

Madison looked at him, and smiled mirthlessly. "My head!" he exclaimed bitterly. "I got you into this, all of you — but it will take more than my head to get you out. If I could stand for it myself, I'd do it — but I can't without dragging you in too — we're too intimately mixed up. If I said it was a deal of mine — they'd ask where Helena came from — they'd ask where you came from, Flopper. We're beaten — beaten every way we turn. The game has got us — we haven't a move. We played it to the limit, the slickest swindle that was ever worked, and it worked till there's more money than I've tried to count. And then it changed us from thieves, from — from anything you like — and now that we want to quit, now that we want a chance to make good, it's got us in its grip and we can't get away." He flinched a bead of moisture from his forehead. "My God, I don't know what to do!" he muttered hoarsely. "It was easy enough to *talk* about stopping this thing, about returning the money — but I can't see the way out."

No one answered him — all were silent — as silent as the mute and venerable figure that sat, listening attentively it seemed, in the armchair by the fireplace.

Madison turned abruptly after a moment to Pale Face Harry.

"You, Harry," he said, laying a hand on the other's shoulder, "you're the only one of the four that can walk out of it — you don't show in the center of the stage — you go. You said