

334 ADVENTURES OF JIMMIE DALE

Well, there was one man who knew where Marre was—Hunchback Joe. And, come what might, Hunchback Joe would tell him, Jimmie Dale, to-night where Marre was! He was not so sure as the Tocsin that Hunchback Joe would talk to the police; he was sure that Hunchback Joe would talk—to the *Gray Seal*. That was all. That was what he was waiting for here now in the darkness before the police came—for Hunchback Joe.

Time passed—a half hour—an hour. It was getting perilously close to the time when the Secret Service men would be pounding at the door out there, and the margin of time left for that grim interview with Hunchback Joe was narrowing rapidly; but there was a strange, calm, cold patience possessing Jimmie Dale—the man would come, and come in time—he knew that, knew it as he knew that he sat there and lived and breathed.

The silence was oppressive, heavy; it seemed to palpitate in rhythm with the lap of the water against the pier. The minutes dragged by, another five of them—and then suddenly Jimmie Dale sat rigidly forward in his chair. The front door had not been unlocked or opened, but there was the sound of a footstep now—from the rear section of the shed, where there had appeared to be no entrance! The footstep came nearer—the door of the partition opened—there was the click of the electric-light switch—the light came on—and then a low, savage, startled oath came from the doorway.

Jimmie Dale did not move—his automatic was covering the misshapen, toad-like figure of Hunchback Joe, as the other stood just inside the room. For a moment neither spoke—then Hunchback Joe laughed suddenly in cool contempt.

"What's the game?" he demanded. "You don't need any mask on here—I deal with your kind every day. What do you want?"