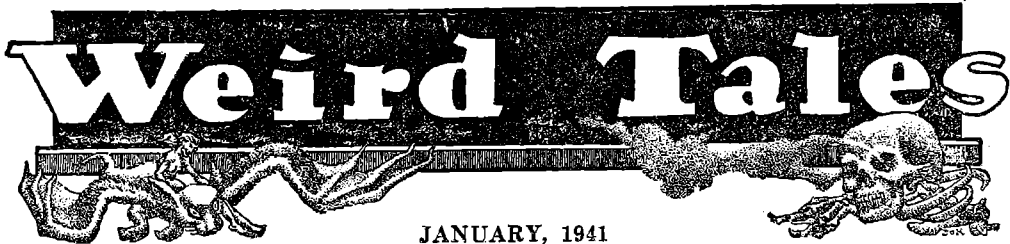


Weird Tales



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Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use of the name of any living person or reference to actual events is purely coincidental.

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"The twin, actually only seven months old, was in appearance thirty-six."

Test Tube Twin

By RALPH MILNE FARLEY

Biology created—and then killed—a gangster's plan for the perfect murder.

LIKE a cowed and disheartened tiger in a cage, the slim broad-shouldered man in evening clothes plodded up and down the modernistically furnished windowless air-conditioned room. His cruel lips were set at a bitter slant.

Nearby, a bull-necked man in a blue serge suit sat watching him.

"But, boss," the bull-necked one remonstrated anxiously, "what's th' matter wid this dump as a hang-out?"

The tiger abruptly ceased his pacing, and snarled, "It's safe, yes. It's comfort-

able, yes. But I want freedom, Mike. And I don't intend to stay cooped up here all my life—cops or no cops!"

A buzzer sounded insistently. Both men jumped, and turned toward the door.

"It must be the doc, Mike," said the slim man, brightening. "And that means freedom for me! Let him in."

The big man lumbered to his feet, and slouched out of the room. The other resumed his pacing, but with a new feline liteness in his step.

A few minutes later Mike reappeared, shoving protestingly before him a small bespectacled man in a white laboratory coat.

"Sit down, Doctor," the slim man invited with a wave of his manicured hand toward one of the chromium-plated chairs. "Mike, you needn't stay. I'm quite sure that Doctor Tiverton is not dangerous!"

But the doctor did not take the proffered chair. He studied his host for a moment, then fell back a pace, with an expression of startled recognition. "So it's Tony Moroni the gangster, is it? Well, whatever dirty job you want of me, I'll not do it!"

"Sit—down!"

Startled, the little doctor sat.

"Now, doctor, tell me about your researches. Is it true that you plan to grow babies in test-tubes—asexually, by 'budding' as I believe you biologists call it?"

TIVERTON stiffened, and set his puny jaw belligerently. But the gangster's evident interest in Tiverton's beloved experiments proved too much for him. He relaxed. He leaned forward. His pale eyes glowed behind his thick-lensed glasses.

"Correct," he earnestly replied. "There are scattered throughout every human body millions of cells of 'undifferentiated tissue'—the same stuff which made up the original egg from which the man was born. When the egg developed into an embryo,

certain hormones called 'organizers' caused most of the cells to differentiate into skin, nerve, brain, muscle, bone, and so forth; but some of the cells remained untouched by these organizers, and so continued as simple undifferentiated egg-cells."

"And you believe that it is possible to isolate one of these egg-cells, grow it in a test-tube, inject the proper organizers at the appropriate time and place, and thus develop it into a baby?"

"How do you know so much about my researches?" the little doctor countered.

Moroni smiled a twisted thin-lipped smile. "My scouts have been checking up on you, Doctor Tiverton. But answer my question!"

"Yes, we biologists believe that it is possible. And why not? Not all twins are caused by the fertilization of two ova; nor even by one ovum splitting into two parts. Sometimes there occurs what is called 'delayed twinning': that is to say, an undifferentiated cell takes it into its head—if I may use the phrase—to become a baby, and so it starts developing just as though it were the original ovum.

"One of the theories of cancer, Mr. Moroni, is that the cancer germ in some way stimulates a group of undifferentiated cells into an attempt to produce a delayed twin. That is why teeth and hair, for example, are often found in cancers."

Tony Moroni's eyes narrowed and he chuckled grimly. "So a cancer victim is killed by his own twin brother? Quaint idea! And do you think that, if properly financed, *you* could produce a twin brother for anyone?"

"Yes."

"An *identical* twin?"

"Yes. Every undifferentiated cell carries exactly the same hereditary characteristics as were carried by the original fertilized ovum. But of course the twin would -be very much 'delayed.' For example, if

I made a twin of *you*, he would be just a baby, whereas you are a grown man."

"That's what I was afraid of—er—er— isn't there some way of speeding them up?" He tensed and glanced anxiously at Doctor Tiverton, but Tiverton was too carried away with his subject to notice anything other than scientific interest in the question.

"Yes, there *is* a way," he judiciously replied. "Do you remember reading in the papers a few years ago about that baby who died of senile debility at the age of three months?"

Moroni nodded.

The little doctor continued, "Well, that case interested me. So I experimented, and have already succeeded in isolating the hormone which causes growth. From my experiments with animals, I believe that I could bring a human baby to maturity in about six months; although, of course, he would be child-like mentally, having had no experience with life."

"That wouldn't matter—I mean, that's very interesting, Doctor Tiverton. I've always wanted to be a benefactor——"

"You?" Tiverton's pale eyes widened with surprise.

"Why not?"

"But why?" Tiverton stared at him suspiciously.

"Merely for *your* protection, Doctor. I don't want the public to accuse you of taking gangster money. I know that you have been turned down by the Rockefeller Institute and several other foundations. I am your last chance. Come, come, man! Can't your desire to serve humanity, overlook the source of the funds?"

Doctor Tiverton's pale eyes began to gleam again. "I—I—I think you're right, sir. Yes, I'll accept your generous offer. Very gladly, sir. I didn't mean to be rude, but you must realize——"

Moroni smiled wryly, and shrugged his broad shoulders. "No apologies necessary.

I understand. Your professional standing would suffer if it became known that Public Enemy No. 1 were backing you. Well, as I have already stated, it suits me too to remain unknown. Okay, then. You will find ten grand deposited to your account in the State Street National Bank. Not a cent of it is to be spent for any purpose other than to equip a research laboratory—and to pay yourself a salary of five hundred a month. You are to render a monthly account, which I shall send for. From time to time I shall have you brought here to report in person. If you make satisfactory progress, more money will be made available, and your salary will be raised. But you are not to publish anything, nor even let it be known what is your line of research, until I give the word. Any help hired by you must meet with my approval. Is everything understood?"

"Yes. Yes, indeed! You are very generous. And, although your terms sound a bit peculiar, that is doubtless due to your—er—moving in different circles from me. I'll try to deserve your confidence."

Moroni twisted up his thin-lipped mouth and chuckled. He arose gracefully and pulled a bell-cord. Big Mike came rolling in.

"Send Doctor Tiverton home in my car," Moroni commanded. Then held out his hand. "Good-by, Doctor. You and I are going to be very useful to each other."

Mike, frowning and shaking his big head, led the little doctor from the room.

Tony Moroni resumed his pacing, but all suggestion of a caged tiger was now gone. His pacing was the testing stride of one about to be freed.

Mike returned, with a worried scowl on his heavy face. "I suppose you know what yer doin', boss. But won't th' doc tip off th' bulls to where yer hidin'?"

Moroni sniffed contemptuously. "Not he! Doctor Tiverton is so intensely interested in his experiments that he won't want

to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs."

"So you admit yer a goose, boss? Well, th' quicker you lay an egg under th' doc an' blow him ter hell, th' better it'll suit me."

"All in good time, Mike. All in good time." He stretched his arms out to each side, and drew a deep breath of exultation.

A MONTH later Tony Moroni sent for Doctor Tiverton, and this time the doctor came willingly, without coercion or subterfuge, to the warehouse in the depths of which was located the gang-leader's windowless air-conditioned palatial apartment.

The two men met without tension, like business acquaintances of long standing.

"Well," asked Moroni, rubbing his sensitive hands together eagerly, "what progress?"

"I've succeeded in isolating some undifferentiated tissue, and causing it to multiply. But I haven't yet succeeded in producing the necessary organizers to cause it to differentiate. I need help."

"I rather expected the request. And I believe that I've thought up a way to grant it. How would you like to open another laboratory, with a dozen or so bright young assistants, devoted exclusively to cancer research?"

"Yes," eagerly. Then, puzzled, "But why *another* laboratory?"

Moroni's eyes narrowed slightly. "Because, my dear doctor, in that way these young men will never suspect that their search for the organizers which cause cancers is being conducted, not in hope of curing cancer, but rather to assist you in your private experiments in your own exclusive laboratory. Thus we shall eliminate the danger that one of your bright young men might steal the show. You see, I'm looking out for your interests."

"Yes—I see," doubtfully.

Moroni's keen eyes studied intently the

face of his protégé. "Very well. Hop to it."

The periodic conferences continued. Four months later, the little doctor gleefully informed his patron that his assistants had succeeded in isolating most of the hormones of differentiation. By using these hormones, he had been able to cause a mass of undifferentiated tissue to develop into a human embryo in his own private laboratory.

Tony Moroni chewed his cheek and studied his protégé. "It has actually become an embryo?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes."

"You have reason to believe that it will develop into a normal human child?"

"Yes."

"Then destroy it!"

The little doctor's pale eyes snapped with horror.

"But, Mr. Moroni!" he wailed, uncomprehending.

"Who is paying for these experiments?" Moroni sternly asked.

"You, sir, but——"

"Very well, then. Go back to your laboratory and get your 'tools', or whatever you call them. Bring them here and isolate some of *my* undifferentiated tissue. *Mine*, do you hear me? I want you to make a twin brother for *me*."

"Y-yes, sir. But the other embryo, the one which I have already started. Wouldn't it be well to continue that one, several steps ahead of this one, as a sort of guide—a pilot experiment, as it were?"

"No! Kill it, and start again. You can make several out of *my* tissue, and use some of *those* to experiment upon."

The little doctor clenched his hands in mental agony, then set his puny jaw and shook his head.

Moroni's eyes snapped, and his upper lip curled back off his teeth. "Suppose I withdraw my financial support?"

"Suppose I tell the police?"

"You'd never live to tell them."

"But *why* do you want me to kill it?"

"Man, don't you understand? It is I who am putting up all the money for this research; so don't you see that I want my own twin to be the first one ever created in this way? Can't you realize my pride in fatherhood, or brotherhood, or whatever?"

Doctor Tiverton smiled tolerantly, and nodded comprehendingly.

"Very well then," Moroni continued. "Go back and get your tools."

DOCTOR TIVERTON did not return quite as soon as Moroni had expected him to.

When big Mike finally brought the doctor in, his boss was pacing up and down as he had not done since the day when Doctor Tiverton was first brought to him.

"Well?" he snapped.

"They say th' doc asked 'em to drive him from his office to his home. He took a bag to get some clothes in."

"Of course I did," Doctor Tiverton hurriedly added. "I may be here several days, getting the samples. You intended that, didn't you, sir?"

"Oh, so that's it, eh? Well, don't pull anything like that again. From now on, you're going to be under guard. At your private laboratory, at the cancer research center, at your home, everywhere."

"I rather expected that, sir," said Tiverton mildly.

Moroni threw a swift glance at him, then shrugged his shoulders. "Well, get going. Perhaps, if you hurry, you won't have to spend the night here after all."

"Of course, sir, if you object to my staying here, I can keep on coming back and taking samples, until I get results."

"That would be much better."

Using a local anesthetic, Doctor Tiverton took several small bits of flesh from those accessible portions of the anatomy of

the sardonic gang-leader where cancer most frequently develops. These samples he placed in culture-media in thermos bottles. Then, under the personal guardianship of big Mike, he departed for his private laboratory.

Later Mike returned alone.

"Well?" Moroni anxiously inquired.

"I don't know what it's all about, boss," Mike replied, "but I did like you said. There was somethin' what looked like a pollywog growin' in a bottle. Th' doc said it was a baby. He poured acid on it—an' pouf!"

Moroni relaxed his tenseness, and smiled a tight-lipped, twisted smile. "Now *mine* will be the first and only one!" he exulted.

"Say, boss, you ain't thinkin' of havin' a kid, are you?"

"Mike, you'd be surprised."

DOCTOR TIVERTON made several trips to Tony Moroni's secret hang-out, before he reported that he had succeeded in isolating a group of undifferentiated cells from the samples of flesh taken from his patron.

Meanwhile several of the gang-leader's henchmen were given janitor jobs in Tiverton's private laboratory and in his cancer research center, while other gorillas shadowed the doctor everywhere he went.

Finally Doctor Tiverton reported to Moroni that several embryos had started to grow. The healthiest one was picked for the final product, and the others were used to try injections on, before applying the injections to the chosen individual. One by one these test babies died. Like an American Beauty rose, nourished by the clipping of all the other buds on the stem, the selected embryo developed and grew in its tube of culture-medium.

Tony Moroni became frantically eager to see it. He sent for Doctor Tiverton almost daily for reports, had him take many photographs showing its progress, begged

him to bring it over to the hangout. But the little doctor insisted that the risk was too great.

"In fact," said Doctor Tiverton, "I'd like to hire a competent nurse right now, without waiting for the baby to be born. Then the fetus can be under constant care and attention, even when I'm at home asleep."

"I know just the one for you," said Moroni.

He sent for a girl named Rose, who had been a trained nurse, and later the moll of Bill Dolan, Moroni's trusted lieutenant. Dolan was still Moroni's lieutenant, but no longer quite so trusted. And Rose had been thrown over by Dolan, which fact rendered her more than willing to make a play for the big boss himself, if for no other reason than to show Bill Dolan that he had kicked her upstairs rather than down.

"Rose," said Moroni, "I have a job for you, a long hard job, a year perhaps. When it's over, you and I are going away—together. Meanwhile I'll see that the boys all know that you're Tony Moroni's girl. Will you do this for me?" He drew his thin twisted mouth up into a smirk.

"Will I? Say, Tony, you know I've always——"

"Save that for later!" he snapped, holding up his hand protestingly. "You're not my girl yet, though the boys will all be told so. Not until I've tested your loyalty for a year. And you're not to breathe a word of all this to Bill Dolan."

"That so-and-so!" she spat. "Say, Tony, if the info means anything to Bill Dolan, that's reason enough for me buttoning up my lips."

NINE months elapsed. Moroni was as nervous as an expectant father at a maternity hospital. And when Doctor Tiverton at last telephoned him that the baby had been taken from its test-tube and

had successfully drawn its first breath of life—his words had been: "Mr. Moroni, I congratulate you on becoming the brother of a seven-pound baby boy"—the gangster had gone to bed and required medical attention himself.

He was even tempted to leave the safe seclusion of his hideout and go to see the child, but he restrained himself. Instead he had Doctor Tiverton come and report in person, leaving the new-born baby in its nurse's care.

"Doctor Tiverton," he exulted, "we two have made a great contribution to the unwritten history of America. Next I want you to mature that baby just as quick as the Lord will let you. You still think you can do it?"

The little doctor's pale eyes glowed proudly. "I'm *sure* that I can."

"How long will it take to bring him to my own age?"

Doctor Tiverton studied his patron's appearance appraisingly. "About seven months, I should estimate."

"Good! Good! Doc, you don't know what this means to me—to have a twin brother my own age and looks. Why, it'll be the making of me! Doc, you can rest assured that I shan't forget you, when you finally accomplish what I'm after!"

"Of course," Tiverton diffidently explained, "you understand, Mr. Moroni, that although your brother's mind will be the equal of yours, it will be wholly untrained, with only the experience of a young child."

"Yes, yes," impatiently. "I understand."

"But, sir," reassuringly, "he should catch up with you very quickly from then on."

"I wonder." Moroni smiled a thin-lipped, introspective smile. "Well, run along, Doc. And Heaven help you if anything happens to my brother before he reaches the age of thirty-six!"

In Doctor Tiverton's private laboratory, under the constant care of Tiverton and the nurse Rose, Moroni's twin baby brother matured by leaps and bounds. Weekly photographs were taken and submitted to Moroni, and the gang-leader's exultation grew as the baby progressed through childhood to boyhood, young manhood.

As he studied each successive picture, the gang-leader would chuckle, "Yes. Yes. That's just how I looked at that age. Ain't science wonderful, Doc!"

Six months after the "birth" of the test-tube baby, it was the exact replica of Tony Moroni at the age of thirty. Moroni shut himself up more completely than ever, and refused to see anyone except big Mike, Doctor Tiverton, and the nurse Rose.

And he started to grow a beard.

As he laughingly explained to Mike, "My brother is getting to look so much like me, that I've got to have some way of telling us apart. Hence the beard."

Mike stared at him for a moment. Suddenly comprehension and admiration dawned upon his broad features.

"I getcha, Chief!" he exclaimed. "Yer goin' ter bump off yer brother, an' then make a getaway." His face fell. "But how about yer fingerprints? That is unless yer twin has th' same prints as yerself."

Moroni laughed. "Mike, you amaze me with your erudition. No, the poor boy's fingerprints are *not* like mine. No two men in this world have identical fingerprints, not even in the case of identical twins. Mike, you have always been very clever at carrying out my orders, even though you are sometimes a bit slow in thinking for yourself. Here is a list of the places where my fingerprints are on file, and the dates when each was printed. From each place I want you to get me a blank fingerprint card of the kind which was in use on that date, and also *borrow* my record card. The sky is the limit. Now hop to it!"

"I getcha, Chief," big Mike grinned.

So all the record cards of Tony Moroni were supplanted by cards just the same in every respect except that they bore the fingerprints of Moroni's laboratory-bred twin brother.

By the time that this interchange had been completed, the twin, actually only seven months old, was in appearance thirty-six, like the brother from whose flesh he had sprung.

Then one night, when Doctor Tiverton was home in bed, Rose and her patient were brought to the air-conditioned hide-out in the secret depths of the warehouse.

The synthetic twin was trimly clad in a suit of Tony Moroni's best, which he wore with the same easy swagger as his gangster brother. He had the same broad shoulders, the same slim hips, the same keen eyes and twisted mouth. In fact, except for an almost unnoticeable immaturity of expression, he *was* Tony Moroni.

THE real Moroni's face was pale beneath his new-grown beard, as Rose introduced them.

"Bobby," she said, "this is the kind Mr. Moroni, who gives us all our nice things.—I call him Bobby, Tony. Had to give him a name, you know.—Bobby, shake hands with the nice man.—Gosh, Tony! I hardly knew you with those whiskers."

The twin obediently held out his hand. "Pleased to meet you, sir," he said. His voice had the deep pitch of a man's, so remarkably similar to Moroni's own voice that the gangster winced. But the intonation was that of a young child.

Moroni was quivering as with a chill, as he took hold of the outstretched hand. His own hands were encased in white cotton gloves.

"They never told me he could talk!" he exclaimed. "Nor that he had a name! So this is Bobby. Robert Moroni, my own twin brother!"

He shuddered, and passed the back of one white-gloved hand across his eyes with a tired gesture. Then he straightened his shoulders, and set his crooked jaw defiantly. Big Mike looked worried. Moroni nodded to him reassuringly.

"Come, Bobby. Come into this next room with me. I want to show you something."

"Gosh, Tony," cried Rose, comprehending, "whatcher going to do to the——"

Mike clapped a big hand across her mouth, and firmly held her. But Bobby never noticed. He was trustingly and admiringly following his older brother. And if he had noticed, he would not have understood.

The door closed behind him and Moroni. A muffled shot was heard. Rose shrieked, in spite of Mike's restraining hand, and struggled violently in his bear-like arms.

When Moroni returned again through the door, his face was set and grim, and his usually inscrutable eyes were brimming. In each white-gloved hand he held a gun.

"And now, damn you, Rose," he snarled, "*you're* going to answer for my brother's death!"

The girl's eyes widened, and her face went white, as she struggled in the powerful arms of big Mike.

"Me?" she shrieked. "Good God, Tony——"

"Oh, I know it's not your fault. But you used to be Bill Dolan's moll, and I hate him. If he hadn't doublecrossed me, I'd not have had to cower here in this hideout all these months, afraid of the police. And you were Dolan's moll at the time when he doublecrossed me. You see this gun, Rose? It's Dolan's. It has his fingerprints on it. A bullet from it has just killed my brother—who everyone will think is me. The gun will be planted back on Dolan again!"

He raised the other gun, and Rose's eyes

went even wider. She cowered back against big Mike.

"Tony, Tony!" she cried. "I'm your girl! Do you hear me? I left Bill Dolan for you! I love you, I swear it! Tony, you can't do this to me!"

But Moroni's face remained grim.

"This other gun is mine. It has no prints on it," he said.

"Tony!"

The roar of the weapon cut short her agonized appeal. With a gurgling shriek, Rose collapsed in Mike's arms.

"Drop her right there, Mike," Moroni commanded unconcernedly, "before you get blood all over you. I'm going to put this gun into the right hand of myself, lying dead on the floor of the next room."

A momentary shudder passed through his slim, perfectly tailored form as he mentioned the dead body in the next room.

Mike shrugged his broad shoulders. "But I don't see——" he began.

"Very simple," Moroni explained, with a contemptuous glance at the crumpled body of the girl who had loved him. "Here's how the bulls will figure it out. Bill Dolan came here to find Rose. We had a quarrel over the girl. I killed her—probably accidentally, while gunning for Dolan. And Dolan chased me into the next room, and shot me down. So the police will cross Public Enemy No. 1 off their list as gone the way of all bad gangsters."

He paused, and his crooked slit mouth contorted into a broad grin.

"And listen to the best part of it, Mike," he chuckled. "Bill Dolan, the mug who doublecrossed me, will get the hot seat for my murder; which is a murder which he would like to have pulled, so that makes it perfectly fair to pin it onto him. Oh, and just before leaving town I'll phone the police an anonymous tip to take a look in the warehouse."

"But how about th' doc? Won't he squeal?"

"Mike, you took the words out of my mouth. Send two of the boys to the doc's residence, to invite him here to an important conference. And they mustn't slip. He probably will come without suspecting anything. But he must be brought here at all costs. Get that? And while the boys are bringing the doc, you plant this gun back on Bill Dolan. Now scam!"

He wrapped the Dolan gun in a handkerchief and handed it over to his big bodyguard. Then he turned, slumped a bit, and carried the other gun in through the doorway of the adjoining room.

ABOUT an hour later Mike returned and reported the successful planting of the Dolan gun.

Just then the buzzer rang. Mike went to answer it.

In a few minutes he came lumbering excitedly back with a worried look on his usually bland face.

"Say, Chief, this is bad!" he panted. "Th' boys have bumped off th' doc."

"What!" exclaimed Moroni.

"They *had* to, Chief! Honest they did. He wouldn't come with 'em, so they grabbed him, an' gagged him, an' drug him along. He fought, an' kicked, an' bit. They kep' tellin' him they'd bump him off if he didn't shut his trap, but they say he was too scared ter listen ter reason. An' finally in th' car he broke loose from his gag an' let out a yell; so they let him have it."

"Where's the body?"

"Downstairs in th' car."

Moroni relaxed, and laughed a laugh of relief. "Why, that's perfectly all right, Mike. It has merely saved me the trouble of doing it myself. And I rather liked the doc. I killed one man tonight, whom I had rather let live. Two—er—one is enough in one night—not that I mind

bumping off that she-rat," he added hastily.

"Well," he continued, "you bring up the body. I want to take a good look at it, so that I shan't be depending on anyone else's say-so that Doctor Tiverton is dead. Then there'll be no one else in the world who knows the story of the test-tube baby, except you and me.

"Oh, and find out which of the boys shot the doc, and bring me his gun. I'll take it with me and drop it in the river to-night.

"That'll make one unsolved mystery for the police to worry about, with no gun for the ballistic experts to match with the death bullet." He chuckled grimly.

Mike hurried out, and presently returned with a slumped figure over one shoulder, and a gun in the other hand. Moroni pocketed the gun, and then carefully examined the small frail body.

"It's the doc, all right," he said, chuckling grimly. "Face looks kind of peaceful in death. Good material for a first-rate undertaker's job, if it weren't for the fact that he'll probably lie for a long time before he's found. For I want you to take him to his own private laboratory, Mike, and leave him there. By the time he's found, his body'll be in such bad shape that no one'll ever figure out he wasn't killed right there. All right, Mike, take him away. And when you come back, tell the boys not to wait."

AFTER Mike had departed, toting his grisly burden, Moroni brought out two heavy suitcases, and set them down beside the elevator-well. On them he laid a hat and coat. He grinned a slitted twisted grin through his new-grown beard.

"All set for the getaway," he gloated. "The perfect crime. Now no one knows about my double, except Mike and me. Poor Mike! He thinks that he is going with me."

With white-gloved hand he took out the revolver which had killed the doctor. One cartridge had been discharged. Moroni slipped the gun back into his pocket, and shook his head.

"No," he ruminated. "I can't use this one. I'll have to use my own gat, and throw that away too. It would never do for the police to find similar bullets in Mike's dead body here and in the doc's dead body over in his laboratory. I don't want the doc's death pinned onto my gang."

He reached beneath his left armpit, pulled out his own trim automatic and fingered it lovingly.

"The perfect crime!" he repeated.

The elevator clicked and began to approach. Moroni raised his gun with narrowed eyes.

The door of the elevator opened, and Mike stumbled out, his fat face white with fear, his arms hanging in front of him.

Moroni fired, but just as he pulled the trigger, he noticed that Mike's wrists were handcuffed; and with quick appreciation of what this meant, he jerked the weapon aside, and missed.

Mike tripped and pitched forward, pushed by someone behind him. And out of the elevator barged five policemen with drawn automatics.

Moroni hesitated a moment, dropped his weapon to the floor, and raised his own hands aloft, then chuckled softly to himself at the humor of the situation.

For not an article in either of the suitcases was identifiable as having belonged to the notorious Tony Moroni, now deceased; in fact they were all marked with the name "John Anderson" or the initials "J. A." All of his money was safely planted in various banks under that name. All recorded fingerprints of Tony Moroni would check with those of the deceased.

The bearded living "John Anderson" could testify that he had just returned to his apartment, and had found the bodies; hence his being jittery and too quick on the trigger when the elevator door opened. He had known the dead Tony Moroni, but not intimately. The girl, no. Bill Dolan, no. Mike, he had seen occasionally in company with Mr. Moroni, that was all.

Mike himself, not knowing that Tony had meant to shoot him, would not intentionally give his chief away—would corroborate his story. So that the worst that could happen would be a charge, impossible to prove, that John Anderson had been "harboring" Tony Moroni.

Grinning, he held out his wrists, and the manacles were snapped onto them.

Just then there peered out of the elevator the timid face of Doctor Tiverton, with its thick-lensed spectacles and pale blue eyes.

As these eyes focused on the bearded prisoner, their timidity vanished, and the little doctor dashed wildly out into the room.

"That's him! That's Tony Moroni!" he cried, pointing at the horrified gangster. "He's the man who sent his thugs to my house to kidnap my twin brother. He killed my twin brother!"

"Your twin brother!" Moroni exclaimed involuntarily, uncomprehending.

"Yes, *mine*, the embryos which you commanded me to kill, before I made yours for you. Well, I didn't kill it then. You did, just now!"

Moroni went limp. A policeman, patting Moroni's pockets, pulled out a revolver.

"One cartridge fired," the cop announced. "Perhaps this is the gun that killed Doctor Tiverton's brother.

It was. The perfect crime had crumbled.