



. . . . *A Good Detective
Watches All Routes That
May Bring Criminals
into His Midst*

THE RULE COVERING MISTAKES

By
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SHADRACK ARNOLD, Granville's number-one citizen and model of virtue, frowned at the Dutch clock noisily ticking its way into eternity. The porcelain timepiece stood on the back bar of the Paradise Saloon, its glass face reflecting the last rays of the sun. Its hands were straight up and down.

Proprietor Ludolph Hoorn wiped his fat, dimpled hands and beamed at his lanky customer. One of his hands went unguided to a clean beer stein.

"What today, Detectiff Shad?"

"Sarsaparilla."

"Ach," said Mr. Hoorn softly, and released the beer stein. But his face beamed on.

Shad had turned his inscrutable, trained, photographic, deductive eyes toward the free lunch.

Shadrack Arnold was making history in Granville. For the third time in a week he had done the unheard of. The unprecedented. *He had had free lunch with a sarsaparilla!* And Ludolph Hoorn, who for a nickel offered the biggest schooner of steam beer this side of St. Louis, had blinked his little eyes no more than he usually did at the sight of Shad. Hoorn, as

well as Granville, had got used to Shad; now only strangers stared at him. Shad was six feet, six inches tall and weighed one hundred and twenty-eight pounds.

Ludolph Hoorn made funny noises in his throat now. But these could be interpreted only as sounds of pleasure.

“Vree loonch—eh, Shad?”

Shad’s nod was faint. But it was absolute. Hoorn’s free lunch was the most famous thing in Grail County! Shad’s long fingers slipped under his hat and through his mop of yellow hair. He turned smoky-blue eyes to the clock again and nodded that he’d have time. “Got to meet the Westbound,” he said. “Some mighty important mail coming in for me.”

The Dutch saloonkeeper grunted with interest. He set the sarsaparilla and a highly-polished glass on the bar. The light that seeped in through the front windows gave Hoorn’s paper-white face the effect of transparency. His bushy eyebrows and mustache were dark against his waxy complexion. They didn’t look real. He gave a hasty glance around the barroom, then whispered:

“Somebodies, you are after catching—Detectiff Shad?”

“Ain’t sayin’—” Shad smiled faintly, as befitting a holder of a diploma from Criminal Investigators, Incorporated. A gold-edged diploma that was signed by no less a personage than Captain Evans Ellsworth of St. Louis!

SHAD dug into a pocket of his well-worn Levis for a nickel which he placed on the bar for his drink and free lunch. He set his Homburg style hat at a rakish angle and straightened his new black sateen shirt. Then he went to work on the free lunch.

Shad took two pieces of freshly-cut rye bread from under its damp covering of cheesecloth. His fingers did not tremble

when he lifted the meat fork today; already he was an old hand at this business. And his choice was before him. Meat so tender as to fall away at the touch of a fork.

A roast of beef and one of pork leg sweltered in hot gravy, and wedged between them was nearly half a baked ham. The ham had cloves sticking out of it, and within the perimeter of its savory aroma was a dish of raisin sauce. On the board were slices of cold beef, pork and ham, Wisconsin yellow cheese, sliced sausages, bologna. Earthenware bowls were filled with small white onions in vinegar, potato salad and half-grown green peppers in their own warm juice. There were pickles and gherkins. A row of hard-boiled eggs bordered this mouth-watering array.

Shad constructed his sandwich, paying full tribute to Hoorn’s culinary art. He put everything in. He could come back to the salad later.

The big Dutchman’s face shone like a full moon.

“Dry the bickles—St. Louis, Shad!”

“Thanks, *Mynheer*.” Shad had heard Mr. Buchanan from Center City call Hoorn by that title and Hoorn had liked it. He liked it now. Shad speared off a pickle—but it was really the *St. Louis* that got Shad. St. Louis was where Criminal Investigators, Incorporated lived.

Shad allowed a faint smile to drive the inscrutability out of his face. It was something to be the best private detective in Grail County, perhaps in the state! A nickelplated pair of handcuffs in his hip pocket and a shiny badge on the inside of his vest were ready in case he wanted to make an arrest. Shad hadn’t made an arrest as yet, but he was ready for it. Page 12 of the 69 page book, which had come with Shad’s course, said:

“*The power of arrest is every man’s prerogative!*”

Shad had nearly finished eating when a long whistling wail came in over the batwing doors. He nearly choked on his sandwich. The Westbound was whistling for the crossing a mile out of town. Shad took a gulp of sarsaparilla, which probably surprised the free lunch no end, and was all right again.

He slid to the swinging door, looking over the top of it until the train rolled in. For a moment steam obscured the scene. Then he saw men hurrying along the platform. Shad could see Postmaster Cauldwell, for one, and Marshall Tom Dillon. Then Shad's eyes widened. He stopped chewing. A virtual mob of men began getting off the train.

Then Shad was munching away at his last bit of sandwich again. He remembered now. This was the crew of the newly-opened Three Star Ranch north of town. As he watched, the men loaded into a big Conestoga wagon, and Phil Barker, ramrod of the Three-Star spread, drove away.

But still Shad's deductive, Investigator-trained eyes scanned the break in the buildings that showed the train tracks and part of the station. On page three of the book it said: "*A good detective watches all routes that may bring criminals into his midst.*"

He was rewarded when the engine took a couple of tentative puffs, spun its drivers and then crept away from the station. A man stood on the platform. A stranger! A stranger who was looking toward Granville's main street. Shad knew he was looking at Ludolph Hoorn's sign on the false front of the saloon. You couldn't miss it. Pictured was an enormous schooner of frothy beer and the legend, "Biggest Beer in Town—5 cents!" Ludolph Hoorn had wanted to add that the beer was the biggest *this side of St. Louis*, but the sign had been too small for that.

A steely calm came over Shad. His face turned inscrutable again. This was it. The stranger was rutting straight through the lot toward the Paradise Bar.

Shad looked across the street to see if Old Bill, his delivery horse, was all right. Old Bill would be late for his supper tonight; he was usually late when Shad had special investigations to do. What Shad did was all right with the good-natured Mr. Carter as long as he got his work done. Mr. Carter paid Shad twenty dollars per month for delivering groceries—when business was good. Business wasn't very good now.

The stranger stopped and talked to Marshal Dillon. Shad saw the town marshal shake his head. Then they talked some more. The man was short and as stocky as the town marshal. But this man had a dark, sly look—as that of an escaped criminal. Perhaps—Yes, this was it!

Shad could almost see the man breaking his way out of a jail, could almost see the guns flash, hear the shouts of police officers. It was easy for Shad to see these things. When one worked with the great Captain Ellsworth it gave him an insight to things unknown to other men! Vicariously, if not in fact, he had rubbed shoulders with every type of criminal, relentlessly pursuing them into the fastness of their subterranean hiding places. And always, as from some Pisgah height to guide him, stood the protective Criminal Investigators, Incorporated.

Shad was back at the bar when the stranger came inside. The man had a scar over one eye, a shifty gaze and a blue serge suit that shone in the places of greatest wear. The stranger looked at Shad and then at the bartender as he came up to the bar. "Beer," he said.

"Pheer? *Ja.*" This time Mr. Hoorn's hand wasn't sidetracked by a sarsaparilla; it went unerring to a clean beer stein.

Shad nursed his soda and watched the stranger from the corner of his eye. The stranger stared at the free lunch and seemed surprised by its quantity. He licked his lips, like a coyote drooling over a flock of penned chickens.

When the stranger looked at the big gold nugget on Hoorn's watch chain, Shad was sure the stranger was sizing things up for a robbery. His eyes followed the stranger's around the room. The man looked at the calendar on Hoorn's wall, where gay young lovers skated across a pond of somewhat dusty ice. Under the picture was the less cheerful inscription. "The St. Elmo Tombstone Company, St. Louis, 1910." The stranger's eyes moved on toward the side door where another sign hung a trifle off center. This one said: "Family Entrance. No Profanity—It Might Be Your Sister."

THE Dutchman looked at the schooner of beer he had drawn. His small eyes sparkled. The beer was foamy, glistening—and cold. He set the schooner on the mahogany as if it were a priceless heirloom.

The stranger put down his nickel. Before foraging into the free lunch, he tasted the beer. He nodded and almost smiled. "Cold," he said.

"*Ja!*" The big Dutchman's jewels vibrated to secret mirth. He turned to Shad. "He say iss kalt, *ja!* Ach, mit mine own hands und two mules I bring down the ice in the winter from the hills outd. I store in mine cellar the ice mit kegs of pbeer from St. Louis on. *Ja!*"

Shad nodded corroboration. His eyes went surreptitiously to his empty glass. He had nursed his sarsaparilla to the end. By all the rules he should order another drink before eating any more free lunch. But Shad was saved from spending that nickel. The soft creak of the batwings saved him.

Into the barroom filed a delegation that brought gurgles of joy from Proprietor Hoorn. Phil Barker led the men. Three Star men. Barker said, "It's on me, Hoorn." He held up *one* finger to designate the number of rounds he was paying for. He looked at Shad then. "See Smiley, the blacksmith, anywhere? We busted a wheel before we got out of the freight yard."

Shad scratched his beardless chin. He thought a moment, considering the question. Then he said, "You'll find Smiley out to the Corners doing some work. Won't be back till late, or in the morning."

Barker cursed. "I'll have to wait," he grumbled, and joined his men.

Shad smiled tolerantly after him. There was a page on *Tolerance* in Captain Ellsworth's book. Shad looked at the men taking their places along the bar. Hard men, these. He was glad he had no dealings with any of them. One criminal at a time was bad enough—and he had *the stranger!* The stranger, who anybody could see had criminal tendencies, had taken his sandwich and his beer and retired to the end of the counter.

Shad suddenly remembered his mail. He smiled faintly to the men staring at him and slid sideways out of the barroom. He had plenty of room to have gone out naturally, but he slid. He had work to do before he would follow the precepts of Captain Ellsworth's teachings and—*Follow That Man!*

MARSHAL TOM DILLON and Harry Marston were coming toward him along the board sidewalk. They stopped in front of the post office. Shad nodded at them and followed his beanpole shadow inside.

"One of them Criminal Investigator letters for you," said Postmaster Cauldwell, looking over his glasses. He handed over a long, brown envelope. "Say, Shad, how

much time they give you on this extra course?"

Shad pressed closer to the window. "I get three months, if I want it," he said from the side of his mouth. Then he slid back out of the post office, sideways.

At the sidewalk, Harry Marston grinned at him. "How's crime?" Marshal Tom Dillon smiled, too, but not so expansively. It had been hard for the town marshal to figure Shadrack Arnold out. Shad, through the teachings of the great Criminal Investigators, Incorporated, had apprehended two important criminals in less than six months. The marshal asked, "You know when Barbara Willbank's coming back?"

"She's up in the city doing some millinery buying," said Shad. He looked at the sky. "Let's see. She told Old Man Carter she'd pay her grocery bill Saturday, so it'd be before that. Yeah, Barbara Willbank will be back before Saturday."

Tom Dillon grunted. "Her brother stopped off the train to see her—but he's got to go on his way to the Coast tomorrow."

Shad's heart dropped. "You don't mean the stranger in the Paradise?"

"Yeah. Name of Stanley." Tom Dillon's keen eyes swept to Shad's. "Something wrong?"

Shad shook his head. Then he looked at Harry Marston. "Say, I've got some groceries going out to your place. I better hurry with them." He half-raised his hand, which made an unnecessary display of his large brown envelope, and hurried away. He had to forget the stranger.

Shad had the solace of the envelope when he drove Old Bill away. He had groceries for Mrs. Featherstone, Mrs. Marston, the Rileys over on the hill and Ned Bayton, who ran the city's waterworks on the road to Center City. At the end of the street one of the Blake kids yelled

across the way. "Ast your ma, Henry, kin you come over," and "Hello, Shad!"

Shad didn't hear any of that. He was already listening to the roar of the big city. His one-horse delivery wagon became a fine open-air carriage, with a coachman slapping the same horse fly he himself was slapping from Old Bill's back. The head of celery on the seat beside him became a fair and gallant lady. Her caresses were tolerated only because Shad, in spats, gloves and silk top hat, realized her kisses were born of gratefulness. Had he not saved her little sister from the clutches of the Gashouse Gang?

SHAD gave Old Bill his head, then opened his letter. His face remained inscrutable as he read the letter headed by the insignia of the agency—the symbolic badge, handcuffs and crossed six-shooters. The message was addressed to him—Detective Shadrack Arnold.

Fellow Investigator:

Because of your amazing prowess in mastering the fundamentals of Captain Ellsworth's Course as well as Packet Number Two of Confidential Material, we are sending you Packet Number Three at no charge.

Captain Ellsworth is so pleased with your work that he requests us to place your name in our "Selected Group." You will receive special pamphlets and confidential material from time to time, also at no additional charge.

The first of the series we have included. This is a folder on Sunny Hill Tract Number One, a subdivision put on by Mr. James Ellsworth, brother of Captain Ellsworth. We are sending you this material to keep you posted on what the principals of our organization are doing. Captain Ellsworth, as well as many others of our organization, are investing here.

The lots, as you can see, are priced at \$300. A very low down payment of ten dollars to members of our organization. A payment of ten dollars thus reserves any lot. As marked, lot *Number Seven* is open. For a very short time. This lot, as you can see, adjoins the one owned by Captain Evans Ellsworth.

If you are interested in owning a lot adjoining that of the world's famous Captain Ellsworth, send remittance to Dept. B, Criminal Investigators, Inc. You must act at once.

Sincerely,
Criminal Investigators, Inc.
James F. Padd, Secretary.

Shadrack leaned back against the wagon seat and studied the green pamphlet. "By Golly," he whispered. "This is something. A place next door to Captain Ellsworth's!"

Then Shad was aware that Old Bill had come to a stop. He looked up and around. His mouth came open with surprise. The wagon stood at the hitchrack at the side door of Carter's Grocery. The recreant, Old Bill, had circled the block and come back home. Mr. Carter stuck his face outside. "Ain't you started yet? Mrs. Featherstone is aimin' to roast that coffee before supper time."

"Right away, Mr. Carter." Shad gave a sickly grin, scowled at Old Bill and crammed the brown envelope and letter into his pocket.

Old Bill backed away from the hitch rail, turned and began to trot off in the direction he should. This time, when they passed the millinery shop of Barbara Willbank's, Shad scowled. "Why didn't she tell somebody she had a brother?"

NIGHT was drawing its pattern over the hills when Shad got back from his last delivery of the day. After he put Old Bill

up, Shad's work would start anew. His unauthorized watch over the community of Granville would begin.

Page two of Captain Ellsworth's book said: "*A private detective owes a certain allegiance to his community. His conduct and reputation must be above reproach, and he should always keep his payments up to date.*" Shad didn't bother with that last. His payments were not only up to date, they were paid in full. Before going to bed each night Shad took a turn around town to see that everything was all right. This he did without the knowledge of Marshal Tom Dillon. Marshal Dillon might not understand.



Granville's business houses were already dark, with only a few lights showing along the street. The Paradise Bar was one of those still open. Shad looked across the top of the batwings when he moved past it. The bar was filled, as it always was at this time of the evening. Also, the stranger, Stanley Willbank, was still there—only Shad had lost interest in him.

Shad crossed over the street and went down through the vacant lot toward the railroad station. No trains stopped here before tomorrow morning, but Shad always included the drab building. He was about to turn away when he saw a flare of firelight

against one of the box cars at the spur track. When he moved closer he saw it was a small fire built near the broken-down wagon of the Three Star Ranch.

Shad moved closer. There might be some form of devilment going on. But suddenly he saw Marshal Tom Dillon's ruddy face in the firelight, and felt reassured. Phil Barker's voice came to him. "No, I'm not letting the boys take any whiskey out to the ranch. The Old Man won't stand for it."

Shad moved back and started to circle the box car. Suddenly he heard other voices. Three men in close conversation at the side of the box car. Shad moved closer. One of the men said:

"It's a cinch, I tell yuh. Soon's the town's asleep, I'll get in through that back door. The Dutchman sleeps upstairs, but that's all right—hey, somebody's coming."

Shad gulped, nearly swallowed the piece of pine gum he was chewing. He faded back across the tracks and into the welcome gloom. He didn't wait to see who it was coming, he had heard enough.

AT TEN o'clock Mr. Hoorn began waddling around the saloon pulling down the kerosene lamps and extinguishing them. As each light went out the room was plunged deeper and deeper into the gloom, until finally Ludolph Hoorn's white face shone out alone from his hand lamp. The Dutchman trailed up the stairs then, to bed.

Shad listened into the night, but he heard no sounds of a prowler. He slipped to the side of the darkened building, followed it back to the alley. He had plenty of time. The man who was going to rob the Paradise would wait until its proprietor was asleep.

Shad tried the door. It was locked, tight. But when he tried the iron window he found it wasn't even latched. Somebody that had access to the backroom had

slipped the latch earlier in the evening.

He would have notified Tom Dillon, but the marshal might throw the men into jail before there was any evidence against them. And now was not the time or occasion.

Page three said: "*At no time divulge any of your work or plans to a layman, and to a duly constituted officer of the law only on occasion.*"

But Shad didn't hesitate now. There was a better place to hide and wait inside the backroom. Carefully he climbed through the window and pressed against the inner wall. He listened, his nose dilating to the smell of stale beer, of cigar butts. Before he swung the window back in place enough filtered starlight came in to show him the outlines of cases of whiskey, racks of empty bottles and the door that led into the barroom. When the window was closed, Shad took the sport hardwood club out of the slot that barred the alley door. He hefted the club. It was just right to knock a man out without permanently disabling him.

Shad left the door unbarred. This way it would be even easier for the thief. Shad could stand between the window and the door and be ready for anybody entering from either side. He hoped Ludolph Hoorn was a heavy sleeper.

If Shad's knees were a trifle unsteady it was from *excitement*. *An Investigators, Incorporated, detective was without fear*. Shad hoped this was true. He put on his shiny badge then, and held his club ready. Captain Ellsworth said, that at times like this, whatever the private detective did was justifiable—providing it was the means of trapping the culprit!

SHAD took a deep breath. In that instant his inscrutable countenance must have been very much like the illustrious captain's on page one of the book. He

would have the same kind of patience. “A good detective may have to follow his man into the lowest of dives, may even have to join him in his sotten pleasures. He must have patience, be untiring in his efforts to protect his community.”

A stick snapped off in the night. Just beyond the window, Shad waited, his club ready. He said things to his knees again. It was simple—he would knock the man out, handcuff him and then go and rouse Tom Dillon from his bed. He already had the words ready for Marshal Dillon. “Sorry, Marshal Dillon, to wake you up—but I’ve just caught another criminal. He’s in back of Hoorn’s Paradise Bar. Tried to rob it tonight. Here, Marshal, is the key to the handcuffs—Good night, Marshal Dillon.” It would be a pretty speech. Yes, that would be all he would say. Just that, “Good night, Marshal Dillon,” and then go home to bed.

Shad braced himself as the noise came closer. He tried to remember how the man of the trio down at the railroad spur had looked in the gloom.

Suddenly the unlocked iron window moved. The wedge of starlight widened. Then the window closed again, as from a wind. But there was no wind. Then the door shook. It moved inward. Shad held his breath, his club raised. The door opened wider. The head and shoulders of a man came inside. Starlight glinted against a gun barrel as Shad’s club came down.

The man dropped like a sack of flour off the endgate of Shad’s delivery wagon. Shad still held his breath. His lean body seethed with excitement. Yet he stood where he was, listening until the noises of the night crept in again. The far-away moan of a freight whistle on Carriso Grade came to him—that was all. And then Shad was kneeling beside the man, his leather encased handcuffs in his hand. Shad hurried. Was the man hurt badly?

“I’ll play it safe, crook,” whispered Shad, and snapped the cuffs on the desperado’s wrists.

His fingers trembled as he lit one of the sulphur matches on its block. He dug out a candle from his pocket while he waited for the tiny blue flame to turn yellow. Sulphur fumes wrinkled his nose as he lit the candle.

As the candle flame crept higher, Shad’s intensity mounted. His mouth came open with surprise. His eyes dilated more and more as the flame rose higher.

“My God!” he breathed, hypnotized by the sight. The man had rolled over on his back. His eyes were closed, and he was breathing heavily—but he wasn’t one of the Three Star men!

“My God!” said Shad again. “Tom—Tom Dillon!”

Shad stared, shook his head. It couldn’t be Marshal Dillon—but it was—Shad stuttered out, “I didn’t mean to do it, Marshal Dillon. I—I didn’t go to hit you—”

The marshal, of course, said nothing—just lay there as one dead.

THE candle wavered in Shad’s hand, snuffed out against the door jamb. Darkness again. This time it was very welcome to Shad’s anguished eyes.

Despite the Stygian blackness, Shad found his key and unlocked the cuffs from Tom Dillon’s wrists. Muttering in self-renunciation, he dropped the cuffs into his pocket. He whispered to the unconscious Dillon then, “Got to get you outside.”

Shad took a look into the night first, squinting down the alley. The distant porch light of the Parker House made silhouettes of everything in the alley. One of the silhouettes was moving. A man sneaking down the alley toward Shad!

Shad’s breath came quick and fast now. There was a ray of hope in that sneaking figure. The Three Star man would come

from that direction. Shad closed the door softly, then pulled the marshal to one side of it, making him as comfortable as possible. He regained his former position. This time there would be no mistake.

The man outside tried the door, tentatively. He must have been surprised that it was unlocked, for he stood there a full minute before opening it. When the door finally swung inward, Shad nearly struck out at the empty air. He held himself just in time.

Then the man came in. Very low and on guard. He must have heard the blow coming for he threw up his arm just as Shad struck. Shad's blow was spoiled. The man staggered upright, crashed into a stack of whiskey cases. They came down in a resounding clatter. Shad's eyes, inured to the deeper gloom, had the advantage. And his swinging blow had the fury of desperation behind it. He didn't miss. The man's yell died in his throat. He collapsed in a heap at Tom Dillon's feet.

A great feeling of exultation swept over Shad this time. Now he knew he was right. It was that easy. Now he could redeem himself, perhaps even be pardoned for his terrible error in hitting the town marshal. At least, he had vindicated himself.

Light suddenly showed under the inside door to the barroom. A flickering, shadowy light. A voice came from someplace back in the saloon. "Vhat iss? In mine saloon iss somepodies—*yah?*"

The minute the storeroom door opened, Shad cried, "It's me, Mr. Hoorn. It's me—Shad!"

"*Ach!*" The Dutch proprietor's face, white as it was, was ghostly in the lamplight. He wore a stocking cap, and his flannel nightshirt reached to a decorous point below his knees. He held a Frontier Model Colt .45 in one hand and his lamp in the other.

Shad tried to smile. "I got him, Mr.

Hoorn. I got the fellow that was trying to rob your saloon!"

"Mine Gott!" Hoorn's chubby barefeet pressed closer. He flashed the light into Tom Dillon's face. "*Ach.* Mine Gott again Shad—he should do this to me!"

"No, no, Mr. Hoorn. Not Tom Dillon—this other one!"

"Annuder one? *Ach.* I see, the annuder one knocked out poor Tom marshal—are they dead, Shad?" Hoorn knelt down, flashing his lamplight into the other man's face. Then he gulped.

Shad gulped, too. His newly found hope died at he stared at the man as if seeing a ghost. This man wasn't the Three Star man either. It was the brother of Barbara Willbank. *Stanley Willbank!* The man Tom Dillon had practically vouched for!

Hoorn was shaking his head severely. "Mr. Man, vy you haff to hit Tom Dillon on the head on? If you vant the bag you forget in mine saloon, vy you do not shake the front door?"

"His bag?" Shad's blue eyes suddenly looked like forget-me-nots left out in the rain. He said weakly, "You sure he left a package inside?"

"Yah, his bag." Hoorn beamed. "Detectiff Shad. He hits Tom Dillon by mistake, you hit him not by mistake—I go get some viskey—*Ja!*" Hoorn waddled away with the lamp.

The back room plunged into darkness again, Shad stood there until one of the men at his feet began to move. Then he took a deep breath and lit the candle. Under its feeble light Shad saw Tom Dillon begin to move his arms. It was all explained now. The marshal was here simply because he'd found the door open when he made his rounds. And the girl's brother had to have his bag before he caught the five o'clock train in the morning.

Shad moved listlessly to the door,

squinted down the alley. He shook his head dolefully. It was too late. The man from the Three Star outfit had probably been scared off by the unusual traffic and noise in the alley. Shad's smile was sickly. This was the end of being a detective for him. It was all over. The handcuffs were heavy in his pocket now, and his badge weighed a ton.

The ghostly Ludolph Hoorn returned, with a glass of water, a whiskey glass and a quart of bourbon. Marshal Tom Dillon was breathing loud and fast now. Suddenly he sat up, staring with bleak eyes around him. Hoorn's whiskey helped him to regain his senses—but Shadrack Arnold didn't see that; he was fading away into the protective shadows of the alley.

AFTER a sleepless night, Shad had made up his mind what he had to do. The only thing to do was to go to Tom Dillon and tell him the truth. Captain Ellsworth, it seemed, had made no provisions for mistakes of this nature.

Shad's long frame was a usual sight along the street at this early hour. His daily route was easily defined. First, he would water and feed Old Bill. Then he would have his breakfast at the Chinaman's, and after that help Old Man Carter open the grocery store.

This morning, however, Shad did none of these, things. He even passed by the Chinese restaurant. Shad wasn't hungry. He moved along the sidewalk until he came to Marshal Dillon's office.

The office door stood open. But the marshal, although an early riser, wasn't in. Shad gave a quick sigh of relief. Then he steeled himself, and opened the back door to look into the jail.

He shut the door in a hurry. Stepped back breathing fast. He leaned weakly against Tom Dillon's desk. Now he was in a worse fix. The face that had stared at him from a cell was Stanley Willbank, the girl's

brother. Tom Dillon had misunderstood—had arrested the wrong man!

Shad's pained eyes rested on the desk. A wanted folder with a picture on it stood face up. A telegram stood beside it. The telegram was new, as though it had been brought over from the station late last night or early this morning. Shad stared, and gulped again. He tiptoed to the inside door, cracked it open. The face was still there, scowling. Shad shook his head and closed the door softly again.

Footsteps sounded on the boardwalk. Hard heels and the clank of spurs. Phil Barker, of the Three Star Ranch, came inside, asking:

"Where's Tom?"

"Over at the Paradise, I reckon. He ain't here."

Barker grinned and said it didn't matter. "Tell Tom we got another wheel, and we're leaving town. Glad to get that crew away. Last night I had to bust up a plan of theirs—hell, a playful gent was figuring on busting into the saloon to get a case of whiskey for the ranch." Barker clicked his teeth and went out laughing.

Shad closed his eyes. But his faint smile came back. It was plain that the Three Star men were tough, but no criminals.

Steps sounded on the sidewalk again, and Marshal Tom Dillon came inside. He looked like he had a headache. If he did have one, Shad knew where he got it. Shad tried to smile.

"Marshal Dillon," he managed, "I want to see you."

"'Bout time. Where'd you go last night?" The marshal grimaced and rubbed his head. "That fellow sure hit me hard—but you must have hit him harder. He was still unconscious when me and Hoorn dragged him down here to my jail. Hoorn told me all about what you did, hitting that fellow and saving me—"

Shad fought his eyes away from the authentic lawman's. It took all the teachings of Captain Ellsworth to keep from blurting out what had actually transpired there in the dark. Shad looked toward the cell door and clamped his jaws together.

Marshal Dillon sat down heavily. "That lie about being the girl's brother is what threw me off. Shad, you'll get a reward for this."

Shad took a deep breath. He didn't care about any reward. Dillon could have that. Life to Shad was livable, pleasant again. The stranger had turned out to be a real criminal.

"You caught him, Marshal Dillon, not me. And you brought him in. I feel lucky the way it is—it might have been worse."

THE marshal grunted, not understanding. "But you did bust him with that club!" He looked at Shad long and hard. "I can't figure you out, Shad—I didn't know about this gent till I got a telegram late last night. Then I was out hunting him. When Hoorn's back door was open I figured something was up. There was. He was already in there, and he hit me plenty hard." Dillon winced and felt his head. Then he picked up the telegram on his desk and flipped it toward Shad. "The gent out there is the one that held up Center City's bank last year!"

Shad stopped holding his breath and grinned. He looked at the telegram:

RAY ANDERS BELIEVED
HEADING YOUR WAY. DARK,
STOCKY BUILT. SCAR OVER EYE.
SEE APRIL BULLETIN. HENRY
BUCHANAN, SHERIFF, GRAIL
COUNTY.

Ludolph Hoorn's bulk suddenly darkened the doorway. He beamed at them, dry washing his fat hands. "*Mynheer von Shad! Ach! Annuder bad vun you catch! For lawmans, hot buttered rums, I make. Ja!*"

The big Dutchman stood there until both said they'd come. Then he backed out of the doorway to lead the way to the Paradise.

As they went along, the marshal whispered: "One thing, Shad—about that crack on the head I got—"

Shad pulled up, held his breath.

Tom Dillon's voice was low. "Suppose we don't say anything about that Ray Anders hitting me on the head. Folks here in Granville might think I was getting careless."

"Sure," said Shad slowly. "I won't say a thing, Marshal Dillon." Shad's face was as inscrutable as Captain Ellsworth's might have been as he went on up the street with the marshal. Yes, life was very pleasant.