

the painted mottoes whose scrolls gaped where the cracks were; a swirl of horses reaching madly down the stretch, a roar of hoarse, delirious shouts, elated oaths around the bookmaker's paying-stand, pinched faces on the outer fringes of this ring; a thirst intolerable, stark pain, the brutal jolting of a boxcar through the nights, hours upon hours of a horror that ended only with the loss of consciousness; walls that reared themselves so high that they seemed to stand sentinels against the invasion of even a ray of sunlight, steel bars, and doors, and bolts that clanged, and clanged, until the sound ate like some cancerous thing into the soul itself; and then wolves, human wolves, ravenous wolves, between two packs of them, the police on the one hand, the underworld on the other, that snarled and tore at him, while he fought them for his life.

All that! That was the price he had paid for that package there—that, and that crimson stain.

He swept his hand across his eyes. His face grew set, and his jaws locked hard together. No, he wasn't sure yet that even that was all—that the package there was even yet finally and irrevocably *his*—to do with as he liked. There was last night—The Iron Tavern—the police again. *Was* there a connecting link trailing behind him? What had become of the Scorpion? What story had the man perhaps told? Were the police looking for an unknown man—who was Dave Henderson; and looking for an unknown woman—who was Teresa?

Well, before long now, surely, he would know—when Millman got back. Millman, who had intimated that he had an inside pull somewhere that would get the straight police version of the affair, had gone out immediately after breakfast for that purpose.

That was what counted, the only thing that counted