Challenge To the Reader

And so once more I come to what might be termed the "seventh-inning stretch" of my novels. Time out, ladies and gentlemen.

1 ask in a variation of a theme 1 have harped on now for four years: Who killed the two horsemen in the arena of the Colosseum?

You don't know? Ah, but really you should. The whole story is now before you: clues galore, I give you my word; and when put together in the proper order and the inevitable deductions drawn, they point resolutely to the one and only possible criminal.

It is a point of honor with me to adhere to the Code. The Code of play-fair- with-the-reader-give-him-all-the-clues-and-withhold-no thing. I say all the clues are now in your possession. 1 repeat that they make an inescapable pattern of guilt.

Can you put the pieces of the pattern together and interpret what you see?

A word to the small army of well-intentioned hecklers who worry the life out of the author each time he blithely lays down a challenge. The contents of the tele- gram which in the story 1 send to Hollywood, and the contents of the reply thereto, are not necessary to your logical solution. As you shall see, a solution is possible without knowledge of either; they are merely confirmation of logical conclusions arrived at from analysis. So that actually you should be able to tell me what my telegram said!

—Ellery Queen, The American Gun Mystery (1933) p.176