

# **THE STRANGER**

**Stephen King**

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Kelso Black laughed.

He laughed until his sides were splitting and the bottle of cheap whiskey he held clenched in his hands sloped on the floor.

Dumb cops! It had been so easy. And now he had fifty grand in his pockets. The guard was dead - but it was his fault! He got in the way

With a laugh, Kelso Black raised the bottle to his lips. That was when he heard it. Footsteps on the stairs that led to the attic where he was holed up.

He drew his pistol. The door swung open.

The stranger wore a black coat and a hat pulled over his eyes.

“Hello, hello.” he said. “Kelso, I’ve been watching you. You please me immensely.” The stranger laughed and it sent a thrill of horror through him.

“Who are you?”

The man laughed again. “You know me. I know you. We made a pact about an hour ago, the moment you shot that guard.”

“Get out!” Black’s voice rose shrilly. “Get out!” Get out!”

“It’s time for you to come, Kelso” the stranger said softly “After all - we have a long way to go.”

The stranger took off his coat and hat. Kelso Black looked into that Face.

He screamed.

Kelso Black screamed and screamed and screamed.

But the stranger just laughed and in a moment, the room was silent.  
And empty.

But it smelled strongly of brimstone.