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governable, almost insane fury seemed to possess the man as he stood over the prostrate footman,

demanded.

Michael led the way from the room

wearing his muzzle and Michael saying not a word.
Suddenly Clutching Hand turned on

footman, overcome by fear, hurried upstairs. Still trembling and fearful, Michael paused in the hallway. He put his hand on his face where

Another moment he surveyed his work to see that he had left no loose ends. Then he quietly let himself out of the house.

The next morning Rusty, who had

been Ellaine's constant companion since the trouble had begun, awakened his mistress by licking her hand as it hung limply over the side of her

She awakened with a start and put her hand to her head. She felt ill. "Poor old fellow," she murmured,

Rusty moved away again, wagging his tail listlessly. The collie, too, felt

"Why, Miss Elaine—what ees ze mattair? You are so pale!" exclaimed the maid, Marie, as she entered the room a moment later with the morning's mail on a salver.

"I don't feel well, Marie," she resided, twinks, with her slender, white

plied, trying with her slender white hand to brush the cobwebs from her brain. "I—I wish you'd tell Aunt Jo-sephine to telephone Doctor Hay-

"Yes, mademoiselle," answered

Languidly Elaine took the letters

one by one off the salver.

Finally she selected one and slowly tore it open. It had no superscription, but it at once arrested her at-

tention and transfixed her with ter-

Elaine drew back into the pillows

norror stricken.

Quickly she called to Marie. "Go

Kennedy, in his stained laboratory apron, was at work before his table, while I was watching him with inter-

ing about the nature of the message

An instant later he almost tore off

out of the laboratory.

"This is terrible—terrible," he muttered, as he hurried across the campus.

est, when the telephone rang.

a little tank

half dazedly.

ward.

The New York police are mystified by a tries of murders and other crimes. The incipal clue to the criminal is the warn-g letter which is sent the Yoldman warned to the control of the warned of the warned of the mysterious assassin is also that we warned of the mysterious assassin is also to the warned of the mysterious assassin is also that warned wa

## FIFTH EPISODE

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M.

The Poisoned Room.

Elaine and Craig were much together during the next few days. Somehow or other, it seemed that the chase of the Clutching Hand involved long conferences in the Dodge library, and even, in fact, extended to excursions into the notoriously crime-infested neighborhood of Riverside drive, with the feelingship procession of automo-He put his hand on his face where the Clutching Hand had struck him. Then he waited, muttering to himself. As he thought it over, anger took the place of fear. He slowly turned in the direction of the cellar.

Meanwhile, Clutching Hand was standing by the electric meter. He examined it carefully, feeling where the wires entered and left it, and starting to trace them out. At last he came to a point where it seemed suitable to make a connection for some purpose he had in mind.

Quickly he took some wire from his bag and connected it with the electric light wires. Next, he led these wires, concealed, of course, along the cellar floor, in the direction of the furnace. The furnace was one of the old hot its fashionable procession of automobiles and go-carts—as far north, indeed, as that desperate haunt known

But to return to the more serious side of the affair. Kennedy and Elaine had scarcely come out of the house and descended

the steps, one afternoon, when a sinister face appeared in a basement areawas the Clutching Hand.

He wore a telephone inspector's hat and coat and carried a bag slung by a strap over his shoulder. For once he had left off his mask, but, in place of it, his face was covered by a scraggy black beard. The disguise was effective.

tive.

He saw Kennedy and Miss Dodge He saw Kennedy and Miss Dodge and slunk unobtrusively against a railing, with his head turned away. Laughing and chatting, they passed. Then he turned in the other direc-tion and, going up the steps of the Dodge house, rang the bell. "Telephone inspector," he said in a loud tone as Michael, in Jennings' place for the afternoon, opened the door.

he bent down beside it and uncovered a little tank.

He thrust his hand gingerly into it, bringing it out quickly. The tank was nearly full of water.

Next from his capacious bag he took two metal voles, or electrodes, and fastened them carefully to the ends of the wires, placing them at opposite ends of the tank in the water. For several moments he watched. The water inside the tank seemed the same as before, only on each electrode there appeared bubbles, on one bubbles of oxygen, on the other of hydrogen. The water was decomposing under the current by electrolysis. Another moment he surveyed his work to see that he had left no loose

door.

He accompanied the words with the sign, and Michael admitted him.

As it happened, Aunt Josephine was upstairs in Eliaine's room. She was fixing flowers in a vase on the dressing table of her idolized niece. Meanwhile, Rusty, the collie, lay, half blinking on the floor.

while, Rusty, the coine, lay, half bina-ing, on the floor.

"Who is this," she asked, as Mi-chael led the bogus telephone inspec-tor into the room.

"A man from the telephone com-pany," he answered deferentially.

Aunt Josephine, unsophisticated, al-lowed them to enter without a further

question.

Quickly, like a good workman,
Clutching Hand went to the telephone
instrument and by dint of keeping his
finger on the hook and his back to Aunt Josephine succeeded in convey-ing the illusion that he was examining

No sooner was the door shut that the Clutching Hand hastily opened his bag and from it drew a small powder-spraying outfit, such as I have seen used for spraying bug powder. He then took out a sort of muzzle with an elastic band on it and slipped it over his head so that the muzzle protected his nose and mouth. tected his nose and mouth.

tected his nose and mouth.

He seemed to work a sort of pumping attachment and from the nozzle of the spraying instrument blew out a cloud of powder which he directed at

the wall. Meanwhile, Michael, in the hallway, on guard to see that no one bothered the Clutching Hand at his work, was overcome by curiosity to see what his master was doing. He opened the door a little bit and gazed stealthily through the crack into the room.

Clutching Hand was now spraying the rug close to the dressing table of he and was standing near the mir-He stooped down to examine the Then, as he raised his head, he happened to look into the mirror. In it he could see the full reflection of Michael behind him, gazing into the

'The scoundrel!" muttered Clutching Hand, with repressed fury at the

discovery.

He rose quickly and shut off the spraying instrument, stuffing it into the bag. He took a step or two toward the door. Michael drew back, fear-

the door. Michael drew back, fear-fully, pretending now to be on guard. Clutching Hand opened the door and, still wearing the muzzle, beck oned to Michael. Michael could scarcely control his fears. But he obeyed, entering Elaine's room after the Clutching, Hand, who locked the

"Were you watching me?" demanded the master criminal, with rage.
Michael, trembling all over, shoot. nd looked him over disdainfully

at the clumsy lie.

Then he brutally struck Michael in the face, knocking him down. An unDoctor Hayward had arrived and had just finished taking the patient's

nad just imissed taking the patient's pulse and temperature as our cab pulled up.

Elaine was quite ill indeed.

"Oh! I'm so glad to see you," she breathed with an air of relief as Kennedy advanced.
"Why—what is the matter?" asked

Craig anxiously.

Doctor Hayward shook his head dubiously, but Kennedy did not notice him, for, as he approached Elaine, she drew from the covers where she had concealed it a letter and handed it to

"You are sick this morning. To morrow you will be worse. The next day you will die unless you discharge Craig Kennedy."

At the signature of the Clutching

"Get up!" he ordered.

Michael obeyed, thoroughly cowed.

"Take me to the cellar, now," he Hand he frowned, then, noticing Doctor Hayward, turned to him and repeated his question, "What is the matter?"

without a protest, the master criminal following him closely.

Down into the cellar, by a back way they went, Clutching Hand still

blis head. "I cannot diagnose her symptoms," he shrugged.
There seemed to be a faint odor, almost as if of garlic, in the room. It was unmistakable and Craig looked about him curiously, but said nothing. sindenty Cuttering rand turned on him and seized him by the collar. "Now. go upstairs, you," he muttered, shaking him until his teeth fairly chattered, "and if you watch me again—I'll kill you!"

He thrust Michael away, and the

As he sniffed, he moved impatiently and his foot touched Rusty, under the bed. Rusty whined and moved back lazily. Craig bent over and looked lazily. at him. What's the matter with Rusty?" he

May I take Rusty along with me? Craig asked finally
Elaine hesitated. "Surely," she said at length, "only be gentle with him."
"Of course," he said simply. "I thought that I might be able to discover the trouble from studying him."

cover the trouble from studying him.

We stayed only a few minutes longer, for Kennedy seemed to realize the necessity of doing something immediately, and even Doctor Hayward was fighting in the dark. The furnace was one of the old hot air heaters and he paused before it as though seeking something. Then he bent down beside it and uncovered

Back in the laboratory, Kennedy set to work immediately, brushing everything else aside. He began by draw-on. "Room forty-nine is probably

"Well," added Craig, "you see, Michael has become infuriated by the treatment he received from the Clutching Hand. I believe he cuffed him in the face yesterday. Anyway, he says he has determined to get even and betray him."

I did not like the looks of the thing, and said so. "Craig," I objected vehemently, "don't go to meet him. It is a trap."

Kennedy had evidently considered my objection already.

"It may be a trap," he replied slow-ly, "but Blaine is dying and we've got to see this thing through."

As he spoke, he took an automatic from a drawer of a cabinet and thrust it into his pocket. Then he went to another drawer and took out several sections of thin tubing, which seemed to be made to fasten together as a fishing hole is fastened, but were now separate, as if ready for traveling.

Then he went out. I followed, still arguing.

"If you go, I go," I capitulated.

"That's all there is to it."

Following the directions that Michael had given over the telephone, large and the stood three breathing heavily.

We ran to him. Craig turned him over gently on his back and examitued him. He called No answer. Michael him over gently on his back and examitued him.

arguing.

"If you go, I go," I capitulated.

"That's all there is to it."

Following the directions that Michael had given over the telephone,
Craig led me into one of the toughest
parts of the lower West side.

"Here's the place," he announced,
stopping across the street from a
dinzy Raines law hotel.

"What's the matter with Rusty?" he asked. "Is he sick, too?"
"Why, yes," answered Elaine, following Craig with her deep eyes.
Craig reached down and gently pulled the collie out into the room. Rusty crouched down close to the floor. His nose was hot and dry and feverish. He was plainly ill.
"How long has. Rusty been in the room?" asked Craig.
"All night," answered Elaine. "I wouldn't think of being without him now."

his notebook again.
Reluctantly I followed and we entered the place.
"I want a room," asked Craig as we were accosted by the proprietor, comfortably clad in a loud checked suit and striped shirts sleeves. "I had one here once before—forty-nine, I think."

"Fifty—" I began to correct.
Kennedy trod hard on my toes.
"Yes, forty-nine," he repeated.
The proprietor called a stout negro porter, waiter and bell-hop all com-

"Fifty—" I began to correct.
Kennedy tred hard on my toes.
"Yes, forty-nine," he repeated.
The proprietor called a stout negro
porter, waiter and bell-hop all combined in one, who led us upstairs.
"Forty-nine, sąh," he pointed out,
as Kennedy dropped a dime into his
ready palm.
The negro left us and as Craig

The negro left us, and as Craig

The negro left us, and as Craig started to enter, I objected. "But, Craig, it was fifty-nine, not forty-nine. This is the wrong room."

"I know it," he replied. "I had it written in the book. But I want forty-nine—now. Just follow me, Walter."

Nervously I followed him into the room.

"Room forty-nine is probably just



the little incision he had made, "will you take care of him?" ickly Craig made one test after

morrow you will be worse. The next day you will die unless you discharge another.

As he did so I sniffed. There was Craig Kennedy."

It was signed with the mystic trademark of the fearsome Clutching an unmistakable odor of garlic in the air which made me think of what I had already noticed in Elaine's room.

"Arseniuretted hydrogen," he answered, still engaged in verifying his tests. "This is the Marsh test for equickly sine cannot to marie. Go
eget Aunt Josephine—right away!

And Marie almost flew down the
hall. Elaine seized the telephone and
called Kennedy's number. "Arsenic!" I repeated, in horror.

I had scarcely recovered from the surprise of Kennedy's startling revelation when the telephone rang again. Kennedy seized the receiver, thinking relative that the evidently that the message might be from or about Elaine.

But from the look on his face and from his manner, I could gather that, est, when the telephone rang.
Without a word he answered the call, and I could see a look of perturbation cross his face. I knew it was from Elaine, but could tell nothing about the neutron of the

although it was not from Elaine herself, it was about something that interested him greatly.

"Good!" I heard him say finally. "I

shall keep the appointment-abso-

"What was it?" I asked, eagerly.
"It was Elaine's footman, Michael,"
he replied, thoughtfully. "As I sus-"This is terrible—terrible," to muttered, as he hurried across the campus of the university to a taxleab stand. A few minutes later, when we arrived at the Dodge mansion, we found Aunt Josephine and Marie doing all they could under the circumstances. I considered a moment. "How's that?" I queried.

ing off a little of Rusty's blood in a tube, very carefully.

"Here, Walter," he said, pointing to the floor below."

Then he the pictures and furniture, only it is on the floor below." He gazed about keenly. Then he took a few steps to the window and

threw it open. As he stood there he took the parts of the rods he had been carrying and fitted them together until he had a pole some eight or ten feet long. At one end was a curious arrangement that seemed to contain lenses and a mirror. At the other end was an eye-piece, as nearly as I could make out.

"What is that?" I asked as he completed his work.
"That? That is an instrument something on the order of a miniature periscope," Craig replied, still at Craig replied, still at

ork.
I watched him, fascinated at his re sourcefulness. He stealthily thrust the mirror end of the periscope out of the window and up toward the corresponding window upstairs. Then he gazed eagerly through the eye-piece.

"Walter—look!" he exclaimed to

I did. There, sure enough, was Michael, pacing up and down the roo As I looked at him nervously walking to and fro, I could not help admitting that things looked safe enough
and all right to me. Kennedy folded
the periscope up and we left our
room, mounting the remaining flight

of stairs.

In fifty-nine we could hear the measured steps of the footman. Craig

over gently on his back and examined him. He called No answer. Michael was almost pulseless. Quickly Craig tore off his collar and

"Here's the place," he announced, stopping across the street from a dingy Raines law hotel.
"Pretty tough," I objected. "Are you sure?"

"What's that?" I ejaculated, horror

"Quite," replied Kennedy, consulting his notebook again.

Reluctantly I followed and we entered the place.
"A poisoned blowgun dart, such as is used by the South American Indians on the upper Orinoco," he said

He examined it carefully "What is the poison?" I asked.
"Curari," he replied simply. "It acts
on the respiratory muscles, paralyzing
them and causing asphyxiation."

The dart seemed to have been made of a quill with a very sharp point, hol-low, and containing the deally poison in the sharpened end.
"Look out!" I cautioned, as he

handled it.

handled it.
"Oh, that's all right," he answered casually. "If I don't scratch myself, I am safe enough. I could swallow the stuff and it wouldn't burt me—unless

stuff and it wouldn't hurt me—unless I had an abrasion of the lips or some internal cut."

Kennedy continued to examine the dart until suddenly I heard a low exclamation of surprise from him. Inside the hollow quill was a thin sheet of tissue paper, tightly rolled. He drew it out and read:

"To know me is Death.
"Kennedy—Take Warning."
Underneath was the inevitable

"To know me is Death.
"Kennedy—Take Warning."
Underneath was the inevitable Clutching Hand sign.
We jumped to our feet. Kennedy rushed to the window and slammed it shut, while I seized the key from Michael's pocket, opened the door and called for help.
A moment before, on the roof of a building across the street, one might have seen a bent, skulking figure. His face was copper colored and on his head was a thick thatch of matted hair. He looked like a South American Indian, in a very dilapidated suit of cast-off American clothes.
He had slipped out through a doorway leading to a flight of steps from the roof to the hallway of the tenement, and, like one of his native venomous serpents, worked his way down the stairs again.

the stairs again.

My outery brought a veritable bat-talion of aid. The hotel proprietor, the negro waiter and several others dashed upstairs, followed shortly by a portly policeman. Craig took the policeman into his

confidence, showing him the dart and explaining about the poison. The officer stared blankly.

"I must get away, too," hurried on Craig "Officer, I will leave you to take charge here. You can depend on me for the inquest. The officer nodded.

"Come on Walter," whispered Craig, eager to get away, then adding the one word, "Elaine!"
I followed hastily, not slow to un-

erstand his fear for her.

Nor were Craig's fears groundless. In spite of all that could be done for her, Elaine was still in bed, much weaker now than before. More than that, the Clutching Hand

not neglected the opportunity,

Suddenly, just before our return, a stone had come hurtling through the window, without warning of any kind, and had landed on Elaine's bed.

Below, as we learned some time aft Below, as we learned some time atverwards, a car had drawn up hastuy and the evil-faced crook whom the Clutching Hand had used to rid himself of the informer, "Limpy Red," had leaped out and hastily hurled the stone through the window, as quickly leaping back into the car and whisking away. whisking away.

Around the stone was wrapped a piece of paper on which was the ominous warning, signed as usual by the Hand:

"Michael is dead. "Tomorrow, you.
"Then Kennedy.
"Stop before it is too late."

Elaine had sunk back into her pil lows, paler than ever from this second shock. It was just then that Kennedy and

I arrived and were admitted.

"Oh, Mr. Kennedy," cried Elaine,

handing him the note.

Craig took it and read. "Miss
Dodge," he said, as he held the note out to me. "you are suffering from ar-senic poisoning—but I don't know yet how it is being administered."

He gazed about keenly. Meanwhile,

I had taken the crumpled note from him and was reading it. Somehow, I had leaned against the wall. As I turned, Craig happened to glance at

me.
"For heaven's sake, Walter," I heard

him exclaim. "What have you been

up against?"

He fairly leaped at me and I felt He fairly leaped at me and I felt him examining my shoulder where I had been leaning on the wall. Something on the paper had come off and left a mark on my shoulder. Craig looked puzzled from me at the wall. "Arsenie!" he cried.

He whipped out a pocket lens and looked at the paper. "This heavy, fuzzy paper is ratify loaded with it, providered, he reported.

powdered, he reported.

Kennedy paced the room. Suddenly, pausing by the register, an idea seemed to strike him.

"Walter," he whispered, "come down cellar with me."
"Oh! Be careful!" cried Elaine, anx-

ious for him.
"I will," he called back.

As he flashed his pocket bull's-eye about, his gaze fell on the electric meter. He paused before it. In



Kennedy Discovers the Secret of the

spite of the fact that it was broad

"They are using no current at present in the house," he ruminated, "yet the meter is running.

He continued to examine the meter.

Then he began to follow the electric

wires along At last he discovered a place where they had been tampered with and tapped by other wires.
"The work of the Clutching Hand!"

Eagerly he followed the wires to the furnace and around to the back. There they led right into a little water tank Kennedy yanked them

out. As he did so he pulled some-thing with them.
"Two electrodes the villain placed there," he exclaimed, holding them up

there," he exclaimed, holding them up triumphantly for me to see.
"Y-yes," I replied, dublously, "but what does it all mean?"
"Why, don't you see? Under the influence of the electric current the water was decomposed and gave off oxygen and hydrogen. The free hydrogen passed up the furnace pipe and combining with the arsenic in the wall paper formed the deadly arseniuretted hydrogen."
He cast the whole improvised electrolysis apparatus on the floor and

trolysis apparatus on the floor and dashed up the cellar steps.

"I've found it!" he criec, hurrying into Elaine's room. "It's in this room—a deadly gas—arseniurette' hydro-

He tore open the windows

"Have her moved," he shouted to Aunt Josephine. "Then have a vac-uum cleaner go over every inch of wall, carpet and upholstery."

wall, carpet and upholstery."
Standing beside her, he breathless iy explained his discovery. "That wall paper has been loaded down with arsenic, probably paris green or Schweinfurth green, which is acetoarsenite of copper. Every minute you are here you are breathing arseniurefted bydagen. "This Clutching Hand ted hydrogen. This Clutching Hand is a diabolical genius. Think of it—poisoned wall paper!"

No one said a word. Kennedy reached down and took the two Clutching Hand messages Elaine had received. "I shall want to study received. "I shall want to study these notes, more, too," he said, hold-ing them up to the wall at the head of the bed as he flashed his pocket lens at them. "You see, Elaine, I may be able to get something from study. ing the ink, the paper, the hand writ-

ing—"
Suddenly both leaped back, with a

cry.
Their faces had been several inches apart. Something had whizzed between them and literally impaled the two

notes on the wall. Down the street, on the roof of a carriage house, back of a neighbor's, might have been seen the vector figure of the shabby South American Indian crouching behind a chimney and gazing intently at the Dodge house.

As Craig had thrown open Elaine's window and turned to Elaine the figure had crouched closer to the chimney

Then with an uncanny determin tion, he slowly raised the blowgun to

his lips.

I jumped forward, followed by Doctor Hayward, Aunt Josephine and Marie. Kennedy had a peculiar look as he pulled out from the wall a blow-gun dart similar in every way to that which had killed Michael.

"Craig!" gasped Elaine, reaching up and laying her soft, white hand on his arm in undisguised fear for him, "you —you must give up this chase for the Clutching Hand!"

"Give up fre chase for the Clutching Hand!" he repeated in surprise.

"Never! Not until either he or I is and laying her soft, white hand on his

mingled in her look, as he reached down and patted her dainty shoulder encouragingly.