

FRANK: A journal.

LYNCROFT: Yes. If you're looking for Wolcott's secrets, I'd start there. Now go.

(A strange, alien sound from the other room. The lights flicker again, and something strange and alien moves in the shadows.)

LYNCROFT: It would appear that my guest has arrived.

(The strange sound, almost a bestial roar, grows louder. FRANK runs. Lights change.)

Scene 5

FRANK: *(V O)* I couldn't amscray fast enough. There was something about Lyncroft...something wrong. And it spread out to anything around him. Whoever... whatever was behind that door, I didn't want to know. What I did know was I had a lead, my first solid one since this whole wingding started. I had to get to the crime scene, so I played the payola game again. Money exchanged hands, and I was in. Normally, I don't bother with the crime scene this long after the fact. The cops've usually snagged anything worth snagging, and made a pigsty of the rest. But I had a feeling they missed something this time; something I sure as hellfire had to find.

(The bedroom of Bernard Wolcott. It is in shambles. FRANK is stalking around, making notes. He stops, noticing a small handkerchief covered in blood. He lifts it up.)

FRANK: Well, what do we have...?

(Suddenly, a voice in the dark—)

WALTER: You don't belong here.

(FRANK spins, drawing his gun and shining his flashlight. He doesn't spot anyone.)

WALTER: You're a small man. You would break the law, not to uphold it, but for your own personal gain.

FRANK: Who's there?

WALTER: Darkness. Shadow. The unseen justice that all criminals fear.

(Suddenly, a cloaked man grabs FRANK's throat.)

WALTER: They call me...The Cloak!

(In a quick move, FRANK grabs WALTER and hurls him to the ground.)

WALTER: AH! Damn!

(FRANK points his gun at WALTER.)

FRANK: Don't move, pal. I...

(WALTER rolls into the darkness. FRANK shines his light on him. WALTER is wearing a nice black suit, and a hooded cloak obscuring most of his face.)

FRANK: Hey. Fancypants. I said don't move.

WALTER: You caught me by surprise. It won't happen again.

(Beat. FRANK stares at WALTER for a bit.)

FRANK: Walter? That you? Walter Kingston-Smith?

(Beat)

WALTER: I am the moonless night that descends upon those who would harm this city...

FRANK: It is you, isn't it?

(Beat)

WALTER: No.

FRANK: Jumpin' Jesus...you crack your head or something?

WALTER: I don't know who you think I am...

FRANK: Walter Kingston-Smith.

WALTER: ...but I assure you, I'm not.

FRANK: So you're just some nut dressing up like a hero-mag character? A character written by Walter Kingston-Smith?

(Beat)

WALTER: I am the reason you fear the dark.

FRANK: Fine. I ain't got time for this bunk.

WALTER: Don't walk away from me. *(He draws a gun.)*

FRANK: Put that away.

WALTER: You're disturbing a crime scene.

FRANK: If you were gonna shoot me, why not do it when I didn't know you were here?

WALTER: Fire-arms are my last resort. I have trained with the yogis of Tibet, the Indian Rajput and the senseis of the Oriental arts.

FRANK: Swell. *(He resumes investigating.)* You want to stop speechifying and help me look?

WALTER: I told you to stop.

FRANK: Yep. And you didn't stop me, so I'm gonna keep looking.

(Beat. WALTER holsters his gun.)

WALTER: Well played.

FRANK: You're the only one playing here. I'm trying to do real detective work.

WALTER: I'm a detective too.

FRANK: Pfft.

WALTER: What was that?

FRANK: What was what?

WALTER: You snorted. Derisively.

FRANK: Never heard someone say that word out loud. You must be a writer.

WALTER: Well, I have been known to... *(Beat)* You think you're pretty clever, don't you?

FRANK: I think I'm God's gift to women. Just can't meet a woman who agrees.

WALTER: What are you here for?

FRANK: You tell me.

WALTER: You want to find Bernard Wolcott's killer.

FRANK: That's what I'm getting paid for.

WALTER: You won't find anything.

FRANK: Somebody said that to Columbus once.

WALTER: I've already done my own investigation. Using methods beyond your understanding.

FRANK: Then why are you here?

(Beat)

WALTER: Just as the night falls on the city, so The Cloak...

FRANK: The little black book. Am I right?

WALTER: The...the what?

FRANK: My guy on the force says they didn't find it when they searched this place. Means it's still around here somewhere. And from what I hear tell, that book has juicy secrets on at least a few of you, maybe all of you. The kind of stuff that would keep a writer who's about to make it big loyal to his bum of an agent.

WALTER: I have no idea what you're talking about.

FRANK: I'll bet you don't.

(FRANK is lifting up a side table.)

WALTER: Found something?

FRANK: Yeah, maybe. Hear that?

(FRANK *shakes it. The sound of a drawer moving in the table.*)

WALTER: What? What am I supposed to be hearing?

FRANK: Sounds like a drawer. 'Cept there ain't no drawer on this table, is there?

WALTER: A secret compartment!

FRANK: That's my thinking.

WALTER: You've done good work...for a reprobate.

FRANK: Thanks?

WALTER: And for the record, I'm sorry.

FRANK: For what?

WALTER: For this.

(WALTER *grabs FRANK in a strange headlock.*)

FRANK: Hey!

WALTER: Don't struggle. This is a Bengali Sleep Grip. In a matter of moments, you'll be...

(FRANK *breaks free from WALTER's grip.*)

WALTER: Damn!

FRANK: What the hell are you doing?

WALTER: What lies inside that compartment is not for your eyes.

FRANK: Says you! I'm the one who found it.

WALTER: Don't make me...

(FRANK *and WALTER draw guns on each other simultaneously.*)

WALTER: Well.

FRANK: Well.

WALTER: Looks like we have a...