

The Shadow – Death by Chapter

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Lamont Cranston (*the Shadow*)

Margot Lane

Chet Hale (*a magazine publisher*)

Alvin Kane (*a neurotic confession writer*)

Mrs. Meggs (*Kane's landlady*)

Secretary (*a very frightened young woman*)

Announcer

Music (*theme . . . under the following*)

Shadow: Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows. (*Laughs – “Hahaha-a-ah” in a spectral crescendo*)

Music (*up and under . . .*)

Announcer: The Shadow, who aids the forces of law and order, is, in reality, Lamont Cranston, wealthy young man-about-town. Several years ago, while in the Orient, Cranston learned a strange and mysterious secret . . . the hypnotic power to cloud men's minds so they cannot see him. Cranston's friend, Margot Lane, is the only person who knows whom the voice of the invisible Shadow belongs to.

Music (*up and out*)

Announcer: In today's drama, “Death by Chapter,” a would-be writer crosses the thin line beyond which fiction becomes fact and imagination a murderous reality. It will begin in just a moment, but first.

(Pause for commercial)

Announcer: And now the Shadow and “Death by Chapter.”

Music (*up and out for . . .*)

Announcer: In his swank penthouse office Chet Hale, editor and publisher of half a dozen crime and horror magazines, waits impatiently while Lamont Cranston and Margot Lane read the opening chapters of a handwritten manuscript, and as Cranston finishes the last page and hands it to Margot, Hale asks . . .

Hale: What do you make of it, Cranston?

Cranston: Badly written but pretty frightening stuff. Where's the rest of the story?

Hale: The rest hasn't been written, and I think I can tell you why.

Margot: The handwriting seems to indicate a very disturbed personality.

Hale: More than that, Margot. This author, Alvin Kane, hasn't finished the story because he's only *lived* the first three chapters.

Cranston: What makes you think so?

Hale: Look, Cranston! Murder is my business. Fictional murder, that is. I've read and published thousands of murder stories, and I've come to know the difference between a fiction writer making his stuff sound like fact and a crackpot trying to make fact sound like fiction.

Margot: And you think Kane actually lived this? . . . started by killing those animals – the cat and the dog that annoyed and frustrated him?

Hale: Yes, Margot, and he writes about the boy he wanted to kill because he thought the boy was laughing at him.

Cranston: There *is* a frightening progression in those events, Hale. And it reads more like a diary than a story.

Hale: That's why I wanted you to see it before I return it.

Cranston: (*Quickly*) Hale! If you want my advice, I wouldn't return or reject that thing until you've had a chance to find out more about this fellow Kane.

Hale: Why not?

Cranston: Because I agree this isn't fiction but fact, and Kane is working up to killing a man. And if you reject his brainchild, *you* could become the material for his next chapter.

Hale: (*Shocked*) You could be right.

Cranston: You deal in fiction. I deal in fact.

Hale: (*Not entirely convinced*) But I've rejected the tripe of a thousand screwballs and cranks.

Cranston: This is something more and you know it, or you wouldn't have asked us to come here and read this manuscript.

Hale: Yes, I'll admit it worries me. What do you suggest?

Cranston: Hold the manuscript a few days. I'd like to meet the author . . . check his neighborhood for a basis for those strangling incidents. What's the address?

Hale: Ten South Street.

Margot: That's an old rooming-house section.

Hale: Yes, and be careful *you* don't become Chapter Four!

Music (*bridge and out for . . .*)

Sound (*light street sounds, footsteps on stone stairs*)

Margot: (*With distaste*) Ugh! Number Ten South Street is one of those gloomy brownstones, Lamont.

Cranston: Just the place to fit the mood of a frustrated writer, Margot.

Margot: Didn't you and Hale agree that Kane wasn't a writer but a frustrated man?

Cranston: Sometimes the two go together. . . . Let's ring the doorbell and see.

Sound (*bell or buzzer sounds inside, muffled and off*)

Margot: Kane may not be home. He wrote of spending a lot of time wandering the streets . . . with a chip on his shoulder.

Cranston: Yes, but at *night*.

Sound (*door unlocked and opened behind the following*)

Meggs: (*Slightly back from mike, and showing hostility*) I only got one room vacant, and I only take in single men.

Cranston: That's all right. We're not looking for a room.

Meggs: If you're sellin' something, I don't want any.

Cranston: We're not selling anything.

Meggs: If it's one of them surveys, I don't know nothing.

Cranston: We're looking for a writer by the name of Alvin Kane.

Meggs: (*Provoked and impatient*) I don't board no writers! Their typewriters make too much noise.

Cranston: This man writes in longhand, and he gave this house as his address.

Meggs: Nobody by that name ever gets any mail here!

Margot: Are you sure?

Meggs: Sure as my name is Meggs! I get all the mail that comes, and I put it on the hall table for them that rooms here.

Cranston: He might live here under another name and meet the mailman outside.

Meggs: (*Flatly*) If he did, I'd a heard about it. The mailman's a friend of mine. Stays for a cup of coffee once in a while. (*Curious*) What's this Kane fella look like?

Cranston: We don't know. We've never seen him, *Miss* Meggs.

Meggs: (*Sharply*) It's *Mrs.* Meggs. I'm a respectable widow, and I run a quiet, respectable house with nobody in it using different names. What do you want with this Kane?

Cranston: We'd like to talk to him about his manuscript and a couple of incidents in the story.

Meggs: What kind of incidents?

Cranston: A cat and a dog that were killed.

Meggs: I don't allow no cats or dogs in *my* house. (*Suspiciously*) You people from the S.P.C.A.?

Cranston: No. And it looks like we might have the wrong address.

Meggs: (*Emphatically*) You *sure* have. Good day!

Sound (*door slammed and locked*)

Margot: Lamont! I think that woman was lying.

Cranston: I'm *sure* she was, and I'm going to prove it. Let's go!

Margot: Go where?

Cranston: To the district Post Office to send a letter special delivery to Mr. Kane of this address, which should be delivered this afternoon.

Music (*up and out for . . .*)

Sound (*light street sounds up and under . . .*)

(*distant clock strikes four behind the following*)

Margot: Four o'clock, and there's the mailman, Lamont!

Cranston: *(Watching)* Taking our large yellow envelope addressed to Alvin Kane, Ten South Street.

Margot: He's ringing the doorbell.

Cranston: That's why I sent the largest envelope I could find. So we could watch it delivered from a distance.

Margot: The door is opening. I wonder if Mrs. Meggs will accept it.

Cranston: If she does, we'll know she was lying about Kane not living in her house.

Margot: We'll soon know. . . . There's Mrs. Meggs at the door now!

Cranston: Yes! And she's signing for the envelope.

Margot: That proves she lied! What do we do now?

Cranston: Just wait here. Give her time to give it to Kane. Then pay a return call and see what she has to say.

Margot: What did you put in the envelope, Lamont?

Cranston: Nothing but a blank sheet of paper Kane can use to *start* his next chapter of confessions.

Margot: *(Shudders)* But not finish it . . . I hope.

Cranston: Our job will be to prevent fiction becoming fact.

Music *(bridge and out for . . .)*

Sound *(street door of rooming house unlocked, opened and closed, slightly back from mike)*

(quick footsteps come on and stop, crackle of stiff envelope ripped open under the following)

Kane: *(Angrily)* My manuscript! He sent it back! No! There's nothing in the envelope! . . . Nothing but a blank sheet of paper . . . nothing on it! Somebody's making fun of me! *(Calls)* Mrs. Meggs! Where are you? Come here!

Sound *(heavy footsteps lumber on)*

Meggs: *(Comes on)* Oh, it's you, Mr. Kane! I been waiting for you. Some strangers come asking about you!

Kane: Who came asking about me?

Meggs: I don't know . . . a man and a woman, and they didn't give their names.

Kane: What did they want?

Meggs: They wanted to see you about your story writing.

Kane: *(Cry of triumph)* My publisher! My editor! They want more!

Meggs: *(Scornful)* They want to know about a cat 'n dog that were killed.

Kane: *(Suddenly tense)* What did you tell them?

Meggs: *(Becoming alarmed)* Nothing! I told 'm you didn't live here . . . like you asked me on account of bill collectors and your . . . enemies!

Kane: Did they come before or after this envelope came?

Meggs: Before! What's the matter with you? Why are you getting so excited?

Kane: It's a trick . . . a trap! You're helping them steal my story – my life's story!

Meggs: I am *not*. . . I didn't tell them anything!

Kane: You're lying! *I'll* find out what you told them. I'm going to the publisher's office. I'll show them they can't steal my story! *(Goes shouting)* And if I find you've lied to me! . . .

Sound *(door jerked open)*

Kane: *(Back from mike, shouting)* You'll be the next to die!

Sound *(door slammed)*

Music *(theme)*

Announcer: We'll return to the Shadow in just a moment, but first . . .

(Pause for commercial)

Announcer: Now back to the Shadow.

Music *(up and out)*

Announcer: Checking on a strange manuscript sent to a publisher of crime stories who believes the author is confessing to murder, Lamont Cranston and Margot Lane return to a rooming house whose landlady denied any knowledge of the man who may be enacting each chapter of crime. . . .

Sound *(light street sounds as before, footsteps up stone stairs)*

Margot: Lamont! Do you think that man with the red beard who rushed in and out of here could be our author?

Sound *(footsteps out, and doorbell or buzzer behind the following)*

Cranston: It could have been, and that envelope we sent him may have started something.

Margot: I wonder if the landlady will be more cooperative this time.

Sound *(door unlocked and opened behind the following)*

Meggs: *(Angry)* Oh! It's you two again!

Cranston: Yes. And this time we want to see Mr. Kane.

Meggs: I told you . . .

Cranston: *(Cuts in)* You told us he didn't live here but you accepted a special-delivery envelope addressed to him at this house!

Meggs: *(Startled)* How do you know that?

Cranston: Because I sent it.

Margot: And we watched you sign for it from our car parked across the street.

Meggs: Who are you, and what do you want with him?

Cranston: Then you admit he *does* live here?

Meggs: I ain't saying till you tell me what you want!

Cranston: I told you we want to talk to him about his manuscript.

Meggs: Then he was right! You *are* from the place he sent his story to.

Margot: Is he the man with the red beard who just rushed in and out of the house again?

Meggs: Yes! *(Quickly)* But he'd asked me to say he didn't live here because he didn't want some bill collectors to find him.

Cranston: Did you tell him we'd been here?

Meggs: Yes! . . . After he got that big yellow envelope with nothing in it. Why did you send it?

Cranston: To prove you were lying.

Meggs: I ain't gonna lie for him no more!

Cranston: Why not? What happened?

Meggs: He acted like a crazy man. Said you were from his publisher and you were trying to steal his Story and I was helping you.

Cranston: Had he ever acted like that before?

Meggs: Not like that! He's always been kind of touchy and suspicious of everybody. But he's never been like that before.

Cranston: Did he threaten you?

Meggs: He sure did. He said if he found out I was helping you steal his story, I'd be the next to die; and I been thinking about calling the cops before he gets back!

Cranston: (*Quickly*) Back from where?

Meggs: He said he was going to that editor or publisher and show them they couldn't steal his *life* story!

Margot: Good heavens, Lamont! It *is* a true confession and he's gone to Hale's office!

Cranston: Where is your phone, Mrs. Meggs?

Meggs: There's a pay phone right there on the wall at the foot of the stairs.

Sound (*quick footsteps to phone*)

Margot: Do you have a dime, Lamont?

Cranston: (*Fast*) Look in your handbag, Margot. I don't have any small change.

Sound (*zipper of bag opened*)

Margot: I hope *I* have. But doesn't Hale leave his office at four-thirty?

Cranston: Yes, but he and some of the editors sometimes stay later for story conferences. Can't you find a dime or two nickels?

Margot: (*Dismayed*) Not a one, Lamont. (*Aside*) Don't you have a private phone, Mrs. Meggs?

Meggs: No I don't – on account of my roomers would always be sneaking in and using it.

Cranston: Well, go see if you can find two nickels or a dime.

Meggs: All right, but you'll have to pay me back. This is none of my business.

Cranston: (*Angry*) It may be your life and the lives of others. Hurry!

Meggs: *(Goes)* All right. But if you ask me, he oughta be arrested.

Sound *(heavy footsteps go off)*

Margot: She's right, Lamont. He sounds really dangerous.

Cranston: Granted, Margot. But he's done nothing the police could hold him five minutes for.

Margot: Couldn't he be held for observation?

Cranston: Not unless he blew his top in the presence of the police. . . . And we can't count on that. *(Calls)* Hurry, Mrs. Meggs!

Meggs: *(Calling from a distance)* I'm lookin'!

Margot: Lamont! Why don't you drive to Hale's office? Maybe you can beat Kane there . . . warn them he's coming! I'll stay here and phone if Mrs. Meggs finds some change.

Cranston: *(Exclaims)* That's an idea, Margot, at any rate. Wait here! Get all you can out of Mrs. Meggs, and I'll call you at this number the minute I get to Hale's office!

Music *(bridge and out for . . .)*

Sound *(rapid typing that stops abruptly as door opens)*

Kane: *(Back from mike slightly)* Where is the editor, miss?

Secretary: *(Startled)* Oh! I'm sorry. Mr. Hale has gone for the day.

Kane: *(Comes on slowly)* Where is my story?

Secretary: I'm sorry. I'm only Mr. Hale's secretary and I don't have anything to do with the manuscripts submitted to us.

Kane: I want my story. You're trying to steal it!

Secretary: *(Uneasy)* We don't steal stories! If yours isn't acceptable, it will be sent back to you by mail if you sent return postage.

Kane: You sent me a yellow envelope with nothing in it!

Secretary: We did not!

Kane: You sent somebody to find out if my story was true!

Secretary: *(Getting scared)* We don't print true stories

Kane: *(Starts low for rising scale of hysteria)* I want my story.

Secretary: There's no one here who can give it to you.

Kane: I want my story.

Secretary: *(Starts to get up)* I'll see if there's anyone . . .

Sound *(typing chair rolled back)*

Kane: *(Moving in)* No you don't! You're going to tell someone to hide it.

Secretary: *(Fighting against panic)* There's no one else here! I'll go see if I can find it on Mr. Hale's desk.

Kane: I'll go with you! Nobody's going to steal my story!

Secretary: No! Please. Wait here. I'll see. *(Stalling)* What is your name?

Kane: Kane. . . . Alvin Kane.

Secretary: *(Startled)* Oh!

Kane: *(Exclaims excitedly)* You know my name! You know about my story! You're trying to steal it . . . before it's finished!

Sound *(phone starts ringing)*

Secretary: The phone. I'll have to answer it.

Kane: No! We'll get my story!

Secretary: *(Frantic)* It may be Mr. Hale. He'll want to talk to you . . . about your story . . . maybe buy it!

Kane: It's a trick!

Secretary: You answer it. I'll get the story for you.

Sound *(phone jerked off cradle)*

Kane: No! *(Grabs her arm)* You wait!

Secretary: *(Cries out)* Please let me go!

Kane: Shut up! *(In to phone with feverish intensity)* Hello?

Margot: *(Filter)* Hello. Is Mr. Hale's secretary there?

Kane: *(Hesitating a moment)* Who wants her?

Margot: *(Filter)* Margot Lane! It's urgent.

Kane: What do you want?

Margot: *(Filter)* Could I talk to his secretary? It's important.

Kane: No! She's busy!

Margot: *(Filter) (Tense)* Are you Alvin Kane?

Kane: *(Harsh)* Yes! Why?

Margot: *(Filter) (Fast)* It's about your wonderful story. We want to talk to you about buying it.

Kane: You want to buy it, Miss Lane? Print it with my name on it?

Margot: *(Filter)* Yes!

Kane: Where are you?

Margot: *(Filter)* At your rooming house. We've been looking for you.

Kane: *(Suspicious)* You wait there! I'll get my story and come back.

Margot: *(Filter) (Fast)* No! It's too valuable. It's locked in a safe! Mr. Hale's secretary can't get it for you, but we know all about it. We'll buy it, but we want to know what you're going to do in the next chapter!

Kane: That depends!

Margot: *(Filter)* Come back to Mrs. Meggs'! We'll talk about it!

Kane: I want to talk to the editor – Mr. Hale.

Margot: *(Filter)* He'll be here. *(Fast)* And tell his secretary to ask Mr. Cranston to come to Mrs. Meggs' as soon as he can.

Kane: *(Suspicious)* Who's Cranston?

Margot: *(Filter) (Desperately making up a half-truth)* He's . . . our crime specialist. Have Mr. Hale's secretary tell Mr. Cranston to hurry and we'll have a . . . story conference!

Kane: *(Exclaims)* A story conference! You wait. I'll come!

Sound *(click of phone on cradle)*

Kane: *(Goes and calls back to secretary)* You tell Cranston to hurry over to Mrs. Meggs'!

Secretary: *(Shaken)* Yes . . . *(Gasps and faints)* I'll tell . . . Mr. Cranston. . . .

Sound *(slump of limp body to floor)*

Music *(short bridge and out for . . .)*

Sound *(door opened, footsteps entering)*

Cranston: Hello. . . Anyone here?

Secretary: *(Regaining consciousness, moans off mike)*

Sound *(quick footsteps)*

Cranston: *(Back from mike, startled)* Good grief! *(Comes on)* Miss Reed!

Secretary: *(Relieved)* Mr. Cranston!

Cranston: *(Helping her up)* Has Kane been here?!

Secretary: *(Shudders)* Yes.

Cranston: What happened?

Secretary: He wanted to see Mr. Hale! He wanted his manuscript! I . . . I think he would have killed me if Miss Lane hadn't phoned . . . talked to him!

Cranston: What did she say to him?

Secretary: She . . . persuaded him to go back to Mrs. Meggs'.

Cranston: Good grief! . . . How?

Secretary: She said she'd be there . . . talk to him about buying his story, and I was to tell you to hurry to Mrs. Meggs'.

Cranston: Can I call outside on this phone?

Secretary: Yes. It's a night line . . . you can dial.

Sound *(phone jerked off cradle and fast dialing behind the following)*

Cranston: Did Kane strike you?

Secretary: No! I was so frightened . . . when he ran out . . . I just fainted. . . . I'm sorry.

Cranston: I shouldn't wonder. He beat me here . . . must have taken a cab! I left Miss Lane to call here . . . warn you . . .

Sound *(filter sound of phone ringing number)*

Cranston: . . . but she must have realized your danger

Secretary: Yes! And she persuaded him to leave . . . said Mr. Hale would be there . . . and you, our crime specialist, would come for a story conference.

Cranston: *(Exclaims)* A story conference! *(In to phone)* Come on, Margot! Answer the phone! Kane may be taking another cab! *(Aside)* How long has he been gone?

Secretary: I don't know! I was too surprised and frightened to notice the time, and then I fainted. . . .

Sound *(filter click of connection)*

Cranston: *(Aside)* Just a minute.

Margot: *(Filter)* Lamont?

Cranston: *(Fast)* Margot! Get out of that house and take Mrs. Meggs with you!

Margot: *(Filter)* But Lamont. . .

Cranston: *(Cuts in)* Don't argue! Kane beat me here to Hale's office and may take a cab back to Mrs. Meggs'.

Margot: *(Filter)* Is Mr. Hale's secretary all right?

Cranston: Yes! Your story-conference bait may have saved her life. Now get out of there and meet me on the corner, but *don't* let Kane see Mrs. Meggs!

Margot: *(Filter)* Shall I call the police?

Cranston: He still hasn't committed a crime they can hold him for! *(Sharply)* Get out before I have to call Commissioner Weston and report a homicide!

Music *(theme)*

Announcer: We'll return to the Shadow in just a moment, but first . . .

(Pause for commercial)

Announcer: Now back to the Shadow!

Music *(up and out)*

Announcer: Tracking down a would-be author who seems to be *living* his crime story as he writes it – chapter by chapter, Lamont Cranston finds Margot Lane waiting for him near the rooming house where the writer lives. . . .

Sound (*car comes on fast and stops, motor cut, door opened and closed . . . light street sounds under the following*)

Margot: (*Comes on*) Lamont! I thought you'd never get here!

Cranston: Rush-hour traffic held me up! Where's Mrs. Meggs?

Margot: She wouldn't leave her house. She said if Kane made any trouble, she'd beat him to a pulp and call the cops!

Cranston: So she still thinks he's a harmless guy writing imaginary stories of his crimes.

Margot: She says she doesn't care *what* he is and she's going to be there to get her rent out of him before anyone takes him away.

Cranston: Have you seen anyone with a red beard go into Number Ten?

Margot: Yes . . . just a few minutes ago. What are we going to do?

Cranston: (*Grimly*) You're going in that drugstore and phone Commissioner Weston. Tell him what we know and what we suspect!

Margot: What are *you* going to do?

Cranston: The Shadow is going to have a "story conference" with that greedy landlady and Alvin Kane!

Music (*short bridge and out for . . .*)

Sound (*thumping on table behind the following*)

Kane: (*With suppressed fury*) Don't lie to me, Mrs. Meggs! That Lane woman said she'd wait for me! The editor is coming and so is a crime specialist, and we're going to have a story conference!

Meggs: (*Angrily*) She left and wanted me to go too! And don't you call me a liar! And don't you bust my furniture! And you pay the rent you owe me and get out of here!

Kane: I'll get out as soon as they've bought my story! I'll live in a penthouse and have lots of money, and then nobody will laugh at me!

Meggs: (*Snorts*) I'll start laughing as soon as I get my back rent.

Kane: You'll be sorry if you do!

Meggs: I'm sorry I even let you get a week behind! And you'll pay me now, or I'll go up and lock your room so you can't skip with that junk you call clothes . . . you . . . you deadbeat!

Kane: Don't you dare call me a deadbeat, or you'll be . . . *(Breaks off)*

Sound *(doorbell or buzzer sounds behind the above)*

Kane: that'll be my editor! *(Grandly)* Perhaps his associate – the crime specialist!

Meggs: *(Snorts)* And maybe a psy-*chi*-a-trist!

Kane: *(Goes quickly)* Send them up to my room. I'll receive them in my *den*!

Sound *(footsteps run up the stairs behind the following)*

Meggs: *(Exclaims)* Den it *is*! . . . where you'll be laughin' like a hyena or a mad dog bayin' at the moon!

Sound *(doorbell or buzzer rings persistently, heavy, deliberate footsteps to door, door unlocked and opened, light street sounds off mike)*

Meggs: *(Calls over the above)* All right. . . All right! Quit wearin' out my bell. I'm comin'! What do you . . . *(Breaks off and explodes)* Them kids again! . . . ringin' an' runnin' an' hidin'!

Sound *(footsteps outside, street sounds up slightly)*

Meggs: *(Yells)* Keep away from my bell, you little brats! Come back and I'll take a broom to you!

Shadow: *(Back from mike)* *(Laughs)* Come back in your house, Mrs. Meggs! No children rang your bell!

Meggs: *(Startled)* Who said that!

Sound *(footsteps)*

Shadow: The Shadow, Mrs. Meggs.

Meggs: How'd you get in my house?

Shadow: Through this open door!

Sound *(door closes, street sounds out)*

Meggs: Where are you? Who closed my door? I don't see nobody!

Shadow: No one sees the Shadow, Mrs. Meggs. For I have the power to cloud your greedy mind, so listen carefully to what I have to say.

Meggs: (*Awed*) I'm . . . I'm listenin'. What do you want?

Shadow: I want to know if your roomer Alvin Kane is still in this house.

Meggs: Yes! He just run up to his room – thinkin' you was his editor!

Shadow: What room?

Meggs: The top floor rear! The cheapest room I got, and he ain't paid up for that.

Shadow: You'll be paid, Mrs. Meggs.

Meggs: That's what *he* said! When I just told him to pay up and get out!

Shadow: You're lucky *you* didn't pay with your *life*! Now get out of this house, Mrs. Meggs. Leave Alvin Kane to the Shadow!

Meggs: (*Startled realization*) I won't. You ain't real. I'm just hearin' things! Talkin' to myself like crazy. . .

Shadow: (*Moves in*) No! To the *Shadow*!

Meggs: (*Cries out*) Something touched me! But there's nobody – and nobody'll believe me. . . . (*Goes fast*) I'm gettin' outa this house. . . . It's haunted. . . .

Shadow: (*Laughs as . . .*)

Sound (*fast, heavy footsteps go, door jerked open and slammed*)

Music (*short bridge and out for . . .*)

Kane: (*Fades in with feverish excitement*) I must be ready! I must think what to tell them about my next chapter! What I'm going to do . . . as if I'd already done it (*Breaks off*) Why don't they come! (*Sudden anger*) If that Mrs. Meggs sent them away, I'll kill her! (*Exclaims*) That's *it*! My next chapter . . . Meggs! The greedy old . . . (*Stops short as . . .*)

Sound (*light tap on door*)

Kane: (*Quickly*) Yes! Just a moment!

Sound (*quick footsteps to door, door unlocked and opened*)

Kane: (*Grandly*) Come in, gentlemen! You must pardon my poor artist's quarters, but genius . . . (*Breaks off*)

Shadow: *(Comes in)* Is often close to madness, Kane. *(Laughs)*

Kane: *(Startled cry)* Who knocked? . . . spoke? . . . laughed?

Sound *(door slammed and locked)*

Shadow: It's too late to lock your door against the Shadow!

Kane: Shadow!

Shadow: Don't bother to look around the room, Kane. No man can see the Shadow.

Kane: Who are you? Why are you here?

Shadow: I have come to your "story conference," Kane.

Kane: My story conference! You want to buy my story?

Shadow: I want to *hear* your story . . . the next chapter . . . what you plan to do.

Kane: *(Eagerly)* I know what's going to happen. . . . More exciting things than in the beginning.

Shadow: What kind of things?

Kane: At first only little things died. . . .

Shadow: A cat? A dog?

Kane: Yes!

Shadow: Did you really kill them?

Kane: Yes!

Shadow: Why?

Kane: They belonged next door! They barked and yowled! Kept me awake nights. I caught them . . . killed them! That started it!

Shadow: Are you going to kill more cats and dogs, Kane?

Kane: No! That isn't exciting enough . . . *for a story!* People only get a thrill out of reading about people killing . . . *people!*

Shadow: Have you selected your victim?

Kane: Yes! Mrs. Meggs! My landlady.

Shadow: Why?

Kane: She's a greedy old woman and she laughs at me.

Shadow: Is that reason enough to kill someone . . . even in a story?

Kane: (*Resenting criticism*) It doesn't matter! It's *my* story! And I can make it happen.

Shadow: (*Mocking*) How? Mrs. Meggs is a big powerful woman. She could throw you out of this house.

Kane: (*Exclaims*) No she can't! . . . I have something that will shut her mouth . . . make her quit laughing at me.

Sound (*drawer jerked open, clatter of gun pulled out*)

Shadow: Where did you get that gun, Kane?

Kane: I bought it . . . in a pawn shop.

Shadow: Do you have a permit for it?

Kane: No! And it doesn't matter.

Shadow: It will matter to the police when they come and find you with that gun in your possession, Kane.

Kane: They won't find me! I'll kill Meggs and get away and hide.

Shadow: The police would find you.

Kane: (*Excited*) I'd kill the police and get away, and there'd be more chapters!

Shadow: (*Slowly and emphatically*) No, Kane. This is the *last* chapter! . . . entitled "Alvin Kane Meets the Shadow."

Kane: I'll kill you, Shadow, if you try to stop me!

Sound (*running feet*)

Shadow: No you don't!

Sound (*scuffle of footsteps in struggle . . .*)

Kane: (*In a fury*) Nobody will stop me!

Sound (*exchange of blows*)

Shadow: You'll only leave this room in a *straitjacket*!

Sound *(thud of hard blow and crash of body)*

Shadow: *(Pause)* The police and psychiatrists will write the remaining chapters of your life. . . . *(Laughs)*

Music *(up and out for . . .)*

Announcer: We will return to the Shadow in just a moment, but first . . .

(Pause for commercial)

Announcer: Now back to the Shadow.

Music *(up and out)*

Sound *(car motor up and under the following)*

Margot: You know, Lamont . . . even with Kane arrested for illegal possession of that gun and held for observation, this case worries me.

Cranston: Why, Margot?

Margot: I have quite a lot of friends and acquaintances who are crime writers, and they all want you to read their stuff, but most of them are rather touchy about criticism

Cranston: *(Chuckles)* Most of them are milquetoasts who wouldn't actually kill a fly.

Margot: *(Dubious)* But suppose I catch one of them sticking pins in flies?

Cranston: *(Chuckles)* Then you'd better watch them carefully.

Margot: *(Exclaims)* Good heavens! I know one that's well on the way.

Cranston: How so?

Margot: He collects butterflies . . . and sticks them on a board *(Laughs)* with pins!

Music *(up and out)*

Announcer: Listen again next week – same time, same station – when the Shadow will demonstrate that . . .

Shadow: The weed of crime bears bitter fruit. . . . Crime does not pay. The Shadow knows. . . . *(Laughs)*

Music *(theme – up and out)*

THE END