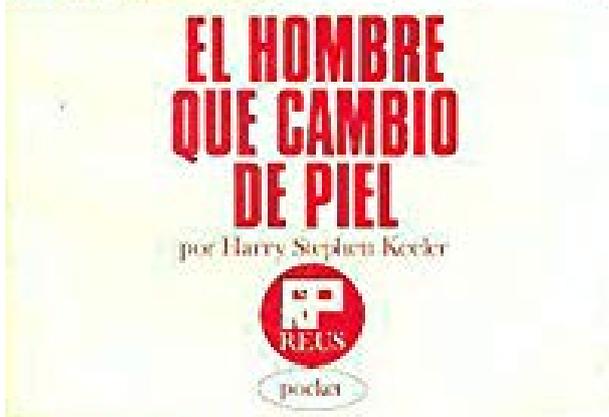


# The Man Who Changed His Skin



<b>Genre:</b>	Mystery
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<b>Goodreads Rating:</b>	4.20
<b>ASIN</b>	B001I8FK6W



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a selection from CHAPTER 31: ----- "Well," said Button firmly and authoritatively, "you go to the police station.- And you tell them your story.- Not mine, but yours.- Yours, yes, designed to make mine - stick.- You tell them simply - it must be simple, remember this - you tell them that you were just coming home here after having been at a card game, or crap game, or something, at some friend-s, and there, right out on the street - some street - any street you want to name - you passed a man sleep-walking - in his nightshirt.- Yes, describe him as having his arms straight out in front of him - his eyes protruding unseeingly from his face.- Say you saw all this because you were carrying one of these lanterns with a reflector on it.- Say you pointed your light squarely on him - that he didn-t even blink.- Kept on majestically trudging.- Tell them he proved in this light to be, however, not just a man, but a man you work for, occasionally.- Run errands for, do odd jobs for.- Press his suits and so forth.- In short, he was, tell them, Mr. Clark Shellcross, of 222 Cabot Street. ----- "Tell them - rather him, the captain," drove on Button, "you didn-t dare try to halt this man - or even waken him - lest he have a fit or something.- Tell him you didn-t dare to even try to hold him back.- You could only tramp along by his side for a moment or two.- A thing you didn-t want to keep up.- For sooner or later, tell him, you-d have to restrain the walking man - and then you-d be responsible if something happened - something

serious even perhaps, since - ----- "Tell the captain you sped away from the chap finally, but came, panic-stricken, to the police station. ----- "After hearing your story, they-ll know then I wasn-t drunk or anything when I told mine.- Yours will confirm my story, you see.- And to the extent of 100 percent - no than twenty ways across the board.- Believe me, they-ll be sorry - I mean that son-of-a-bitch of a captain will be sorry for his insulting treatment of me.- For if the man you saw sleep-walking along on the street was Shellcross, then the man found in Shellcross- bed tonight wasn-t Shellcross at all, as per all the confused identification given it in the Jungclaus house and all, and the whole suicide theory blows up.- As appertaining to Shellcross himself, I mean.- Well, will you do what I have outlined?- Confirm my story?" Clark with arms waving wildly now, was springing to his feet. ----- "Ah go raght now dis minut.- Quick-s Ah kin mek it - quickah Ah go, quickah Mist- Shellcross is sated f-m walkin- round into dangah - o- death.- Soon-s Ah co-plete mah story to dem, an- dey puts out dat netwuhh, quickah Mist- Shellcross git plucked afo- he becomes a floatin- co-pse in de hahbor, o- what.- An- -" ----- "You-ll confirm my story now, as I-ve outlined?" ----- "Not quite -zackly," said Clark.- "But will confuhm it od-wise.- But fully.- You see, Mist-Button, dey mought tangle me up on any story dat Ah gib whut de way yo- outline.- Dey mought want to know whut st-eet Ah seed Mist- Shellcross on - an- den ef Ah mek up one, dey mought not put out a - a - network at all - dey mought on-y go -long dat st-eet on-y, an- up an- down de side st-eets givin- out ob it.- An- miss him co-pletely....