

The flashlight, full on, lay on the desk. It played over the package of banknotes, and sent back a reflected gleam from the nickel-work of a telephone instrument that stood a few inches further along on the desk. The man's form, his back to the door, and back of the light, was like a silhouetted shadow. It was quiet, silent now in the house. Perhaps five seconds passed, and then the man chuckled low and wheezingly.

Dave Henderson grew suddenly rigid. It startled him. Somewhere he had heard that chuckle before—somewhere. It seemed striving to stir and awaken memory. There was something strangely familiar about it, and——

The man, still chuckling, was muttering audibly to himself now.

"Sure, that's the dope! The Scorpion—eh? Cunny the Scorpion! Nice name! Well, we'll see who gets *stung*! I guess ten minutes' start ain't good enough; but if some one's chasing the Scorpion, he won't have so much time to chase me. Yes, I guess this is where I fade away—with the goods. By the time there's been anything straightened out, and even if he squeals if he's caught, I guess I'll be far enough away to worry—not!"

Dave Henderson's face had grown as white and set as chiselled marble; but he did not move.

The man leaned abruptly forward over the desk, picked up the telephone, chuckled again, and then snatched the receiver from the hook. And the next instant, his voice full of well-simulated terror, he was calling wildly, frantically, into the transmitter:

"Central! . . . Central! . . . For God's sake! . . . Quick! . . . Help! . . . I'm Dago George. . . . The Iron Tavern. . . . They're murdering me. . . . Get the police! . . . For God's sake! . . . Get the police.