

His mental soliloquy ended abruptly. He had opened the door noiselessly that led into the house, and was creeping without a sound along the hallway toward the door of his room at the front of the house—and now suddenly he stood rigid and motionless. Was it fancy, his imagination playing tricks upon him, or had Tooler come down-stairs? It seemed as though he had caught the sound of a lowered voice; and it seemed as though it had come from his own room there along the hall.

And then he smiled sarcastically at himself, and began to creep forward again. He had complained of the whole thing being tame, and now he was getting an attack of nerves when it was all over! How could he have heard a lowered voice through the closed door of his room? It was a physical impossibility. And Tooler, in any case, was not in the habit of talking to *himself*! Tooler never talked to any one if he could help it. The man always seemed to be nursing a perennial grudge that he hadn't been born a mute!

Dave Henderson's smile broadened at his little conceit—and the next instant vanished entirely, as his lips compressed suddenly into a hard, straight line. He had halted for the second time, hugged now close against the wall. The door of his room was *not* closed, and it was *not* Tooler—and it was *not* nerves. The door was slightly ajar; and the words came quite audibly; and the guarded voice had a haunting familiarity about it:

"Sure, I grabbed the train, an' Bookie stalled on being able to get old Tydeman on the long-distance until after the train—an' me on it—was on our way Tumble?"

Dave Henderson did not move. Into his face there had come, set in a grayish-whiteness, a look that min-