

336 ADVENTURES OF JIMMIE DALE

"You blot on God's earth!" he said hoarsely. "That's enough of that! The buttons are off the foils to-night, Hunchback Joe!"

For the second time, Hunchback Joe's eyes had ceased to blink. He was staring at the gray seal on the table top in front of him, and now in spite of his effort to maintain nonchalance, a whiteness had come into his face.

"You!" he shrank back a little in his chair. "The Gray Seal!"

Jimmie Dale's lips were thin and drawn tight together. He made no answer.

It was Hunchback Joe who broke the silence.

"What's your price?" he asked thickly. "I suppose you've got those—those other things, or at least you know where they are."

"Yes," said Jimmie Dale grimly, "I know where they are."

"Well"—Hunchback Joe hesitated, fumbling for his words—"we're both tarred with the same brush, only you're worse than I am. I've got to pay your price, of course. Make it reasonable. I haven't got all the money in the world. Tell me where those things are, and name your figures."

"My figure"—Jimmie Dale was clipping off his words—"is a little information. A trade, Hunchback Joe—mine for yours. I want to know where Peter Marre, alias Clarke, is?"

Hunchback Joe drew back from the table with a jerk. The whiteness in his face had changed to an unhealthy, leaden gray. He shook his head.

"I don't know," he said. "That's straight—I've heard of Marre, of course, everybody has, he's a lawyer; but I never heard of Clarke, and that's——"