

the underworld in general had but an extremely superficial acquaintance with Hunchback Joe; that Hunchback Joe's minor depredations against the law were but a cloak to—the mental soliloquy ended abruptly. Jimmie Dale drew suddenly back from the door, and, retreating along the wall of the building, crouched down in the darkness beneath the window. *What was that?* It came again—a step, stealthy, cautious, from the areaway—and now another step—there were two men there.

The picklock was back in his pocket, and, in its place, his fingers closed around the stock of his automatic. A shadow showed around the corner of the building, a queer, twisted, misshapen shadow—it was followed by another. Jimmie Dale drew in his breath softly. Hunchback Joe! He had rather expected that the man would already have come and gone, that this initial act of the brutal drama staged for the night's work would already have been performed. Well, it did not matter! There was still time—time to wait while Hunchback Joe did his work here, time in turn to do his own and still reach Baldy Jack's before ten o'clock.

From somewhere in the distance came the roar and rattle of an elevated train; from a neighbouring tenement came the strains of a wheezy phonograph. The figures were at the rear door of the tenement now. A minute passed; the door opened, closed, the two figures had disappeared—and then, in a flash, Jimmie Dale had straightened up, and a steel jimmy was working with deft, silent speed at the window sash. He had the time it would take Hunchback Joe to reach and open Klanner's door from the hall inside—no more. And if he could watch Hunchback Joe at work it would simplify to a very large extent his own task when Hunchback Joe was through; there would be no necessity for a *search*, and—ah! The window gave. He raised it noiselessly,