

The MAN MARKED FOR SLAUGHTER

A Story of
Underground
Torture



It was Jeff Crockett—
bleeding from the
struggle

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FLARES and slashes of red light stabbed the blackness and firecrackers blasted like machine-guns as Chinatown celebrated its New Year.

In the temples joss sticks smoldered before hideous idols. From the gaily decorated balconies projected bamboo poles from which dangled ten-foot strings of firecrackers, thousands of them exploding all night long above the sinister alleys.

Yellow men padded about amid flying bits of paper, a red snowstorm from the exploding fireworks; but the few white men in Chinatown were there on business—either the shady business of dope and murder, or the official business of punishing criminals.

It was a night for fantastic crime. Fog from the Pacific lay over San Francisco, and the chill, salty odor of the sea fog fought with the sharp smell of burning powder in the maze of malodorous, narrow streets.

From the gilded doorway of Hang-Chi's Bazaar, famous for its silks, carved ivory and jewelry, a white man backed out, fighting in a mad frenzy of despair for his life.

Fred Horton, Special Agent, retreated, shooting at every step, emptying his gun at the yellow enemies inside the dragon door. As Horton, pale with the foreboding of death, backed into the street, the rattle of fireworks was suddenly increased by the sharp reports of revolvers.

From neighboring hiding places in doorways

and cellar stairways, marksmen in black silk blouses drove a dozen slugs into the victim's body.

"Take that, you yellow rat!"

Shuddering in his last agonies, Fred Horton whirled and fired his last shot at the assassin in the nearest doorway, then threw his empty gun with terrific force at the yellow, grinning thug.

It struck a doorpost with crashing impact and dropped into the area nearby. Instantly a horde of silk-clad Chinese gunmen ran with silent, padding footsteps to surround the dead man.

From the doorway of the bazaar came a stout, smiling Chinese in the silken robes of the festival season. His smile creased fat wrinkles in his round, yellow face and his almond eyes, black as midnight pools, beamed through the lenses of his great horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Is the foreign devil released from the burden of life?" asked Hang-Chi blandly. "Speak, Sui-Lee, have you earned your reward?"

"Even so, Lord of Magnificence!"

ONE-EYED Sui-Lee, leader of the yellow thugs, slid his smoking gun into his sleeve. "The dog's prying eyes will no longer trouble the secrets of Lord Hang-Chi."

"Let not his body defile my doorstep. He has a friend, another prying white devil, who must not find him here."

"No fear, Lord of Heaven and Earth. The time was well chosen for this pig's slaughter. Who could

Jeff Crockett is Led Into a Hideous Cat-and-Mouse Game of Oriental Cruelty!

hear the shots that killed him amid the rattle of firecrackers?"

Hang-Chi smiled as one who is always pleased at praise of his crafty ways. The killing of Fred Norton, Federal Agent, was his own scheme, and to shoot the troublemaker while the quarter rattled with explosives, was his own pet idea.

"Remove the white carrion," he ordered crisply. "Tomorrow night come to my feast in the Garden of the Lotus Pool and I will reward you with much gold."

Sui-Lee bowed to the ground as Hang-Chi retired into the bazaar, then he sprang up, catlike, and gave rapid orders to his men in the singsong chant of his race.

With precision the gunmen obeyed. Fred Horton's body was picked up by the eager claws of half a score of Chinese. While a couple of coolies ran to the scene with buckets of water and rags to wash the pavement clean of blood, the dead man was whisked around the corner and tossed into a waiting limousine.

The driver, in the livery of a chauffeur, with the visor of his cap concealing his eyes, barely looked around when the body was dumped on the floor, but as the door slammed shut, he asked:

"Is he well hidden?"

"Covered with the stolen rug."

"May his grave be defiled, Sui-Lee. And his father's grave, also."

The chauffeur drove carefully away, left the quarter with no appearance of flight and proceeded at a lawful speed through the fog-laden streets until he entered Golden Gate Park. Near the entrance he had selected, a car was waiting, half hidden under the dripping foliage, and this machine followed at a discreet distance until the death car halted under some low-growing trees.

The liveried driver left his limousine with its gruesome burden and ran to the trailing car. In a moment he had stepped inside and the pair drove away rapidly, taking a circuitous route to Chinatown.

"Hang-Chi has one enemy the less," said Ong-Sip, removing his chauffeur's cap and wiping the sweat from his yellow forehead.

"And the White Devil's hell has one more inmate roasting in the flames."

"May all the foreigners with prying eyes share his fate," said Ong-Sip.

"And first of all, the friend of that white devil.

He is the next one marked for slaughter. But *not* by the gun!"

"I hope that one will afford us merry sport before he passes. Hang-Chi loves a feast spiced with ingenious torture."

THE man "marked for slaughter" stood beside the murder car at daybreak that same morning—a tall, gaunt figure, ice-blue eyes and a jaw of iron.

Jeff Crockett, ace among the West Coast G-men, followed a police alarm that a stolen car with the body of a Federal Agent had been found in Golden Gate Park. Burning with indignation and grief, he looked into the bloodstained features of his best pal, a true comrade and a fearless fighter. He uttered no threats of reprisal but silently he made an oath to settle that account.

Detectives and special agents went into action to reconstruct the crime. Evidently it was a gang murder committed miles away from the place where the body was found.

Jeff Crockett allowed the fingerprint men, the footprint experts, the photographers and the rest, to fight for clues. One bit of evidence he had found—and he kept it to himself.

"I'm going to get the rats that ganged up on Fred," he promised himself. "I'm going to get them and get them alone."

"What's the matter with Jeff Crockett?" asked Sergeant Doyle. "What's he pulling out for?"

"If you ask me, Sarge, Crockett is running around in circles." Detective Joe Conlon watched the Federal man entering his car to drive away. "He says nothing. Looks wise. But I see through his bluff. He's stumped."

The two police officers continued their study of the stolen car and its gruesome contents, while Crockett drove rapidly away.

JEFF CROCKETT, back in his hotel room, began to change his clothes from the skin out, putting aside his tailored tweeds and getting into an outfit of tattered, misfit garments.

He carefully made up his face and was pleased that yesterday's beard added to his unkempt appearance. Before he left the hotel, by the service elevator, he gave one last glance at the clue that he had discovered clinging to Fred Horton's coat—a tiny scrap of paper, bright red and smelling faintly of gunpowder.

There are plenty of white visitors wandering through the streets of Chinatown by daylight. Smartly dressed tourists from the Eastern cities, men and women who flock to the curio shops, the bazaars where silks, ivory and jewelry of gold and jade are sold, and the restaurants where they can taste strange dainties.

There are plenty of other white visitors, too: Chinatown bums, panhandlers, hopheads, prowling in the ill-smelling alleys, searching for scraps of food or cigarette butts.

One more derelict would not be noticed. So thought Jeff Crockett, for once underestimating the keen eyes of his foes. The alleys of Chinatown cannot be combed by one man in an hour. There are miles of them, and the object of Crockett's search was hard to find.

But by nightfall he had located the street of the crime. With a dozen excited yellow marksmen firing at a victim, some of the shots were bound to miss their man.

A few freshly splintered bullet holes in the woodwork of the doors and storefronts, told their story to a tramp-like prowler, peddling shoestrings on the curb from a dirty cigar box. The derelict pried into every cellar area and receptacle near the bullet-marked houses, disregarding the suspicious glances of yellow men who hung around the block. An empty shell and a couple of flattened bullets rewarded him for his search.

In one cellar doorway, full of tattered paper and rubbish of all kinds, he found more than he had dared to expect—an automatic, which had been hurled with such force that the handle was cracked. It was empty, a .38 caliber, fitting the ejected shell.

Here was something to go on! A gun belonging to the murdered agent, found on the spot where he had fought his last fight with yellow fiends. He was hot on the trail.

The door of the cellar opened abruptly, and half a dozen of Sui-Lee's gunmen, with sinews of steel pulled him inside. Jeff Crockett lashed out furiously with his fists. Clawing hands all over his body prevented him from reaching for his gun.

Smash!

Howls of agony and monkeylike chattering told him that his right had pistoned into one yellow face. *Thud!* His left struck something soft and padded, like a heavy paunch under a quilted coat. A groan of pain answered that one, followed by gibbering commands in Cantonese.

Then, as though he had tangled in a giant cobweb, Jeff Crockett's arms were caught by cords of silk. A net dropped from the darkness above clung to his limbs, his face, his body, and the cords tightened about him so that his struggles only drove the thin silk fish-line into his flesh.

A flashlight from the gloom shone upon a fat round moon of yellow, with big, horn-rimmed glasses, and a voice spoke blandly:

"Welcome, illustrious white visitor, to the unworthy dwelling of Hang-Chi."

The light flashed off. In the darkness footsteps padded away like little verminous rodents running to their holes.

Jeff Crockett was left alone in a vile-smelling dungeon below the mysterious alleys of Chinatown, while Ong-Sip, Sui-Lee and their master, Hang-Chi, drank rice wine together and made plans for the evening's sport.

A SHORT time later, in the splendid Oriental bazaar above the cellar, Nelda Wynn, young, smartly dressed, and with all the evidence of wealth and culture, was pricing some of the elaborate gold jewelry sold by Hang-Chi. If she had been a casual visitor buying a cheap souvenir she would not have been honored by the service of the prosperous merchant. But Hang-Chi, clad in silken garments, bowed low before this beautiful heiress and served her gladly.

"Are these the best you have?" asked Nelda as Hang-Chi's taper-nailed fingers laid a tray on the counter before her. Her brown eyes, under the straight, dark lines of her brows, looked with disdain at the assortment of gems set in soft gold.

The straight little nose, the strong rounded chin and the firm lips, all marked her as a willful girl who got what she wanted.

Hang-Chi beamed through his round glasses and his moon-face cracked into a fat smile.

"These rings are unworthy to be seen by your gracious eyes," he murmured. "I am saving for the last some gems that were made by goldsmiths of the late Emperor."

"That's what I want to see. Something rare." Her voice was that of a lady. Breeding in every inflection.

Hang-Chi purred.

"Follow me, gracious lady. The jewels I speak of are in a special room. Only the privileged may enter the silken room of the Golden Dragon."

Through incense-laden air, the girl followed Hang-Chi to the back of the bazaar and entered a small silk-paneled room with a chair of state placed before a table of inlaid ivory. The chair was apparently of gold, a splendid piece of Chinese carving, with writhing dragons forming the high arms and back of the throne.

Hang-Chi went to a safe and opened the massive door, returning with a black velvet-lined tray. On it rested a single gem, a magnificent jade, set in gold that was worked like the finest lace.

The merchant placed the tray on the table and handed the girl a large magnifying glass.

"Deign to examine this treasure. See, I will adjust the light. Now, gracious lady, if you will be seated where you can study the workmanship under this glass—"

As Nelda slipped into the great chair of the Golden Dragon, a strange thing happened. The carved dragon folded in silently. The back and arms of the chair closed about her body like a trap, and the girl's shrieks were cut short by a velvet drape that Hang-Chi flung over her head.

"Don't struggle. That chair has trapped great, powerful men," said Hang-Chi. "Scream if you like. No one can hear you. Scream, my pretty one. I like it!"

Smiling blandly, Hang-Chi touched a push-button in the chair, and slowly it descended through the floor to blackness of a cellar far below. The floor opening was closed a moment later and nothing was left to show that Hang-Chi's device had entrapped one more victim.

After replacing the gem in the safe, the merchant left his special room, glanced about the bazaar to see whether anybody had noticed the girl's disappearance, and retired to his private quarters.

"Close the store early," he said to his head clerk. "Tonight is the feast of the Celestial Circle in the Garden of the Lotus Pool."

Nelda screamed when she felt the trap closing about her body, then terror seized her as the light was blotted out by the velvet pall thrown over her head. Her struggles only served to hold her tighter in the grip of Hang-Chi's dragon chair and she felt herself drawn softly downward into the clammy blackness.

It was all a horrible nightmare, she thought, as strange odors of drugs and opium smoke came to her nostrils, and her ears were tortured by the

sounds of derisive laughter. She was suffocating under that clinging pall of velvet; the blood pounded in her temples and she fought desperately against the deadening fumes of the drugs that were robbing her of consciousness.

"This is the end!" she thought. "This is death!"

With failing strength she writhed and struggled to free herself of the trap. From choking lungs she gasped out cries for help. Then the horror was blotted from her mind as consciousness left her.

WHEN Nelda opened her eyes, hours later, she was dazzled by the blaze of colored lights. Partly stripped, she was lying on an ebony couch at the edge of an underground pool.

She was in Hang-Chi's Lotus Pool retreat, a vault far below the level of the street which had been made into a gorgeous artificial garden with miniature trees, shrubs and flowers all formed of delicately-tinted shells.

The walls, rising twenty feet above the floor, were painted with Chinese landscapes of fantastic mountains, palaces and pagodas.

In alcoves near the walls were opium layouts, ready for the guests when they had feasted, and tables prepared for the gambling games of the Orientals.

Nelda tried to rise from the couch, but shrill laughter startled her and she sank back ashamed. The underground garden was full of silken-robed yellow men, seated at a banquet table and feasting, while they stared at her with narrow black eyes full of cruel delight.

Hang-Chi's Celestial Circle was a dream of Oriental luxury. At the opposite side of the pool was the great table shaped like a half circle, and the feasters could look down from their chairs into the depths of the water, where electric bulbs threw light on the rocks and marine plants and the shimmer of gold and silver fish.

But Hang-Chi's guests were not looking at the fish. They were staring at her half-nude body and gloating over the beauty that was soon to be destroyed. Their black eyes glinted, their teeth showed in grins of unholy joy and their high-pitched voices filled the room with terrifying laughter that echoed shrilly from the walls.

Terrified and ashamed, Nelda pulled the silken draperies closer about her limbs. The laughter pealed out louder than ever, and musicians back of the table set up a wailing discord of fiddles, reeds

and squeaky falsetto voices.

Hang-Chi, gorgeously robed as an emperor, smiled upon his guests and said:

"The daughter of white devils has awakened from her sleep. Let the devil of the deep sea come forth and embrace her." He touched one of the ivory levers beside the table, a door swung open in the depths of the pool and an octopus swam in from a hidden tank, its long, wriggling tentacles reaching out greedily for prey.

Nelda gave a shriek of terror. She sprang up from the couch and backed away from the pool, wildly searching for some way of escape. A narrow stairway of gilded metal wound upward to a trapdoor in the ceiling. That was the only way out of this pit of doom, but as she darted toward it, a pair of crouching, gigantic, half-naked coolies leaped to their feet and thrust her back, struggling and screaming in their arms.

Shouts of laughter went up from the guests of Hang-Chi. This was going to be good entertainment. The daughter of white devils fighting for her life!

Hang-Chi beamed through his round glasses and raised a cup of rice wine.

"Thanks to the Gods of Benevolence and Delight," he chanted. "They have provided a choice victim for our pleasure."

The other guests emptied their cups, bowing toward Hang-Chi, who continued:

"Our pleasure is doubled when she fights for life so furiously. Sui-Lee, bring out the white devil we have captured and let him see the fate that awaits him."

Hang-Chi's chief gunman rose from the table, followed by Ong-Sip and three gaunt, yellow thugs, and opened a door back of the staircase. They reached into the cell back of that door and pulled out a captive bound in a net of woven silk cords.

IT was Jeff Crockett, dressed in the ragged clothes of a Chinatown tramp, his face scratched and bleeding from the fight he had put up when captured.

"Cut loose the net from this dog who is about to die," ordered Hang-Chi. "But see to it that his hands are tied, for he will die fighting."

Sui-Lee did as he was directed, looping fine cords about Jeff Crockett's wrists and slashing away the net with a razor-edged stiletto.

Crockett straightened himself and stared

defiantly at Hang-Chi. "You are playing with death," he cried boldly. "No yellow man can kill a Federal and escape."

Hang-Chi smiled. His fat face showed no alarm.

"My men have killed one of your contemptible band," he said suavely. "Now it is your turn to perish. When more come, I will take care of them, too."

Jeff saw the girl for the first time, struggling in the grasp of her captors. He turned away from Hang-Chi with a hoarse cry of fury. The two half-stripped coolies had picked Nelda up bodily, now they swung her light form in a wide arc and flung her into the center of the pool.

She fell heavily, stunned by the impact of the water, and sank without a struggle. Hang-Chi and his guests leaned from their chairs with shouts of laughter at the splash and stared into the depths to feast their eyes on the octopus destroying the girl.

Sui-Lee, standing beside Jeff, knife in hand, was so fascinated at the sight of cruelty that he forgot to watch his prisoner. Jeff snatched the knife between his bound hands, reversed the blade and severed the cord in a single swift movement.

With a scream of rage, Sui-Lee wheeled on him and at that split second Jeff's hand drove up and slashed the yellow gunman's face from jaw to temple. Sui-Lee trumpeted with rage and pain like a wounded elephant, but Jeff ducked under his charge and shot headlong into the pool.

The fast dive sent him to the bottom of the tank, where Nelda lay stunned. The giant devil fish was greedy and shot out a tentacle that clutched at her ankle. Jeff had a fast glimpse of the rubbery, writhing arm, with its suckers opening and closing eagerly as he slashed out with his blade.

The steel went through the quivering flesh. The tentacle hung half severed, lashing like a wounded snake. The water turned red before his eyes, and Jeff Crockett realized that he had struck too hard and cut the girl's ankle.

The sharp pain brought her out of her stupor and, choking and gurgling, Nelda fought her way to the surface, while Jeff, on the bottom of the tank, lashed out with the blade as the wriggling monster thrust his tentacles at his body. Every stroke cut a gash in that yielding, slimy flesh, but there seemed no way to kill the devil fish. Jeff was entangled in a net of writhing tentacles that clung to his flesh wherever they touched.

For an instant he freed himself and shot his

body to the surface with a vicious kick. His lungs were bursting and he gasped in long breaths of air as he swam to the side of the pool where Nelda was clinging. Above her on the edge crouched Hang-Chi, threatening to slash her fingers with a long sword.

Jeff swam furiously to reach her side, but a writhing tentacle shot up from the depths and twined itself about his ankle. Crockett felt himself being pulled back relentlessly; by a last mighty effort he flung up his right hand and hurled the knife straight into Hang-Chi's fat neck.

As Jeff was dragged down he had a last glimpse of blood jetting from the gash in that thick throat, while the sword fell from Hang-Chi's hand into the water.

With the strength of a cable that monstrous tentacle pulled Crockett clear to the bottom of the tank. He could see the vast quivering bulk of the monster above him through the dim water and had a glimpse of the cruel, parrot-like beak, ready to tear into his flesh.

THEN something silvery and swift flashed between him and the octopus and the tentacle relaxed, severed by the sword. Nelda, diving after Hang-Chi's weapon, slashed with one well-directed stroke as she kicked her way to the surface.

Jeff's foot touched the bottom of the tank and with one vigorous push sent his head out of the water. Hang-Chi's guests were in a chattering, gibbering group round the wounded man, who was bleeding like a slaughtered pig. Nelda was swimming close beside him, and for a moment nobody paid any attention to the pair. They were all excitedly trying to keep Hang-Chi from bleeding to death.

"Over this way," said Jeff, shoving the girl toward the bank nearest the staircase.

She still held the sword, but Jeff relieved her of it.

One of Sui-Lee's gunmen saw the pair floundering at the surface and screeched a warning in Cantonese.

Hang-Chi gurgled out a command, his voice choked with blood, and Ong-Sip ran to the ivory levers that controlled the underwater gates of the tank and yanked them frantically.

Crockett felt the rush of water under his body and below him saw door after door swinging open. The current rushing in from some concealed water

system brought in the deep sea monsters from Hang-Chi's aquarium.

Sharks flashed into the pool, turning up their white undersides as they snapped at the severed tentacles of the octopus. Dogfish sped through the water, and huge, slimy electric eels and stingrays crowded into the pool. From another door crawled huge crabs, like spiders, snatching with voracious claws at the fragments of the octopus.

Ong-Sip screamed louder than ever as he saw what he had done. All the gates were open and he was unable to close them. The more he worked the levers, the faster flowed the water, and already it was brimming the pool and beginning to overflow.

Jeff Crockett felt the rasp of a shark's side on the skin of his leg and shoved Nelda to the edge of the pool.

"Out of here!" he cried warningly. "Make a dash for the staircase!"

Sui-Lee saw the pair climbing out of the pool and raised a shrill alarm. He came racing toward Crockett with his arm extended stiffly in front of him, pumping lead from an automatic.

Jeff did not wait for Sui-Lee to come on, but charged at him, waving the keen-edged sword and taking a chance with Sui-Lee's marksmanship.

As the yellow gunman saw that terrifying steel blade whirling closer and closer, his aim faltered, and with a shrill yelp he dropped his gun and fled. Jeff picked it up, then turned at a call of distress from Nelda.

The two gigantic coolies were running to cut her off from the foot of the staircase, and as Jeff raced across the artificial garden, crashing through the trees and shrubs of shells, his feet were splashing in the overflow of the pool.

He knew how desperate the situation was. If the yellow men shut off their retreat by the staircase, they would be trapped. The cellar would fill with water. They would drown!

JEFF halted, took careful aim and fired. The coolie who was seizing Nelda leaped in the air and dropped, kicking in the death agony. The second coolie stopped short, and in that instant Nelda gained the staircase. The next moment the yellow giant leaped forward to draw her down and Jeff's second bullet caught him in the spine, dropping him in midair.

When Jeff reached the foot of the staircase the water was already ankle deep. Now the yellow

guests of Hang-Chi realized their danger and left their bleeding host to his fate as they dashed in a screaming, hysterical mob toward the staircase, the only way out.

Nelda was near the top, working at the system of bolts that closed the trapdoor. Jeff was halfway to the foot of the stairs, holding his gun on the crowd and slashing with the sword at those who ventured too close.

Step by step, Crockett fought his way, backing up only when the pressure became too strong, driving his blade into the yellow, screaming faces that closed in upon him.

"Hold them! Hold them! Just a moment longer!" cried Nelda. "I've got the door unbolted. It's beginning to give."

A shot echoed in the vault. Hang-Chi, staggering waist-deep in water toward the staircase, had flashed a gun from his sleeve and fired. But he was shooting, not at Jeff Crockett, but at the white underside of a shark that was darting through the water. There was a snap of fanged jaws and blood stained the water under Hang-Chi as his leg was laid open by the shark.

Hang-Chi screamed shrilly and fired again at the shark.

Jeff Crockett had saved his bullets for the last rush. Now, as Nelda forced open the trapdoor above his head, he sprayed the snarling faces below him with lead at close range. The mob fell back, shrieking curses at the white devils, and as they gave way Jeff thrust Nelda through the door, slid after her through the narrow gap and slammed the trapdoor down again.

They were in the silk-paneled room where Nelda had looked at the jade and gold ring, but the dragon chair was gone. Jeff heaved at a teakwood cabinet and toppled it upon the trapdoor, then seizing all the weighty furniture he could find, chairs, tables, and chests, he piled them high.

There was still a chance that the heaving trapdoor might be lifted by the desperate Chinese. Jeff found a heavy bar and used it as a lever to roll the safe upon the trapdoor.

Below their feet could be heard the gurgling of the rushing water and the howls of the yellow thugs trapped in a cellar infested with sharks and devil fish.

Outside the silk-paneled room the bazaar was deserted, the showcases covered with dust cloths, the only light a dim bulb to discourage burglars.

But beyond the walls could be heard the festive music of the Chinese orchestras celebrating New Year and the *bang-bang-banging* of ten-foot strings of firecrackers.

Jeff looked at the girl in her tattered silk garments and realized, for the first time, how beautiful she was. And she looked at him and knew that, in spite of his rags, he was no Chinatown tramp.

"How did you get here?" he demanded.

"I took a chance. People warned me that it was risky to come here alone at night. But I'm like that."

"You'll never come that close to death again."

"But for you I'd been eaten alive by now." She shuddered. "I can't thank you for this. Words would sound silly. But my father can give you something more substantial!"

"Don't talk money to me!" His voice was harsh. "Just promise on your word of honor that you'll quit taking crazy chances."

She stared at him. "Don't you need money? You look like a poor man."

"I earn all I need—all I want. But answer me! Will you promise to quit taking crazy chances?"

"Why should you care?"

SHE shrugged, then as she saw the admiration in his eyes, her cheeks flushed and she was aware of her scanty, tattered garments, and snatched up an embroidered Mandarin robe to wrap about her slender body.

Before Jeff could answer, the wail of sirens from the street outside blasted in their ears; the front door was caved in with axes and a squad of police and detectives were swarming into the store, guns leveled for business.

Sergeant Doyle and Detective Joe Conlon pounced upon the astonished pair with a gruff, "Up with 'em, you two yeggs!"

Automatically Jeff's hands went up, and then he laughed in the sergeant's face.

"What's the idea? Who tipped you off about Hang-Chi?"

"Well I'll be cooked! Jeff Crockett! What are *you* doing? Setting off the burglar alarm!"

"Burglar alarm? That explains it. When we moved the safe the alarm rang at Headquarters."

Jeff Crockett pointed to the safe holding down the trapdoor. "When you send your men down below, Sergeant, you'll find the gang that murdered

Fred Horton. And I think that Chinatown will know from now on that it's sudden death to go up against a Federal."

"A Fed?"

Nelda's voice rang out with a strange note. All eyes turned upon her as she stared at Jeff.

"So you are one of *us!*" she cried, seizing his hand with a strong impulsive grip. After a moment's pause she added, smiling, "And you wanted my promise to take no more chances! I'll have to promise you something else instead."

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