

"You know what I mean!" Dave Henderson answered levelly. "Take it!"

"My God!" screamed Bookie Skarvan. "No! My God—no! Not that!"

"Yes—*that!* You're getting what I swore I'd never give you—a chance. Either you or I are going out. Take that revolver, and for the first time in your life try and be a man; or else I'll fix you, and I'll fix it so that you won't move from here until your friend the Scorpion gets his chance at you for the pleasant little surprise you had arranged for him with your telephone trick, or until the police carry you out with a through ticket to the electric chair for what looks like murder over there on the floor. You understand—Bookie? I'll make you fight, you curl! It's the only chance you've got for your life." Now—take it!"

Bookie Skarvan wrung his hands together. A queer crooning sound came from his lips. He was trembling violently.

"There aren't very many of those ten minutes left, Bookie," said Dave Henderson coldly. "But if you got in a lucky shot—Bookie—you'd still have time to get away from here. And there's the money there, too—you could take that with you."

The man seemed near collapse. Great beads from his forehead ran down and over the sagging jowls. He moaned a little, and stared at the revolver that lay upon the desk, and reached out his hand toward the weapon, and drew his hand back again. He looked again at Dave Henderson, and at the muzzle of the revolver that covered him. He seemed to read something irrevocable and remorseless in both. Slowly, his mouth working, his face muscles twitching, he reached again to the desk, and pulled the revolver to him; and