alive! No sign, no word had come from her; he had found no clue, no trace of her as yet through the channels of the underworld; his surveillance of the Magpie, whose friendship he had begun to cultivate, had, so far, proved fruitless.

It came upon him now again, the fear, the dread, which he had known so often in the past few months, that seemed to try to undermine his resolution to go forward, that whispered speciously that it was useless—that she was dead. And misery came. And he lay there staring unseeingly into the moonrays as they streamed in through the top-light.

Time passed. Then a smile played over Jimmie Dale's lips, half grim, half wistful; and the strong, square jaw was suddenly out-flung. If she was alive, he would find her; if she was dead—his clenched hand lifted above his head as though to register a vow—the man or men, her murderer or murderers, whether to-morrow or in the years to come, would know a day of reckoning when they should pay the debt!

But that was for the future. To-night there was this vital, imminent danger that he had to face, this decision to make whose pros and cons seemed each to hold an equal measure of dismay. What was he to do?

He laughed shortly, ironically after a moment. It was as though some malignant ingenuity had conspired to trap him. He was caught either way. What was he to do? The question kept pounding at his brain, growing more sinister with each repetition. What was he to do? Defy the police—and be branded as a stool-pigeon, a snitch, an informer in every nook and cranny of the underworld! He could not do that. Everything, all that meant anything in life to him now would be swept from his reach at even the first breath of suspicion. Nor was it an idle threat that his unwelcome visitor had made. He was not fool enough to blind himself on that score—it could be only too easily accomplished. And on the other hand—but what was the use of torturing his brain with a never-ending rehearsal of details? Was there a middle course? That was his only chance. Was there a way to safeguard Smarlinghue and, yes, this miserable hovel of a place, priceless now as his new Sanctuary.

He followed the moonpath's slant with his eyes to where it touched the floor and disclosed the greasy, threadbare, pitiful carpet. A grim whimsicality fell upon him. It would be too bad to lose it! It was luxury to what Larry the Bat had known! There had not even been a carpet in the old Sanctuary, and—he sat suddenly bolt upright on the cot, his eyes, that had mechanically travelled on along the moonpath, strained now upon where the light fell upon the threshold of the door. There was a little white patch there, a most curious little white patch—that had not been there when he had thrown himself on the cot. Came a sudden, incredulous thought that sent the blood whipping fiercely

through his veins; and with a low cry, in mad, feverish haste now, he leaped from the cot and across the room.

It was an envelope that had been thrust in under the door. In an instant he had snatched it up from the floor, and in another, acting instinctively, even while he realised the futility of what he did, he wrenched the door open, stared out into a dark and empty passageway—and, with a strange, almost hysterical laugh, closed and locked the door again.

There was no writing on the envelope; there was not light enough to have deciphered it if there had been—but he had need for neither writing nor light. Those long, slim, tapering fingers, those wonderful fingers of Jimmie Dale, that seemed to combine all human faculties in their sensitive tips, had already telegraphed their message to his brain—it was the same texture of paper that she always used—it was from *her*—it was from the Tocsin.

Joy, gladness, a relief so terrific as it surged upon him as to leave him for the moment physically weak, held him in thrall, and he stumbled back across the room, and slipped down into a chair before the table, and dropped his head forward into his arms, the note tightly clasped in his hand. She was *alive*. The Tocsin was alive—and well—and here in New York—and free—and they had not caught her. It meant all those things, the coming and the manner of the coming of this note. A deep thankfulness filled his heart; it seemed that it was only now he realised the full measure of the fear and anxiety, the strain under which he had been labouring for so many months. She was alive—the Tocsin was alive. It was like some wonderful song that filled his soul, excluding

all else. How little the contents of the note itself mattered—the one great, glorious fact for the moment was that she was alive!

It was a long time before Jimmie Dale raised his head, and then he got up suddenly from his chair, and lit the gas. But even then he hesitated as he turned the note over, speculatively now, in his fingers. So she knew him as Smarlinghue! In some way she had found that out! His brows gathered abstractedly, then cleared again. Well, at any rate, it was added proof that so far her cleverness had completely outwitted those who had pitted themselves against her—so much so that even her freedom of action, in whatever role she had assumed, was still left open to her.

He tore the envelope open. There was no preface to the note, no “Dear Philanthropic Crook” as there had always been in the old days—instead, the single, closely-written sheet began abruptly, the writing itself indicating that it had been composed in desperate haste. He glanced quickly over the first few lines.

“You should not have done this. You should never have come into the underworld again. I begged, I implored you not to do so. And now you are in danger to-night. I can only hope and pray that this will reach you in time, and—” He read on, in a startled way now, to the end; then read the note over again more slowly, this time muttering snatches of it aloud: “... Chicago ... Slimmy Jack and Malay ... Birdie Lee ... released from Sing Sing to-day ... triangular scar on forehead over right eye....”

And then, for a little while, Jimmie Dale stood there staring about the room, motionless, rigid as stone, save that

his fingers moved in an automatic, mechanical way as they began to tear the note into little shreds. But presently into his face there crept a menacing look, and an angry red began to tinge his cheeks, and his jaws clamped ominously.

So that was the game at Malay John's, was it? Birdie Lee was out again! She had not needed to mention any scar to enable him to identify Birdie Lee. He knew the man of old. The slickest of them all, the cleverest of them all, before he had been caught and sent to Sing Sing for a five-years' term, was Birdie Lee—the one man of them all that he, Jimmie Dale, might regard as a rival, so to speak, where the mastery of the intricate mechanism of a vaunted and much advertised "guaranteed burglar-proof safe" was concerned! And Birdie Lee was out again!

There was danger if he went to Malay John's, she had said—and it was true. But what if he did *not* go! What, for instance, if Birdie Lee went through with this night's work!

Jimmie Dale walked slowly across the room, halted before the wall near the door, stood for an instant hesitant there—and then, as though in a sudden, final decision, dropped down on his knees, and, working swiftly, removed the section of the base-board from the wall for the second time that night.

Out came the neatly folded clothes of Jimmie Dale; and with them, serving him so well in the days gone by, the leather girdle, or undervest, with its stout-sewn, upright pockets in which nestled, in an array of fine, blue-steel, highly tempered instruments, a compact powerful burglar's kit. It was the one thing that he had saved from the fire in the old Sanctuary—and that more by accident than design.

He had been wearing the girdle that night when he had stolen into the Crime Club, and afterwards had returned to the Sanctuary with the intention of destroying forever all traces of Larry the Bat; and then, only half dressed, as he was changing into the clothes of Jimmie Dale, the alarm had come before he had taken off the girdle, and, without thought of it again at the time, he had still been wearing it when he had made his escape. He looked at it now for a moment grimly—and smiled in a mirthless way. He had not used it since that night, and that night he had never meant or thought to use it again—only to destroy it!

He reached into the aperture in the wall once more, drew out a pocket flashlight and an automatic pistol, and laid them down beside the clothes and the leather girdle; then, pulling off his coat and shirt, he ran noiselessly across the room to the washstand. A few drops from a tiny phial poured into the water, and the pallor, the sickly hue from his face was gone. It was to be Jimmie Dale—not Smarlinghue—who would keep the rendezvous at Malay John's!

And now he was back across the room once more, turning out the light as he passed the gas-jet. The leather girdle, that went on much after the fashion of a life-preserver, was fastened over his shoulders and secured around his waist. The remainder of his clothes were stripped off with lightning speed, and in their place were donned the fashionably tailored, immaculate tweeds of Jimmie Dale. It was like some quick-moving, shadowy pantomime in the moonlight. He gathered up the discarded garments, tucked them into the opening in the wall, replaced the baseboard, slipped the automatic and flashlight into the side pockets of

his coat—and stood up, his fingers feeling swiftly over his vest and under the back of his coat to guard against the possibility of any tell-tale bulge from the leather girdle underneath.

An instant he stood glancing critically about him; then the roller shade over the window was lifted aside, the window itself, on carefully oiled hinges, was opened noiselessly, closed again—and, hugged close against the wall of the building, hidden in the black shadows, Jimmie Dale, so silent as to be almost uncanny in his movements, crept along the few intervening feet to the fence that enclosed the courtyard. Here, next to the wall, a loosened plank swung outward at a touch, and he was standing in a narrow, black areaway beyond. There was only the depth of the house between himself and the street, and he paused now, crouched motionless against the wall, listening. He heard no footfalls from the pavement—only, like a distant murmur, the night sounds from the Bowery, a block away—only the muffled roar of an elevated train. The way was presumably clear, and he moved forward again—cautiously. He reached the front of the building, which, like the old Sanctuary, was a tenement of the poorer class, paused once more, this time to peer quickly up and down the dark, ill-lighted cross street—and, satisfied that he was safe from observation, stepped out on the sidewalk, and began to walk nonchalantly along to the Bowery.

And here, at the corner, under a street lamp he consulted his watch. It was ten o'clock! He smiled a little ironically. Certainly, they would hardly expect him as early as that! Well, he would be a little ahead of time, that was all!
