

"A lie!" Jimmie Dale cut in, an ugly calm in his voice. "You——"

But Jimmie Dale, too, was interrupted. The telephone on the table was ringing. His automatic covering Hunchback Joe, he pulled the instrument toward him, and lifted the receiver from the hook.

"Hello!" he said gruffly. "What's wanted?"

A voice responded in feverish excitement:

"Say, dat youse, Joe? Dis is Hoppy Meggs. Say, de fly cops has got tipped off; dey're on de way down to yer place now. Youse want to beat it on de jump!"

"Wait a minute!" said Jimmie Dale. He passed the instrument over to Hunchback Joe. "It's for you," he said, with a queer smile.

Hunchback Joe put the receiver to his ear—and a moment later, without a word in reply, returned it to the hook. But he had risen from his seat, and, swaying on his feet, was gripping at the table edge for support.

"I could have told you that," said Jimmie Dale evenly; "but you've got it now from a source that you won't question. I told you the buttons were off the foils to-night, but you don't seem to realise it yet. Three nights ago you laid a trap for me—and *the Pippin died*. Do you understand what I mean now by naked foils? You've one chance for life—and that's to answer my question. But I'll play fair with you, and tell you that I'm going to see that the police get you even if you do answer. Those documents and that blackjack are here in this place, and the Secret Service men know where to find them." Jimmie Dale's watch was in his hand. "It's five minutes to twelve. They'll be here at midnight. I've got to make my getaway before they come. I need two minutes for that, including locking you in so that *you* can't get away. That leaves you three minutes to make up your mind. If you answer, you can have whatever chance your law-