

*... he came bringing fear ...*

As they were walking into Spots' room, Rourke stopped abruptly.

"You go ahead and get the search started, I want to get something," he said, whereat he turned face to head off down to the bedroom at the other end of the hallway. With a shrug of his shoulders, Jimmy pulled out the top drawer of the nearby dresser and began rifling through its contents, tossing the garments carelessly onto the bed. But as he was reaching for the next drawer, a noisy crashing sound rang out from the other room.

"Rourke?" Jimmy called down the hall. There was no response. The door of the room was open, and he could see that a light was on, but there was no sign of any movement within.

"Rourke?" he called again as he passed down the hall. Standing in the doorway, he craned his neck into the room. It was the lamp next to the bed that was turned on, washing the room in a kind of gloomy half-light, enough to see that it was empty.

"Rourke?" Jimmy repeated, but this time under his breath, as though uneasy in hearing the sound of his own voice. After another second or two, he set foot into the room, wary-eyed, half expecting to see Rourke lying cold on the floor of the other side of the bed.

"C'mon, Rourke," he said aloud, his hands balled into fists, his features distorted with confusion. "You ain't puttin' me on at a time like this, are ya?"

Still no answer came. He crossed the room to get a look at the floor on the other side of the bed. There lay the shattered pieces of a smashed china lamp that had stood on the bureau top. In walking through the room, however, he had failed to notice that the door of a closet in the other corner was slightly ajar, and now as Jimmy gazed on the broken fragments in puzzlement, the door swung slowly and noiselessly outward.

"James Fulton," spoke a low, almost emotionless voice.

Spinning around, Jimmy blanched.

"No, no! Keep away from me! Ya hear me? I . . . I said keep away!"