

# ***I AM THE SHADOW***

by MAJOR PHILIP ATTFIELD

HE KNEW the secrets of the famous. HE KNEW the perils they faced.  
HE KNEW he had to beat any would-be assassin to the draw.  
And HE KNEW he must never let it be known that he was a Special Branch man.

THEY GAVE ME A GUN, a snub-nosed automatic. From that moment I was alone, a single, armed man against the chance assassin in any crowd.

I had been appointed to that select band of Scotland Yard Special Branch detectives who shadow Britain's important people.

The assistant Commissioner who briefed me left me with no illusions about the job. I alone was to be responsible for the safety of my charge – and for twenty-four hours a day.

My first call was at a London tailors – where I watched the raised eyebrows as I asked for suits to be made with space for a specially made chamois-leather holster which I was to wear night and day under my left armpit.

## REASONS

THE bulge of my gun was camouflaged, but it was to be my routine to practise drawing that gun for at least five minutes a day.

It was vital that I should be able to fire at the first sign of danger. The gun had to be in my hand in a split second.

These precautions seem to belong more to the world of Peter Cheyney than to the workaday lives of famous men, but there were good reasons for them.

I carried dozens of those reasons in my pocket – each one was an entry in the "Black

Book," the official "Bible" for all shadows.

Here were the details of more than 300 men and women known to the police as dangerous - some as fanatics.

I was warned never to lose that "Black Book," and to commit its contents to memory.

## MY JOB

I WAS soon to discover that royalty and statesmen of all nations are pursued and pestered by strange and sinister people. Many of these troublesome ones are wealthy, many desperate and cunning, many simple and cranky.

Some are blackmailers. Some have a history of mental disease, quiet for certain months of the year, violent at others.

Some are known to become dangerous at the full moon; some have killing tendencies at odd dates in the year which they, for some reason best known to themselves, consider important.

Anywhere, in any crowd, these people could appear. My job was to spot them and, if necessary, to shoot first.

These fanatics dog the famous

The "Black Book" is kept always up to date. As reports reach the Yard from all over the world of the movements of fanatics, so the information is passed on to The Shadow.

As I added each new page and picture I knew that danger threatened from one more quarter.

The suspects changed as rapidly as the world political scene changed. Many extreme political factions employ hot-headed men and women who profess to hate royalty.

These hot-heads, fearless of their own lives, gladly accept assignments to do harm to any statesmen or royal personage with whose ideas they do not agree.

Before I take you, the reader, with me on my mission as a shadow, I want you to know some of the dangers.

## WOMEN

WHILE guarding the Duke of Windsor and Mr. Anthony Eden on honeymoon, I learned that by far the most dangerous fanatics are women.

They are determined and ruthless. They are easily-managed pawns for the evil-intentioned men who remain discreetly in the background.

The only positive action I could take against these women was to warn local police forces and Secret Service men that they might turn up anywhere at any time.

I could never go out and look for possible assassins; I dared not leave the side of the man I was guarding. I just had to wait, and hope that I would spot the dangerous ones in time. Nor was I able to pass on my fears to the man I was guarding, for it was part of the job to leave him free to concentrate on the important affairs to which he was attending.

It was fortunate for me that few of the women could resist writing letters. These, to some extent, betrayed their intentions.

### STRAIN

THEY wrote, these women, from all over the world and, sometimes, enclosed a photograph of themselves.

Some of the letters were threatening, others apparently were letters from women craving audience - or love.

Although the letters revealed potential dangers, when the writers said they were going to travel to any particular part of the world where I was serving, they did not say when, or by what method.

The nervous strain of watching and waiting was intense, particularly when sometimes I was on my feet for thirty-six hours at a stretch.

### CAPTURE

IT was in Austria with the Duke of Windsor that I caught the first of these women fanatics.

I knew that she was somewhere in Europe but the details of her background were sketchy.

I was standing just a few yards away from the Duke knowing that any mishap to him would have caused a world sensation.

Enormous crowds packed either side of a small space on the pavement outside a church. I looked along the lines of faces. They seemed a normal, docile and happy crowd, laughing and chatting among themselves.

Their coat collars were turned up against the wind, hands dug deep in pockets.

Suddenly, I spotted a woman pushing her way forward. She was dressed in a fur coat; her dark hair was flecked with snow. Her restless, dark eyes, were staring in my direction.

### WAITING

I EASED my gun a little looser in my armpit, and watched.

As she pushed forward I took a couple of steps, to place my body between her and the Duke's party. She squeezed through the front rank of the crowd and took one, two, three purposeful steps.

I caught her arm and held her tight. She was unable to move. Then I called two Austrian policemen and told them to take her to the police station.

The incident passed almost unnoticed. The woman hissed something I could not hear.

### 'COUNTESS'

LATER that day, when the Duke was safely indoors, I went to see her. She was a wealthy Italian, who gave herself the bogus title of "Countess."

She would not answer questions and, although she spoke quite good English,

insisted on speaking Italian which I could not understand.

Austrian police took her fingerprints and packed her off to Italy.

I sent a copy of those fingerprints to Scotland Yard, a precaution which came in useful later on.

That woman, under the name of Alexandra B., caused me trouble for three years.

Determined and calculating, she teamed up with Jean M., a Frenchman and an associate of confidence tricksters. Soon after they decided to work together, I took possession of a number of cleverly-written letters which looked like attempts to blackmail.

The two moved around from place to place, always staying in the most luxurious hotels.

As the letters became more threatening, I kept a careful check of their movements.

Eventually the letters became such a serious menace that, after a police conference in Paris, the two were asked to attend the Prefecture for interview.

When they refused, they were arrested and later deported. But they joined up later in Switzerland and the blackmailing and abusive letters continued.

### 'RED ROSE'

EVERY day I had to read through stacks of letters. Some were anonymous, some contained threats, others were obviously from cranks.

But none could be ignored. Any one of them might spell danger to the man I guarded.

A beautiful Indian woman wrote enclosing her picture and signing herself "Red Rose." With the letter was a painting of a red rose, cut from a book.

Another woman wrote persistently from Canada. She

enclosed a snapshot of herself and a pressed prairie-flower, signifying her devotion.

Never a day passed without a letter from “Dolly,” signed in the most affectionate terms.

These were harmless but there were dangerous women too, women like Elizabeth S.

A tall, strong woman from Hamm, in Germany. Elizabeth S. spoke perfect French and English. She was widely travelled and her letter-writing was prolific.

Her letters were imperative. In one she wrote: “I bid thy Royal Highness instantly to agree to an interview.”

### STOPPED

FOR long periods we kept her quiet by replying to most of her letters, but at least twice a year message were flashed to me that she was “on the move” and might come in any direction.

Twice she was stopped when she was too near my charge to

be healthy, and both times she was put into gaol and deported.

But the third time she managed to get through the outer guards of a house I was guarding in Paris.

I caught sight of her through an upstairs window, and rushed downstairs and into the grounds where she was standing by bushes at the side of the drive.

When I challenged her by name, she readily admitted her identity and then pleaded with me to take her inside. Instead I took her to the local police station.

At the house where she was living I searched her belongings. In a suitcase I found a wicked-looking sheath knife, a deadly weapon.

Was she spying out the land for an attack when I saw her? I shall never know. But what I do know is that she had a mental derangement which showed itself every so often and made her capable of anything.

Apart from this sinister and dangerous part of my job I had

learned to know the man I guarded.

I had to keep danger from him and at the same time to make his worries my worries.

Because I speak fluent French and German, I was able to listen to conversations that were sometimes revealing and useful.

Frequently, apart from guarding a man, I had to guard State secrets – secrets I heard during private meetings of V.I.P.S. I rarely had a day off. The only time when I could breathe freely was when my charge was safely inside some Embassy, and the Secret Service took over for a few hours.

Otherwise I was on duty all the time, knowing always that if an assassin struck, I must be there to receive his bullet if need be.

**Now that you know the dangers ... are you ready to join THE SHADOW on his first dangerous mission?**

### **NEXT WEEK**

***I carry a gun for the Duke of Windsor***