



Crane fired one shot over the escaping man's head.

PROTECTIVE ARMOR

By **NORMAN A. DANIELS**

Detective Rainbow Crane Discovers That a Loud Suit Can Sometimes Make as Big a Noise as a Roaring Gun!

ON THE books, Matty Crane was listed as a "plainclothesman." That was the biggest joke the boys at Precinct 62 ever heard. Matty Crane was partial to bright colors. A rainbow appeared in the sky once, took one look at Matty's new suit and had a nervous breakdown. From then on the boys

named him "Rainbow" Crane.

One day in early fall, Crane checked in at the precinct and repaired to Inspector Nolan's office for instructions. Nolan, a gray-haired, tired-looking career cop, glanced up from the papers on his desk. He shuddered and hastily averted his gaze.

Today Rainbow Crane was wearing a sports jacket which had been advertised as a “Glen Urquhart” plaid. It was a daring combination of gray, blue and tan squares with an overlay of bilious orange stripes. Tastefully scattered throughout were dashes of green, yellow, red and blue intermingled. With it he wore fawn-colored doeskin slacks, brown and white shoes and a snappy green felt hat. His tie—Inspector Nolan felt one of his headaches coming on! It was a blazing yellow, with huge red poppies clustered generously on the field.

Nolan passed his hand over his eyes and tried to collect his thoughts.

“Sit over there,” he muttered. “And pull down the shade. Where was I?”

“You sent for me. Remember?” Crane said. He didn’t think it was funny, all the cracks about his clothes. Even if the rest of the force had no taste they ought to admire a bold and unconventional mind.

“Uh—yes. I sent for you. Yes, that’s right. Lou Huber got out of jail this morning.”

“I know.”

“What are you planning to do?”

“Me? Am I supposed to have plans?”

“Don’t play dumb. We both know Huber killed Jerry and Jerry was your partner. I repeat. What are you going to do?”

Crane looked stolidly out the window.

“The jury said Huber was innocent,” he said, at last.

“They had to—there was no proof. But Huber killed him all right and you’ve kept your lip buttoned up so tight that—well, I know you, Rainbow. I know you’re not going to let this pass. Now let me warn you.”

“Yes sir,” Crane said automatically.

“Don’t do anything foolish. In fact—” Nolan’s expression grew optimistic—“you don’t have to move. Huber is crooked. Just wait and he’s bound to pull something. Then you’ll have him—legally. But if you go out to knock him off in revenge, you’ll ruin yourself.

Now I shouldn’t have to tell you this, Crane. You know it as well as I.” He raised his eyes, got the full shock of Crane’s necktie and recoiled.

“Ah, that tie, Rainbow. Where did you get it?”

CRANE looked at him suspiciously.

“This?” Nolan’s eyes were so limpid and honest Crane was deceived. “Just a little thing Warren makes up for me. If you want some I’ll have him hold a couple just like it for you.”

“No, don’t!” Inspector Nolan looked horrified. “I just wanted to know so I could warn my wife. It was Warren’s, you say.” He pretended to grow angry. “Haberdashery, my eye! Such ties are against the law. That store is a menace. Joints like that ought to be raided.”

Rainbow Crane’s face had flushed but, by an effort, he kept his temper.

“That’s a skookum tie,” he insisted. He heaved himself out of his chair, walked across the room and preened the offending scarf before a small mirror on the wall. Soon afterward Nolan dismissed him.

At ten to eleven that night Crane had checked out of the precinct and was walking north. A clock on the Insurance Building was just striking eleven as Crane turned into an alley which was a short cut to a restaurant on the next block. The short order cook made up a fresh batch of coffee at eleven for the late movie trade and Crane usually got a cup before going home.

It was dark in the alley but he knew the route by heart and didn’t hesitate. A truck went by in the street outside, its motor coughing. Then it began to backfire and the fusillade was deafening. In the midst of that racket there was a single report which sounded as though it came from further down the alley, from the courtyard in the back.

Only a trained ear would have caught

it. Crane lifted up his feet and trotted down the alley. The courtyard was a dirty, littered place toward which the buildings presented their rears contemptuously. From the dirty window of a small jewelry store, whose littered storeroom abutted upon the courtyard, a feeble gleam of light came partway into the dark.

Against this glow, Crane saw the fence which separated the court from the next yard. And silhouetted against this fence was the dark figure of a man, with a gun in his hand. At his feet was something which resembled a mound of old clothes, but which the detective instinctively knew was a human body.

Faster than he had ever drawn a weapon in his life, Crane flipped open his plaid coat to yank his service pistol from its holster.

“Drop it!” he warned. “Drop it or I’ll shoot!”

The figure dropped the gun. But instead of standing still, the shadowy man ducked, wheeled out of the light and charged for the fence.

“Stop!” Crane yelled. He fired one shot over the escaping man’s head.

The fugitive had leaped to the top of the fence like a squirrel and was actually swinging himself over as Crane raced toward him. But with the shot he seemed to lose heart. Instead of going on over, he climbed back, let go all holds and dropped back on the same side, near Rainbow.

Crane grabbed him, slammed him up against the fence and held him there, pinned by the pressure of the gun muzzle in his stomach while his left hand did a rapid frisk. The man was clean.

Crane stepped back, fumbled out a pen-light and snapped it on.

“Denny Boulton,” he said. “Who’d you knock off, Denny?”

The gunman gave him an old time movie sneer.

“Nobody,” he said. “The stiff was

layin’ here when I come through.”

“And what were you doing standing over him with a gun in your hand? Waiting for a street car?”

“I ain’t talkin’.”

“Who is it, Denny?” Crane asked. “Anybody we know?”

Denny almost laughed outright.

“Friend of yours, copper. Lou Huber.”

While Crane reeled under that, Boulton added his next remarks with relish.

“Deader’n a mackeral. Slug right through his head.”

Crane pulled himself out of his confusion with a jerk. He got out handcuffs and snapped them on Boulton’s wrists.

“I’m going to turn you over to a harness bull,” he said. The dead man would keep a few minutes until he returned. He led Boulton out through the alley toward the street.

Sirens whined and a patrol car flashed past as they came out on the street, but it was gone before Crane could yell. Then a patrolman came around the corner at a run and Crane hailed him.

“Lo, Rainbow,” the cop puffed. “Got a flash there’s been a shooting. Who’s this?”

“Denny Boulton and he done it.” Crane jerked his thumb over a shoulder. “You’ll find the corpus delicti in the court behind Resnick’s Jewelry store.” He looked at Boulton and changed his plan. “You go on in and look things over—and find the gun. It’s laying there some place. I’m going to take Denny in myself.”

A CAB brought them to headquarters and Crane marched Denny up to the desk.

“Denny Boulton,” Crane said to the desk sergeant. “Book him for murder. I think he ought to get a medal before he gets the hot seat. It was Lou Huber he killed.”

“I demand justice,” Denny Boulton said. “I didn’t kill nobody.”

“Not much,” Crane sniffed. “I found him standing over the stiff with a gun in his hand.”

“It’s a frame,” Boulton said loudly. “He didn’t find me standing over no body. Listen, Sarge, it was like this: Me and Huber was walking down the street minding our own business when I hear a shot, and Lou takes a dive on his kisser. I look around and here’s this fancy-pants cop chasing for me. He had his roscoe all set to go and I had a funny feeling he was gonna use it first and ask questions second, so I lammed.

“I run down the alley with him after me. When he gets ready to cut loose with the roscoe I figgers I better stop. He hauls me in and says I killed Lou Huber. It’s a frame, Sarge. Huber was my best friend!”

Crane had let him talk without interruption. Now he drew a deep breath.

“Book him for Bellevue Psychopathic if you like, Sarge. But my story goes.”

To his surprise, the desk sergeant said nothing. His face showed no expression. He reached for his phone and called Nolan. The inspector came out promptly. Boulton turned on a torrent of words and again Crane let him talk. Nolan looked puzzled.

“It’s no good, Denny,” Crane said at last. “Your story smells. I sent Tom Riordan into the court before we got the cab. He’s found Huber’s body and he’s found your gun laying there. Ballistics will tell us in ten minutes the slug in Huber’s head came from your gun.”

Nolan looked at him queerly.

“Did you examine the body, Crane?”

“No, sir. Nobody could have looked deader and besides Denny himself told me Huber was shot through the head. I sent Riordan back when I got a cab to bring Denny here.”

“You’re a rat, copper!” Denny Boulton said loudly. “I know you hated Lou Huber, but puttin’ a slug through the back of his head is

dirty. You’ll burn for it, not me!”

Crane closed his mouth. He turned to Nolan expecting to see amusement on the inspector’s face and met again that maddeningly blank expression.

“Hold Boulton,” Nolan said. “Crane, come into my office.”

Puzzled, Crane followed. Inside, Nolan sat down wearily at his desk.

“Let’s see your gun,” he said.

“What!”

“Sorry, Rainbow. I’ve got to check Boulton’s claim.”

Wordlessly, Crane drew his pistol and passed it across. Nolan broke the gun and glanced in.

“There’s one shot missing,” Rainbow said stiffly. “The one I fired in the air to stop Denny. Now am I under arrest?”

“Oh, don’t get huffy,” Nolan said tiredly. “Don’t you think I believe you rather than that little rat?”

“Then what’s this all about?”

Nolan slid the gun into his desk drawer. He looked up, got an eyeful of Crane’s suit and hastily averted his eyes.

“Riordan phoned in before you got here,” he said. “There was no body in the courtyard, no gun.”

“Then the stiff was snatched. Somebody carted it away.”

“Maybe. Lou Huber’s body was found on the sidewalk halfway down the block. The slug that killed him went on through and can’t be found. So ballistics can’t check the bullet against your gun or Denny Boulton’s gun.”

“It’s a frame,” Rainbow said, wetting his lips. “They knew how I felt about Huber so they switched things.”

“In addition,” Nolan went on quietly, as though he hadn’t heard Crane speak, “there are witnesses, at least six, who saw the man who killed Lou Huber.”

“Then what are we waiting for?” Crane snapped. “Let’s see them and see if they

put the finger on me!”

Nolan pushed a call button. A policeman came in.

“Get five or six plain clothes detectives and line them up in the inspection room right away. Call me when you’re ready.”

THERE was silence then in the inspector’s office. Nolan drummed with his fingers on the desk. Crane mopped his face and watched Nolan’s fingers. Rainbow wondered why all the members of the force had grown so antagonistic toward him. The phone rang and Nolan answered.

“All right,” he said to Crane.

“Inspector,” the detective began, “you don’t believe I did this?”

“No. Of course I don’t. But we’ve got to go through with the identification, then we can write it off. Too many people know you had reason to hate Lou Huber—and wanted to get him. You’ve got to be cleared.”

In the inspection room the row of detectives awaited them. Crane wedged himself into the line. Then the door opened and a woman came in. She looked down the line, walked directly to Crane and pointed a bony finger into his face.

“That’s the man,” she said excitedly. “I saw him!”

Nolan’s face became grim. Crane felt his heart congeal into a lump of ice and go sliding down inside his fancy coat toward his still fancier shoes.

Two eighteen-year-old boys came in next and put the finger unerringly on him.

“That’s the man,” one said. “He’s a yellow killer. He waited until them fellers went past. Then he stepped out of a doorway and let one of the fellers have it right in the back of the head. We was right across the street and seen the whole thing.”

Crane’s knees were going rubbery. No reputation, no faith in him could withstand this kind of direct eyewitness evidence. He

had a motive for killing Lou Huber, he was being positively identified by witnesses as the man who had killed him. His own story was going to look pretty thin and feeble against all this.

He walked back to Nolan’s office with the inspector.

“So I am arrested now,” he said.

Nolan looked unhappy.

“What else can I do now? I’d hoped they wouldn’t identify you. Anything else might be squelched. But we can’t fool with a murder charge. Maybe you’d better come clean?”

“You, too?” Rainbow muttered.

He placed his hand gently in the middle of Nolan’s back and as the inspector opened the door to his office, gave a mighty shove.

Nolan went through the doorway as though shot from a cannon. He hit a chair, dived over it and skidded across the rug in a welter of flying furniture.

Rainbow Crane slammed the door shut and pelted down the corridor as hard as he could go. He skidded out a side exit, snagged a passing cab and ordered himself driven to the subway station. He took an uptown train, got off after a few stations and walked across town to another line where he took another train and went all the way downtown close to the section where he lived.

His move to escape had been the instinctive reaction of a trapped animal. Now he was beginning to think. He was in trouble, plenty of trouble. If he wanted to stave off capture a while longer the first thing to do would be to get rid of his distinguishing clothes. Any one of the 19,000 cops in New York would know him at sight.

He went by quiet side streets to within a block of his apartment house, then took to the backyards and finally reached a spot in an alley across the street where he could see his own front doorway. Parked halfway down the

block was a green and white patrol car. Too late! The place was covered.

He slunk back in the alley and tried to think. His tailor! There was another suit there now, waiting for him, in fact. It wasn't either the modest, subdued tones he craved at the moment, but at least its description wasn't on the teletype and the radio.

Hugging the shadows, he made his way through the silent night streets. It took him almost an hour to cover the short distance but he had to duck and wait every time he saw a patrolman or a radio car.

Barrow's shop was dark, naturally. He scouted it thoroughly, to make sure Nolan hadn't thought of putting any bloodhounds around it. Then he stepped into the doorway and rang the nightbell. The tailor slept in the apartment in back and it was worth the risk of waking him.

He could hear the heavy ring of the bell but no one stirred in the building. Could Barrow be away? If so, he was sunk.

Without thinking, he tried the door. It swung open. His policeman's instinct made him reach for his hip, then he remembered his gun was back in Nolan's office. He pushed the door wide and stepped in.

His nostrils tingled to the acrid bite of gunpowder. Moving as fast as he could, he groped his way past the clothing racks, sewing machine and pressing device to the living quarters in the back. He found the light switch and pressed it.

HE WAS not surprised by what he found. Barrow lay on the floor, shot through the chest and quite dead. There was only a little blood. The room had been torn apart ruthlessly. Drawers of a desk were pulled out and dumped, papers, bills, receipts, scattered in wild confusion, a steel cashbox smashed and its contents taken. There was a heavy steel safe in a corner of the room, but it was closed. Marks on the door suggested that the murderer

had tried, but failed, to get it open.

Crane looked for and found the top drawer. There were faintly penciled numbers in the wood. Barrow had opened the safe once in his presence and consulted these numbers first, so he knew they were the combination. In a couple of minutes the steel door swung back. Crane touched nothing except Barrow's customer ledger which contained the complete record of the pattern and cloth of every purchaser and every suit for the year.

It took an hour, but at the end of that time Crane had stumbled upon two items which were familiar. One was the name Jack Sutro, which belonged to a two-bit, but ugly gunman of his acquaintance. The other was "Glen Urquhart" which now bore equally unpleasant memories for him. Taken together they spelled a dirty tale.

He copied Sutro's address and spent the next twenty minutes trying on dark suits until he found one that fitted. Once or twice he was halted by a particularly dazzling design which, in spite of his trouble, he could not help but pause to admire. However, he had little difficulty in resisting temptation and finally got into a dark blue. With an old felt hat which had evidently belong to Barrow, he thought he was pretty well disguised.

The night was warm. Although it was past two in the morning when Rainbow Crane left the tailor shop, the ubiquitous New Yorker was still sitting on the front steps inhaling the second-hand air. Crane walked boldly down the middle of the sidewalk, no longer seeking shadows. No one noticed him, even a patrolman whom he could have touched as he went by.

Sutro's address turned out to be a frowzy fourth-rate hotel with unwashed windows and begrimed curtains. The clerk slumbered at his desk. Without arousing him, Crane tiptoed by and walked up four flights to the room given in Barrow's files.

Through the flimsy door came the

sound of peaceful snoring. Crane examined the lock. It was of the type common to all fourth-rate hotels. It could be opened by almost any skeleton key. Crane, a practical man, possessed such a key and a moment later he was sliding noiselessly into the warm, odoriferous room.

Jack Sutro snored, grunted in his sleep. Crane let a tiny circle of light from his pencil flash stab the room. It was untidy and littered. A closet door was ajar and the light revealed empty hangers. But on the floor of the closet was a bulging laundry bag. Crane opened it and, for the first time since he had been identified as a murderer, smiled broadly.

He turned on the bed lamp, saw Sutro twitch and groan in the sudden light. Considerably, he aided the waking process by sitting on Sutro's stomach.

"Oof! What—what—ugh, get off—hey!"

The man's eyes snapped open. He stared incredulously into Crane's menacing glare, only two feet away.

"One yip and I'll blow the top of your head off," Crane promised in a nasty voice, shoving the end of the pencil flash under Sutro's jaw. He knew that the man couldn't see what was in his hand at that angle.

The mobster, a wiry, evil-faced runt, licked suddenly dry lips.

"Whaddaya want? Dough?"

Crane shook his head.

"Don't you recognize me, Sutro? I'm Rainbow Crane."

That registered, he knew, by the flicker in Sutro's eyes.

"Didn't know you in that disguise," Sutro mumbled. "Whaddaya want with me?" He sneered a little. "Your pals are hunting you. Want me to hide you?"

"Don't play dumb, Sutro. This is a pinch. For murder."

"I'm laughing," Sutro said. "You ain't pinching nobody. You ain't even a cop no

more."

Quick as a striking snake, his hand darted under the pillow. Crane saw the gun coming out. He merely dropped his penlight, bunched his knuckles and struck. The blow traveled about four inches. But it carried a large measure of Crane's worry and anger and hate. It put a glaze on Sutro's eyes, made his teeth click like billiard balls.

THE fingers that clutched the gun butt went limp. Crane helped himself to the gun, stood up with it in his fingers. He waited while Sutro shook some sense back into his skull.

"Get up," Crane said thinly. He gestured with the gun at the suit he had laid out on a chair, a "Glen Urquhart" plaid of gray, blue and tan squares with an overlay of bilious orange stripes and tastefully scattered dashes of green, yellow, red and blue. There were fawn colored doeskin slacks, brown and white shoes and a snappy green felt hat. There was even a tie—blazing yellow, with huge red poppies generously clustered on the yellow field.

"Put it on," Crane said.

Sutro regarded the suit with horror, which he strove at once to conceal.

"Them? Why should I? They ain't mine. I never seen them before. I don't want to go to no masquerade this time of night."

"You've been to a masquerade, Sutro. This is midnight for you—unmasking. Move or I'll knock you cold and dress you myself."

His voice told Sutro he wasn't going to stand for any more stalling. Cowed, but surly and defiant, the gangster edged his skinny shanks out of bed and dressed as slowly as he dared. When he had finished Crane looked him over, sighed as he thought how much better those beautiful patterns looked on himself and motioned to the door.

"Let's go. And take some advice. Don't give me an excuse to blast your backbone in two because I'd love it." By way

of emphasis he rammed the gun muzzle three or four inches deep into Sutro's back.

They went down the stairs and into the lobby. The dozing night clerk looked up, caught the full impact of Sutro's clothes and choked. He was paralyzed, with his mouth open, unable to move or speak while they paraded through the lobby and out the door.

On the street, Crane flagged a night cruising taxicab and shoved his prisoner in.

"I'm almost sorry you didn't make a break, Sutro," Crane said as they moved across town. "Just for Nick Barrow's sake. Remember Nick Barrow, the tailor?"

"I dunno what you're talking about," Sutro mumbled.

"No? Listen, mug, I'll give you a break. Spill the works on Denny Boulton and I'll take the frame off your neck, or at least make it a little looser."

"You're outa your head," Sutro muttered.

The cab slid into the curb a block from the alley where Crane's night adventure had begun. They disembarked, Sutro looking around him nervously and waited while the cab pulled away.

"Last chance, Sutro," Crane said. "Will you talk?"

"You got nothing on me," Sutro said.

Crane stared at him, sighed, shrugged his shoulders.

"So it was a bluff and it didn't work. Okay, Sutro, I've got nothing on you. Scram."

"Are you kidding? You drag me all the way over here just to tell me that? You're nuts, copper."

"Yeah." Crane turned his back and started to walk away.

Sutro wheeled and ran down the street, looking eagerly for a cab. At the sound of his feet, Crane came back, watching.

There was a yell, then a woman's scream.

"There he is!"

"The killer—there goes the killer!"

Sutro's head jerked, he gave an almost inarticulate snarl of fear and began to run. His evident panic produced a sudden courage in the citizenry. Men sprang from front stoops and gave chase. The pursuit went down the block, Sutro sprinting madly, the men giving tongue like hounds after a fox.

They caught him at the corner, dragged him down and were pounding him lustily when the first police whistle shrilled and the first patrolman raced up. Almost as though staged, a patrol car flashed around the corner, screamed to a stop and Inspector Nolan piled out.

"We got him!" the hunters chorused. "Hey, we got your killer for you!"

Nolan pushed through, hauled Sutro to his feet.

"Wait a minute! Quiet, everybody!"

The excited clamor died down.

"Are you sure this is your man?"

"Sure, that's the rat!"

"That's him! I'd know that face anywhere!"

"Listen!" Nolan yelled. "You identified a man at the police station tonight as the killer. He escaped. Is this the same man!"

"Sure, it's the same man I"

"What are you giving us, Inspector? Think we're kids? Sure that's the same guy! Could anybody miss up on that kisser?"

MEN in the crowd hooted scornfully. "See, Inspector?" Crane tapped Nolan on the shoulder.

The Inspector turned completely around nervously.

"You! Where'd you come from, Rainbow?" Nolan's voice was mild, friendly. He even grinned at Crane. "I kind of expected to find you here." Then he asked: "See what?"

"It's obvious. Your witness«s were identifying a suit of clothes, not a man. They never really looked at me."

“That,” said Nolan grimly, “has now become obvious. And it’s your own fault, Rainbow. You would wear those clothes.” He turned his attention to the cringing gangster. “All right, Sutro, you’re in a nice spot. Got anything to say?”

“Denny killed him!” Sutro gasped. “Not me. Denny did it I tell you!”

“Why?”

“Denny and Huber were partners in a stickup. Huber went up the river and Denny was supposed to sit on the dough. He spent it and he knew what Huber would do to him when he got out. So he fixed up this stunt for knocking off Huber.”

“Simple,” Crane said. “Sutro went to my tailor. Barrow, and had him make up a suit just like mine. He waited for Denny to decoy Huber to this neighborhood, probably on a fake search for the hidden money. When they got down here, one of them, probably Denny, shot Huber. Then Sutro ran so that witnesses would see him apparently escaping. Denny waited for me in the courtyard where they knew I’d come through.

“The shot I heard was to attract my attention. It came after the actual murder but was masked from the people who had run for cover by now, in the backfiring of a truck—also a plant. They knew I’d make a perfect scapegoat because I had reason to hate Huber.”

“Denny done it!” Sutro babbled. “I only wore the suit to help him out. Denny killed Huber, not me!”

“And you killed Nick Barrow,” Crane said. “You killed him to get the record of another suit like mine being made for you. You got his bills, but you missed up on the ledger in his safe. And that was a mistake that’s going to be a little expensive for you, Jackie boy.”

After Sutro had been taken away, Nolan faced Rainbow Crane with some embarrassment.

“This is not much of an apology, considering the way we treated you tonight, but I think you’ll understand,” he said. “I’m sorry, Rainbow, but we couldn’t do it any other way. The New York Police Department stands by its members. Our difficulty was the mobsters behind the frame-up were alert and suspicious and we had to put them off guard. The boys who acted that way toward you were instructed by me. It’s lucky you escaped—it fitted in with my plan. I wanted you to work under cover. After you got away, I sent out word you weren’t to be molested. One of the uniformed men recognized you, later, in the blue suit, but he never let on. I hope it’s all right now.”

Rainbow Crane grinned. “Sure, it’s okay, Inspector,” he said. “I even doped out something like that after we pinched Sutro. I was wondering why everybody got so hostile after those mobsters pulled the frame-up. Thanks a lot. No apology is needed.” Then his jaw hardened. “Hadn’t we better get over to Barrow’s. There’s another body waiting for us, back of the tailor shop.”

Rainbow Crane showed up at precinct headquarters next morning in a suit which made the desk sergeant spill the ink and choke on his chewing tobacco.

Inspector Nolan, looking up innocently, with a glad greeting on his lips, blanched and bit his lip in a stern struggle for control.

“I was saving this for holidays,” Rainbow said, “but today’s a special occasion.”

“Crane,” said Nolan wearily. “Haven’t you had enough? Look at the trouble those suits got you into?”

“Trouble?” said Crane, lifting an eyebrow. “Why, Inspector, I figure just the opposite. It was the suit that got me out of trouble. It was the best protection I ever had. Like a suit of armor.” He looked down at himself. “Barrow would have been proud of

this if he could see it.”

“What’s in the package?” Nolan asked, trying to change the subject.

“Present for you. Remember that tie I was wearing? I decided to give it to you as a memento of this case. Nicest tie I ever had,” he said regretfully.

He opened the box and laid the tie on

Nolan’s desk. The red poppies blazed on their yellow field.

Nolan rose from the chair, and Rainbow Crane dashed to the door.

“Hey, sergeant!” he yelled. “Bring a glass of water! The Inspector’s having the jitters! I think he wants to kill me!”