

—VIII—

BOOKIE SKARVAN PAYS HIS ACCOUNT

THE little red-rimmed eyes blinked into the glare—it was the only color left in the white, flabby face—the red rims of the furtive little eyes. Bookie Skarvan's fat hand lifted and tugged at his collar, as though the collar choked him. He fell back a step and his heel crunched upon the telephone transmitter, and smashed it. And then Bookie Skarvan licked his lips—and attempted a smile.

"I," mumbled Bookie Skarvan, "I—I can't see your face. Who—who are you?" The sound of his own voice, husky and shaken as it was, seemed to bring him a certain reassurance. "What do you want? Eh—what do you want?" he demanded.

Dave Henderson made no reply. It seemed as though his mind and soul and body were engulfed in some primal, savage ecstasy. Years swept their lightning sequence through his brain; hours, with the prison walls and iron bars around him, in which he had promised himself this moment, seemed to live their life and existence over again. He said no word; he made no sound—but, with the flashlight still playing without a flicker of movement upon the other, he felt, with the back of his revolver hand, over Bookie Skarvan's clothing, located in one of the pockets Bookie Skarvan's revolver, and, with utter contempt for any move the man might make through the opening thus given him, hooked the guard of his own revolver on the little