

carefully. The only thing he could hear was a faint sound from the orchestra. He switched on the little flashlight. Its powerful rays showed him a group of boxes and discarded furniture. "Nothing here," he muttered after a brief survey of the room. "Hullo!" he exclaimed suddenly to himself, "what's this?" His eyes had fallen on a pair of steps almost hidden by a large box. He went cautiously over to them and discovered that they led down into a cellar.

Pete went down the steps, treading lightly lest he make a noise that would arouse someone. At the bottom, he stood silently for a couple of seconds, listening. No sound came to his ears. Not even the sound from the orchestra.

He switched on his light and saw that he was in a room similar to the one he had just left. A few boxes and empty barrels were the only things in the room. He saw



the man, horrified. There was no doubt that the man was dead, for the knife was stuck in his left chest over the heart. But who had killed him? He went over the man and felt his wrist. "Damn!" Pete exclaimed. The body was still warm! The murderer might still be somewhere there in the room, Pete thought suddenly. Impulsively he stood up. As he did so, the room was flooded with light.

Four men stood in the room. All had guns pointed straight at him. If the dead man had gotten up, Pete wouldn't have been any more surprised than he was then.

"Well, here we are again," Carlson greeted him. "What's the little detective up to now?"

Pete recovered himself and walked over to the men, seemingly unconscious of the fact that their guns were still pointed toward his abdomen.

"Well, Carlson," he drawled. "It looks like I have finally got the goods on you."

"You got me?" Carlson laughed. "Hell, feller, does it look like you got me?" Here he indicated the guns of the men beside him.

"Sure," Pete replied easily. "You and your bad pups, too."

"Hell, Carlson," Jones spat viciously, "let's bump this bastard off an' git it over with."

"Wait!" Carlson commanded, going over to where the dead man lay. "Look, it's Red. Somebody got him with a knife!" He exclaimed.

"This guy done it!" a little dark man said sharply out of the corner of his mouth.

There was some muttering and nasty looks cast at Pete. He saw that he was in a tight place. From the way Carlson was grinning at him, he knew Carlson knew something about why the man had been killed and by whom.

"I found that man here," Pete said with attempted indifference. "Someone had already knifed him." "Yeah?" Carlson queried, coming closer to Pete. "Now, I guess you are willing to talk sense. We all know you killed Red, but we can all forget it, too; that is, if you forget what you know about us. And the money still goes with the bargain," he added.

"What are you talking about, Carlson? You can't frame that killing on me!" Pete snapped.

"Why not? There are four of us to say we saw you do it."

"Well, if you do," Pete said savagely, "you'll do it from behind the bars, Carlson. I got the low-down on you now, and you're through. Do you get that? You're through!"

At a signal from Carlson, one man grabbed Pete's gun and the other two grabbed his arms. In a few minutes he was securely tied. "What the hell are you trying to do, Carlson?" Pete asked angrily. "You can't do anything to me and get away with it. Hell, I work for too big a company."

"Shut up, bo!" Jones sneered wickedly, hitting him in the mouth with his fist.

"And you," Pete went on, spitting out blood, "I'm going to whip that monkey head of yours down to a frassle when I get loose."

Jones hit him again. "Let's give him the works, Carlson," one of the men said darkly. "I'll take a chance on it."

"No," Carlson answered, "that won't do. Wait!" He exclaimed suddenly: "I got it! We'll shoot him with Red's gun and claim that he and Red killed each other!"

"Is that the best you can do?" Pete sneered.

Jones hit him again, grinning darkly, "Why is it, bo, I git sich a helluva kick outa smashing you?" he asked.

"You're too dumb for anything else!" Pete fung at him.

He was rewarded by another blow from Jones.

"Hell, ain't this bo cock--?" he grinned delightedly.

"Red's gun ain't on him," the small dark man said after a brief search through the dead man's clothes.

"It's over town at his room, then," another man, named Smith, said suddenly.

"We've got to have Red's gun," Carlson said decisively, "because it's the only one of its kind in Fairview. Say, Smith, take my car and go get his gun. Be careful nobody sees you get it. And hurry back!"

"You'll never get away with it, Carlson!" Pete said savagely at the man.

"Are you still refusing my offer?" "Hell, yes!" Pete snapped.

"What are you squawking about, then?" Carlson replied. "You had your chance to play the game. Leave him here, fellers, and let's go

up and get a drink while we're waiting for Smith," he added, inspecting the ropes on Pete's hands and feet.

"Bring me a bottle of milk," Pete instructed.

"Sure. Anything to please you," Carlson grinned. They left the room, locking the door behind them.

"Well," Pete said to himself, "you've sure got yourself in one hell of a mess."

After Pete had left Sally's home that afternoon, she went for a walk in the park. The air had cooled her temper and anger wonderfully. She couldn't rid her mind of what Pete had said about Carlson. She had no idea that Carlson was in anyway connected with anything unlawful. He had given her the impression that Pete was deliberately trying to make trouble for him. Now that she had heard Pete's side of the story, she was a trifle confused. Pete wouldn't have been sent on this job if there hadn't been something wrong. After all, it was Pete's job to get to the bottom of the thing. She felt a warm glow of admiration for Pete and the way he was determined to carry out his orders, in spite of what she had said. She knew she had no business trying to butt in on his work, even if Carlson had asked her to.

The more she thought over it, the

more Sally wanted to go to Pete and tell him that she understood and was with him to the end.

She had just discovered that she loved him. Loved him more than anything else in the world!

The sudden realization of it caused a queer little feeling to rise in her breast. A fear that she had already lost him!

She called up his hotel, but he had gone out. She hardly knew what to do. She did know, however, that she wanted to be near Pete, and that she couldn't rest until she had gotten to him.

She finally decided to look for him out at the Black and Tan Club. Hailing a taxi, she was soon on her way.

She hurried into the road house and saw Carlson and two other men come from a small door at one end of the room.

He saw her and came toward her. The other two men went back to the bar.

"Hullo there, Sally," Carlson greeted her. "What's happened? you look as if you had found a pot of gold."

She wanted to tell him that she had found out something far more important to her. Instead, she laughed and said: "I'm looking for Pete."

"I wouldn't bother with that cocky bull-headed devil if I were you, Sally," Carlson replied. "He

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LIBERIA UNKIND.—Fredrick W. Smith, master electrician, who went to the Republic sometime ago in quest of fame and fortune. He returned recently, disgusted, saying Liberian affairs are sewed up by whites.

another door, however, that was also partly hidden by a large empty box. He opened it cautiously and went into the room.

He stepped on something soft on the floor. Switching on his light, he saw that it was a small package with something white spilled out of a broken end.

Pete picked it up and looked closely at it. "Cocaine!" he exclaimed half aloud. "So that's your racket, Carlson. No wonder you could afford to offer me eight grand to lay off. The dope business brings high profits!"

Looking around, he saw several boxes containing similar packages. "Holy hell!" Pete mused. "This guy must supply an awful big market!"

Casting his light around the room, his eye fell on a shoe sticking out from behind a box. He wouldn't have noticed it only it was sticking straight up!

Instantly, Pete became alert. Surely there was a man behind that box or else the shoe wouldn't be sticking out in that position.

He switched off his light and cautiously began to work his way around so that he would be able to see behind the box.

Having reached the position he desired, he switched on his light, his gun held steadily in his right hand. The light showed him a man lying in a sprawling position, his eyes closed as if he were asleep.

"A devil of a place to sleep," Pete muttered to himself, wondering whether to try and awake the man or let him alone.

Then it struck him that there was something unnatural about the man. Somehow, he didn't look like he was breathing. Cautiously he moved closer. What he saw sent a cold chill up and down his spine. A knife was buried to the hilt in the man's chest!

For a few minutes Pete gazed at

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