

prove later, would look very black against Lester, and he would probably hang for it."

"It's a lie!" shouted Bill Fergus furiously.

"Quite so," said Hawke calmly. "You couldn't very well have struck her on the head with this piece of quartz, could you?" And the detective reached quickly into his rucksack, which lay on the floor beside his chair, and produced the fragment of quartz which Tommy had picked up on Carn Buidhe.

"And that's actually what happened—she was struck down by this," he added. "But you could have done it, Miss Carey. You were well up the Chasm when the—the tragedy took place. And—as I've good reason to know—a rock dropped or rolled from that part of the Chasm lands on that exposed piece of face beside the chock-stone where your sister was climbing. And you have an even stronger motive. You are in love with Lester. Lester was in love with Helen. She stood between you. And so——"

Moirá Carey was nodding. "Yes," she said breathlessly, "I did it——"

"No, Miss Carey," said Hawke, "you didn't. You couldn't have made sure that the knot would slip. Lester, you were the only man who could both strike Helen Carey with this piece of quartz—there's brown wool from her balaclava adhering to it—and untie her knot. But this is what you gave away. Moirá heard you say: 'She's gone!' How did you know that it was Helen Carey? Fergus was supposed to be climbing third. Even if you could have looked down over the edge of the chock-stone—and you couldn't, for there's a bulge in the rock that interferes—you'd only have seen a brown balaclava helmet. And Fergus was wearing one, too——"

"That's right," broke in Bill Fergus quickly. "I was supposed to be climbing third. But I made Helen go instead. I thought I might be able to help her if she got into difficulties."

Hawke ignored the interruption. He

was watching Max Lester through narrowed eyes.

"Lester, when Helen Carey's head was level with the top of the chock-stone you struck her with the piece of quartz, which you had ready in your hand. She fell back, but only for a foot or so, for you had the rope well fastened, and it held her, fraying a little against the rough edge of the chock-stone. You drew her up, loosened her knot, and let her go again. Then you threw down the quartz after her."

Hawke paused.

"Afterwards, when we met at the foot of the Chasm, you saw that I had smelt a rat, so you pretended to be sick on the way down. You wanted to see what I was going to do, so you climbed up by an easier route to the top of the Chasm. Then I played into your hands by climbing up to the chock-stone, and you thought it would be easy and much safer to get rid of me."

Max was as white as a sheet, but a cynical smile was curling the corner of his mouth. "And the motive?" he asked.

"Jealousy," said Hawke bluntly.

"You were in love with Helen. She was in love with Fergus, and wouldn't look at you."

"Good God!" said Max violently. "If I was in love with Helen Carey, why should I murder her?"

Hawke smiled slightly. "It was Fergus you meant to get. As I've said before, he was supposed to be climbing third, wearing a brown balaclava. And he's such a haphazard person that no one would be surprised at his knot failing. You struck the blow before you realised your mistake."

The door opened, and Tommy came in with an inspector and a sergeant of the county police.

Hawke rose to his feet, smiling at Max.

"You can spend the next hour or so explaining away to the police the bullet wound in your shoulder. I expect that's what's making you keep your hand in your jacket-pocket."

THE CASE OF The Pickpocket Decoy



LARRY THE DIP was in a bad fix. It was not the first time in his career that this little monkey of a man had been in trouble with the police, and he had served several short terms because of his light-fingered actions. Larry the Dip was a pickpocket, and right at the top of his profession!

He was still somewhat bewildered by the suddenness of his arrest when cashing a five-pound note. He also appeared to be dazed that he should be brought under escort to Scotland Yard and the private office of Chief Inspector Baxter, of the C.I.D.

There was another man in the room, a tall, loose-limbed man who wore a suit of crumpled tweeds. The Dip eased his neckcloth as he looked at Baxter's companion.

"Lumme," he said. "Mr Dixon 'Awke! When you two coves get to-

gether it means trouble for somebody."

"Trouble for you!" Baxter rasped. He slid from under his papers the five-pound note which the pickpocket had tried to change. "Where did you get it?"

"Earned it! I went to the races and——"

"What meeting?" cut in Hawke sharply.

"Rushmoor, last Friday. I put a thick 'un on a hundred-to-one shot, and——"

"The favourites romped home at Rushmoor last Friday," Dixon Hawke interrupted. "I was there, Larry! Now, suppose you tell us the truth. Where did you get the money?"

The Dip shrugged his shoulders. He was something of a fatalist, and as there seemed no way of escaping an eighteen months' sentence he gave up his attempt at bluff.