

DEAD MAN'S CHEST

Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. DEATH FROM BEYOND

DOUG LAWTON paused along the Manhattan waterfront and looked for the old Darien Pier. He saw it, looming above the express highway, a grim, gray, ghostly structure that looked like a monster with a pre-historic past, ready to swallow any unwise wayfarer who might come within its reach.

Below the elevated highway lay the broad, rough-surfaced street that ran along the waterfront, an esplanade of darkness as black as the river itself. Doug had followed that thoroughfare southward from Fourteenth Street; how many blocks he didn't know, for he had been looking for the pier.

Besides, it was difficult to count the blocks in this vicinity for the streets were all dead-ends, some with numbers, others with names, that slanted to meet the veering edge of the Manhattan shore line. Counting streets would be the next task for Doug Lawton, now that he had found the Darien Pier. But he would have to wait until he heard the tugboat whistles. They wouldn't come for several minutes yet, for when Doug looked at the luminous dial of his wrist watch, he saw that he was ahead of schedule.

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Pausing in the darkness, Doug studied the old pier which, though obviously long empty, still bore the name "DARIEN LINES" in faded letters against its colorless background. Doug could now understand why the Darien Pier had been picked as his starting point for tonight. It was about the only structure high enough to catch the reflected glimmer of Manhattan lights, for the low buildings on the near side of this street cut off the city's glow. Therefore, the pier made a conspicuous landmark, when judged by its upper stories.

What Doug didn't like was the lower portion of the pier, the stretch beneath the express highway. As Doug moved over beneath the elevated pillars, the darkness absorbed him and he could picture figures in the vague, black entrance of the old forgotten pier. If Doug could not see such figures, they in turn could not see him, but that was little comfort. Nevertheless, Doug did not intend to move into the blackness where he might suddenly be trapped; not while he was carrying a thousand dollars cash in his pocket.

Cars were speeding along the express highway above; an occasional truck or taxicab came jouncing along the broad waterfront street. None of their lights could reach among the pillars where Doug had stopped beneath the superstructure.

As he waited, Doug let his hand go to his hip pocket, not to clutch the roll of bills that totaled a thousand dollars, but to grip the handle of a loaded sixgun that he had brought with him from Oklahoma.

Doug Lawton had come to New York for a very specific purpose. For several years, he had been looking into a little matter of some Cuban gold, which had been owing to his great-uncle, Artemus Lawton, since the time of the Spanish-American War. During a fruitless hunt in Mexico, where he had hoped to trace the gold, Doug had kept up correspondence with various persons who had done business with his uncle, years ago.

Upon his recent return to Oklahoma, he had received a letter, a letter which he now carried in his pocket. The letter itself was strictly anonymous, bearing no identification other than a New York postmark. Its message was brief, stating simply that if Doug Lawton would come to New York City and call a certain telephone number, he would be told where and how he could obtain the information that he wanted.

The letter had stated the approximate time at which Doug was to make that all-important phone call and, in addition, it carried another definite proviso. With him, Doug was to bring a thousand dollars in cash, as payment for the information should it be what he wanted.

So far, Doug had fulfilled the conditions. When he had called the telephone number, a rough but otherwise indefinable voice had told him to go to the waterfront at Fourteenth Street and walk southward until he saw the pier bearing the name of the Darien Lines. There, at an appointed time, Doug would hear tugboat whistles. They would come in a series, telling him how many blocks he was to go south, east, south, east, and so on until he reached the place where he was expected.

Doug had hedged at those instructions. Over the phone, he had asked the name of the man he was to meet. The voice had hesitated, then stated bluntly, "Tom Jeffrey." With that, the call had ended abruptly, leaving Doug to accept or reject the proposition as he chose.

Doug had chosen to accept.

Now, Doug was by no means sure that he had taken the wiser course. The whole thing could be a hoax, designed to put him at the mercy of a gang of roving wharf-rats who would slug and rob him. Should he suffer such an experience, Doug's only clue to the whole thing would be the name of Tom Jeffrey, a man who might not even exist.

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To Doug's strained mind, the Darien Pier, with its boarded entrance and higher sockets representing permanently shuttered windows, had taken on the aspect of a grotesque and massive death's head, as forbidding as a bleached skull on a desert waste. Common sense advised Doug to scam, yet having come this far, he was loath to give up the prospect of a final goal, should there happen to be one.

From the river came sounds that in themselves goaded Doug to remain. He heard the basso whistles of some freighters; then the grand diapason of a deep-throated liner. Amid these came the constant clang of a ferry-house bell, answered by a trailing banshee howl from across the Hudson, a sound that guided ferry-boats to their slips on the Jersey side. The ferries themselves were giving intermittent blasts, but none of them could be the high-pitched tugboat calls that Doug was waiting for.

Then the thought struck home: Why wait?

Turning back into the darkness beneath the elevated structure, Doug eased slowly past a pillar, then quickened his pace beneath the shelter. His gun half-drawn, Doug kept swerving as he moved with long strides. It wouldn't have been a happy coincidence for anyone to spring at Doug in that gloom. Tall, rangy of build, Doug had sidestepped plenty of troublesome creatures in his time, rattle-snakes included, and he was now allowing for any breed that might be around.

Yet this was not retreat; it was inspiration.

The voice had said that the first signals would guide Doug south. That was the direction he was taking now, along the course that he would have to go. Smart business this, for it was giving Doug a head start on his coming journey, in case the game proved fair. That in turn meant that Doug would no longer be at the Darien Pier at the time when the signals were due. Hence, if the whole thing proved a trap, it would lack its most important feature, an intended victim named Douglas Lawton.

One block... two blocks –

Doug was counting them now, as he traced his way from pillar to pillar, counting them by looking across the wide street to the dingy houses that lined the other side. All the while, Doug was listening for shrill tokens among the whistled throbs that pulsed from the river.

They came, from back over Doug's right shoulder; high squeals from some craft which Doug calculated must be just off the end of the deserted Darien Pier. Three shrills; then the voices of the bigger boats took over. Next, two more pipes, penetrating despite the interference of the deeper tones. A pause; then one sharp squeal. That was all.

Three blocks... two blocks...one block.

Simpler than Doug had anticipated, for he had assumed he would have to follow a longer trail. Already past the second street south of the Darien Pier, Doug slanted his course across the waterfront and rapidly reached the third. Turning that corner, Doug strode two blocks eastward. There he made another turn and covered a single block, to a crossing of a small alley.

Here the situation explained itself. The corners were occupied by loft buildings and a warehouse, but to the right the alley formed a short dead-end, terminating at the very door of an old, dilapidated brick house. This was the only residence that could be entered; above and beyond its roof, Doug could see the higher floors of a fairly modern office building, which obviously fronted on another street. That, however, was unimportant; the house was all that mattered.

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The door was open, the entrance lighted. Doug entered and saw a row of push-buttons with name cards; above these, a placard that stated "Buzzer Out of Order." Pushing through an inner door, Doug went up a creaky stairway, looking for lights beneath doors. He saw none until he reached the third and top floor; there a light glimmered from beneath a door at the back of the hall. Stopping at that door, Doug rapped on it, duplicating the whistled signal that he had heard:

Three... two... one.

There was a half-opened window the hallway that led to a fire escape, so Doug watched it as he listened for sounds from within the room. Quick footsteps came; as the door opened, Doug wheeled, then relinquished the hold that he had taken on his gun.

The man who opened the door was of lean and flimsy build, half a head shorter than Doug's six-feet-two. He was wearing an artist's smock and had a paint brush in his hand. His face was sallow, wise of expression both in smile and eyes. Giving Doug an affable nod, the man gestured for him to enter.

The room itself was an artist's studio with tall windows at the back. Those windows extended from low sills almost to the ceiling and they were pivoted crosswise at the center so they let in air as well as light. Doug scarcely noticed the windows for they formed a blackish background. He was more interested in the contents of the room, which included canvases, some blank, others painted; a large easel at the side of the room; a drafting board over toward one window, with a chair beyond it.

Going to the easel, the sallow man laid aside the paint brush and wiped his hands on a rag as he said,

"I guess you must be Lawton."

"That's right," returned Doug. "I take it you're Tom Jeffrey. But you're not the man I talked to on the telephone."

Doug was standing just inside the door, arms folded, the expression on his rugged face spelling business, nothing more. His whole manner gave the effect of a quiet patience, hanging on a balance point.

"I have no telephone," explained Jeffrey, hurriedly. "That's why I left that detail to a friend. But the business is between us. You have the letter?"

Doug's arms unfolded, bringing his left hand into sight with a letter from his coat pocket.

Jeffrey tightened his sallow lips nervously.

"Here's the letter," said Doug. Then, coolly, he asked, "Did you write it?"

"Well, not exactly," parried Jeffrey. "I know what it says, though. Did you bring the money?"

"I'll have it when it's needed," Doug assured him. He replaced the letter in his pocket. "Now what can you tell me that's worth a thousand dollars?"

Going over to the window, Jeffrey pushed the chair aside; standing behind the drafting board, he beckoned to Doug who sauntered toward him, but stopped a few paces short.

"Here's the man you'll have to meet." Jeffrey began a rapid sketch. "He knows something and says it would be worth a lot to you. Whether he'll tell it is your problem, not mine."

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The sketch, though rough, was complete. Its penciled lines showed a bearded face with gnarled forehead and bristling eyebrows, carrying the salty expression of an old sea captain.

"There's one odd point," stated Jeffrey. "The skipper – I mean the old gent – says that if he never tells what he knows, it may mean more than if he did tell it. Does that make sense to you?"

"It might," replied Doug, "and it mightn't."

"Maybe this will help." Jeffrey's quick pencil was making another sketch. "It has a lot to do with it. That much I know."

The sketch consisted of wavy lines representing the ocean. Rising from the water were the figures of two mermaids, arms gesturing to indicate a space between them. Jeffrey knew the sketch by heart for he was looking up as he finished it. Cannily, Jeffrey asked, "Would that be worth a thousand dollars?"

Doug had approached to watch Jeffrey's pencil work. Now, arms still folded, Doug drew back a step, turned slightly away, as though to consider the question.

"I suppose you know who the old gentleman is," said Doug, "and also where I can find him."

"Both," assured Jeffrey, "but I want the money before I tell you those facts. That's fair enough, isn't it?"

"Fair enough," replied Doug, turning toward the door, "provided this all means something –" Suddenly, he swiveled on both heels, bringing his right hand straight up with the gun. He'd sensed a move from Jeffrey and he hadn't guessed wrong. The sallow man was coming forward across the drawing board, a distorted look upon his face. Jeffrey's hands were clawing ahead of him. If they'd been reaching for a weapon, Doug wouldn't have hesitated with his gun. But Jeffrey's hands were empty, helpless even in their frantic grab.

Falling, the artist crashed into the drawing board and the flimsy uprights that supported it. In the midst of the wreckage he sprawled headlong on the floor, a gasp coming from his writhing lips, only to be drowned by the thud and splintering of the table and its board. Looking beyond, Doug saw the closed window, black against the night; then his eyes returned to Jeffrey, wondering what sort of game the fellow was trying to play.

If a game, it was a grim one.

Buried to the hilt in Jeffrey's back was a heavy knife, its rounded handle the central spot of a slowly widening circle that carried the crimson dye of blood.

Doug Lawton was standing alone in a room with a dead man whose murder had come like a stroke from the beyond!

CHAPTER II. TRAILS IN THE NIGHT

THE stark reality of Jeffrey's death was slow in penetrating Doug Lawton's mind.

To Doug, the scene before him seemed strangely remote, like some picture woven from his imagination. It was like the drawings on the sketch pad attached to Jeffrey's board, which had skidded ahead of him in the final moment of his sprawl. Doug was looking at those sketches now, the portrait of the bearded skipper, the figures of the beckoning mermaids.

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Those pictures were etching themselves into Doug's memory, for the skipper represented a man that he must some day meet, while the mermaids in their tantalizing way, were luring him toward the discovery of a secret that he had long sought to learn. Somehow, they existed without Tom Jeffrey, yet it was his hand that had drawn them.

Jeffrey's hand.

It lay there, almost upon the drawings, as though seeking to pluck them from the sheet. Magnetically, Doug's eyes moved from that hand, along the arm and past the shoulder to the center of Jeffrey's back, as though drawn by the steel of the very blade that was buried there.

The crimson circle was widening further. Under the glare of a hanging lamp which had been above Jeffrey's drawing table, the blot showed vividly against the light buff of the dead man's artist's smock.

Yes, Jeffrey's death was very real. The only incredible part was the manner of its delivery. Reaching up with his left hand, Doug turned the switch of the overhanging light, extinguishing it. There were other lights in the room, but they were over toward the door, hence there was no longer any reflection from the window. Staring out into the darkness, Doug could see a drizzle-swept space that represented either a courtyard or a garden; beyond it was a wall bounded by the dim lights of an alley. Past that reared the dozen or more stories of the office building, dark except for the lights of a few scattered windows.

Glancing down to the dampened window sill, Doug saw that the window itself was solidly locked by an automatic clamp. Again, Doug studied the outer darkness, and calmly, since he was positive now that murder could not have struck from there. It was singular, as Doug recalled it, that he should have thought of that darkness in terms of death, only to have tragedy strike in the midst of a lighted room.

From somewhere, a clock chimed heavily, announcing eight o'clock. Doug didn't have to count the strokes. He knew the hour, because he had been told to wait at the Darien Pier at exactly ten minutes of eight. Of course, he'd had a few blocks start from there when he heard the whistled signals. Correspondingly, Doug had gained a few minutes leeway, and those minutes had been enough to throw any followers off his trail.

Or had they?

Granted that Doug had outdistanced any pursuers, they could have overtaken him when he arrived here in Jeffrey's studio. In that case, the knife stroke could have been meant for Doug himself, not Jeffrey, and the only place it could have come from was the door. He'd turned toward the door, but he remembered that he'd been swinging slowly around to face Jeffrey when he saw the artist fall. Maybe Jeffrey himself had turned in the direction of the window and had just started to move back when the knife caught him.

Odd that Doug hadn't heard the flying blade whistle past him; odder still that it should have missed Doug and so accurately found Jeffrey. Yet those were minor objections compared to the impossibility of a knife coming through a tightly shut window. Therefore, the door was the answer.

All this had sorted itself in Doug's mind by the eighth stroke of the clock. He'd folded his arms again during that rapid contemplation; now, thinking in terms of the door, Doug swung toward it instantly, his arms still crossed.

Doug wasn't wrong in thinking of that door in terms of danger.

The door had opened and in the doorway stood a girl with a gun. Not a big girl nor a big gun, still both were sizable enough to command respect. They were about .32 caliber, as Doug rated them. He was more

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interested in the gun, though, than the girl, except for the one finger that she held against the trigger of the revolver. Trigger fingers could tell a lot, particularly where nerves were concerned.

The girl was rather beautiful, if Doug had wanted to notice it. Her eyes were brown, like her hair, and her firmly tightened lips were naturally red. Those features stood out sharply against the white background of her rounded face, so sharply that Doug didn't realize that the girl was deathly pale. Not having met her before, Doug couldn't be blamed for his lack of discernment. Besides, he was watching that trigger finger.

Doug idled a few paces in the girl's direction, then halted easily as the gun came up. He met the girl's gaze now, because it was sighted along the revolver and in her turn, she was stepping forward to force Doug back. Just to please her, Doug relaxed with a backward slouch and he was glad to see the girl's trigger finger lose its momentary tension.

The girl's eyes darted briefly toward the figure on the floor, only to center on Doug again. Though the corner light was out, Jeffrey's body showed clearly.

"Whoever you are," the girl said coldly, "you came here to frame him."

"You mean Jeffrey?" queried Doug, with a lift of his broad eyebrows. "Hardly that, lady. He's dead."

"I don't mean Jeffrey," the girl snapped. "I mean Anjou." She paused, watching to see if Doug showed recognition of the name, then gave it in full, "Anjou de Blanco."

"I never heard of him," returned Doug, calmly. "But speaking of frame-ups, there's somebody else who ought to be considered first."

The girl's lips widened in a gasp.

"You... you don't mean me!" she exclaimed. Then, her tone sharpening: "Why, that's just who you do mean! You did something to stop Anjou from coming here, because you guessed I would be along. You're trying to frame me!"

As though to corroborate the girl's claim, a shrill sound broke the quiet. It was the siren of a police car, echoing in from the alleyway on which the house fronted. Off in the distance came sharp blasts of police whistles in answer to the summons. A sudden color came to the girl's face, her voice was low, challenging, as she came another step toward Doug, but he noted that her trigger finger still restrained itself.

"I see it now!" came the girl's words. "You're bringing the police to blame Anjou for the murder. You'll accuse me of having helped him. You think you're framing me –"

"Or maybe it's just the other way about," put in Doug, suddenly. "When I said somebody else, I meant myself. A nice job, lady, to have the police find me standing here and Jeffrey lying there."

Doug turned his head half about to nod sideward toward Jeffrey's body. That, however, was just the start of his maneuver, a gesture that he knew would bring the girl's gun a trifle forward. With a sudden reverse spin, Doug unlimbered his long left arm, carried it in a sudden sweep that clamped his hand over the girl's, gun and all. Then, launching his right hand for her shoulder, he was spinning her about, the gun pointing upward as the girl's trigger finger acted.

The arriving siren was drowned by the sharp barks of the .32 as its bullets punctured the ceiling harmlessly. Then the gun itself was flying through the air and the girl was doing a headlong skid across the room,

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knocking over Jeffrey's easel as she tried to halt her spinning dive. Crashing into a stack of canvas-covered frames, the girl sprawled against the wall, while Doug laughed an unfriendly good night and wheeled out into the hallway.

Doug didn't take to the stairs. He knew the police would be coming from that direction. Instead, he slid through the open window and started a swift trip down the fire escape. Not that he expected the police to trail him by this route; Doug was thinking in terms of the girl and wanted to get a few layers of steel steps between himself and the window.

Again, Doug was guessing right.

The girl hadn't lost an ounce of her determination. Brushing aside the canvases, seeing her gun in the corner, she grabbed it, rushed out through the door and turned directly toward the window, guessing that Doug had used it for his exit. Heavy footsteps were coming up the stairs, but the girl didn't hear them. She was all intent upon reaching the window and blasting useless shots after a man who was out of range and whose existence she couldn't even establish, if questioned.

It was then that blackness swooped from the head of the stairway. A cloaked figure, arriving two flights ahead of the police, flung itself upon the girl, turning her full about. A gloved hand, more skillful than Doug's, wrenched the gun from the girl's fist before her finger could even find the trigger. Amazed, the girl was staring straight up into a pair of eyes that seemed like live coals as they looked at her from beneath the brim of a slouch hat, strange eyes that commanded silence.

Then, carried by that same sweeping arm, the girl found herself at the front of the hallway, past the stairs from which clattering footsteps were about to arrive. There the roof of the old house sloped into a low alcove that contained a skylight. A gloved hand pushed the skylight upward, while a sibilant voice spoke from lips that were hidden by heavy folds of a cloak:

"This way, before the police find us!"

Before the girl could even nod, a powerful arm had literally propelled her upward and she was groping along the slight slant of a tin-sheathed roof, her gaze blurred by the drizzle. The skylight settled noiselessly back into place and again the cloaked stranger was beside the girl, guiding her to a small window of a building next door. Climbing in the window, the girl found herself in a long passage that stretched to a stairway far beyond. All this was shown in the long, thin glare of a flashlight that the cloaked rescuer pressed into the girl's hand.

Then came final instructions from the being in black:

"Those stairs will lead you out the side door of this warehouse. When all is clear, twist the end of the flashlight to the right. Take the cab that comes for you."

The girl nodded, gasped a "Thank you," and turned to look for the mysterious stranger. He was gone, like a shadow. Nor was it strange that such a thought should cross the girl's mind. For those very words, The Shadow, was the name by which this master of the night was known.

Meanwhile, Doug Lawton had been faring less happily than the girl whom he had left to explain matters to the law. At the bottom of the fire escape, Doug had turned toward the wall at the back of the space which proved to be a flagstone courtyard. Reaching that wall, he groped along it until he found a gate. Gun drawn, he eased the gate open, his gaze turned up toward the tall windows that represented Jeffrey's third floor studio.

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They were dim, those windows, but as Doug moved through the gate, one window brightened suddenly. The police had reached the studio and had turned on the overhanging light. Against the panes, Doug could see the outlines of men in uniform, stooping to examine Jeffrey's body.

With that, Doug performed a stoop of his own in the shelter outside the wall. The gate clattered slightly as he closed it and Doug wheeled instinctively, recalling his former suspicion of spies. This time the thought came late.

A powerful hand clamped Doug's wrist, shoving his gun hand upward. In the glow of the street lamp Doug saw a smooth, handsome face, dark in the dull light, but with glittering eyes and shiny teeth that showed in a smile that was both grim and pleased. Before he could swing a left hand punch, Doug was caught by a grappling arm and a moment later he was completely locked with this antagonist whose name sprang spontaneously to mind.

Anjou de Blanco.

That was the name the girl had spoken, the name of the man she had claimed that Doug had tried to frame. The recollection filled Doug with a surge of anger, partly toward himself. He'd misjudged the girl when he'd countered with an accusation of his own, for Anjou's absence at that crucial time indicated that the fellow had betrayed the girl who trusted him. That gave Doug a double score to settle.

Gun shots wouldn't do it. They would only bring the police and more complications. What Doug wanted was to bring his gun down on Blanco's head. Letting one knee drop, Doug braced for a counter-stroke as Blanco pressed him downward. A sudden twist and Doug's hand was free, slicing over to the left, to begin a cross-swing.

But it wasn't Doug who swung.

Catlike, another figure had sprung up behind him, and a deft hand tapped a rounded implement against the base of Doug's skull. Sagging, Doug let the gun slip from his hand as he toppled forward, supported only by Blanco's powerful hands. Blanco gave an approving nod to a little man who paused to scoop up Doug's revolver, grinning in the happy fashion of an ape.

"Well done," said Blanco. "Hurry, we must take him to the car."

Together, they half-carried Doug through the outlet of the alley. They were gone, when a cloaked form vaguely outlined itself against the roof edge above the very room where the police were discussing their discovery of Jeffrey's body. Then the figure of The Shadow was moving silently, obscured by the misty drizzle, to the roof edge just above the fire escape.

From there, The Shadow made a noiseless descent by the very route that Doug had taken. Reaching the gate, he seemed to filter past it, forming only a fleeting patch of blackness as he passed the dull glow of the lamplight. It was in the further darkness that The Shadow paused to listen. There, he caught the faint sound of a departing cab, from almost a block away; but that was not all.

There was another car that started from closer by, hardly around the corner from the alley. Swiftly, The Shadow moved through a passage beside the office building, but when he reached the next street, the car was gone. All that he saw was a subway entrance, adjoining the building itself.

A low, whispered laugh came from The Shadow's lips. As it died away, The Shadow, like the mirth itself, had vanished into the night.

CHAPTER III. AT THE CLUB CADENZA

IT was quarter of nine when Lamont Cranston strolled into the Club Cadenza, one of cafe society's newest midtown night spots. Immaculately attired in dinner clothes, Cranston didn't look like a man who had recently been climbing over rooftops, but he had been doing exactly that. For the leisurely Mr. Cranston was a man who lived two lives, his own and The Shadow's. Cranston made it a practice to keep the two identities widely separated.

In the club, he hesitated and stared about in a puzzled fashion until a head waiter approached and conducted him to a table. Cranston expressed surprise when he saw the blunt-faced man who rose to greet him with a firm, but brief handshake. As they sat down at a table for four, the blunt man kept looking toward the door, obviously expecting someone else.

"Sorry I was late, Belville," remarked Cranston quietly. "I thought it would be better if your other guest arrived first." He glanced at the two vacant chairs. "Or should I say guests?"

"Neither," returned Belville, in an annoyed tone. "I think our bird has flown without waiting for the bait. Perhaps it's just as well, because it proves that the police commissioner was right. Still, it leaves the fellow free to work his crooked game somewhere else."

"At least you've been expecting him," reminded Cranston, gesturing to the chairs, "But who was he bringing with him? The girl?"

Belville's eyebrows raised, shoving heavy wrinkles up to the roots of his dark, bushy hair.

"How did you know there was a girl in it, Cranston?"

"I said the girl," Cranston repeated. "There always is one, when they work the Spanish prisoner swindle. She is always some charming senorita, who has to be brought all the way from Spain, or somewhere in South America, which costs money, and often an elderly duenna must accompany her, which costs more money. Then the senorita gets you alone and pleads with you to rescue the poor prisoner, not just because of the fortune that will be yours, but because of some family tradition. She doesn't love the prisoner; she never did. She's merely sorry for him. But now she has come to care for you, because your sympathy has been so deep, so real. You are just a wonderful Americano and a Grade A sucker, only you don't find that out until later."

Belville was now smiling broadly, chuckling despite himself, but at the same time he was shaking his head, raising his hands and spreading them in mild protest. Then, as Cranston finished, Belville became serious again, though with a trace of a knowing smile.

"It sounds as though they've taken you, Cranston," commented Belville. "Maybe more than once?"

"They've tried," conceded Cranston. "That's why Commissioner Weston wanted me to look into your case after you reported it to him. The Spanish prisoner racket pops up after every revolution, political shake-up, or any minor pretext. There's always some unfortunate who has to be bailed out of the calaboose in order to show you where he's buried a million dollars."

"But this case is different," protested Belville. "I'll admit it begins with a Spaniard, this chap who calls himself Anjou de Blanco, but there isn't any prisoner. There's just a man Blanco says he can produce, who has a half-interest in a mighty lot of money that may take some financing to find."

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"And the man's name?"

"Blanco won't give it," replied Belville. "He says he wants to be sure of where I stand. Otherwise, he'll have to try someone else."

"Good," decided Cranston. "That's why the commissioner brought me into it. You can let this fellow Blanco switch over to me."

"Provided he ever shows up again," returned Belville, dourly. Then, his quick eyes steady, Belville added, "But if Blanco proves to be on the level, it's my privilege to finance him. Understand?"

A thin smile traced itself on Cranston's lips.

"You talk as though you've already been taken," stated Cranston. "However, it's all yours, if there's anything in it. I'm merely helping the police commissioner investigate a complaint. Now tell me, who claims the other half of the money?"

"A girl," replied Belville. "She's the girl Blanco was supposed to bring here. She's not a Spanish girl, either. Her name is June Getty and she has a claim on a lot of gold that was shipped out of Cuba at the time of the Spanish-American War. At least, that's what Anjou de Blanco claims, but if there is a June Getty, I don't think we're going to meet her —"

"I think you are," interrupted a girl's voice. "That is, if you happen to be Stephen Belville."

Cranston was getting to his feet, so Belville did the same, turning to face a girl who had just arrived beside the table and was meeting Belville's surprised gaze with a very determined look. Douglas Lawton had noticed this about her and so did Stephen Belville.

For this was the girl who had been in Jeffrey's studio, the same girl who had accepted The Shadow's advice and help in making a quick flight.

From that brief interlude, Cranston was able to judge June's true character much better than Belville could now. Belville was taking the brunt of the girl's indignation for having assumed that she might not exist. Yet in itself, June's indignation was her way of covering her own uncertainty. Of that, Cranston was positive, for, as The Shadow, he remembered June's willingness to be guided in a moment of bewilderment.

In his turn, Belville was registering the correct response. The slight smile that flitted across his blunt features was both solicitous and apologetic. Belville wasn't saying a word as he listened to the girl upbraid him.

"I am June Getty," the girl repeated, "and everything Anjou told you about me is true. I wouldn't be dealing with Anjou if I didn't trust him. But it's not to Anjou's discredit if I don't entirely trust his judgment, particularly when I knew he was dealing with someone like you, Mr. Belville."

"If Anjou hasn't told you the name of the man he says he can produce, that's because he knows you're too anxious to find it out. On that point, Anjou is smart, because I told him to be. I could tell what you were like from the description Anjou gave of you and if you don't want to deal with us, we can find someone else."

The smile had faded from Belville's face; his hands were lowering as he bowed. His expression now was one of frank regret and when he spoke, his tone was one of complete conciliation.

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"May I introduce a friend, Miss Getty?" Belville murmured. "His name is Lamont Cranston and he may be the very person that you and Senor Blanco would like to meet. Not only does your arrival here nullify all the doubts that I so unwisely suggested; I feel that I now can fully recommend both you and Senor Blanco to Mr. Cranston. Should you so desire, I shall withdraw completely, if only to convince you that I, too, can be trusted."

There was sincerity, concern in Belville's words and the effect on the girl was electric. Her anger melting, June sat down in the chair that Belville politely drew back for her.

"I... I'm sorry," the girl declared, "if I came to quick conclusions –"

"Justified conclusions," put in Belville. "Cranston will tell you that I was criticizing Anjou and yourself quite heartily and that you only heard the end of it."

"But after all," continued June, "Anjou has been keeping you in doubt. I just admitted that myself."

"It was his proper policy to do so," argued Belville. "I realize that, now that I have met you."

"But since you hadn't met me –"

"The blame is all the more mine. To criticize a person one has never met, is quiet inexcusable."

With those words, Belville delivered the perfect touch. He was admitting an unpardonable act in speaking slightly of June, but in the same statement reminding the girl that she had been unjustified in forming advance conclusions regarding himself. June could only glance toward Cranston as the arbiter who might decide this dilemma and she was startled as she met his eyes.

Calm eyes, Cranston's, their easy gaze so complete a contrast to the burning eyes of The Shadow, that it was singular June should even have compared them. The only similarity was the result that they produced, though under circumstances diametrically opposite. The Shadow had literally compelled June to avoid a situation; Cranston was persuading her to accept one.

It struck June that if Belville's recommendation stood for Cranston, Cranston's should stand for Belville. So June turned to Belville who was still standing beside his chair and said:

"Please sit down, Mr. Belville. I expect Anjou very shortly and I know we shall both want to talk business with you."

Much pleased, Belville sat down, then asked:

"Did Anjou mention why he was detained?"

"No," replied June firmly. "I didn't ask him, but I suppose he was going over some of the papers he intends to show you."

"You phoned him at his apartment?"

"Yes. From my own apartment."

Cranston would have been willing to endorse the last part of June's statement. He knew June must have stopped at her apartment on the way here. Apparently, she'd intended to come directly from Jeffrey's to the

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Club Cadenza, for the blue dress with the bell sleeves was quite suitable for evening wear. As for earrings and bracelets, which were now a conspicuous portion of her get-up, June could have carried them quite readily in her handbag with the .32 revolver. But June was no longer wearing the blue dress. She had changed to a brown crepe after her trip across the drizzle swept roof.

"Anjou will soon be here," assured June, accepting a light that Belville proffered for her cigarette. Then, her eyes roving toward the entrance of the night club: "Why, here he is now!"

In the lights of the Club Cadenza, Anjou de Blanco was strikingly handsome as he sauntered toward the table. The glitter of his eyes, the shine of his teeth, were modified by well-formed features of a distinctly Latin mold. His only give-away was a tendency to appear over-handsome, both by his smile and his unruffled pose; but when he spoke, his tone had a suavity that reduced his manner to a normal. Introduced to Cranston, Blanco bowed cordially and delivered a convincing handshake. Then, as he sat down, he spoke to Belville in a tone of distinct sincerity.

"I have news that will please you, Senor Belville," announced Anjou. "I have heard from the man who has a claim on the Cuban gold. His name is Douglas Lawton and I am sure he will do business with us."

"Do you mean," queried Belville eagerly, "that you found him tonight?"

"He has found me," corrected Anjou, "or at least he knows where I can be reached. After all" – he swept an expressive hand toward June – "Senorita Getty has the original claim. This man Lawton should be glad to be considered at all."

Belville let his curved eyebrows ripple his forehead upward; then, with a nod, he suggested:

"Suppose you tell Cranston the details."

"They are very simple." Anjou gave a slight shrug. "Fifty years ago, in Havana, one million dollars in Spanish gold was paid to an American named Josiah Getty."

"My grandfather," put in June. "He supplied the Cuban insurgents with munitions to help their revolt against Spain."

Belville turned to Cranston.

"A munitions runner," defined Belville. "Or perhaps we should define Josiah Getty as a filibuster."

"Call him what you want," snapped June, testily. "He was justified because the United States declared war on Spain and, therefore, he had a legal right to the money or his share of it."

"The senorita is right," Anjou put in. "Now we have only to find the money. For that we need your help, Senor Belville."

Smiling blandly, Belville nodded. Then:

"This chap Lawton," queried Belville. "How does he enter into it?"

"The money for the munitions was supplied by gamblers in Havana," explained June. "They pretended they were shipping it to Spain. Actually, it was sent to the United States where part of it – mind you, only part – went to the man who supplied the munitions."

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"A smuggler," smiled Belville. "I suppose he was Lawton's grandfather?"

"His great-uncle," supplied Anjou. "His name was Artemus Lawton, but we have no proof that he received the money. We are trying to learn what we can from Douglas Lawton."

Belville turned a questioning gaze toward Cranston.

"What do you think, Cranston?"

"It should be worth investigation," replied Cranston. "The question is how much would it cost."

"Not too much perhaps," put in Anjou, smoothly. "Of course, there will be expenses. First, we must learn what happened to the money." He turned to Belville. "If you would be willing, senor, to pay for such work, you would be entitled to a share. Perhaps" – he eyed Belville sagely – "we might be able to sell you Lawton's share for the right price."

"Do you mean," asked Belville, "that Lawton might be willing to sign it over?"

Anjou de Blanco nodded. Belville's expression became interested as he turned to Cranston. But before Belville could again ask Cranston what he thought, Cranston spoke.

"I think, Belville," said Cranston, rising, "that I must be leaving. I have an appointment with a friend of ours. Before you come to a final decision, let me know the details."

That pleased Belville, because he was sure he knew the friend that Cranston meant; namely, Police Commissioner Weston. Watching Cranston depart, Belville let his smile grow confident as though he felt that Cranston had practically certified the quest of the Spanish gold.

There was something, however, in Cranston's smile that Belville did not catch, any more than June or Anjou.

The nonchalant Mr. Cranston was not thinking in terms of treasure; he was thinking of murder, though there was much more than a chance that the two might be related. Indeed, so certain was he of the connection, that he had timed his action almost to the dot. Before Cranston could reach the phone booths in the entrance of the Club Cadenza, he was flagged by a head waiter, who announced that a call had just come in for him.

The call was from the police commissioner, who knew that he would find Cranston at the Club Cadenza. It concerned something more important than the Spanish prisoner racket.

Commissioner Weston wanted his friend Lamont Cranston to meet him at the studio of an artist named Jeffrey to look into a murder.

CHAPTER IV. THROUGH THE WINDOW

LAMONT CRANSTON took a cab to Jeffrey's place.

He had two reasons for doing this. First, he wanted to check the time of a cab trip, allowing for a stop-off at the apartment house where June Getty lived. The second reason, which linked with the first, was that Cranston was riding in the same cab that June had used and, therefore, the driver could inform him as to the details of June's own trip.

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The driver of the cab was Moe Shrevnitz, one of the speediest hackies in Manhattan. Serving as one of The Shadow's agents, he was familiarly known as Shrevvy to others of the clan. He was quite an impartial character, this Shrevvy. He made no distinction between The Shadow and Lamont Cranston when one or the other rode in the cab. Shrevvy simply called them both "boss."

It was The Shadow who had gone to Jeffrey's earlier this evening; now it was Cranston. So Shrevvy took up the details of what had happened in between.

"Say, boss," Shrevvy informed, "that dame you sent along her way was sure in a hurry. Only she wasn't in as much of a hurry to get to the Club Cadenza as to a telephone."

Cranston's silence was in itself a query for Shrevvy to furnish further details.

"She stopped at a drugstore about five blocks from where I picked her up," Shrevvy continued. "I watched her trying to put through a call in a booth that was up against the window. She didn't get anything except her nickel back."

"Busy signal?" asked Cranston. "Or no answer?"

"I'd say no answer," replied Shrevvy. "She took it very patient-like. If it had been busy, she'd have hung up and tried again."

"And after that?"

"She gave me the address of an apartment house. Here it is right now." Shrevvy pulled up beside a medium sized apartment building. "From the way she hustled into the place, I guess she was in a hurry to try that number again."

"How long was she in here?"

"About ten minutes. When she came out, she had me take her straight to the Club Cadenza."

"Good enough. Wait here, Shrevvy."

Entering the Greendale Arms, Cranston found a push-button listing the name of June Getty, Apartment 5-C. Also, Cranston noticed a "No Vacancy" announcement, listing the name of the rental agent as J. B. Morris Co. Coming from the building, he crossed to a drugstore and put in a phone call.

The voice that answered was methodical. It said:

"Burbank speaking."

Cranston's voice became The Shadow's whisper as he returned one word:

"Report."

The report came. Burbank was the contact man who kept check with The Shadow's active agents and it turned out that those active agents had truly been active. In fact, Cranston's earlier operations as The Shadow were based upon facts that his agents had provided a few days before when Commissioner Weston had asked Cranston to look into the Spanish Prisoner swindle, as reported by Stephen Belville. Cranston purposely had confined himself to interviews with Belville. But as The Shadow, he had put his agents on the trail of Anjou

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de Blanco.

They had located Anjou's apartment on the fringe of Greenwich Village and had discovered that he had a freakish looking companion or servant who answered to the nickname of Perique. It was difficult to classify Perique exactly, since he only visited Anjou's apartment at intervals and spent most of his remaining time along the waterfront where he was as difficult to follow as a wharf rat. This evening, however, Cliff Marsland, one of The Shadow's agents, had overheard Perique phoning Anjou from a fish-and-chip place. He'd given a name, an address and an hour.

The name was Jeffrey; the address was No. 10 Van Camp Lane, where Jeffrey's studio was located; the hour was eight.

When Anjou had left his apartment shortly afterward, a girl had picked up his trail. The girl was June Getty, who had already been observed by The Shadow's agents, though they hadn't learned where she lived. Word of all this had been relayed to The Shadow through Burbank. Dropping his role of Cranston, The Shadow had for the first time entered the game, telling his agents to drop their respective trails.

Obviously, June had been worrying about Anjou and had decided to follow him herself. But it was only June who had encountered The Shadow at Jeffrey's. The man who had been there, and who The Shadow now calculated must be Douglas Lawton, had not answered to Anjou's description, in the brief glance that The Shadow had had.

There had been no sign of Anjou until Harry Vincent, another of The Shadow's agents, had spotted him stopping back at his apartment. From Burbank's report, Anjou had reached there just about the time that Shrevvy dropped June at her apartment. But Anjou's apartment was much nearer Jeffrey's, ten minutes nearer at least.

Where had Anjou been meanwhile?

That was the question The Shadow wanted answered. He gave instructions as to how his agents might solve it. Then, as Cranston, he strolled out from the drugstore, entered the cab and was again on his way to Jeffrey's.

When he reached the house at the end of Van Camp Lane, Cranston found the police in charge, with the commissioner's big car standing by. The commissioner's chauffeur waved to him and a police officer promptly ushered Cranston up to the third floor. There, Cranston found Weston in command.

Commissioner Ralph Weston was a brusque gentleman who had an officious way that he mistakenly thought showed his efficiency. However, there was no question but what Weston got results, although he usually browbeat others into getting them. Important to the bristles of his military mustache, he was using his regular system and getting nods from some wise-looking detectives standing by.

The only unimpressed witness was a stocky man whose swarthy face was buried chin-deep in his hand. He was Inspector Joe Cardona, ace of the Manhattan force. Cardona knew his business and wanted to get about it, but he also knew that the proper preliminary step was to let the commissioner have his say first.

"It's obvious what happened," decided Weston. "Somebody came here with the express purpose to murder Jeffrey. He got behind the fellow, stabbed him in the back, and there is the result."

With that, Weston gestured to Jeffrey's body which was still lying on the floor. Cranston watched everybody nod with the exception of Cardona.

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"Some friend of Jeffrey's phoned in the tip-off," added Weston, "but, unfortunately, it was too late to prevent the murder. The killer fled, probably by the fire escape, just before our squad arrived."

Taking a look at Cardona, Weston expected to see a nod, but didn't. Sarcastically, Weston inquired:

"You have a better theory, inspector?"

"Jeffrey was stabbed from behind," stated Cardona. "From the position of the body, the way Jeffrey smashed the drawing table when he fell, I would say that he was taken by complete surprise."

"In that case," conceded Weston, "the murderer must have been hiding here when Jeffrey entered."

"Except that there is no place to hide," Cardona pointed out. "That is, no place from which the killer could have reached a position directly behind the victim."

"Would it occur to you," inquired Weston, testily, "that the murderer might have rearranged the scene?"

"He couldn't have," Cardona replied. "Look at the way that table is jammed under Jeffrey's body. There's only one answer, commissioner. Jeffrey was killed from outside, by someone who hurled the knife through the window."

"But the window is closed, inspector."

"It didn't have to be at the time Jeffrey was killed."

"Then somebody had to close it afterward and lock it from the inside. So that incriminates Jeffrey's visitor, whoever he was."

Weston gave that as a final verdict, but Cardona still wasn't convinced. He walked over by Jeffrey's body, measured the narrow space to the window by spreading his hands. Then Cardona shook his head.

"Whoever came here was framed," declared Cardona. "At least he was supposed to be. That's why the tip-off was sent in. The actual killer figured himself too clever to be suspected. I'll admit the details still puzzle me, commissioner, but my hunch is, we're dealing with a frame."

"Ridiculous," snapped Weston. "The whole thing is open and shut."

"Speaking of frames," Cranston said, "what about the window frame? As for the case being open and shut, that applies to the window, too. Suppose we test it."

Cranston stepped to the window, unlocked it. He drew the bottom of the window inward and at the same time, the top half tilted outward, since the tall window frame was cross-pivoted at the center. As Cranston released the window, the weight of the heavy bottom clamp caused it to swing back to the vertical, latching itself automatically.

"Say!" exclaimed Cardona. "That may be it!" He paused, then shook his head. "Open it again, Mr. Cranston, just like you did before."

Cranston complied and Cardona's face looked bluntly disappointed.

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"Something could have been holding it open," the inspector said, "but that bottom half would still be in the way if any one outside tried to stab Jeffrey. The murderer couldn't have fixed the window the way he wanted it."

"Except that he did fix it," declared Cranston, "and it was all arranged beforehand."

Weston began to flash an annoyed glance at Cranston, who paid no attention.

"I don't think I ever saw a window like this before," observed Cranston, coolly. He turned to Weston: "Did you, commissioner?"

"Of course I have," Weston retorted. "It's a regular studio window. A lot of them hinge crosswise, halfway up."

"So that the lower half swings inward?"

"Why not, Cranston?"

For answer, Cranston pointed to the damp sill and a stretch of rain-streaked floor just beneath it.

"In a heavy rain," remarked Cranston, "a window that swung outward at the top would act like a water chute. I would say that this studio was a perfect murder trap, but that Jeffrey didn't realize it was a trap for himself."

Pulling the lower half of the window inward again, Cranston found that it swung only a dozen inches, due to a little block set on the wall beside it. Turning, he looked at the remains of Jeffrey's drawing table. Beside the broken stand was a string, one end attached to a portion of the table itself. Hitched to the other end of the cord was a rubber eraser that looked rather chewed.

Holding the window inward, Cranston dropped the eraser over the wall-block, released the window frame but held the cord taut. The window stayed open, braked by the eraser. Cranston gave the string a sharp tug and the eraser jounced free, letting the window drop back to its closed position, its oiled catch silently clamping itself.

"That's what happened when Jeffrey fell forward on the table," asserted Cranston. "He crashed into the table and the string jerked the eraser clear. Now let's see where the knife could have come from."

Opening the window again and blockading it, Cranston took the position that Jeffrey must have had at the time he'd been killed. His back hunched forward, Cranston turned abruptly and pointed upward. His finger indicated a clear path at an outward angle past the projecting slant of the upper half of the tall window to a window of the office building across the rear courtyard, a window on the sixth floor, three stories above this fatal window of the studio from which Cranston pointed.

"Better check that office," said Cranston to Cardona. "It's the only place the knife could have come from."

By now, Commissioner Weston was tremendously impressed. To Cranston's suggestion, Weston added an order.

"Start a roundup of knife throwers," commanded Weston. "Only an expert could have made a fling like that."

"And probably even an expert couldn't have," added Cranston. "The blade would have described too great a curve. I would say the knife was fired like a projectile." He turned, pointed down to the knife handle that

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showed in the middle of Jeffrey's back. "Note the rounded handle, the very type that would fit into a gun barrel."

Cardona was stooping to study the knife handle.

"It would take a big barrel," decided Cardona. "Probably the size of an elephant gun. That would have meant a lot of noise."

"More likely it was an airgun," Cranston stated. "They pack sufficient power and are practically noiseless."

Cardona nodded. Then:

"I'll go over and have a look at that office," he said. "Meanwhile, we may be able to get a line on Jeffrey from some of the other artists in the neighborhood."

As Cardona spoke, Cranston picked up the sheet on which Jeffrey had sketched the mermaids and the grizzled skipper.

"If this is Jeffrey's work," commented Cranston, "I think you can limit your hunt to a certain class of artists. I mean the kind that call themselves tattoo artists."

Both Cardona and Weston drew close to study the mermaid sketch as Cranston tapped it.

"This is the sort of picture a tattoo artist draws," declared Cranston, "when he wants to show a customer the kind of work he does. And this man" – Cranston pointed to the portrait of the skipper – "looks as though he might be one of Jeffrey's customers."

Placing the sketch sheet in Weston's hands, Cranston nodded a "good night" and left, satisfied that he had given the commissioner enough to work on for one evening. Besides, Cranston had some unfinished business of his own to complete.

As The Shadow, he intended to pick up the trail of Douglas Lawton, the missing man whose name, though yet unknown to the law, had just been cleared of suspicion of murder.

CHAPTER V. JUNE GAINS A CLUE

BUSINESS was about finished at the Club Cadenza at the time Lamont Cranston was leaving Jeffrey's studio.

Not the night club's business, but the matter which Anjou de Blanco was discussing with Stephen Belville.

"And so, Senor Belville," Anjou was saying, "you have heard all that I have to offer. Here we have June Getty" – he gestured toward the girl – "who has one claim on the missing gold. I can produce the one man, Douglas Lawton, who has the other claim. It is then a question of locating the gold itself. That will cost money."

"Doubtless," agreed Belville, "but how much?"

Anjou shrugged as if to say he didn't know.

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"And how will the gold be divided?" queried Belville. "I mean after it is found, if it is found."

"Three ways," replied Anjou. "Thirty percent for each of the interested parties: June, Lawton and yourself. The other ten percent, suppose we call it an agent's commission, for myself."

Belville looked at June who nodded her agreement. But Belville shook his head.

"It won't do," he decided. "You say the gold presumably left Cuba and was supposed to have arrived in the United States. If so, it would belong to June Getty and Douglas Lawton."

"Even if it did not leave Cuba," amended Anjou, "it would still belong to them."

"Suppose it left Cuba, but never arrived in the United States," argued Belville. "Whose would it be then?"

Anjou shrugged as though that possibility made no difference, but for the first time, June looked worried.

"It's possible," he went on, "that someone else might have a claim on the gold for having handled it in transit." He stared stolidly at Anjou. "Can you supply the details regarding the transportation of the gold, if it ever was transported?"

A wise smile flashed across Anjou's face.

"That is part of the bargain," he declared, "but until it is sealed, I must reserve such information."

"What if such information brought up a new claim?" demanded Belville. "How would the third party figure?"

"Certainly for no more than June or Lawton," replied Anjou. "At most, it would mean splitting the gold four ways."

"Less your ten percent."

"Less my ten percent."

Belville pondered the situation a few moments, then drew a fat wallet from his pocket. His blunt face showing a slightly speculative frown, he drew ten five hundred dollar bills into sight and dangled them in Anjou's direction.

"Five thousand dollars advance," offered Belville, "if you guarantee to deliver all information as to all the parties concerned. Five thousand dollars to be refunded if you can not deliver. Of course, you have the privilege of spending this money toward tracing the missing gold. I must know, though, how far you have already gone."

With a heroic gesture, Anjou waved the money away and his smile became more suave than ever. June stared almost horrified as Anjou forced Belville to put his money away.

"Not yet, amigo," declared Anjou. "Until I can deliver, as you term it, I shall not ask for money. Besides, I already have all the money that I need."

Some of the waiters and busboys at the Club Cadenza had gathered close at the sight of the money and they were quite impressed by Anjou's refusal to accept it. Feeling that he had scored a slight triumph, Anjou arose and nodded to June, who said "good night" politely to Belville. Together, Anjou and June left the night club.

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Outside, June spoke in a low, anxious tone.

"You did need the money, Anjou! You've used all that I could lend you and you owe some pressing bills. Why didn't you accept it from Belville?"

Looking about, Anjou noted that the doorman of the Club Cadenza was busy helping some customers from a cab. Since the doorman couldn't overhear him, he answered June's question.

"Belville suspects me of being a swindler," said Anjou. "He's been thinking in terms of the old Spanish Prisoner game. If I had taken the money and given him nothing in return, he could have called the police at once. That is why Belville had those waiters standing around; to be witnesses."

"But you could prove yourself legitimate," argued June, "by simply producing Douglas Lawton." She hesitated, frowned. "You can produce Lawton, can't you?"

"Of course," assured Anjou, blandly. "But I may not wish to do so, not just yet. As for money, do not worry, little one. A friend of mine has promised to lend me a thousand dollars, this very evening. But there is one thing else. This question that Belville brings up, that someone else may have an interest in the gold. It may be true."

"Who else could it be?"

"We must learn." Anjou gave a slight shrug. "Perhaps it may prove easy after I have talked with Lawton."

"Why should he know?"

"Because his great-uncle was the man supposed to receive the gold. He should know how it was coming to America, eh?"

Such logic brought a nod from June.

"You saw how anxious Belville was to learn everything," continued Anjou. "That is because he knows nothing. It is never good to tell too much to a man who knows nothing. A little will make him think you know a great deal more."

The doorman was returning, so Anjou lowered his voice.

"When Belville comes out," he said to June, "I want you to follow him. Perhaps he is trying to learn more than is good for him. It is always a mistake for anyone to do that."

Anjou turned and flagged a passing cab. At the same time, a rather handsome, well-dressed man who had been standing in the doorway of the Club Cadenza, walked along the street and was lucky enough to suddenly find a cab standing by.

His name was Harry Vincent; he was another of The Shadow's agents. The cab he found as if by chance happened to be Shrevvy's. Harry was taking up Anjou's trail.

June was fuming a bit as she realized that Anjou's parting admonition could be meant for herself. The statement that it was a mistake for anyone to try to learn too much could mean that Anjou realized that June had trailed him earlier this evening. Putting June on Belville's trail was simply a way of getting rid of her. June realized that, but a trifle late.

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"If Belville knows nothing," the girl muttered, "it's because he never tried to find out anything. In that case, there's no reason to follow him!"

Nobody was around to hear June's protest, not even Harry Vincent. Apparently, he had already figured the same thing himself, but hadn't been stupid enough to wait until he mulled it over. Clenching her gloved hands angrily, June started to walk away; then halted and looked back.

Belville was coming out of the Club Cadenza, with a bus boy following him, bringing a large suitcase. Belville was about to speak to the doorman so June stepped back and listened. Belville was asking about a place called the Cobalt Club and the doorman was telling him that it was only a few blocks away.

"Very good," decided Belville. "That's where I'll probably find Lamont Cranston. It's on the way to Grand Central Station where I'm taking a train for New London. I can stop by there."

That satisfied June. Since Anjou wanted her to follow Belville, she decided that she would. Because of the one-way streets, Belville's cab would have to take a roundabout course, so as soon as it started, June began walking in the opposite direction.

As June turned the final corner before the Cobalt Club, she saw Belville's cab. A large official-looking car was already in front of the club and from it, an important man with a short-clipped mustache was alighting and giving instructions to his chauffeur. Belville was turning to greet the mustached gentleman, so June drew closer to hear what she could.

"Commissioner Weston!" exclaimed Belville. "I was hoping I'd find you here. Have you talked to Cranston?"

"Oh, hello, Belville." The commissioner was taking a flat board that his chauffeur handed him. "Yes, I've seen Cranston."

"He told you about his interview with me?"

"On the Spanish Prisoner matter?" Weston laughed. "No. We had something more important to discuss. A murder."

Emphatically, Weston tapped a sheet of paper that was pinned to the board, to indicate a grizzled face with a pair of beckoning mermaids drawn beside it.

Belville stared blankly, then inquired, "You mean that man was murdered?"

"Not this man," replied Weston. "Another. This picture shows a man who may know something about it. We're going to compare it with photographs from our files. But it has nothing to do with your case, Belville."

"But I want to talk about my case. I'm not sure that it is a racket. This chap Blanco wouldn't take money when I offered it –"

"That's fine," interrupted Weston. "Then he isn't a swindler after all."

"I'm still not certain," argued Belville. "I'm leaving on the next train to New London and I thought that while I was gone –"

"While you are gone," interposed Weston, "you can let the whole matter rest. I'll see you when you return, Belville."

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With that Weston practically pushed Belville back into the waiting cab and turned to enter the Cobalt Club. That left June quite alone and rather proud, though puzzled, at the skill she had shown as an eavesdropper, until she realized that in the subdued gloom that fronted the exclusive but unpretentious Cobalt Club, it would be very hard to see anyone. Belville and Weston had been standing in the only lighted space and hence were practically like figures on a miniature stage.

Now that Belville's cab had gone and Weston had entered the club, another figure stepped into the lighted space, coming from the gloomy sidewalk beyond. He was a stooped man, with shaggy white hair that spread in curly fashion beneath a wide, round hat. His face, though wrinkled, was alert and, though he carried a cane and used it as he walked, the man was spry of action. His head turned rapidly toward the street, as though following the departure of Belville's cab; then he looked swiftly to the door of the Cobalt Club to make sure that Weston had really gone in.

All the while he was moving rapidly, his cane tapping ahead of him. Realizing suddenly that the elderly man would soon be looking her way, June played the part of a chance passer-by and walked directly toward the man without giving him a glance.

She was conscious, though, that as the man passed her, he gave her a thorough scrutiny. However, June kept on her way, listening to the taps of the cane dwindle behind her.

Odd taps, with a singularly hollow sound, that cut off abruptly when the man turned a corner. Swinging about, June trailed after him, spotting him by his shaggy hair when she, too, turned the corner. Then, as she saw the man enter a store which had a phone booth sign, June was positive that he, like herself, had witnessed that brief interview between Weston and Belville. Not only that, June was convinced that this man had been waiting there, in the gloom beside the Cobalt Club, until the commissioner arrived.

June's belief was substantiated when she entered the store and took the next phone booth to the elderly man. The booths were set against a window, hence there was a space past the edge of the intervening partition. Through it, June could hear the old man's voice, firm despite a peculiar crackle.

"Yes, this is Mr. Harkland," the elderly man was saying. "Now listen, Klauder, I am going to see old Skipper Malloy... Yes, they're looking for him, and I want to settle matters finally before they find him..."

There was a pause, then Harkland cackled as if in answer to a query:

"That's right, Klauder. I want no interference... You know where he is now... That's right, over the Green Anchor, down by the Holland Tunnel... Yes, bring the car, and leave it at the usual place."

Finishing the call, Harkland emerged from the booth and was leaving the store when June came cautiously into sight. The girl decided to give the shaggy-haired man sufficient leeway before following him, on the theory that Harkland wouldn't look back more than once, and that within a half block. Considering Harkland's hobbly gait with the cane, June thought she timed it rather well.

It happened that June was wrong.

When she came out of the store, the girl was totally baffled to see no sign of old Harkland. Momentarily, she thought she caught the distant echoes of his hollow cane, but its tap-tap-tap was much more rapid than before. Before June could even trace the direction, the sound was gone and all traces of Harkland with it.

A cab was coming along the street, its top-lights glowing to indicate that it was empty. June hailed it, got in and told the driver:

"I'm not sure of the street, but it's near the Holland Tunnel. Just drive down near the tunnel and I'll tell you where to drop me."

Unfortunately, it wasn't Shrevvy's cab, since that particular cab happened to be busy elsewhere. Otherwise, the most important clue of the evening could have been flashed directly to The Shadow.

CHAPTER VI. MEET SKIPPER MALLOY

THE rumbling whistles from the river were jarring Doug Lawton from a dull stupor, stirring the aches that still throbbed through the back of his head. The sounds were muffled, like the clang of the ferry-house bell that beat dimly into Doug's tangled thoughts.

All that was missing was the piping of a tugboat, the one signal that Doug expected, as his mind backtracked into the past. Doug was still thinking that he had to keep an appointment with Tom Jeffrey. Opening his eyes, Doug tried to rise, then sank back on the cot where he had been lying.

Then Doug remembered.

He'd kept his appointment. Jeffrey had been murdered. Doug had been accused of the crime by a brown-eyed brownette whose name he didn't even know. After that, he'd been slugged by a man named Anjou something-or-other.

Anjou de Blanco.

That was the name. Doug remembered it now and with good reason. He propped himself up on the cot, opened his eyes and he was staring squarely into the suave, smooth face of Anjou de Blanco himself.

In the light of the small, poorly lighted room, Anjou's face had lost its darkish look; his eyes, in turn had less glitter and his smile no longer had its whitish gleam.

"Good evening, Senor Lawton," purred Anjou. Then, as Doug fumbled for his inside pocket, the sleek man added, "If you are looking for your thousand dollars, I have it here."

Adroitly, Anjou drew the currency from his own pocket and began counting it. Angrily, Doug tried to get to his feet, then relaxed, as a huddled man, with a grinning apelike face, sprang from the doorway, swinging a short, knobby club in his right hand. The sight of that blunt instrument reminded Doug of his headache.

"No, no, Perique," Anjou waved the man back. "Senor Lawton is our amigo. It is only for his own good that we treated him so roughly. But for us" – Anjou turned toward Doug and gave a slight shrug – "you would be wanted for murder."

"You should know," retorted Doug. "You were the only other person around there, except –"

"Except for a young lady," Anjou broke in, "but neither of us was in Jeffrey's studio at the time he was knifed."

Doug was silent. He had to admit that de Blanco was correct. But there was another good reason why Doug decided to keep quiet. His hand, sliding for his gun, had found that the revolver was gone.

"I have a letter here," remarked Anjou. "It was in your pocket with the money. It says you can buy certain

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information for your thousand dollars. Was this letter from Jeffrey?"

Doug nodded, though he recalled that Jeffrey had stated otherwise.

"Was Jeffrey the man who answered your phone call?"

Again, Doug nodded.

"Apparently, Jeffrey did not deliver," purred Anjou. "I don't suppose he had time to mention a man named Skipper Malloy."

Doug's eyes opened momentarily at the term "skipper," but he covered that brief flash. Now, eyes half closed, he was conjuring up the image of the bearded face that Jeffrey had sketched. Skipper Malloy. That was a name to remember.

Evidently, Anjou de Blanco thought the same.

"I can furnish you with your thousand dollars' worth," Anjou went on, smoothly, "so suppose we consider this money a loan until I prove it. I shall return soon" – suavely, Anjou pocketed Doug's money and the letter – "and until then, I advise you to remain here, since you will be safe. The police are looking for the man who murdered Jeffrey and you were seen in his studio. Remember?"

Giving a nod, Doug leaned back on the cot. Anjou beckoned Perique from the room and they spoke softly in Spanish, in the hallway. Doug knew the language, but the conversation was too low to be clear. Besides, something else had caught his ear.

The shrill squeal of a tugboat whistle!

It came once; after a pause, the whistle piped three times. There was another pause, followed by three more sharp blasts. After that, silence.

One... three... three.

During the second pause, Doug had heard the closing of a door, indicating that Anjou had gone out. Now there were footsteps in the hallway, telling that Perique was about to return. Evidently both were sure that Doug had accepted the invitation to remain, particularly because of Anjou's convincing argument. Perhaps they thought he couldn't hear the tugboat signals; perhaps they thought Doug wouldn't attempt a break, not with Perique and his formidable club so close at hand.

They were wrong on all counts.

As Perique swung into the room, Doug was on his feet, grabbing for the room's one light, a hanging bulb on its cord. Perique launched with a savage snarl, waving his club ahead of him, but Doug gave the bulb a faster sling toward the side wall of the room. It crashed, filling the room with darkness in which Doug, recoiling in the opposite direction, completely dodged Perique, who instinctively turned his drive in the direction of Doug's fling.

Stumbling against the cot, Doug grabbed the only possible weapon, the cot itself. Hoisting it with a heave of his strong shoulders, Doug swung the cot toward the spot where he expected Perique would be – and was. The cot crashed and Perique with it, his club clattering to the stone floor.

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Through the hallway, Doug found the outer door and stumbled through it to a dark alley. Wavering toward a patch of dull light, Doug reached the street. Across the way he recognized a layer of solid black against a higher pile of faded gray.

The black was the elevated highway, the gray was the old Darien Pier that squatted above it!

This was the original starting point from which Doug had made his trip to Jeffrey's, ahead of schedule. The tugboat's signals had called for someone to start another trip to a different destination and though Doug was quite sure the call wasn't for him, he intended to follow it. Since de Blanco was still a question mark, Doug paused, looked southward, to see if he could sight the fellow. Doug did glimpse moving figures, magnified by the mist, but they were lost almost immediately.

The visibility was nearing zero, which pleased Doug, though it didn't occur to him, as he headed one block south, that he might be dodging friendly followers as well as enemies. Pausing at the first corner, he took another look about and for a moment was puzzled as a glowing light seemed to flicker on and off, as though some indefinable figure had moved in front of it. June Getty might have thought in terms of a cloaked personage known as The Shadow, had she been present to witness that phenomenon; but not Doug Lawton. Besides, the shape, if it could be called such, was moving down the avenue, which wasn't Doug's course.

So Doug turned eastward, found that the third turn led only to the right. Heading three blocks south, he came to a corner that represented the finish of the trail. There he saw his goal, a building which had a restaurant on the ground floor, its front clearly illuminated by a large green neon sign representing a green anchor, obviously the name of the cafe.

It could only be the Green Anchor. There wasn't another such building within a half block; all the rest were warehouses. Approaching the Green Anchor, Doug stopped short of the lighted windows. He was at a doorway, opening directly onto the street. Within the doorway was a flight of steps leading up to the floor above the restaurant.

The building itself was only two stories high, an old brick structure that probably had once been a residence. Doug decided to try the second floor before letting himself be seen in the restaurant, so he went up the steps and found himself in a large, gloomy room filled with bare tables and illuminated only by a red exit light. There was another stairway leading down into the cafe, so this was obviously an upstairs dining room.

At the back of the room was a chink of light which turned out to be a door. Doug opened it, went through a short passage with a tiny private dining room on each side and came to another door which showed another crack of light. This door was locked so Doug rapped. He was answered by the sliding of a bolt, then the door opened and Doug was confronted by a bearded, stoop-shouldered man, who wore a half-toothed smile of welcome that changed suddenly to alarm.

Before the bearded man could shove the door shut, Doug planked his foot in it, then wedged his shoulder through. As he closed the door, Doug announced:

"Don't worry, Skipper Malloy. My name is Douglas Lawton. All I want to ask about is some business that concerned my great-uncle. His name was Artemus Lawton."

It was Skipper Malloy, all right, for every detail of his gnarled face answered to Jeffrey's sketch. At mention of the name Lawton, Malloy tilted his head and added a knowing nod when Doug emphasized the name Artemus. Then:

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"Sit down, young man," invited Malloy. "I'm getting kind of old and there ain't much I know and a lot less I remember. Mebbe though, there's a few things you've got a right to hear about."

"Do you mean," asked Doug, "that somebody has stopped you from getting in touch with me?"

The skipper shook his head.

"Tain't exactly that," he said. "Fact is, I'd never heered of you until right now. Only there's things I'm not supposed to talk about, mostly for my own good, and that might be for yours."

As Malloy gestured to a chair, Doug looked around. The room was simply but comfortably furnished and apparently occupied the whole back portion of the house. There was a bolted door at one side that evidently led to a pair of back stairs; across the room was a little alcove, only a few feet in depth. There were two windows at the rear of the room, both with closed shutters outside them, a fact that Doug specially noted.

"Nice and comfortable here," chuckled old Malloy. "Better than the Sailors' Home where I stayed a while back."

Doug nodded, but his thoughts were elsewhere. He was recalling Jeffrey's studio and the security it had seemed to offer, until death had struck so suddenly and mysteriously. Doug was thinking now in terms of Malloy's safety, though the old skipper didn't know it.

"I'd ruther be alone," added Malloy. "Nobody bothers me here. When I want something to eat, they send it right up to me from the kitchen, except like now, late at night, when the kitchen is closed. So I don't have nobody to talk to, and that's the way it's supposed to be."

Again, Malloy had tilted his head and was eyeing Doug cannily. Snapping his train of recent recollections, Doug came to the point of his visit.

"What I want to know," said Doug, "is the story behind the Cuban gold that belonged to my great-uncle, Artemus Lawton. Can you give me any clue to it?"

A happy gleam came to Malloy's eyes as he gestured again for Doug Lawton to sit down. It was a strange gleam, the sort that might have indicated a demented mind, ready to plunge into its one peculiar mania. Again, it might mean that an old man's recollections had been stirred to the memory of a true but long-buried past.

Doug Lawton had only one course. That was to listen.

CHAPTER VII. DEATH TELLS A TALE

OLD SKIPPER MALLOY cleared his throat with a chuckle.

"You've been talking to Tom Jeffrey, mebbe," Malloy decided, "and there's lots I told him that warn't so, because he was too inquisitive. Then again, there's things I told him true."

Doug responded with a serious nod. Since old Malloy apparently hadn't heard of Jeffrey's death, there was no use breaking the thread of his present tale by mentioning such news. Besides, Doug himself was not anxious to admit that he had witnessed Jeffrey's murder.

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"So I've promised to talk no more," declared Malloy. "Only I guess there's things can be mentioned, considering they was told by others and writ down. Ever hear of Ben Rigby?"

Doug shook his head.

"Who was Ben Rigby?"

"A sailor," replied Malloy. "Died fifty years ago after a shipwreck. We found him dying in a boat, when I was sailing in a fishing schooner out of Gloucester. There was things he said and I writ them down."

As Malloy paused, Doug nodded for him to go ahead. It was an easy nod, Oklahoma style, not too eager. Apparently, it impressed Malloy, for he proceeded.

"You'll find it in the log of the Nancy Lee," informed Malloy. "She was the fisher-ship I sailed in. Only it won't make sense to you, no more than it did to me. He talked about 'Friday night' and 'Fifteen Men.' He said because he couldn't get water, he drank water, and he was yelling about a bottle of rum." Malloy shook his head. "We give him water and rum, too, but nuther done him no good. He died."

Doug decided he'd heard enough about Rigby.

"I'm hunting for some Cuban gold," reminded Doug. "My father's uncle, Artemus Lawton, had a partner named Josiah Getty who went to Cuba and arranged for the sale of munitions there. That was at the time of the Spanish-American War, which you doubtless remember."

"Remember?" chuckled Malloy. "I enlisted in the navy right after that trip on the Nancy Lee, because the war had just begun. I was on the old Vesuvius before they decommissioned her. That's why it warn't for a couple of years that I heard talk about the gold your father's uncle never got."

"Did you hear anything about Josiah Getty?"

"Only that he died of swamp fever."

"Unless he skipped with the gold himself," argued Doug, bitterly. "I've been trying to trace him in Mexico, but no luck." Doug shook his head. "This stuff about a sailor named Rigby, floating in an open boat off Gloucester well, it doesn't just make sense to me. Sorry, skipper."

Doug's normally steady face showed disappointment as he started to rise from his chair, only to have the skipper grab him by the lapels and thrust him down again.

"Nobody even knowed what ship Rigby came off'n," declared Malloy. "Ain't that important?"

"Why should it be?"

"Because," said Malloy, "ships that nobody knowed about was the kind that used to run munitions afore the war, and anybody running munitions might know who was paying for them, and when."

Doug's eyes lighted with new interest regarding Rigby. He eased back in his chair.

"Somebody must have had those munitions ready on shore," argued Malloy. The skipper was on his feet now, pacing the room as if it were a quarter-deck, the floor creaking under his stride. "You've looked up all the people your uncle did business with?"

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"Lots," replied Doug, "but most of them are dead."

The door of the room was opening. Doug's back was toward it and the old skipper was over near the alcove, facing Doug at an angle. Neither of them saw the person who stood upon the threshold.

It was June Getty. Her hands were gripping the brown bag that she carried, the fingers of her right hand quite ready to draw the gun with which she had threatened Doug before. Rather than interrupt this conference, June was deciding to let it interrupt itself. Her hand suddenly gripped the gun in self-protection, as Skipper Malloy turned directly toward her.

But the skipper didn't see June yet. His eyes were lowered, staring directly at Doug, who was seated before him. Malloy was laughing heartily as though he had a joke in mind. June's alarm ending, she closed the front door of the room, slid its bolt home, as though to prevent her own retreat. Actually, she did not want someone to creep in on her while she watched Doug Lawton and Skipper Malloy, neither of whom she feared.

"Twouldn't do to mention no names," Malloy was telling Doug, still in that hearty tone. "All I'll say is, the man I'm thinking of reminds me of Jonathan Pound. Now I'll give you an idea of where to look him up. I'm facing south right now, ain't I?"

Doug nodded.

"See where I'm pointing?" Malloy extended his left hand, side-arm style. He wagged his forefinger twice. "There and there. Add them up. That's where you've got to go."

As Doug stared, puzzled, Malloy relaxed and shook his head.

"That's all I can tell you," he said. "You got to figger the rest yourself. But getting back to Rigby; he warn't off Gloucester when we found him. He knowed a lot, Rigby did, a lot he couldn't say. You want to know the answer?"

There was an eager nod from Doug and June stared breathless. Rearing erect, Malloy cackled crazily:

"Dead Man's Chest!"

Malloy was stepping backward as he spoke, turning as if to take another stride. Doug's hollow voice repeated those same words and June found herself phrasing them with silent lips:

"Dead Man's Chest."

The words had a fatal sound, a promise of the ominous. What happened was horribly in keeping with the theme. Malloy's straightened shoulders did a backward bend, as a sharp gasp sounded through the room. Both Doug and June were transfixed at sight of the skipper's mouth distended grotesquely. Malloy's plucking hands clutched at his shirt front, ripped it wide, as he toppled forward. Twisting as he fell, the old skipper struck shoulder first and rolled halfway to his back, his body propped on one elbow.

Convulsively, Malloy's hands had pulled apart, leaving his chest bare. There, gleaming full in the light, was a sample of tattoo work, done in red and blue. Malloy's whole chest was a panorama depicting a pair of mermaids rising from a wave-swept ocean, who lifted beckoning hands.

Skipper Malloy was dead; of that there was no doubt. His bearded face had been the subject of Jeffrey's first sketch, a face now so contorted that it was scarcely recognizable. Now the scene of Jeffrey's second sketch

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was on display, a seascape with the mermaids. And through Doug's mind ran a statement that Jeffrey had attributed to Malloy, to the effect that if Malloy didn't tell all he knew, somebody might find out more than if he did.

Jeffrey had asked if that made sense.

It made sense to Doug Lawton now. Malloy was proving the importance of those words that throbbed through Doug's brain and forced themselves to his lips:

"Dead Man's Chest."

What didn't make sense was the crazy way that Malloy's body was lying there, propped up by one dead elbow. Groping forward from his chair, Doug planked a numb hand on the skipper's other shoulder, hoping vainly to shake him back to life. Malloy's form did a forward roll under Doug's grip and landed face forward on the frayed carpet.

It was then that Doug Lawton saw the object that he feared was there, a knife with a rounded handle, driven hilt deep into Malloy's back.

A frightened gasp sounded close beside Doug's own shoulder. Springing to his feet, he whirled and saw the very girl who had thrust herself into another death scene, at Jeffrey's. June Getty had come forward; she, too, had seen the tattooed message on the skipper's chest and now was horrified at sight of the knife. June turned her scared gaze toward Doug.

"I... I saw what happened!" June gasped. "You couldn't have done it; you weren't to blame; it came out of nowhere!" She hesitated, then with eyes that shone a full apology, she added: "It was just like the other time."

The .32 was hanging limply in June's hand. Without a word, Doug snatched the gun from the girl's grasp and sprang to the windows, only to find them tightly shut. Hearing a creak behind him, Doug spun about, but saw only Malloy's body with June staring motionless above it. Then, his gaze sweeping to the alcove, Doug saw what he hadn't observed before.

In that alcove was a panel that raised like a window sash. It was the opening to a dumb waiter and a large one, big enough for a person to use as an improvised elevator. Malloy had mentioned having his meals sent up from the kitchen. Naturally, they would come by a dumb waiter, and a large one, because this had once been the serving room for the big upstairs dining hall over the front part of the Green Anchor.

The creaks, still audible, were coming from beyond the closed panel of the dumb waiter. A murderer was escaping by the same route that he had used when he came to deliver death.

Springing to the door across the room, Doug pulled the bolt and yanked the door open. He dashed down a flight of stairs and June, suddenly terrified at being alone with Malloy's body, dashed after him. Reaching a darkened, deserted kitchen, Doug sped across it to a rear door, hauled it wide and came head on upon a pair of figures scuffling in the alley.

Who they were, Doug didn't know, but he was sure one was a murderer. One man was lashing out with a cane that glistened like a sword blade in the gloom. The other, trying to drive past that guard, was swinging a heavy revolver. Hurling himself into the scuffle, Doug became the center of it. Each fighter, thinking himself outnumbered two to one, turned suddenly upon the new combatant.

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A blow from the cane knocked June's gun from Doug's hand, as a blow from the other man's revolver glanced the side of his head. Madly, Doug grappled as he sagged, and from behind him, June pitched bravely into the struggle, trying to ward away the blows that were coming Doug's direction. The girl was whirled back against the door into the kitchen, slamming it shut and jolting herself in the process. Finding herself seated suddenly and violently on the cement of the alley, June started to scramble up, when she saw her gun come sliding toward her, kicked by flaying feet. Grabbing it, June got to hands and knees, just as a surge of living blackness swept in from the front of the alley.

The Shadow!

Whose trail he had picked to follow here, June did not know, but she welcomed his arrival. She was sure that in his uncanny fashion, he would pick the underdog in the three-way fight and turn the odds in Doug's favor.

The Shadow did precisely that, but with such incredible speed that June could scarcely believe what she saw. As he hurtled forward with a challenging laugh, the whole fight seemed to melt at his mere approach. Then June saw why. The man with the cane had broken free and was darting through a gate at the rear of the alley. In the glow of a light from beyond the gate, June recognized the stooped figure and shaggy white hair of the man who called himself Harkland. She wasn't surprised to see him here; after all, he'd made a phone call saying he would be.

But who was the other, the man with the gun?

June saw three figures tangled now: The Shadow, Doug, and the unknown. As they swirled, one man broke away and darted through the front of the alley. That left only one; he was swinging hard with a big revolver. June was pleased, convinced that Doug had shown sense enough to get away, leaving The Shadow with only one opponent, who still might be the killer.

Now the man with the gun was tugging at its trigger, but the shots were stabbing upward, for The Shadow had shoved the man's hand above his head. Six useless shots marked in succession and by their spurts, June saw the face beneath them. The man who had stayed to give The Shadow battle was Doug Lawton, fighting with a gun that the unknown grappler had shoved into his hand!

His bullets spent, Doug buckled under a free-hand jolt that The Shadow applied to his chin. Catching Doug as he wavered, The Shadow steered him straight to June, who helped steady him. The girl gasped quick words:

"There's been a murder... upstairs above the kitchen... but he's innocent. That's why he attacked the others –"

A low laugh told that The Shadow understood. Helping June with Doug, he pointed them both toward the front of the alley, where the lights of a cab were easing into view. June understood. The Shadow was sending both Doug and herself along another route into the clear, like the one she had taken earlier, alone.

Before the pair reached the cab, The Shadow had entered the kitchen of the Green Anchor and was playing the sharp beam of a tiny flashlight through its darkness. He saw the dumb waiter at the bottom of its shaft, then picked out the door to the back stairway. Going up, The Shadow reached Malloy's room, pocketed his flashlight and went to the windows that faced the back alley where he had indulged in recent combat.

Next, The Shadow noted the panel of the dumb waiter shaft in the alcove. He studied Malloy's body, checking its position in relation to the shaft. Observing a portion of the skipper's shirt front beneath one of the dead man's arms, The Shadow lifted the body back to its propped position, where the knife handle held it in place. Intently, The Shadow studied the tattoo of the mermaids emerging from the deep.

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The Shadow's laugh came low, as sinister as a knell of doom. It carried an avenging note, boding ill for the murderer whose infernal device had now struck down two victims.

By then, the sirens of police cars were sounding from in front of the Green Anchor. Opening the front door of Malloy's room, The Shadow went out through the passage to the deserted upstairs dining hall. There, he noted the front stairway that led to the street below, the route by which both Doug and June had come to Malloy's quarters, while others were showing preference for the back way.

Sliding the black cloak from his shoulders, The Shadow rolled his slouch hat inside it, and draped the cloak over his arm, like a light overcoat. A police car had stopped out front and its crew was noticing the steps that led up from the street, so The Shadow went down the inner stairs into the front room of the Green Anchor itself. He arrived unobtrusively as Lamont Cranston, unnoticed by the batch of regular patrons who were crowded at the bar, excitedly discussing the shots in the rear alley.

Without pausing to order a drink, Cranston strolled out through the main door of the Green Anchor and past the police car. So far its crew didn't know there had been a murder. They took it for granted that nobody in the Green Anchor could have been shooting in the back alley. The crew of the prowl car simply classed Cranston as a passer-by in evening clothes, who stopped in at the Green Anchor to see how the people in such places lived.

There was a slight difference, however. Lamont Cranston had paused at the Green Anchor to learn how somebody had died.

CHAPTER VIII. A LETTER TO THE SHADOW

APARTMENT 5C at the Greendale Arms was much more comfortable than the tiny waterfront hide-out where Perique had taken Doug Lawton. That fact was quite evident to Doug as he leaned back in an easy chair and surveyed the tasteful surroundings that included a girl in brown as the most charming decoration. Even with a frown, the girl was very lovely.

"And now that you're feeling better, Mr. Lawton," the girl was saying, "perhaps you'll tell me why you've been getting yourself into so much trouble."

"I have a question first," returned Doug with a slight smile. "You might tell me who you are, since you've made it your business to help me out of that trouble."

"My name," said the girl, "is June Getty."

Doug did more than frown. He glowered, much to June's surprise. His voice came sharply:

"Not related to Josiah Getty?"

"He was my grandfather." June's face went puzzled, then flushed with indignation. "Why... why, you wouldn't have nerve enough to think my grandfather would have run off with all that Cuban gold!"

"Artemus Lawton couldn't have," retorted Doug, proudly. "He happened to be my great-uncle. He had half the money coming to him, but he never saw any of it. Josiah Getty had his hands on all of it."

"But he didn't keep any of it," argued June. "He sent it to Artemus Lawton and that's the last anybody ever heard of it. After that, Josiah died of swamp-fever in Cuba."

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"Or maybe old age in Mexico."

June's lips tightened, white with anger.

"Would you like to see the death certificate?" she demanded. "It's signed by a major in the American army, who was in the Occupation Forces. I have the certificate, along with letters from your dear Uncle Artemus, authorizing my grandfather to use his own discretion in the handling of their mutual finances."

Doug furnished an apologetic smile.

"I'm really sorry," he declared. "I mean very sorry. It must have been a real partnership, Getty and Lawton. Apparently it was never dissolved. Suppose we continue it. Agreed?"

"Agreed," nodded June. Then, soberly: "But first we have to think about old Skipper Malloy. I know one of the men who may be his murderer; that old man with the cane. His name is Harkland. Did you ever hear of him?"

"No," replied Doug, "but I know the other. He's a friend of yours. Anjou de Blanco by name."

Disbelief spread over June's face. Before it could boil over and become anger, Doug produced the evidence.

"This gun is mine." From his pocket, Doug planked a .45 revolver on the chair arm. "I didn't have it when I went to see Skipper Malloy; that's why I grabbed your gun when I needed one. My gun was taken from me out in back of Jeffrey's, after I ducked down the fire escape. It was shoved on me again during the brawl in the alley behind Malloy's place."

"Then Anjou had nothing to do with it," argued June. "He didn't go to Jeffrey's at all."

"No?" returned Doug. "Then how come I woke up and found him looking at me in a little dump where that monkey-face, Perique, is hanging out? Anjou had a thousand dollars of my money; he showed it to me and said he was keeping it as a loan. What's more, he mentioned Skipper Malloy."

June's face was really startled. Mention of the thousand dollars, the sum that Anjou said he could borrow from a friend, fitted perfectly with Doug's claim. So did the fact that Anjou had told Belville he could produce Doug Lawton.

"Then Anjou did go to Jeffrey's," said June, soberly. "I overheard him give the address to Perique, but when I followed Anjou, hoping he wouldn't get into trouble, I lost him on the way. So I kept straight on myself."

"Anjou must have doubled around in back of Jeffrey's," declared Doug. "The same as he did at Malloy's. That's why you lost him. Only I found him."

"Afterward," mused June, "I phoned Anjou, but he wasn't home at first –"

"Because he was dropping me at Perique's."

"And when I finally did get him," June continued, "he said he hadn't been near Jeffrey's. He was surprised when I told him there had been a murder in the studio. He said to say nothing about it when we met Stephen Belville at the Club Cadenza."

"Who is Stephen Belville?"

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"A man with a lot of money," replied June, "and a yacht up at New London, where he went tonight. You see, when I went to Cuba to trace our gold, I talked to gamblers in Havana who might have known something about it. That's how I met Anjou."

"He looks the part," commented Doug.

"According to Anjou," continued June, quite unruffled, "my grandfather must have gotten the gold out of Cuba. That was his main mission, but he naturally kept the details secret. Since it never reached your uncle, the gold must have been dropped off some where. That's why we need Belville, to help hunt for it with his yacht."

"But first you'll have to guess where it is," decided Doug. "It's a long distance up the Atlantic Coast."

"I know," agreed June, "and worst of all, there was a scare about the Spanish fleet attacking the coast, only it headed for Santiago instead. Whatever boat was carrying the gold might have taken refuge in any obscure and deserted harbor. But unless we have somebody like Belville ready, how would we get the gold if we located it?"

Doug pounded his fist against his palm.

"Like a dope, I was wasting my time in Mexico," he said glumly, "thinking that's where the gold had been taken. Meanwhile, Anjou sells you on an idea you already had, and you make a deal with Belville, who may not even be needed. The gold might be where we can pick it up ourselves."

"We can write off Anjou," conceded June, "considering the way he's showed himself up. As for Belville, we haven't closed a deal with him. But we do need money to operate."

"We can scrape up enough," decided Doug, "even if Anjou doesn't pay back what he owes me. But we'd better be careful. Our gold might be anybody's gold. You know that, don't you?"

"I suppose it would be," realized June, "if somebody else found it somewhere. But if either of us gets a clue —"

"We're still partners," completed Doug. "What's more, I have a clue already, if there's anything behind that Rigby story that Skipper Malloy told me."

"Rigby," breathed June tensely. "Dead Man's Chest."

"I guess you weren't there to hear the first part of it," stated Doug. "Rigby was a sailor picked up by the schooner Nancy Lee when Malloy was practically only a cabin boy. He gave Malloy his story and Malloy wrote it down. It was mostly double talk, though."

"Then how will it help us?"

"Malloy only recited from memory. The rest is in the log of the Nancy Lee. We'll try to get hold of it."

"But there was somebody else who Malloy mentioned," reminded June. "That was after I came in. Somebody that reminded Malloy of Jonathan Pound and lived over there." She extended her left hand and wagged her fingers. "Who could that be?"

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"We'll go through my great-uncle's letters," said Doug. "I have them up at the Hotel Metrolite, where I'm stopping. He did a lot of legitimate shipping in the old days, so he corresponded with sailing masters and steamship companies. Of course, shipping munitions to Cuba wasn't exactly legitimate."

"It turned out to be," asserted June. "If we can prove that the right people received the munitions, the whole deal should stand. I'm sure the partnership of Getty and Lawton was honorable, although it was a secret one."

"It still is honorable," declared Doug, "and we'll keep it secret until we've handled our unfinished business, that Cuban gold. And now, since you've stated your case to date, I'll give you mine."

Before Doug could begin, the telephone rang. June's face showed a worried flicker, then steadied as she met Doug's reassuring gaze. Lifting the phone, June said, "Hello," then covered the mouthpiece while she whispered, "It's Anjou." Then June was speaking calmly, mostly in monosyllables, finally concluding with a pleasant "Good-by."

Hanging up, June turned to Doug.

"I don't think Anjou even suspects I was at Malloy's," said June. "It was so dark there in the alley that I didn't recognize him and I was brushed out of that fight so fast that nobody realized I was ever in it."

Doug nodded. He himself didn't recall June's brief attempt to mix in.

"Anjou asked if I followed Belville," continued June, "and whether Belville had left for New London. I told him 'yes,' because both facts were true. He said he'd met you and that you paid him to handle your end of the business, since you might be busy with other matters. He added that if I should happen to hear from you, I was to refer everything back to him."

Doug smiled rather grimly.

"Here's my case," he stated. "I had written to about everybody who might know anything about my uncle, but with no luck. Also, I'd been asking a lot of questions down in Mexico, mostly from old gamblers, as you did in Cuba. Then, a few days ago, I received an unsigned letter, telling me to be in New York tonight and to phone Meteor 6-3454 at seven o'clock."

Doug paused, while June dotted down the number. She had been taking earlier notes during their conversation and Doug had not objected. Considering that he and June were partners, Doug felt it was a good idea.

"When I phoned," continued Doug, "a husky voice told me to be at the Darien Pier at ten minutes of eight. There I was to listen for tugboat whistles, in terms of blocks, south, and east. They would steer me to Tom Jeffrey, the man who would sell me a thousand dollars' worth of facts."

June's eyes were wide with interest.

"And did he?"

"Not exactly. He sketched a portrait of Malloy and the two mermaids rising from the sea. Afterwards, I learned the skipper's name from Anjou, while I was in Perique's room. There I heard the tugboat whistle another signal. I socked Perique, ducked out, and found I was right opposite the Darien Pier."

"And the new directions brought you to the Green Anchor!"

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Doug nodded as June dotted down her last notes. Then the girl asked, "What were the other things that Malloy remembered Rigby saying?"

"Friday night, fifteen men, something about having to drink water because he couldn't get any, but mostly he wanted a bottle of rum."

While June was adding those notations, Doug rose, glanced at the clock, and strolled toward the door. Pausing there, he said:

"It's getting late, partner. I'd better be dragging back to the wagon yard. Only you won't be giving those notes to anybody, I hope."

"Not to just anybody," rejoined June. "Only to The Shadow."

Doug's expression clouded, but June spoke before he could protest.

"We've practically witnessed two murders," declared June. "Remember? The Shadow – that's the only name I can think of for him – arrived right after each death. He's about the only friend we'd have if the partnership of Getty and Lawton ever came to court."

A slight smile cleared Doug's face.

"Try and send those notes to The Shadow," he suggested. "Just put them in an envelope, write 'The Shadow' on it, and drop it in a mailbox like you would a letter to Santa Claus."

Doug's tone ended with a pleasant but indulgent laugh, which left June frowning at her own stupidity. Doug waved a "good night" and was on his way.

Getting out a portable typewriter, June began to type the notes, adding comments of her own. Particularly, June detailed the scene at Malloy's, the point where she had entered, how she had bolted the door behind her and noted that the door to the back stairs was bolted, too. How murder had struck at Jeffrey's, June couldn't guess, for she had arrived there late. But at Malloy's, she was convinced that the fatal knife had been hurled from the dumb waiter.

The gasp that had accompanied the hit could hardly have come from Malloy's lips. As she typed her description of it, June could almost hear the echoes and the recollection gave her shivers. Pausing, June darted glances toward the doors and windows of her own room, fearing that any of them might hide some enemy who dealt in sudden death.

Reason finally conquered dread. Jeffrey had known too much about Malloy and the skipper had known too much about other matters; that was why they had been murdered. The killer's purpose had been to stop them from telling all they knew. Apparently, he'd been in time where Malloy was concerned; therefore, he'd have no reason for dealing death to persons who had heard only shreds of what Malloy knew.

Finishing her typing, June sealed the notes in an envelope and did the very thing that Doug had jokingly suggested. She wrote "The Shadow" on the envelope in big, bold letters, left the apartment house and went to the corner mailbox. But instead of dropping the envelope into the box, June perched it on the top. Returning to the apartment house, June paused to look back from the entrance.

The white envelope showed plainly in the gloom, though the mailbox itself was only dimly discernible. As June watched, she fancied that she saw gloom swirl; then blackness, indefinable in shape but with the action

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of a living hand, wiped the envelope from sight. June stared harder for a dozen seconds more; then, the lights from a car that swung the corner showed the mailbox clearly.

No one was near the box, but the envelope was gone. From somewhere off in the darkness, June Getty was sure she heard the tantalizing trail of a parting laugh that left whispering echoes clinging in the mist.

Only one being could have delivered such a token: The Shadow.

CHAPTER IX. CRANSTON'S APPOINTMENT

IT was late afternoon and Commissioner Weston was holding an important conference in his favorite rendezvous, the grill room of the Cobalt Club. The commissioner preferred such an atmosphere to that of his office when he had weighty matters to consider and particularly when he felt that his friend Lamont Cranston might be of value in cracking a case.

Not that Weston considered Cranston's opinions too remarkable; often the commissioner took quite the opposite viewpoint. He regarded Cranston as a man extremely well versed in unimportant subjects, and, therefore, likely to come up with ideas which, sometimes through their very triviality, might be overlooked by more analytical minds.

In this instance, Weston was willing to admit that Cranston's observation of Jeffrey's studio window had paved the way to the detection of a most ingenious form of murder and since Cranston was already that deep in the case, it seemed advisable to keep him with it. Hence this conference; but so far, Cranston hadn't put in a word. The floor was fully held by Inspector Joe Cardona, who was detailing his findings in two murders, those of Tom Jeffrey and Skipper Malloy.

"The links are established," stated Cardona. "It's obvious that Jeffrey knew Malloy, otherwise, he wouldn't have drawn the skipper's picture. He knew about those mermaids that were tattooed on Malloy's chest, because he drew them, too. The question is: How well did Jeffrey know Malloy? Maybe Malloy was just a customer who had got Jeffrey to decorate him with those tattoo marks. Jeffrey might have been wanting to find out who Malloy was, but in that case, why?"

Nobody seemed to know why. After all, it was Cardona's business to find out. Looking at Weston, Cardona decided that the commissioner was a trifle irked, but a glance at Cranston revealed his features as complacent as ever. So Cardona was about to give more pointed comments when an interruption came in the person of Stephen Belville, who came striding into the grill room, waving a copy of an evening newspaper. He was quite a contrast to the Belville of the night before, for his broad, blunt face was all excited and his manner was more than brisk; it was hasty. Nor was Belville showing the austere dignity that went with evening clothes. He had turned sportsman and was wearing a fancy yachting jacket, with an embroidered anchor twined in the initials S. B., and he was carrying a white cap with similar decorations.

Belville didn't even notice Weston and Cardona.

"Look at this, Cranston!" the yachtsman exclaimed, waving the newspaper. "Two men murdered, a tattoo artist and an old sailor who served in the navy during the Spanish-American War! Could it have anything to do with that Cuban gold? Have you heard from de Blanco? Did he produce that chap Lawton?"

Cranston was shaking his head to Belville's eager questions.

"You're nearly twelve hours behind the times, Belville," commented Cranston. "All this was in the morning

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newspapers. I'm surprised that you didn't hear about it earlier."

"Belville would have heard of it," put in Weston, bluntly, "if there had been any connection between the murders and the swindle that has been bothering him. I would have notified the New London police to contact Belville immediately."

"Why didn't you?" demanded Belville, turning to Weston. Then, holding out the newspaper, Belville tapped a photograph of Malloy that appeared there. "And why did you tell me that this man hadn't been murdered?"

"Because he was still alive at the time," retorted Weston, "and if it hadn't been for your stupid interruption, we might have traced him soon enough to save his life."

Belville fumed indignantly. "I didn't interrupt you long. I couldn't have, because I only had about ten minutes to catch the New London train. I spent the night on my yacht and today we cruised up the Sound. This was the first newspaper I saw today. But if I'm interrupting you now" – Belville swept a blunt gaze around the group – "I'd better be on my way, or you may be missing another murder."

As Belville rose, Cardona halted him.

"Wait, Mr. Belville," the inspector suggested. "It won't hurt for you to be around; it might even help. I'm summing the facts on these two murders and I'd like you to hear them. Some slight detail might tie in with something you've heard de Blanco mention. You never can tell."

Glancing at Weston, Cardona received no objection. The commissioner always approved any process that could be classed as methodical and this came in that category. So Inspector Cardona proceeded:

"The first victim, Tom Jeffrey, knew about everybody on the waterfront. He was a tattoo artist and did special work for sailors. He had a little shop where he was in and out, with samples of designs all over the walls. But he'd always wanted to be a real artist, a painter. That would account for his getting the studio where he was murdered."

Cardona's summary was all routine to Weston, so the commissioner, to keep himself occupied, was slowly tapping the table with the extended fingers of his hand. Cardona was used to this, so it didn't bother him, but Belville became annoyed. At first, Belville didn't realize that the noise came from the table; when he did, he shrugged, folded his arms and eased back in his chair, willing to put up with the commissioner's foibles.

In contrast was Cranston's reaction.

From the start, Cranston had caught the tap of Weston's fingers; then he had observed Belville tilt his head as if to hear a more distant sound. Now, Cranston was adopting the head tilt, completely ignoring Weston's drumming. There were other sounds; they came from the foyer of the Cobalt Club. Rising, Cranston strolled from the room, gauged the direction of the sounds as he reached the door, then governed his course accordingly. Passing a pillar, Cranston crossed the path of an elderly man who was stooped over a stout cane which produced the taps as he walked along.

"Hello, Mr. Harkland." Catching the stooped man's elbow, Cranston imperceptibly steered him toward the grill room. "I haven't seen you in quite a while."

Harkland looked up at Cranston with a pair of eyes that gleamed like gimlets from beneath his shock of white hair. Lips that formed a downward smile delivered a half-laugh.

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"Perhaps you haven't been around the club lately, Cranston. I've hardly been away from it."

"I can understand it," nodded Cranston. "Your rheumatism seems to be bothering you badly. Why not come in and rest a moment?"

Cranston was veering Harkland into the grill room, but the old man hadn't yet noticed the group assembled there. Still addressing Cranston, Harkland said:

"It's been bad for about a week, the rheumatism has. Too much drizzly weather."

"Drizzly weather? Here in the Cobalt Club?"

Harkland snorted a reply to Cranston's query.

"I'm not inside the club all the time, Cranston. I have to go back and forth between here and my apartment. It's only a few blocks, so I hate to use a cab, but I can hardly hobble the distance. Just a taste of damp weather and I feel it here." Pressing his back, Harkland gave a grimace and fairly doubled in a chair beside Weston's table, letting his cane clatter to the floor. "There!" Harkland added. "Another kink. I've practically become an invalid."

Cranston was reclaiming the cane, which was thick, heavy, and made of finely finished wood.

"A nice walking stick," was Cranston's comment, "but rather heavy. I thought you had been favoring metal canes lately, Harkland."

That brought another disdainful snort.

"You haven't seen me for a long time, Cranston," declared Harkland, "and now you tell me the kind of canes I have recently preferred. My choice is a wooden cane, solid wood."

Taking the cane from Cranston, Harkland gave an emphatic rap against the floor; then folded his hands on the handle of the upright cane, rested his chin on his hands and glanced with interest at the group of men.

"This is Oswald Harkland," introduced Cranston. "He is a member of the club. I am sure you must have met him, commissioner."

Weston stared rather blankly at Harkland, unable to remember him. In contrast, Harkland's sharp eyes showed a look that mingled recognition with surprise.

"Why, I have seen this gentleman often," Harkland said to Cranston, "but I never realized he was the police commissioner. I presume you are discussing those strange murders that occurred last night. Now if you would like my opinion –"

"Inspector Cardona is giving his opinion," interrupted Weston, testily. "If you would like to hear it, you are welcome to remain."

Harkland bowed his acknowledgment and Cardona went on.

"Since Jeffrey knew almost everybody with waterfront connections," the inspector stated, "almost anybody with waterfront connections might have murdered Jeffrey, provided they had a motive. That doesn't give us much to go on or maybe it gives us too much. What I've been concentrating on is the way Jeffrey's death was

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framed."

On the table, Cardona spread an elaborate blueprint showing a diagram of Jeffrey's studio, the yard in back of it, and the office building across the rear alley.

"You were right, Mr. Cranston," Cardona affirmed. "A downshot from a powerful airgun could have driven that knife right into Jeffrey's back. It would have had to come from the sixth floor; to be exact from the window of room 608 in the Mortimer Building."

Old Oswald Harkland clucked a dry laugh.

"The office of the Havana Exposition Corporation," remarked Harkland. "I trust you found someone in the place."

Cardona gave Harkland a steady look, then said, "No, we didn't."

"You wouldn't," returned Harkland. "There isn't going to be any Havana Exposition. The public was finding it out, so the people promoting it skipped. We're still trying to collect the rent they owe us."

Harkland drew out a calling card, passed it to Cardona. It bore the name "Riverview Realty Corporation" and in the corner, it said "Oswald M. Harkland, President." Pointing to his own name, Harkland chuckled again.

"The M is for Mortimer," he stated. "That building was named after my mother's family. I know the office you mention, but I doubt your theory."

"Why?" queried Cardona.

"Because I know of no airgun which would combine enough power with sufficient caliber to project a knife that distance."

"Apparently," said Cardona, "you are familiar with Jeffrey's studio."

"Not too familiar," declared Harkland. "We owned the building at the end of Van Camp Lane for a while. We sold it at a nice profit. But it seems to me" – Harkland raised one hand to stroke his chin – "that the studio window would block any missile from above. It slants inward, that window, doesn't it?"

"Maybe it did once," replied Cardona, "but it doesn't now. Somebody fixed it the other way by the simple system of removing the entire frame and turning it around. You didn't rent that studio to Jeffrey, did you?"

Harkland shook his head.

"I thought the studios were practically empty," he replied. "The new owners were allowing the leases to run out so they could remodel the house."

"And who are the new owners?"

"You'll have to ask the company," answered Harkland. He tapped his business card. "You'll find the address right there."

Pocketing the card, Cardona abruptly changed the subject.

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"Skipper Malloy was killed in his room over the Green Anchor," Cardona stated. "He was knifed, like Jeffrey. Just like Jeffrey" – Cardona emphasized that for Harkland's benefit – "because from the position of his body, it was pretty clear that the knife thrust came from a dumbwaiter in the corner of his room. The murderer worked from a cramped space; he'd have had to use an airgun and in this case the range was close enough to give the knife all the velocity it needed."

Cardona was spreading another blueprint, a diagram of the Green Anchor, with the floor plan. Joe indicated the alley that ran in back of the building; he pointed out the door into the kitchen and the situation of Malloy's room just above.

"Granted that Malloy's front door was open," declared Cardona. "The same thing applies in Jeffrey's studio. In each case, the answer is obvious. The murderer wanted to plant the crime on someone else. Only whoever else was there, got clear."

Cardona was watching Harkland and in his turn, the shocky-haired man was nodding as though he agreed with every point.

"Guns can be made in special sizes," reminded Cardona, "and that applies to any kind, like airguns. Suppose one had a barrel... well, say as big as that cane of yours, Mr. Harkland –"

Still nodding as Cardona paused, Harkland lifted his cane as though to study it, but his gaze was far away and his voice carried an absent-minded tone.

"Malloy," said Harkland. "Skipper Malloy. The name has a familiar ring, but there are so many of them –"

"So many of whom?" put in Commissioner Weston.

"Old, pensioned sailors," replied Harkland, "who live in the Seaman's Fair Haven and other homes that my family helped endow. Some of them don't like such places. They are always requesting other diggings and as a director of the Haven, I have to approve new allocations. Malloy's name rings a familiar note. He may have been one of the chronic malcontents who was never satisfied anywhere."

Cardona was making notes on this; observing it, Belville suddenly suggested a different point.

"This office that you mention," said Belville. "It has something to do with an exposition in Havana?"

Cardona nodded.

"Then Anjou de Blanco should know something about it," decided Belville. "He may be able to tell us who was connected with the proposed exposition."

"In that case," put in Weston, brusquely, "this man de Blanco will probably turn out to be a swindler as you originally suspected. Birds of a feather flock together, you know, and since the exposition is phony, de Blanco is probably in the same class if he knows the men behind the scheme."

"Very probably," agreed Belville. "I shall ask de Blanco, when he phones me this evening at the Manhattan Yacht Club. I must get back to the yacht now; I have it moored out at Whitestone. We shall bring it into the North River, where I have arranged for anchorage."

Belville was leaving and old Harkland had decided to do the same. During their comment, Cranston had remained silent; now he was waiting only for a brief chat with Commissioner Weston before proceeding on

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his way. Cranston had already decided where that way would lead, for he had been building new theories during the recent conversation.

In that, Lamont Cranston was not unique and he knew it. Casually, Cranston had been watching Joe Cardona and was quite sure that the ace inspector had been gathering similar notions.

Where Cranston was going, Cardona intended to go, too. But it was Cranston who would arrive there first, as The Shadow.

CHAPTER X. TRAIL OF THE MERMAIDS

WHILE the conference at the Cobalt Club was reaching its conclusion, June Getty was sitting at the window of her apartment in the Greendale Arms, looking out into the gathering dusk and wondering what new hazard it might offer.

Until now, June had been pondering rather than wondering, though there was little difference, at least in this particular case.

June had been pondering over that strange hodge-podge of data that she had sent along to The Shadow. So little progress had she made with it, that June could come only to one conclusion, which she repeated now, in a low, awed tone, for probably the one hundredth time:

"Dead Man's Chest!"

The words gave June a shiver, for they brought a recollection of Skipper Malloy and his untimely death, which was much more horrible in June's memory than the murder of Tom Jeffrey which she had not actually witnessed. Yet those words could not be forgotten, because they stood not only as crime's answer, but as a key to the whole mystery involving the Cuban gold.

Dead Man's Chest!

How could tattoo marks representing a pair of mermaids bring a solution to a problem that had existed for fifty years? That question had an answer, perhaps; but if so, it lay in a larger series of perplexities. That was the tale of Sailor Ben Rigby, found only in the log of the fisher-ship Nancy Lee, with his talk of fifteen men on a Friday night, drinking water because they couldn't get it and calling for a bottle of rum.

All of which made no sense at all, probably because Ben Rigby had been out of his mind when rescued somewhere off the New England coast, fifty years ago.

But Skipper Malloy had sounded quite sane last night when he pointed with his left hand, snapped his fingers twice, and said that was where Doug Lawton would find a clue to somebody who reminded him of Jonathan Pound.

If only Doug could guess the answer to that riddle! But whether Doug could or not, at least The Shadow might. So far today, June had heard from neither of them, but she was hoping that dusk would bring one or the other. Yet now, the dusk, as June gazed into it, carried a threat of something ominous, so fearful that June drew suddenly away from the window.

Then, as June groped for a lamp, the jangle of the telephone came with startling suddenness at her elbow. The ringing bell was momentarily a shock, then it brought a relieved laugh from June's lips, for she was sure the

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call must be from Doug. Picking up the phone, June gave a glad, "Hello," then stifled a slight gasp as she heard Anjou's voice.

Until today, June had rather admired Anjou's style of speech, but his suavity now sounded oily. Anjou was inquiring if June had heard from Belville and June replied, "No," adding that Belville had gone to New London, in case Anjou didn't remember.

"Of course, I know that Belville went to New London. But he intended to return today. I thought he might have phoned you."

"You probably wouldn't guess it," returned June, "but I'm not in the habit of giving out my phone number."

"Of course not," agreed Anjou, "but this being a matter of business, I thought you might have made an exception."

"You mean in Belville's case?"

"Not entirely. Perhaps where this Cranston was concerned. After all, Cranston came to the Club Cadenza to judge the merits of the proposition we were offering Belville –"

"If you're trying to find out if I heard from Cranston," interrupted June, "the answer is again 'No.' You can save yourself time by ending the list right there. I haven't heard from anybody all day. But I might ask: Have you heard from our friend, Mr. Lawton?"

June's stress on the words "our friend" was intended for Anjou to take as he preferred. Whatever his reaction, he parried the question neatly.

"Lawton knows where to reach me if he needs me," answered Anjou. "I told you about the deal he made with me. He paid me a thousand dollars to do some investigating for him. Remember?"

"Yes." Despite herself, June made her tone a trifle sarcastic. "I remember."

"I've found a good lead," came Anjou's voice, as silky as ever. "There's an office in the Mortimer Building used by an organization called the Havana Exposition Corporation. Ever hear of it?"

"Not until now."

"They might have something there in the files," purred Anjou. "Regarding the history of the Cuban gold. Of course, I wouldn't want to go there, not after having met Lawton. I'm afraid he is involved in those two murders and it would be difficult for me to answer questions if they know anything about him. In fact, it's better for me to stay out of sight myself until I hear from Lawton again."

"Of course."

June spoke those words mechanically because her thoughts had wandered. Anjou was talking about hearing from Doug again; June was hearing from him right now. Somebody was tapping the apartment door and from the guarded rat-tat-tat, June was sure it must be Doug. So June put a quick finish to the telephone conversation.

"I'll call you, Anjou," said June, "if I hear from anyone... well, from anyone like Belville –"

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"Don't bother," rejoined Anjou, with a short laugh. "I'm not at the apartment any longer. In fact, I'm not even staying where Lawton thinks I am, but I have somebody ready to spot him if he comes around. Meanwhile, I'll phone you if anything else develops. Adios."

Hearing Anjou's receiver click, June hung up promptly, turned on the lamp and hurried over to the door where the guarded raps were being repeated. Then, on the chance that the tapping might be a trick, June whispered close to the door:

"Who's there?"

"Doug Lawton," came the tone that June recognized. "Hurry. Let me in."

Unbolting the door, June admitted Doug who gestured for her to lock the door again. Then, to explain the delay, June motioned toward the telephone.

"I was answering a call –"

"From Anjou, of course," put in Doug. "What kind of stunt is he trying now?"

"He says there's an office in the Mortimer Building," replied June, "run by the Havana Exposition Corporation. He doesn't want to go there himself because he might be questioned about you."

"Wait, June." Doug was thumbing through the telephone book. "Maybe, it isn't too late to catch someone there. Here's the number. I'll try it."

Dialing the number, Doug received an answer and hung up. He gave a knowing nod.

"Temporarily disconnected," stated Doug. "That's just about what I expected."

"Why?"

"Because there isn't any Havana Exposition," explained Doug. "I'd heard about it out in Oklahoma; in fact, I saw some of the circulars they were sending out, trying to sell stock in the thing. So I checked it through the Chamber of Commerce in Oklahoma City. They found out it was a fake promotion scheme."

"But why did you check on it?"

"For the same reason you contacted Anjou," replied Doug. "I wasn't missing any bets in hunting down that Cuban gold, even though I did think it had gone to Mexico. But the fellows behind this fake exposition don't have any important connections in Havana. They're the type that just sell stock and skip."

"It's rather odd," voiced June, "that New York is the last place where their racket would be found out."

"Not at all," argued Doug. "They worked out of here and sold stock around the country, so the complaints came from other places first. The odd thing is why Anjou should be dragging in the Havana Exposition."

As if looking for the answer, Doug was thumbing through the phone book again. He found what he wanted, the address of the Mortimer Building. Doug slapped the phone book shut with a thud.

"There's the answer!" Doug exclaimed. "The Mortimer Building is practically in the same block as Jeffrey's studio, probably just behind it, and not too far from the Green Anchor. Cute of Anjou, trying to drag you

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down into that area again."

"But Anjou didn't try!" exclaimed June, hotly. "I found out for myself that he was going to Jeffrey's and it was Harkland who gave me the lead on the Green Anchor, when he phoned somebody named Klauder. Not that I'm trying to defend Anjou" – June's tone became serious – "because I don't trust him any longer. Not after the way he treated you. In fact, if Anjou is trying to decoy anybody, it would be you."

To that, Doug nodded.

"You've got something," Doug declared. "Those tugboat whistles guided me to Jeffrey's and Malloy's both. Each time, Anjou showed up. That might be more than a coincidence."

"You mean Anjou might be behind the whistle business?"

"Right," nodded Doug. "I'm going to call that Meteor number, the one where I received my first instructions."

Dialing Meteor 6-3454, Doug heard nothing but a series of successive rings. While Doug listened, June added something else.

"Anjou said you'd know where to find him," the girl said, "and he told me he'd have somebody watching to contact you."

"He wouldn't mean this number then," decided Doug, hanging up. "He means Perique's place. But it's about the same in either case. Perique lives opposite the Darien Pier, or did live there."

Going to the window, Doug stared out into the thickening dark. There were occasional whistles sounding from the river and amid them, Doug could detect a few faint tugboat squeals.

"It may be Anjou," said Doug, in a musing tone. "He could be trying to reach me through you, June. Then, again, he may be wanting you to stick your neck out a third time, now that you've already tried it twice. Only you're staying right here instead. Understand?"

June nodded.

"You're not going in my place –"

"Of course not," interposed Doug. From his pocket he drew a bundle of papers. "I want you to go over these and see if you can find anything that reminds you of Jonathan Pound. These are the papers that belonged to my great-uncle. I've already found something of interest."

From the papers, Doug drew a letter. It was an old letter, addressed to Artemus Lawton from the Port of Gloucester, stating that no records of the Nancy Lee were available and that he might inquire of the Maritime Library in New York. After June read that letter, Doug produced another, also an old one, from the Maritime Library, saying that it, too, lacked any data on the Nancy Lee, a fishing schooner out of Gloucester.

"Just on a chance," declared Doug, "I phoned the Maritime Library. It has grown tremendously since that letter was written and is now housed in an old mansion over on the East Side. They've bought up loads of collections on nautical subjects and the log of the Nancy Lee is among them. The Maritime Library is open this evening, so that's where I'm going when I leave here."

June's eyes widened eagerly.

"Shouldn't I go along?"

Doug shook his head.

"Stay right here," he insisted. "You can't tell who may call up or why. If it's Anjou again, stall him. Meanwhile, see what you can make out of all these other papers."

With that, Doug left, opening the door stealthily and gesturing for June to bolt it as soon as he was gone. From within the door, however, June could hear the automatic elevator beginning its descent, and she promptly went to the window of her darkened bedroom and stared out, watching for further signs of Doug.

He came in sight at last, crossing at the corner, turning his head to look for any followers. Still staring, June held her breath, for she saw people that she thought might be on Doug's trail. One was a man who could have been a chance stroller; another was a furtive figure that shambled around the corner. But June decided that neither could be too important.

There was one figure that June sought but did not see, a cloaked shape that she thought of only as The Shadow. Then, managing a laugh at her own expense, June turned from the window, realizing that she could not have traced The Shadow even if he had picked up Doug's trail.

Somehow, the mere thought of The Shadow gave June confidence. She was convinced that his knowledge of the case, amplified by the data that she had furnished him last night would impel The Shadow to take up this important trail. Therefore, as June reasoned it, Doug at this moment must be under The Shadow's personal observation.

Curiously, June Getty had begun to think more in terms of Douglas Lawton than in those of Cuban gold and the human factors that it involved. With two murders already accomplished, the great problem was to find the murderer; then the question of individual protection would become automatic.

In thinking of Doug and his present mission, June was forgetting the trail that Doug had decided not to take. That was the trail to the Mortimer Building, in the heart of the area where crime had struck twice the night before.

That was the trail which The Shadow had taken for his own.

CHAPTER XI. THE SHADOW COMES FIRST

THE door of room 608 opened softly, easily, and blackness filtered through. It had just an ordinary lock, that door which bore the name "Havana Exposition Corporation" on its glass panel. Still, it should have been better equipped, even in an old-fashioned office building like the Mortimer Building.

The man who represented blackness never let such details pass unchecked. Once he was through the door, The Shadow closed it, locked it with a skeleton key, and turned the beam of a tiny flashlight upon the edge of the door. The Shadow was looking for another lock, a Yale job which was above the simple door lock, but which for some reason had not been latched from the inside.

Under the focused glow, the reason was plain. The latch wasn't simply open; it had been demolished. Whether this was the work of the departing promoters of the fake exposition, or that of some later visitor was a question. A minor question that might prove of major importance later. Such questions, however, had a way of settling themselves when the time came. For the present, other matters engaged The Shadow's interest.

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First, The Shadow flickered his flashlight around the fairly large outer office. The walls were covered with murals depicting palm trees, gay beaches with brilliant colored cabanas, a white skyline representing Havana and plenty of deep blue that stood for the Caribbean Sea. More important than all this was a stenciled square of black lettering that The Shadow's flashlight picked out down in a corner of one mural.

The lettering said "Brookhattan Scenic Studio" and, therefore, opened another avenue of inquiry regarding the Havana Exposition Corporation. However, The Shadow was quite sure that the promoters of the fake exposition had nothing in common with the quest for a million dollars in Cuban gold. If they had been on the trail of a Dead Man's Chest, they wouldn't have bothered with their defunct promotion scheme.

The inner office was reached through a connecting door that had no lock. Entering it, The Shadow kept his flashlight well muffled by the folds of his cloak, for this room had windows, two of them. Except for some cheap and garish furniture which matched the tables and chairs in the outer room, this private office offered just one important item, a padlocked cabinet in the corner.

Naturally, this cabinet had not been opened by Inspector Joe Cardona and his investigating squad. They hadn't come here with a search warrant authorizing them to tear apart the premises of the Havana Exposition Corporation. They had been simply tracking down a window, the particular window that had enabled a murderer with an airgun to knife a shot at a human target named Tom Jeffrey.

Now, however, with the Havana Exposition Corporation listed as a fraud, the police wouldn't have to be so careful. Sooner or later, probably sooner, Inspector Cardona would be here looking for neglected clues. Therefore, The Shadow intended to make the most of the least amount of time.

As usual, The Shadow took an odd way of doing it.

There was a telephone on the desk in the inner office, so The Shadow promptly tried to make a call. Finding the phone disconnected, he moved into the outer office, flicked his light on a door that connected with an adjoining office. This door was locked and very substantial, a contrast to the main door of the big office itself.

Rather than waste time with the lock, The Shadow went into the private office, opened one of the windows and stepped out to a ledge. There, he closed the window behind him, a rather neat achievement considering that the ledge was only a few inches wide. Then, from that precarious perch, The Shadow worked along to another window, meanwhile taking a survey of the dark scene below.

There was enough light from the little alley to reveal some interesting factors. From the ledge, The Shadow could practically look into Jeffrey's studio. Obviously, the murderer had planned a shot from the sixth floor of the Mortimer Building and had fixed the window accordingly.

As he moved along the ledge, The Shadow noted something else. Jeffrey's window wasn't the only available target; there were other studios that would have served just as well. Old Harkland had admitted that the studio building was being abandoned and, therefore, was pretty well empty, but he hadn't mentioned that the same applied to other houses that adjoined it.

In brief, the situation was just the opposite of what would normally be pictured. Instead of a murderer having planted Jeffrey in a studio, then looked for an office that would serve as a nice shooting box, the office had probably been chosen first and the studio deal arranged afterward.

This brought a low, whispered laugh from The Shadow's hidden lips, though the laugh could have applied to his next problem. The Shadow had reached the window of another office and was finding it locked. This

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rather pleased him, for he made a specialty of tackling problems that would have annoyed other venturesome persons.

Clinging to the ledge as if glued there, The Shadow produced a thin wedge of metal, worked it through the crack of the window sash and jimmied the catch in a single action. He slid the window up, eased across the sill, flicked his inquiring flashlight, and found another telephone which he hoped would be a live one.

The Shadow dialed a number. After the second ring, a girl's voice answered. The voice belonged to June Getty. But when The Shadow spoke, it was not in the whispery tone that befitted his attire. He spoke in the voice of Lamont Cranston.

"Hello, Miss Getty... Yes, this is Lamont Cranston. I've talked to your friend de Blanco... No, I didn't call him; he called me... Yes, he probably called me because Belville was away... Quite confidentially, it was about money –"

The Shadow paused. He was making up this Cranston speech as he went along, gauging it to suit June's reactions. Having read the report which June had sent to him as The Shadow, he was naturally in a position to play the theme to the utmost. Right now, June was taking a few moments to become indignant, which was just what The Shadow expected. Of course, she was indignant at Anjou, not at anyone else.

"No, de Blanco didn't exactly want to borrow money," The Shadow resumed in Cranston style. "He said he already had received some, from Lawton. Trouble was, de Blanco didn't feel that Lawton could spare it... Yes, he wanted me to meet Lawton personally and talk over the matter... No, he didn't know where to find Lawton and was sure you wouldn't know either, but I asked for your number, thinking it worth a try... Yes, if you've heard from Lawton, I'd like to contact him at once. I called you a little while ago, but your line was busy –"

The final sentence was entirely correct, but June by this time had taken everything for absolute. Worried about Doug, convinced by Cranston's calm, persuasive tone that he, like The Shadow, would think in terms of Doug's benefit, June promptly stated that she had heard from Doug and that he was on his way to the Maritime Library.

Ending the call, The Shadow put in another. This time, his voice carried the low, weird whisper which was rightfully The Shadow's, for he was talking to his contact man, Burbank.

"Report from Hawkeye," stated Burbank. "Picked up trail of Doug Lawton outside Greendale Arms after relay from Vincent at Hotel Metrolite. No further report as yet."

"Instructions to Vincent," ordered The Shadow. "Go directly to Maritime Library with camera."

"Instructions received."

"Instructions to Burke. Also go to Maritime Library as a reporter. To take over if Vincent encounters any problem."

"Instructions received."

"Further reports."

"Report from Marsland," stated Burbank. "Phone call came to pay-booth Meteor 6-3454 at back of River Garage. No one answered it."

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"Report received."

"Report from Crofton," continued Burbank. "No one has come in or out of premises occupied by Perique, nor has there been any sign of Perique himself."

"Report received."

"Report from Le Brue," persisted Burbank. "Oswald Harkland did not return home from the Cobalt Club. His man Klauder went out with a grocery basket. Has not returned."

"Report received. Instructions to Le Brue. Go to Maritime Library and remain outside to await contact."

Having thus checked on the activities of his various agents and arranged their further disposition, The Shadow was ready to proceed with his own plans. There had been no report from Shrevvy, because the cabby had been busy bringing The Shadow himself to this vicinity.

Using the flashlight, The Shadow decided to take the short route back to the office of the Havana Exposition Corporation. This route happened to be slower, but more convenient; it was through the heavily locked connecting door. Here was a challenge for The Shadow's skill with locks, but it proved no great problem. By means of a special pincer pick, The Shadow probed the lock which gradually yielded under his persuasive touch. Then, edging the door open, The Shadow paused abruptly, his flashlight unlighted in his gloved hand.

A sound was coming from the outer door of the large office. It had the self-assertive sound of a pass-key. The door swung open, a figure entered and locked the door again. Dim in the darkness, the man stooped as he locked the door behind him and his manner was reminiscent of Oswald Harkland. Still, anyone might have stooped to lock a door. This man, however, retained his stoop as he moved into the private office.

It was Harkland, yet a much more agile Harkland than the one who had behaved in such rheumatic style at the Cobalt Club. As soon as Harkland gained the private office, The Shadow heard a muffled sound that had a metallic clank, though dull. Harkland was smashing the padlock on the cabinet in the inner office, subduing the sound by the simple process of wrapping the padlock in a handkerchief.

Whatever his purpose, Harkland was partly defeating it. New sounds were coming from the other door, sounds which The Shadow alone could hear.

Somebody was working the outer door open with a skeleton key. Just as Harkland finished, the outer door opened.

The man who entered was Anjou de Blanco.

Even in the gloom, The Shadow could recognize the debonair Latin, for Anjou's stealthy stride was a definite exaggeration of his usual dance-floor gait. Hearing sounds from the inner office, Anjou was making a skillful approach, yet he was so intent that he neglected entirely to look toward the door where The Shadow stood.

At that, Anjou could have seen nothing but blackness; nevertheless, it worked to The Shadow's advantage. Quite sure that Anjou would not change his course, The Shadow moved in from the door and was close on the sleek man's trail by the time he reached his goal.

There, a peculiar sound greeted the two stalkers. It was a cross between a snarl and a chuckle, the sort of sound which only Oswald Harkland could deliver. Harkland was at the office desk and had turned on a light above it. On the desk were two folders that he had taken from the cabinet and he was spreading out the papers

that he had found in them.

The Shadow observed all this very readily, because Anjou, reaching the inner office, had made a quick side-step to reach the side of the desk across from Harkland. Thus The Shadow, still in the doorway and practically a part of its blackness, had full advantage of the scene that was to come.

Nor did The Shadow wait long. As Anjou leaned forward to study the papers that Harkland had spread, he came into the light. Instantly, Harkland reared, delivering a repetition of his earlier gloat, but with the accent on the snarl. In return, Anjou gave an ugly laugh, one that he made no effort to disguise.

Face to face, these two men who had battled in back of the Green Anchor were ready to resume their fight, with The Shadow as an unseen witness!

CHAPTER XII. DUEL IN THE DARK

THIS sort of scene wasn't new to The Shadow. He'd witnessed dozens like it during his career. What was novel was the manner in which the participants behaved. They almost outdid The Shadow.

What The Shadow expected was a verbal outburst to be followed by actual threat from both sides. Therefore, The Shadow slid both hands beneath his cloak, flipped them out again, each with a .45 automatic; one gun to cover Harkland, the other for Anjou, just to make sure they both behaved.

But neither man was waiting upon preliminary ceremony. With the manner of a man reaching for a cigarette, except that his action was swifter, Anjou de Blanco brought a shiny revolver from his pocket and leveled it straight across at Harkland. With timing equally swift, old Oswald Harkland snaked his wooden cane up from beneath the table and swung its clubby knob toward Anjou, stopping inches short of the other man's head.

The Shadow's guns were covering both by that time, but he couldn't have stopped a death stroke by either party. He was glad only that no other witness was on hand to observe the fact, otherwise the word might have gone about that The Shadow was slipping in technique to let two men – each a suspect in a matter of double murder – get the bulge on each other in such rapid style.

If they'd canceled each other then and there, The Shadow would have had but one potential solace; namely, to prove later that one man had murdered Jeffrey, the other Malloy. But that couldn't be and The Shadow knew it. So far, death had claimed two victims, with only one murderer, for the definite reason that Jeffrey and Malloy had been slain because each knew too much about the same thing.

However, Anjou and Harkland acted in a manner that was to be expected from men so alert with weapons. Anjou let his revolver swivel downward by its trigger guard and Harkland withdrew his cane. Next, Anjou pocketed his gun entirely and Harkland copied the gesture by replacing his cane beside the desk. Repeating the laugh that was no longer geared to a musical pitch, Anjou gestured to the papers on the desk.

"A cute trick, Harkland," said Anjou, "having papers made out for me as a representative of this Havana Exposition outfit. Actually, I had no connection with the firm. But the police wouldn't believe me if they found the stuff."

Cagily, Harkland eyed Anjou between narrowed lids. All he said was:

"How do you know my name is Harkland?"

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"By those other papers," rejoined Anjou. "Your name is on them. They appear to be receipts for stock issued to you by the Havana Exposition Corporation."

Harkland gave an acknowledging chuckle, a rather disarming one, but Anjou was not deceived.

"Very clever," continued Anjou. "If I had come here first and found these, I would have assumed that both of us were in the same boat. Then my mind would have gone to someone else as a man of murder, say for instance Douglas Lawton. But I am not a child, Harkland."

"You talk like a child," retorted Harkland. "It happens that I came here first instead of you. I found both batches of papers planted. I suppose I was to think that somebody else arranged it, even somebody like June Getty."

At that, both men laughed, as though over a mutual joke, but the only thing their tones had in common was a decidedly sour note. It was Anjou who queried, "Disappointed, Harkland?"

"I might ask the same question," returned Harkland. "Are you?"

Anjou shrugged.

"I might have fallen for it," he admitted. "Yes, if I had found these, I would have said: 'Poor Harkland. What could he know about the Cuban gold? What could he have against Jeffrey or Malloy?' I think I would have taken your file of papers along with my own. Of course you would have come around later, to plant another set on me. Am I right?"

"You are wrong," returned Harkland. "You probably thought I would do the same when you planted this double dish. What I intend to do, now that I understand your scheme, is to leave the papers exactly where I found them. I shall see to it that neither batch of evidence is removed. Let the police decide which is true or false."

There was a pause; then Anjou spoke again. This time his tone was not only suave, but with a note of admiration.

"I believe you would do just that, Harkland. Your position is more secure than mine. Yes, I must give you credit for an excellent idea, except that it will not work, now that I have found it out."

As he spoke, Anjou gave his hands an open spread, which bluffed Harkland quite neatly, since it proved that Anjou had no immediate intention of reaching for his gun. Immediately, however, Anjou lashed out one hand, scooped his papers and planted them in his other fist, leaving only Harkland's batch upon the table. Angrily, Harkland snatched up the papers that bore his name.

"That makes us even," announced Anjou. "Whatever you know about the Cuban gold, I can find out, now that I am working on my own."

"Cuban gold?" snorted Harkland. "I am not interested in something that does not belong to me."

"It belongs to anybody, Harkland."

"That's something that anybody would say. But I am not anybody. I have my own honest interests, nothing more. In this case, I do not care to be involved in something that pertains to murder."

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Haughtily, Harkland picked up his cane and Anjou moved his hand toward his pocket, only to withdraw it when he saw that Harkland merely intended to stalk from the office. All that Harkland was waiting for was Anjou; he gestured the fellow ahead. Thrusting his papers in his pocket, Anjou waited for Harkland to do the same, which Harkland did. Then, and only then, was Anjou willing to precede the other man.

By that time, The Shadow had wheeled to a corner of the outer office to let the parade go by. Anjou went first, with Harkland hobbling behind him, and during the march, the two kept exchanging reminders.

"You are not coming back here," Anjou was saying across his shoulder. "I'll see to that, Harkland."

"Perhaps you should call the police," chortled Harkland. "They would be glad to hear your story."

"That's probably what you would do," began Anjou. "But it's too late now, Harkland –"

At that moment, Anjou was opening the outer door. He paused, wheeled about with a vicious cry that belied his own words of "too late." Hearing sounds from down the hallway, The Shadow knew instantly what Anjou had seen. Harkland had done the equivalent of calling the police. The Shadow knew that Cardona must have left the conference with Weston and made a quick trip here.

There wasn't time to wait for Cardona. No time to choose between Anjou and Harkland. The Shadow's course was to block them both, let them both be captured to tell their respective stories, even though it might cloud the issue when determining the matter of a murderer. Both guns drawn, The Shadow surged forward as Anjou wheeled about. First to act, his revolver already on the draw, Anjou was the man who would have to be slugged down first.

The Shadow could have managed it, but he wasn't needed. Harkland, much closer to Anjou, showed a remarkable defensive style. Shooting his cane forward, he grabbed the tip and swung at the same time. The knobby head hit Anjou's gun hand, numbing it before it came to aim. Anjou's revolver struck the floor, just as a shout came from Cardona, down the hall.

It was Harkland now who had to be stopped before he broke Anjou's head with a swing of the cane. Whirling Harkland's way, The Shadow again found that his help was not required. Anjou, with a lash of his free hand, had grabbed the cane before Harkland could swing it and was trying to yank it away. As they twisted, Harkland caught the head of the cane with his other hand and let Anjou complete his yank.

What Anjou got was the cane, all except the head. That part, Harkland retained and something that came with it. The something was a sword that formed the interior of the cane, which was simply a wooden shell, serving as a sheath. As Anjou reeled backward, Harkland lurched after him, thrusting the sword point forward to spear Anjou against the wall.

Instantly, the situation changed. As The Shadow hurled himself in to divert Harkland's thrust, Anjou parried it himself. Harkland had overlooked one thing; he didn't know how to fence, but his adversary did. With swift, criss-cross swings, Anjou literally lifted Harkland backward, sword and all, each blow threatening to knock Harkland's weapon from his hand.

At least neither could kill the other, not in the brief moments which would remain before Cardona arrived. For the first time, The Shadow laughed, his tone sinister and challenging, producing a startling effect upon the two fighters who for the first time realized that he was around. But again, the result went wrong in this situation where everything seemed to be working in reverse.

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It wasn't Cardona who came through the doorway. Instead, a pair of rookie detectives piled into the room. Cardona's shout had been an order for them to go ahead and they did. They heard The Shadow's laugh, saw him go swinging toward a pair of men who forgot their own fight to dive away. He was a vague figure, The Shadow, except for the guns he swung in order to cower Anjou and Harkland. But the rookies didn't like the look of those swinging automatics.

They sprang for The Shadow, aiming as they came. With an amazing twist, The Shadow performed the incredible feat of slashing one aiming revolver upward with one hand, the other with his left. Those revolvers sputtered, a split-second apart, and it was luck on The Shadow's part that he first had encountered the detective who had the quicker trigger finger.

For the revolvers, spouting on the rise, whistled their shots within inches of The Shadow's head. Again they spoke, but their bullets found the ceiling. Then, The Shadow was hurling the surprised detectives back, out through the doorway to the hall, so that he could swing back and handle the situation with Anjou and Harkland.

It was then too late. Anjou had flung away the shell part of the cane. Grabbing it, Harkland was racing in crablike fashion through the connecting door that The Shadow had left wide when he completed his roundabout trail. Anjou in his turn grabbed up his revolver and dived after Harkland. To take up that chase, The Shadow would have put himself in line for new shots from the baffled but still eager detectives.

What The Shadow did was wheel to a corner of the room and let the headquarters men go surging past him on the trail of the two fugitives. Once the rookies had gone by, The Shadow doubled out through the hallway, hoping to head off the fleeing men himself. There, however, The Shadow ran into a new fight; one that explained why Cardona hadn't personally entered the struggle.

The stocky inspector was slugging it out with a pair of men who suddenly broke and raced away in opposite directions. One was Perique, the apelike man who served Anjou de Blanco. The other, of brawnier build, answered to the description of Klauder, who worked for Oswald Harkland. Each had brought a cover-up man with him, showing smart judgment on the part of both Anjou and Harkland. Like their masters, the servants were making a quick getaway.

Except for Cardona and the two detectives, only The Shadow remained upon the scene. Harkland and Anjou had fled their separate ways, losing the pursuing detectives, who were now returning in summons to the sound of wild gun shots that Cardona had managed to fire after Klauder and Perique. To go after either of those underlings would have been futile on The Shadow's part. Neither, if captured, could have told a worthwhile tale.

Harkland or Anjou would be a better catch. But in turning toward the direction in which they had fled, The Shadow came directly into the path of the returning rookies. Wheeling about, he encountered Joe Cardona who was reeling blindly toward him in the gloomy corridor. He'd encountered some heavy wallops, Joe had, in tangling with Klauder and Perique. Now he might mistake anybody for one of those two combatants.

It was then that The Shadow performed a startling action. Twisting from Cardona's path, he delivered a titanic laugh, a lusty challenge to friend or foe, that broke into a fierce crescendo and shivered away like an eldritch call. It brought Cardona to a halt, for he recognized The Shadow's patented mirth. Joe shouted for his men to hold their fire, but the rookies were already blasting at the spot where they had seen blackness whirl.

Those bullets simply bombarded space. The Shadow had evaporated, like a swirl of oily smoke. His laugh, trailing away, might have come from any one of the connecting corridors. It left even Cardona puzzled, while the two detectives were totally bewildered. Then, his senses surging back to normal, Cardona bawled the only

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logical order for a situation such as this.

"Follow that laugh!" Joe shouted. "Don't shoot that fellow in black, even if you do see him. Go after anybody that he's after and bring them in!"

They went three different ways, each following what he thought was the direction from which The Shadow's laugh had faded. Hardly had their running footsteps dwindled into echoes, before patchy blackness materialized in a spot which Cardona and his men had all but surrounded at the time The Shadow disappeared. That blackness emerged from a doorway almost across the hall from office 608.

It was into that doorway that The Shadow had twisted just before the detectives delivered their hectic fire.

Muffling his face with his cloak, he had not only merged with blackness; he had given his laugh that fading effect which made it seem to travel off along any of the corridors. Now, having sent the law on a chase which he hoped would bring luck, The Shadow made his own departure.

Shouts, sirens and whistles could be heard outdoors, telling that patrolmen, posted earlier by Cardona, were converging on the Mortimer Building. Doubtless, though, Cardona had told them only to watch for suspicious characters around the neighborhood, not for fugitives from the building itself. However, by now, all exits would be watched, even though the fugitives were gone. That left only The Shadow; he needed a special way out.

The Shadow took it. He went right through to the inner office of suite 608. Pausing there, he flicked his flashlight into the broken cabinet. Nothing important remained there; only pamphlets and form letters publicizing the non-existent Havana Exposition. Harkland had found the only documents of consequence and like Anjou, had made off with those pertaining to himself.

Gaining the ledge, The Shadow reached beneath his cloak, brought out four concave rubber disks, which nested into a bundle no larger than a dinner plate, though somewhat thicker. Affixing these to his hands and feet, The Shadow began a descent of the wall, using the rubber suction cups as grippers. The only sound was a soft sloughing that had given these disks the nickname of "squidgers" by people who had heard them.

At the bottom, The Shadow removed the disks, and glided out through the very alley where Doug Lawton had engaged in his original encounter with Anjou de Blanco and Perique. Soon, a tiny flashlight was blinking green, a few blocks away from the Mortimer Building. The guarded flash brought a taxicab from the corner. The door opened and a shrouded figure got in.

Then Shrevvy, the driver of that cab, heard The Shadow's whispered order that finished with a note which in itself was a command for speed:

"Maritime Library."

CHAPTER XIII. THE RIGBY RECORD

THE MARITIME LIBRARY was a massive pile of marble patterned after the Pantheon in Rome. Square-walled, it had a domed roof that formed a great curved skylight filled with panes of frosted glass, except for the exact center which was a circle of bronze. Divided into twelve sections, the glass interior of the dome had been painted with semi-transparent murals representing the signs of the zodiac.

Situated on a secluded East Side avenue, partly surrounded by a marble wall broken only by bronze gates, the

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edifice was a thing of grace and beauty when viewed from the avenue or the streets in front or back. From the fourth side, which faced toward the east, it was a total loss. There, the building was flanked by a row of decadent brownstone houses against which the marble wall terminated. Though lower than the library, the roofs of those houses cut off a view of it from the east.

It was just another Manhattan story. Some tycoon of the '90s had built himself a marble manse, but had neglected to buy the row of brownstones. A business rival who also dealt in multi-millions had grabbed them up at a premium and had kept the houses there for spite. So the man who had planned to dwell in marble halls had announced that he would use the building for his mausoleum instead of his home.

This had been blocked by one generation of heirs who had turned the edifice into a private library instead. The next generation, confronted by heavy taxes, had turned it into a public library rather than spend money tearing it down. By then, nobody cared about the spiteful brownstones.

In order to make the building a quasi-public institution, the estate had invited the Maritime Library to occupy it. This was a nice deal, because few people ever bothered to browse around the Maritime Library and there was plenty of extra space where the present heirs could keep the rare volumes belonging to the original owner, none of which could be sold until the year 1968. It was just another case of a dead man's outdated whims pestering the progress of posterity.

Doug Lawton, however, was very glad it all had happened. Otherwise, the building would still be known as the Greckendorfer Memorial, in honor of the builder's third great-grandfather, who had been scalped on this very spot by Indians who discovered that he had watered six barrels of rum which he was swapping them for Governor's Island. Having become the Maritime Library, it now housed all sorts of obscure records including the only known copy of a booklet called "Strange and Unaccountable Nautical Experiences" which included the log of the Nancy Lee.

The ground floor of the building was actually a museum, for it was filled with great glass showcases that formed a transparent labyrinth. In these cases were models of ships dating from Carthaginian triremes to ocean liners, with samples of everything belonging to the centuries between. The models were sizeable, some more than six feet in length, with many of lesser proportions. As a result, the showcases extended clear to the walls beneath the four-sided balcony that formed the second floor. The balcony itself was simply a narrow gallery, with its rail above the great, open central floor below. On the other side of this gallery were shallow alcoves, each with a reading table and short rows of bookshelves reaching to the low ceiling.

It was Doug's policy to survey every place where he intended to stay a while, a practice he had cultivated while roaming from Oklahoma down through Texas and into Old Mexico. Such a procedure proved very handy in avoiding such annoyances as spiny cactus, diamond-back rattlers and Gila monsters. So Doug had taken the long way around in coming to his particular alcove, just as he would have done if pitching camp somewhere near a waterhole.

Hence Doug had discovered various things regarding this one-time mausoleum which most persons would have overlooked.

In every corner of the building was a spiral staircase leading up from the ground floor to the balcony. All four of these stairways were obscured below by the big showcases and the models which they contained; while on the balcony level, they were hidden by the projecting alcoves. Anybody could do a sneak up or down, and it wouldn't be difficult to move along the balcony without being seen from below. A low stoop would manage the trick.

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There was something else about the balcony. The book-nooks were broken by a dividing space, halfway along each wall. Those divisions were like short passages or dead-ends. Each terminated in a big window which was covered with a huge, brass grill, solidly locked in place. There were four of these, of course, and they differed only in their ornamental grill-work. Those grills spelled the words North, East, South and West, according to the particular direction which they faced.

The South entrance was over the main entrance of the library, though there were also doors at the other sides. At that particular window, Doug had halted, faced it, raised his left hand and snapped his fingers twice. He still couldn't get Malloy's gesture out of his mind, with the business about somebody like Jonathan Pound.

From the South window, Doug had faced north and observed the great floor below. At the rear of the building, the north side, was a stairway leading down into the vaults. That basement was the part of the building that had been intended as a crypt, but which now contained the Gluckendorfer book collection.

The only other exciting feature of the place was a great anchor chain that hung from the bronze circle in the dome, to below the balcony level. The chain divided into four, near the bottom; those four chains spread out to support a huge circle of bronze, shaped like a horizontal steering wheel. From the eight points of the wheel hung bronze anchors; on the tip of each was a glowing light bulb, sixteen in all, which provided most of the illumination for both the ground floor and the balcony.

Doug had plenty of time to take all this in, because he was waiting for a wheezy old gentleman in a frock coat named Pitcairn, who acted as librarian, curator, caretaker, superintendent and what-have-you. The only other occupant of the premises was a stout, sleepy-looking guard in uniform who answered to the name of Karson, though Pitcairn had to call him three times before he answered. Most of the time, Karson was drifting around the ground floor in zombie fashion.

Pitcairn had told Doug to wait on the balcony for a few minutes, because a reporter named Burke had just arrived and wanted to write up the library. That had given Doug time to walk around and notice everything. Then, Pitcairn had returned, taken Doug to an alcove slightly north of the southeast corner, and had given him the book that bore the comprehensive title: "Strange and Unaccountable Nautical Adventures."

It was a yellowed pamphlet, nearly fifty years old, bound in buckram. The last case in the book, hot news at the time it had been written, was entitled: "The Mysterious Instance of Ben Rigby, Sole Survivor of an Unknown Wreck, as Related to Absalom Malloy, cabin boy of the Fishing Schooner Nancy Lee."

Reading through the account, Doug took quick notes in a little book he carried with him. The story fitted with what Malloy had said and gave further information. It stated that Rigby had been picked up northwest of Cape Sable, which formed the southern tip of Nova Scotia; in other terms, somewhere off the coast of Maine.

Then it came to Rigby's own statements, exactly as dictated to Malloy. It ran as follows, lacking most all punctuation marks except dashes, for on the page facing it was the facsimile handwriting of Skipper Malloy himself, back in the days when they had called him Absalom, the cabin boy:

Twas Friday night – yes, Friday night – understand me, boy – Friday night when we set sail – we warnt far from land – so near, yo, ho, so far, when the captain spied – the captain said, he said we needed water – so we had to drink water – yes, we needed water so we could drink rum – no rum – not even a bottle – we'd drunk it all up fifteen men – a bottle of rum – fifteen men – so that night we was in the brig, all of us in the brig – next day the captain says to me, 'come along, Ben,' says he – come along boat – we can watch the boxers spar – yes, watch the boxers spar – when the rocks sink – one rock then tother – heave-ho – fifteen men – yo, ho – a bottle of rum – then back to the brig, mates –

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There the maudlin account ended and Doug found himself staring at the page, wondering how much was jargon, how much might make sense. Then, his notebook ready, Doug held his pencil poised, ready to transcribe Rigby's statement in precise detail, when the buzz of voices suddenly disturbed him.

Stepping from the alcove, Doug looked over the balcony rail to the great floor below. Karson had finished his zombie routine and had suddenly become alert. He was arguing with a wise-looking chap who could only be Burke, the reporter mentioned by Pitcairn. Only Burke wasn't interviewing Karson; it looked the other way about. Listening, Doug caught enough of the buzzed conversation to learn that some visitor had entered the library and started off among the showcases, but when the watchman looked for him he was gone. So Karson was asking Burke if he had seen him.

To that, Burke shook his head; then pointed toward the stairs that led down into the vault room. The watchman pondered, finally nodded, and decided to go down and have a look. Hardly had he gone, before Pitcairn, the librarian, came stalking from the front of the great room, bringing some scrapbooks to show to Burke. Turning around, Doug started back toward his balcony nook, then stopped short.

Somebody had entered the alcove where Doug had left the Rigby record!

Doug could tell it because the shallow alcove had an overhanging light that flung shadows of the table and chair out to the alcove's mouth. With them was a shadow that looked like a head and a pair of shoulders, in motion. It couldn't be due to any swinging of the light because the other shadows did not move. This called for quick action on Doug's part, even where shadows were concerned; in fact, he didn't yet trust shadows as implicitly as did June Getty.

Sliding his hand to his hip, Doug gripped his gun, sidled past the edge of the alcove and came upon a young man who was just turning in his direction. He was a friendly, clean-cut chap, who gave Doug a serious smile; but Doug wasn't in any mood to be receptive. Most important to Doug was the way the stranger's hand was dipped in a coat pocket, as though he had just dropped something there. The hand came out, empty; whereupon, Doug's gaze went quickly toward the desk where the buckram-bound pamphlet was lying.

It was still there, open at the page which bore the Rigby statement. Clamping his free hand on the book, Doug closed it. Without relaxing his gun grip, he turned toward the other man and demanded:

"What are you doing here? Do you have a pass from the librarian?"

"That's who I'm looking for," the other man returned, "My name is Vincent, Harry Vincent, and I want to register."

"You don't need to give your name," returned Doug, "only you do need a librarian's pass. Here's mine" – Doug brought out a slip that Pitcairn had given him downstairs – "and you're supposed to get one in the office. Otherwise, you can't come up here."

"Sorry," apologized Harry. "I looked in the office but nobody was there. That's why I came up. I noticed that this alcove was lighted –"

"So naturally you looked in," interposed Doug, still a trifle suspicious. "Well, this is where I'm doing research and I'm not supposed to be disturbed. If you'll take those stairs, Mr. Vincent, you'll find the librarian in the big room, talking to a reporter. The librarian's name is Pitcairn."

Gesturing Harry along the balcony, Doug let the book drop idly on the desk, then edged to the mouth of the alcove and watched the intruder go to the spiral steps at the southeast corner of the gallery. Doug was sure

that this chap Vincent hadn't been able to do more than make a quick reading of the Rigby record. In fact, he was inclined to believe Vincent's story.

To verify it, however, Doug kept watching over the rail to see if Vincent actually went in search of Pitcairn. Sure enough, Vincent did. He appeared from the corner of the floor below, worked his way among the showcases and approached the spot where Pitcairn was talking to the reporter, Burke.

Pulling pencil and notebook from his pocket, Doug turned back into the alcove, sat down and reached for the little book that he had placed on the table. A moment later, Doug was staring wide-eyed as he sat empty-handed.

The book was gone!

CHAPTER XIV. THE VANISHING FIGHTERS

THE unexpected was becoming the commonplace in the life of Douglas Lawton. From the moment when he had accepted the summons of the tugboat whistles near the Darien Pier, his career had been a checkered series of surprises that involved two murders, a meeting with a brown-haired girl, a few slugfests and a puzzling chain of riddles that dated back to the last testament of Ben Rigby, a dying sailor picked up by a fishing schooner, half a century ago.

Not only had Doug's life become a whirl; others were involved in similar circumstances and Doug knew one person, June Getty, who could testify as much. But now, in a vast marble building which was fantastic in itself, the strangest thing of all had happened. Just as Doug had gained the evidence most needed, the log book of the Nancy Lee, it was gone as completely as if it had never existed.

The whole thing was as maddening as a frustrated dream. It made less sense than Rigby's record itself. Yet at least the mystery was confined to this little book-walled nook on the balcony of the Maritime Library. That at least was something that could serve Doug as a starting point or a finish.

Staring now at the shelves about him, Doug was trying to fathom it out. His first impulse was to blame Vincent; then common sense, or what little of it Doug could gather, made him realize that Vincent could not have taken the book. In fact, Doug's whole action had been geared to prevent just that. The book had been on the table when Vincent left and Doug had remained within the fringe of the alcove from that moment on.

It was a fact, though, that Doug had not been watching the precious book. Yet it could have been taken only from within the alcove itself. But how, considering that the nook was solid walled on all sides except the one that Doug himself had guarded?

That question produced an answer.

The alcove wasn't solid-walled, far from it. The walls, front and back, consisted entirely of books. Indeed, on one shelf there was a slender space from which Pitcairn, the librarian, had taken down the volume of "Strange and Unaccountable Nautical Experiences."

Doug was looking at that space, wondering if by some curious quirk he had replaced the thin volume there. As he looked, he noticed something. In entering the alcove for the first time, Doug had been impressed by the meticulous manner in which the books were arranged, all evenly, as if they had been fitted to the shelves. Now their appearance wasn't quite the same.

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On a lower shelf, at just about the level of the table top, four books were slightly depressed, nearly a full inch inward from the line which marked the others. Apparently those four volumes felt guilty about it, for now they were rearranging themselves, though almost imperceptibly. Staring, Doug could see the books creeping outward, aligning themselves painfully. Books didn't act that way of their own accord.

Doug knew now where his book had gone. Somebody in the next alcove had taken advantage of Doug's brief discussion with Vincent to remove books from that adjoining alcove and Doug's own. Then a stretching arm had extended a creeping hand to Doug's table and taken the priceless volume. Now the evidence was being covered, but not soon enough.

Starting a snatch at the creeping books, Doug halted and gripped a group out of a shelf above. Putting them on his table, he drove both hands through the opening, forcibly launching a batch of books from the shelf in the alcove beyond. It was a quick trick that worked. Doug was rewarded by a snarly grunt from the other side, proof that he'd thumped the book thief with those flying volumes.

Only the jolt wasn't hard enough.

Before Doug could draw his gun and shove it through the opening, a single book came sailing through, catching Doug squarely in the chin. A sudden scuffle of feet told Doug that the thief was scooting from the next alcove; rallying quickly, Doug took up the chase.

Coming out from his nook, Doug raised a spontaneous cry as he saw a stooped man take a flying dive into another alcove several along, in the direction of the north end of the building. At Doug's instinctive shout, Burke and Vincent swung about in the great space below, Pitcairn turning with them.

They didn't see the man who dived from sight, well along the gallery. Stooped, he was sheltered by the balcony rail. But they were witnesses to the unexpected thing that happened next. As Doug started to chase along the balcony, he went past the short dead-end that formed a passage to the window on the east, for the man he was after had ducked beyond that point. As if timed for Doug's arrival, a trio of rough-clad men came surging from that passage and hurled themselves full upon him.

It was most surprising, this attack, coming from a passage that should have been empty, with no means of entry. As Doug turned, and tried to aim his gun, the crew shoved him hard against the balcony rail and sought to slug him down with guns of their own.

Below, The Shadow's agents, Clyde Burke and Harry Vincent, were hardly more than helpless onlookers. They saw Doug's gun spurt twice; pointed upward, it was more of a signal for help than anything else. Then, on the chance that they might be of help, Clyde and Harry raced for the southeast corner of the building, which afforded the nearest flight of spiral stairs. They were hampered, however, by the intervening rows of model cases.

At the same moment, the man who had ducked into a further alcove came bobbing out. Taking a quick glance across the balcony rail, he raced for the northeast corner of the gallery.

Nobody glimpsed his face, nor did they even see his flight, for he was stooped as before. Like a scurrying rat, he reached his corner just as a mighty laugh came echoing through the huge building, a challenge so fearful, so powerful in its reverberations that it seemed a threat from another world.

That laugh froze everyone. Never before had human ears heard such a token of The Shadow's avenging force. Doug was petrified in the halted clutch of the men whose gun hands stopped in mid-swing. The man who had fled to the northeast stairs was cowering, hidden in their shelter. Pitcairn became a statue in the middle of

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the model room. Even Clyde and Harry felt their footsteps falter as they neared the southeast stairs.

Eyes naturally went upward. The mighty laugh commanded it. Since it seemed out of this world, the mirth logically attracted observation skyward. Those eyes saw The Shadow.

The cloaked invader had chosen his own special mode of entry to the Maritime Library. Thanks to his rubber suction cups, he had scaled the marble wall of the building, which was made to order for the squidgy grippers. Once there, he had pried loose a section of the skylight. Hearing the gunfire from within the building, The Shadow had sped his entry.

The Shadow was a human beetle, big and black, making an amazing crawl across the painted mural that appropriately represented the sign of Scorpio. He was using the rubber grippers to reach the brass center of the dome from which the great anchor chain hung. Seeing the battle below, The Shadow had halted it by delivering a strident laugh squarely into the dome itself. A vast echo chamber, the dome had magnified the challenge to titanic proportions, filling the entire space of the great square-walled building below.

Now, as the book-nooks tossed back reverberations of that all-pervading taunt, making the frozen men think that living, laughing shadows were everywhere about them, The Shadow reached the top of the hanging chain and literally threw himself about it, clutching it with arms and legs as he removed his suction cups from hands and feet.

The chain was swaying, The Shadow with it, and the motion applied to the top was increasing the impetus at the bottom. Heaving back and forth, The Shadow was turning the great chain into a mammoth pendulum. Again, The Shadow laughed, but this time his laugh created frenzy among the men who heard it. Having spotted The Shadow, they were ready to give battle.

Wild shots barked upward from the balcony. Others sounded from the front door of the building, where another trio of rough-clad men had suddenly arrived from the front street. Not only was the range too long for hasty fire; The Shadow was no longer at the spot where the gunners aimed. He was sliding down the great chain and its long, crosswise swings were making him an impossible target, since he was moving both on the vertical and the horizontal.

Harry and Clyde surged for the men who had come in by the front way. At the same time another man of stocky frame and strong-jawed face drove in from outdoors to aid them. He was Chance Le Brue, another of The Shadow's agents delegated to this sector. Spotting the action at the front, The Shadow gauged his own course accordingly. The men on the balcony were turning on Doug Lawton to subdue him, never suspecting what The Shadow had in mind. Only The Shadow's agents guessed it, for they knew the ways of their chief.

Heaving hard away, The Shadow let himself slide with the chain as it returned toward the east side of the balcony. A living plummet, he scaled off to a side chain as the swing was completed, released his hold and was catapulted clear across the balcony rail into the very midst of the trio that surrounded Doug. So far, Doug had warded off their heaviest strokes, but they dropped him to attack The Shadow. They changed tactics, too, hoping to settle The Shadow with point-blank shots. That was their mistake.

Even as he landed, The Shadow was swinging hard and wide with heavy guns that he'd whipped from beneath his cloak. He didn't need to catch his balance; he let his enemies take the burden of his weight. Guns went flying, followed by their sprawling owners. The crew of three was scattered, flattened, all in the time required for the great chain to do a pendulum swing across to the other gallery and back again.

Diving over the rail, The Shadow caught the chain on its return. This time, he slid through the big circle that supported the dangling anchors. Dropping, as the chain passed the perpendicular, The Shadow landed on the

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ground floor between display cases and took a weaving course toward the front door. The thugs who were slugging it out with The Shadow's agents had glimpsed the cloaked avenger's action. Losing sight of him amid the cases, they suddenly broke when The Shadow appeared, driving in from another direction. Out through the front door they fled, with The Shadow's agents in pursuit.

The Shadow had left the balcony situation to Doug Lawton, who had only to round up three half-stunned enemies. But Doug's thoughts still concerned the unknown man who had escaped with the precious book. Hurrying along the balcony, Doug was looking into alcove after alcove until he reached the northeast stairs. There he started down the spiral, clutching his gun.

At the bottom, Doug found himself surrounded by a cluster of display cases. Sneaking among them, he kept peering through the glass sides. At last, in an obscure corner, Doug's gaze fell upon a long, slender ship model, a full six feet in length. It was a beautiful white ship, graceful, but with a rakish touch. It was a single funnel job, with a space in front of the superstructure that apparently represented an open hold. Though the model looked like a war vessel, it carried no guns.

It wasn't entirely odd that Doug should forget his quest for the moment. The name that appeared on a placard beneath the long white ship attracted his attention. On that card, Doug read the title :

P. C. VESUVIUS

The name Vesuvius struck home. Skipper Malloy had mentioned it as the vessel to which he had been assigned while in the navy. A minor point, yet something to be remembered. It happened, however, that Doug was immediately to forget it. Hearing a slight motion just behind him, Doug started to swing about too late.

Something as solid as steel slugged downward like a cudgel and clipped Doug above the ear. Earlier he'd parried revolved strokes, but this was heavier and skillfully delivered. Doug folded to the floor and lay quite still. Next, hands were lifting him, hoisting him toward the spiral stairway. Doug stirred and pressed a hand to his aching head, moving his feet mechanically. He was almost out, but not entirely. His captor was taking advantage of the fact. Up the stairs, they reached the balcony and all the while Doug labored under the dulled misapprehension that he was being helped by some friend, most probably The Shadow.

By then, however, The Shadow had followed his agents outdoors. Pitcairn was in the office making a frantic phone call to the police; Karson had come up from the vaults and was on his way to the office. Having left Doug in charge of the balcony, The Shadow was quite willing he should be found there. Doug had made a legitimate visit to the Maritime Library and the police would believe whatever portion of his story he might choose to tell. It was The Shadow's way of squaring an innocent man with the law.

Except that Doug wouldn't be around to tell his tale. By the time his captor had steered him to the balcony, the thugs that The Shadow had clouted were in the process of recuperation. Groggily, they helped prod Doug into the little passage to the east window. There, their leader swung the grill-work open and the whole tribe moved across a short planking through an opening that led into an empty brownstone house. Afterward, hands closed the grill-work and the window, locking both in place.

Police out front were arriving and picking up three very dazed hoodlums who had been overtaken and bashed into submission by The Shadow's ardent agents. Only The Shadow himself could have been found near that scene, for he was watching to make sure that the law took over. As soon as the police entered the Maritime Library, The Shadow glided away, intending to contact Shrevvy's cab in the street behind the library.

It was at the next corner that a strange incident occurred, one of those rare events that changed the course of things and produced a weak link in the chain of crime. It wasn't a coincidence, for the whole attempt was

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intended, provided opportunity afforded it. Opportunity was present, doubly so; present in the person of The Shadow and that of the murderer he sought.

Shrevvy's cab was coming down the avenue. As The Shadow started to give it a green blink, he changed the flashlight suddenly to red, because he saw a police car coming from the other direction. Shrevvy rolled past; The Shadow stepped back, silhouetting himself against the very end of the white marble wall, just where it was flanked by a high board fence that extended from the rear of the brownstone row.

It didn't matter where the police car was concerned; it kept along the avenue. But there was another car, a sedan, that was close behind Shrevvy's cab. Instead of continuing along the avenue, that car veered into the street and The Shadow was briefly in its headlights, against his revealing background.

It braked briefly, as it went past. If it hadn't, The Shadow might not have caught his cue. But that slackening speed, slight though it was, called for instant action. The Shadow made a long, sprawling dive along the wall, away from the corner where it met the fence.

A hollow, coughing sound came from the sedan as it went past, a sound that could have been from the spurting motor, under sudden pressure of the accelerator pedal. But that didn't account for the whirring sound that went by The Shadow's shoulder. As the taillights of the sedan disappeared around the next corner, The Shadow came to his feet, turned his flashlight on the meeting spot of the marble wall and the board fence.

The Shadow had guessed right. Noiseless death, or its equivalent, had been aimed in his direction. The murderer of Jeffrey and Malloy had used his powerful airgun in an effort to gain an even bigger victim, The Shadow.

Hilt deep in the very edge of the board fence was a round-handled knife, the first of those deadly blades that had failed to find a target. A murderer had tried and missed; that was all.

All from the murderer's standpoint; not from The Shadow's. Until now, The Shadow had been willing to call it a night, on the theory that all was serene. Now The Shadow knew that something had gone wrong and badly, where his own plans were concerned.

Nor was that all. The murderer had missed his chance to pin The Shadow with a death-thrust. Now was The Shadow's chance to pin the crime on the murderer!

CHAPTER XV. QUEST OF THE MISSING

INSPECTOR JOE CARDONA, arriving at the Maritime Library in response to a hurry call, was surprised to find Lamont Cranston entering the door at the same time. The fact was that Cranston had merely come around the block while Cardona was finishing the last leg of a fast trip in a police car. But Cranston didn't put it that way.

"Hello, inspector," he greeted, casually. "I was just on my way to the Cobalt Club when I heard the sirens and thought perhaps the commissioner would be along."

"Not yet, he won't," returned Cardona. "He hasn't heard about this case yet. If it's important enough, we'll call him and tell him."

Inside the library they were met by Pitcairn who gave a very garbled story. Thugs had invaded the library but had been finally put to rout by a cloaked fighter who came sliding down the anchor chain that held the great

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chandelier, aided by a reporter and a visitor. The thugs, who looked like a crew from the waterfront, were on display in the custody of the police.

It was Cranston who promptly ferreted out some details that Pitcairn had forgotten.

"You say a visitor," stated Cranston. "How many visitors did you have this evening?"

"Why, two," replied Pitcairn. "One was up in an alcove off the balcony –"

"And did the shooting start there?"

"I believe it did. First it was up there" – Pitcairn pointed to the balcony – "then it was out by the main door."

"What happened to the visitor upstairs?"

Pitcairn stroked his chin, then shook his head.

"I don't know," he finally replied. "He was looking through a book that covered strange nautical incidents. I can't recall the title, but the catalogue number –"

"Never mind the catalogue number," Cardona broke in. "Let's go up and have a look. The only way to deal with any case is to start from the beginning."

"Which reminds me," put in Cranston. "This might interest the commissioner. Suppose I phone him while you are up there, inspector."

Cardona gave the nod as he started for the spiral stairs. Cranston went into the office and picked up the telephone. He didn't call the commissioner however; not at first, nor did he make his call as Cranston.

Instead, he phoned Burbank, and spoke in The Shadow's whispered tone. The Shadow had instructions for his agents and they were to move fast. First, a quick check at Harkland's, to learn if he had returned there and also to check on Klauder. Next, and this was more difficult, the agents were to track down Anjou de Blanco and Perique.

There was a way that the latter assignment might be handled in a hurry. Anjou had told June Getty that Doug Lawton would "know where to find him" and that somebody would be "watching for Lawton." That meant that somebody was watching Perique's place. Therefore, the system was for one of The Shadow's agents to start prowling around there, while the other watched for chance loiterers who might be interested.

Finished with that call, Cranston reverted to his own self and phoned the club to tell the commissioner that a lot of interesting things had happened at the Maritime Library. That chore done, Cranston phoned Burbank again, to hear reports from agents.

One report, the one that came from Harry Vincent, pleased The Shadow very much. He then put in a Cranston call to June Getty, learned that she hadn't heard from Doug Lawton. By then, Cranston was ready to see how Cardona and Pitcairn had been making out upstairs.

They hadn't made out well.

Pitcairn was distressed, utterly distressed, because one of the library books was missing. It was the volume that the visitor had been reading, and now the visitor was gone, book and all. Pitcairn hadn't seen him go out,

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didn't know who he was. It was all very unfortunate, the worst thing that had happened during the entire evening, in Pitcairn's opinion.

It was the worst in Cranston's opinion, too, though he didn't say so. He waited while Cardona quizzed the prisoners and learned that they were simply a trio of waterfront fighters who had been hired to help out if anything happened in the Maritime Library. Something had happened, so they'd helped.

Cardona took time out for a conference with Cranston. They held their chat between two cases which exhibited the flag-ship of Columbus and the frigate Constellation.

"This crew doesn't know anything," Cardona asserted. "They're just what they claim to be, a bunch of wharf-rats paid to handle a cover-up job. But that gang upstairs was different. They must know something."

"Unquestionably," agreed Cranston. "For one thing, they probably know who let them in here."

"An important point," nodded Cardona. He looked across the great room, beneath the huge anchor chain which was still swaying very slowly, like a stopping pendulum, as in mute testimony to The Shadow's recent exploits. "I don't think Pitcairn had anything to do with it. If he'd wanted to steal that book, he could have done it without anybody knowing it."

Cranston gave a slight smile. They were watching Pitcairn now as he walked about in flub-dub style, wringing his hands over the disaster that had struck the Maritime Library. Then Cardona gestured beyond, to where Karson was standing, as if waiting orders.

"That watchman looks all right, too," decided Cardona. "Of course he was down in the vaults at the time everything broke loose and that was a nice way to keep out of trouble." Joe pondered briefly. "I may have something there. I'm going to give Karson a real quiz. If he stands up under it, I'll take Pitcairn and put him through the mill. Maybe Pitcairn is trying to pin something on Karson."

Cardona didn't mind changing opinions when he talked to Cranston. That was why he was doing it now, before Commissioner Weston arrived. The commissioner was always calling Cardona short when Joe tried to crack a case by talking over angles.

"It amounts to this," summed Cardona. "Somebody either let that mob in here, or they did a mighty neat sneak. I've examined the upstairs windows; all of them are firmly barred. Therefore, they must have come in by the ground floor, only its doors are barred, too, except for the front."

"There's the vault room," reminded Cranston. "You had better give it a thorough inspection."

"Right. That would mean Karson. Still, Pitcairn could have sent him down there to be out of the way. You know, though" – Cardona turned a reflective gaze toward the front entrance – "sneaking in here would be a cinch. The real problem is how the upstairs mob got out."

"Maybe they just beat it after the fight, while Pitcairn was phoning from the office and Karson was still down in the vault room. No" – Joe shook his head – "we aren't getting anywhere with this stuff. The big question is why the mob came here at all. You don't need three men to steal a book that anybody could shove in his pocket, any more than a cover-up crew is needed to see that nobody stops them."

Cardona was putting his finger on the answers and he followed with another Grade-A comment. Eyes roving throughout the great building, Cardona continued:

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"The way I see it, the mob was supposed to lug away something bigger than a book, something so big that it would take a couple of guys to handle it. Like one of those ship models, maybe. I'm going to have Pitcairn take an inventory and find out if anything is missing besides that book."

Something was missing and Cranston could have told Cardona exactly what.

The missing item was Douglas Lawton. He had been spirited away not only because he had uncovered the record of the Nancy Lee with the complete statement of Ben Rigby, but also because he had learned other things as well. Doubtless, Doug had not only encountered a murderer engaged in theft; he could have told something about the special crew of handy men who had entered and left the library so mysteriously.

As The Shadow, Cranston had personally handled that batch of troublemakers and now he regretted that his treatment had not been permanent. But there was no use telling Cardona all this; quite the contrary. Right now, Doug Lawton might still be alive, but how long he would remain so was something with a big question mark. Doug would need rescue and immediately. To mass the law in his behalf might only be a give-away that would serve Doug with a quick death sentence.

This was a job for The Shadow to handle with his agents. There was just one way in which Cardona could help, so The Shadow proposed it, Cranston style:

"Suppose you question that outside crew again, inspector. Find out how they got mixed up in this, as far as you can."

Nodding that Cranston had a good idea, Cardona led the way to the librarian's office where the three thugs had been herded, pending the arrival of Commissioner Weston. Bluntly, Joe put a question to the group:

"What brought you lugs here, anyway, and who? The more you speak up, the better it will be for you."

The men shifted uneasily; then one, catching glances from the other two, decided to act as spokesman.

"We can tell you why," the fellow said gruffly, "but we can't tell you who. The reason is we don't know. We don't mind saying that we hang out around Morey's Fish and Chip House, because you'll probably find it out anyway. We hang out there because every now and then some guy phones up and says he needs us.

"It's legit enough, ain't it, for us to poke around some place like the old Darien Pier, or a joint like this, just to see that nobody makes trouble for nobody? Well, that's the deal and until tonight we liked it. When we get back to Morey's, we find dough waiting for us, that's all.

"We didn't start nothing tonight, so why blame us? The shooting started inside this joint and we came piling in to stop it. Some guys pitched onto us and while we were slugging it out, The Shadow came after us. That's why we scrambled. We didn't want no trouble from The Shadow."

The details weren't entirely correct, but they were near enough so. They gave Cranston what he wanted, a starting place; namely, Morey's. The next step was to get there before Cardona decided to round up everybody in the fish-and-chip house. That wouldn't happen until Commissioner Weston gave the order.

Casually remembering an appointment, Cranston told Cardona that he would be back to meet Weston later. Leaving from the library, Cranston turned eastward, along the street that had the row of brownstone fronts. He twinkled a green light and Shrevvy's cab appeared from the avenue just east.

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Getting into the cab, Cranston drew a cloak and hat from a sliding drawer beneath the rear seat, bringing a brace of automatics with them. Shadow style, he gave a destination to Shrevvy and the whispered order ended with a subdued laugh.

The Shadow wasn't thinking of the fish-and-chips they served at Morey's. He was looking at the brownstone house, particularly the last in the row, an empty one that flanked the marble wall of the Maritime Library.

There, The Shadow was sure he would find an answer to a pressing mystery. That, however, was something he would investigate later. Right now, the rescue of Doug Lawton came first.

CHAPTER XVI. THE MAN WHO TALKED

ON the way to Morey's, The Shadow stopped to pick up some of his roving agents. These included Hawkeye, a little wizened man with ferret eyes; also Cliff Marsland and Miles Crofton, a pair of sock-'em and rock-'em chaps who looked like part of the waterfront itself, when judged by the rough clothes they were wearing.

From these agents, The Shadow received the latest reports that had come through Burbank. Oswald Harkland was back at the penthouse where he lived, a few blocks from the Cobalt Club. Anjou de Blanco had returned to the apartment that he no longer intended to keep, according to what he had told June Getty.

In each case, the time element had allowed for a stopover at the Maritime Library, covering the period when Doug Lawton had disappeared along with a trio of sluggers that The Shadow should have settled for keeps. In brief, neither Harkland nor Anjou had an alibi that would stand up.

Of course, either could furnish an excuse. It had probably taken some neat dodging to slip the police cordon which closed around the Mortimer Building after the affray in suite 608. Therefore, both Harkland and Anjou would have been necessarily late in arriving home. Yet neither would want to admit that he had ever been near the Mortimer Building. As for the time element, The Shadow could spike it with the simple fact that he, the last to leave the Mortimer Building, had arrived at the Maritime Library before crime struck there, allowing, of course, for the few minutes The Shadow had required to scale the building and appear through the dome in the midst of the sign Scorpio.

At present, however, the important factor was to locate Doug Lawton. According to The Shadow's agents, Harkland had arrived home without Klauder; similarly, Anjou had been minus Perique. Either of those two servitors might, therefore, have had something to do with the forcible removal of Doug. But neither was of the caliber to manage the deal himself and The Shadow was quite confident that a master's hand had not only stolen Doug's book, but had dispatched the murderous knife intended for The Shadow himself.

That was why The Shadow dismissed the names of Klauder and Perique with a peculiar laugh which carried something ominous in its sinister note. His agents recognized the significance. If time ran out, this rescue expedition might turn into a mission of vengeance. Certainly vengeance was already in the cards; the object of The Shadow's wrath was the man who had murdered Jeffrey and Malloy. But the problem was first to identify the murderer.

Perhaps the killer would reveal himself tonight. If so, the agents could only hope that The Shadow would uncover him before he added Doug to his list of victims.

Now the cab was riding south along the elevated highway, slackening speed as it neared the old Darien Pier. Along the street below, dim buildings showed across the way, one of them marking the former residence of Perique. Crofton, who had covered the place earlier, described his progress or lack of it.

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"I moved in and out," reported Crofton, "like I was Lawton, looking for Perique. Some fellow was snooping around, trying to check on me. A little guy, quick-moving, like a rat."

Cliff Marsland asserted an amendment.

"More like a weasel," was Cliff's opinion. "I spotted him looking for Miles, when I came down here from the River Garage. I trailed him a block or two, but he slipped me."

"Look for him at Morey's," ordered The Shadow. "If he's the go-between in one case, he may be in another."

Shrevvy coasted the cab down a ramp, did some turns through narrow streets and pulled up behind the fish-and-chip house, which was appropriately near the river. There The Shadow melted into the darkness of which he was a part, while Miles and Cliff entered Morey's. As soon as they were inside, Hawkeye sidled into the place, as if a stranger to the other two.

There were plenty of customers in Morey's and they were a rugged lot.

Longshoremen, crew members from ships, with an assortment of hangers-on. None looked tougher than Miles and Cliff, however, which was why The Shadow's agents played the game they did. Moving among the battered tables, they stopped at the bar and opened negotiations with the man behind it.

"Anybody leave anything for us?" asked Cliff. "We're part of the bunch that went out an hour ago."

"Joined them outside," added Miles. "They said to meet them here when we got back, if we got back."

The barkeeper looked uneasy. It was logical that this pair should have joined the crew of wallopers who had been summoned somewhere; they certainly appeared tough enough. Only this wasn't his business and he didn't want to be mixed in it. Cannily, he asked:

"You know Weasel Clegg?"

The name hit a familiar note; it was Cliff's very description of the snoopers that he and Miles had tabbed around Perique's. So Cliff answered:

"Sure we know Weasel."

"Better talk to him then," the barkeeper said. "That will make it simple."

As he spoke, the barkeeper gave a betraying glance. Following it, both Cliff and Miles saw a slouchy man at a table near the door who fitted the appearance of the spy they had spotted earlier. The fellow caught the barkeeper's eye and turned away. Evidently, he didn't take this pair for extra members of the cover-up crew, though he could guess from their looks that they were making that claim.

Other signals passed rapidly. The man with the weasel face flashed a look to some tough characters who were sitting near. Cliff and Miles gave gestures that were understood by Hawkeye, further away. Then, as The Shadow's brawnies moved over toward Weasel's table, the fight was on.

One of the hard guys got up from the table, stumbled against Cliff and apologized by taking a swing at his jaw. Cliff dodged; Miles came through with a punch and flattened the troublemaker. Then three more were on their feet, swinging chairs, which was bad judgment. Miles put a second punch between the chair rungs to reach the man beyond; Cliff wheeled, hoisted the table and bashed the other pair at once, chairs and all.

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They came back, the four wallopers, only to get more. Back to back, Cliff and Miles were taking them as fast as they came. During the brawl, however, Weasel made his exit. So did Hawkeye, trailing the fellow at every turn, finally ducking from sight when Weasel stopped beyond a corner and took a quick look around. It was then that Hawkeye heard whispered orders almost at his elbow. The Shadow was taking over. Hawkeye was to trail along and await blinked signals.

Weasel Clegg hadn't a chance of covering his trail from then on. When he finally ducked down some steps into an old basement, Weasel threw a satisfied glance back along the street, but saw nothing except blackness. Once the fellow moved into his lair, some of that blackness stirred. Signal blinks gave Hawkeye the word he wanted. He was to go back to Morey's and contact Miles and Cliff, who by this time had probably finished the maulers who had made the mistake of pitting a mere two-to-one odds against the pick of The Shadow's strong-arm men.

Meanwhile, Weasel had reached a squalid little room at the back of the rat-trap that answered for a basement. From his pocket he took an envelope stuffed with money, the payroll intended for the cover-up boys who had been detained at the Maritime Library. Stuffing the envelope beneath a shoddy mattress on a broken-down cot, Weasel turned to the door, intending to bolt it.

Instantly, he recoiled, a sickly expression spreading across his pointed face. He coughed two words:

"The Shadow!"

The cloaked avenger had entered silently, was standing motionless with folded arms, just inside the door, like an unreal nightmare conjured up by Weasel's imagination and lack of conscience. Burning eyes focused on the rattish man; lips hidden by an upturned cloak-collar delivered a low, whispered laugh that crept through the room as though emerging from every cranny and crack. A gloved hand gestured a slight flip; now Weasel was staring at the mouth of a .45 automatic that added its unblinking eye to the burning gaze above.

To Weasel, the eyes of The Shadow were colder, more steely than the gun itself!

Weasel didn't just cower; he sagged. He sagged to the only corner that offered a shred of security; a corner behind an old, pot-bellied stove that hadn't been used for years, judging from the rust that adorned it. Beside the stove was an old broken stove-pipe lying in two sections. The pipe had run up from the stove, formed a right angle, and continued to a hole in the wall that had once been stuffed with rags against the weather, but now needed a refill.

Weasel looked as though he wanted to jump in the stove, crawl in the pipe, so great was his desire to elude The Shadow.

Again came The Shadow's laugh, its tone relentless.

"Now it is your turn, Weasel," spoke The Shadow. "You lured others to their doom. Speak, as they tried to speak."

Shakily, Weasel's hands gripped the cold surface of the stove; he drew himself up to face The Shadow.

"I didn't kill them!" gulped Weasel. "I didn't even know what was coming, so help me. I only knowed where they was to be found."

"Jeffrey first," toned The Shadow. "Then Malloy. Who next, Weasel?"

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"Nobody's next," bleated Weasel. "I hadn't nothing to do with it. I only gave the tip-off."

"That a murderer might do his work –"

"I slipped word to Perique. So he could tell de Blanco. Each time I found out where one of them was, Jeffrey and then Malloy, so de Blanco could get to them."

"That paved the way to murder," declared The Shadow. "You are as guilty as the killer, Weasel. The proof lies in the way you lured Lawton to each scene of crime."

"Only I didn't," pleaded Weasel. "I've hardly even seen Lawton."

"But you talked to him," stated The Shadow. "Over the telephone. You were at the pay-booth in back of the River Garage when Lawton phoned there. You told him to be at the Darien Pier –"

It was a hunch on The Shadow's part and he played it to perfection. Weasel, literally wilting on the stove, was impressed with the belief that The Shadow saw all, heard all, and knew all.

Immediately, The Shadow followed through.

"Another death is due," The Shadow announced. "Douglas Lawton is now a prisoner and he is to be the victim. You are responsible, because you hired the cover-up crew that made it possible. I intend to see that Lawton does not die, but I can spare you a few brief moments to tell me what you know. By so doing, you, too, will have a right to live."

The Shadow wasn't asking a favor of Weasel; he was putting it the other way around. Thinking that The Shadow did know everything, Weasel snatched the opportunity. Gripping the stove, he reared himself up, licked his lips and spoke frantically.

"I'll talk, Shadow! I didn't know they'd snatched Lawton. Only since they did, I can tell you where they're taking him, and what they're going to do and why!"

Weasel's voice had gone shrill, drowning all other sounds in this stony, windowless room. The chug that came hard on his words was like a curious echo. Even more curious was Weasel's reaction.

With a grimace that didn't belong on even his ugly face, Weasel lurched forward, upward, lost his hold on the stove and went rolling to the floor. Even before Weasel struck, The Shadow's automatic was in action, sending bullets through the half-stuffed pipe hole in the wall behind Weasel's back. For it was through that six-inch opening that the stroke had come, hidden by Weasel's body. The Shadow knew it when he saw Weasel do the crazy roll, for sticking from the go-between's back was the rounded handle of a knife, another token of a murderer's skill at air-gunnery.

Whether The Shadow's probing shots had reached the killer, was still a question. Reaching the killer in person was out of the question, for there was no direct exit from this room to the rear of the building. But there was something more important at this moment; having at least warned the murderer away with those quick shots, The Shadow had time to gain the facts that Weasel might tell before he died.

Cloaking his gun, The Shadow stooped beside the go-between and lifted the fellow's face. Eyes glassy, Weasel managed to gasp two words:

"Wrecker... Clementine –"

That was all. Upon those two words depended the fate of Doug Lawton!

The Shadow knew.

CHAPTER XVII. GONE FOREVER, CLEMENTINE

THE door of the room was opening as The Shadow turned about and taking it to be his agents, The Shadow started to give a swift command. But the man who hurled himself into the room was neither Cliff nor Miles. He was Harkland's blocky servant, Klauder, lashing his big hands ahead of him for a grapple with The Shadow.

Driving up like a living piston, The Shadow met the thrust, wheeled Klauder around and hurled him against the stove, nearly knocking it over. Klauder rebounded as if both he and the stove were made of rubber and by then The Shadow was meeting another attacker in the person of Perique.

Taking Perique with a twist, The Shadow converted him into a human bludgeon, swinging the man's lighter frame against the heavier form of Klauder, by dint of a terrific over-arm swing. Perique not only came flying back; with him, he brought his short Carib club, flaying it wildly for The Shadow's head. Clamping Perique's arms, The Shadow was getting him under control when Klauder was in again, with a weapon of his own.

Klauder had armed himself by the simple expedient of planting a big foot on Weasel's back, gripping the knife handle that projected from the dead man, and tugging it loose. He was slashing with the knife, but clumsily. Around the room they spun; tripping over Weasel's body, they tangled forcibly with the stove, rolled it over with them. There The Shadow left the battle, for as Klauder and Perique came to their feet, they heard a parting laugh that was suddenly muffled by the slamming of the door.

Reaching the front street, The Shadow ran into Cliff and Miles, arriving with Hawkeye, and pointed them to the attack. Then, finding an alley to the back of the building, The Shadow sped there.

No sign of the murderer when The Shadow flicked a flashlight around a small courtyard, which had another passage leading out. The chance of trapping the killer had been more important than working on Perique and Klauder; now there was something still more important. Cutting through to a side street, The Shadow picked up Shrevvy's cab with flashed signals, boarded it and drove around to the front.

Cliff and Miles were still there, but Klauder and Perique had broken free and fled in different directions.

Wearied by the heavy brawl which they had won at Morey's; The Shadow's agents were not in shape for pursuit, though they could still give battle. As for Hawkeye, he had popped into Weasel's place to see what cooked there, other than an empty stove. Now Hawkeye was out again, hopping the cab with the other agents.

Promptly The Shadow stated what he had learned from Weasel, counting on his agents to interpret it from knowledge that they had gathered while covering the waterfront. Nor did they fail him.

"That name Wrecker rings a bell." It was Miles Crofton who spoke. "Somebody said the other night that Wrecker Chaffin was in town. He operates out of Norfolk with a seagoing tug, doing salvage work. They said he was looking for a crew."

"Clementine is the name of a tugboat," put in Cliff Marsland. "She isn't a sea-goer, though, far from it. She hauls barges around from the East River, except when she's broken down, which is most of the time. They get a laugh whenever she shows up; they say there goes the Clementine on another trial run."

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The whole thing linked quickly in The Shadow's mind. Wrecker Chaffin wouldn't be needing a crew in New York, not with plenty of hands available in Norfolk. Therefore, he could well be the skipper of the Clementine, the tug that was never pulling barges and therefore might have another mission.

Such a mission as being off the Darien Pier at times when signal blasts were needed to lure Doug Lawton into trouble.

Now Doug's trouble was of a deeper sort, but even more it fitted with the ramblings of the Clementine. The fact that the tug, whenever working, hauled around the tip of Manhattan from the Hudson River to the East River, gave her a mobility useful in crime. There was a perfect way of transporting a crew of crooks from one side of the island to the other, without running afoul of the police. True, there were such things as police boats, but they wouldn't be watching an innocent tug like the Clementine unless crime came right to its docking place.

Until tonight, all crime had happened on the West Side, close to the Hudson. The raid on the Maritime Library had been an East Side job. The get-away car had feinted westward, rounded the block and finding itself clear, had gone east.

Now to locate the Clementine.

At the Hudson waterfront, The Shadow scattered his agents, sending them into various dives where they could glean news of what was doing on the river. They were back, and promptly, with the latest information on the Clementine. She was overdue on a barge job up at Weehawken on the New Jersey side of the Hudson. They'd been putting her in shape over at an East River dock and if she didn't make the grade this trip, another tug would have to be called. A couple of tug crews were waiting and hoping for just such a call, which was why The Shadow's agents brought the information back so quickly.

Word would be coming from the old Twenty-third Street Ferry as to whether the Clementine would complete her trip. She was supposed to make contact there if she had trouble or was late.

Fate was playing The Shadow's way. Granted luck, only a fair share of it; he would not only rescue Doug, but perhaps deliver a crushing blow that would crack crime apart while solving the riddle of the Dead Man's Chest.

Hitting the elevated highway, Shrevvy zoomed for Twenty-third Street with The Shadow and his agents as passengers. They were in time, which was the luck The Shadow needed, for close to their goal, they could see a crawling tug, with low lights and a glow from the boiler room. She was creeping toward the pilings at the end of the old ferry slip which was no longer used. Almost there, the Clementine, but she was a snail compared to Shrevvy's cab. Down the ramp, around and up to the ferry, Shrevvy disgorged his passengers.

They were expected. A mob was on hand like the bunch that had covered outside the Maritime Library. Paid sluggers, ordered to get tough with anybody who wasn't wanted. They were here for trouble and they got it. Fully rested from their earlier brawl, Cliff Marsland and Miles Crofton pitched right into them and were promptly amplified by Chance LeBrue, who had been ordered to make contact here. Harry Vincent and Clyde Burke were due later as reserves, so Hawkeye scurried off to meet and guide them.

All this was for The Shadow's benefit. Filtering right out of the picture, he was through the ferry gate and doing an amazing hedge-hop along the big pilings that flanked the old slip. As long as his agents kept the fight strictly on shore, The Shadow would be free to operate, since the shore crew would think it was keeping trouble away from the Clementine.

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Now the tug was practically under the massive end of the slip, where huge pilings seemed to wallow in the water. Atop those pilings hovered a phantom shape, The Shadow, like a lone bird on watch for prey. A lantern swung from the ferry dock, deep in the slip and a voice hailed:

"Ahoy, Clementine!"

"Ahoy," came the answer from the low bridge of the tug. "All's well and on our way."

"You've got thirty minutes time limit to reach that barge wharf. Otherwise, the tug Hercules will take over."

"We'll make it in twenty, or we'll blow this kettle."

"On your way, then."

The swash of the Clementine was mingling with the eddies about the pilings. The stern of the tug was swinging as her engine chugged. Bells clanged, a whistle squealed; they came like signals for The Shadow's take-off. It was a long leap, with the Clementine a bobbing, squirming target below.

Then The Shadow was in mid-air, his cloak spreading like a parachute, with black water widening between the pilings and the stern of the tug, as though to swallow the jet-garbed figure that was taking this long-shot plunge.

The Clementine seemed to gather herself up and back as her propeller churned a white splotch in the murky water. Then The Shadow landed, not in the foam, but over the rail that rose to meet him. Catching his footing, he reeled ahead, planked himself hard against the back of the engine house and merged with the dull grime. He waited there briefly while the Clementine got under way; watched while crew members went past. Then the Clementine was aiming out to midstream with its unseen passenger.

First of The Shadow's jobs was to size the crew, which he did. There were five men on the craft and The Shadow recognized three of them. They were the batch that he had slugged down on the balcony of the Maritime Library.

Next, The Shadow was peering up into the bridge house, at the face of Wrecker Chaffin himself. On shore, Wrecker rated as a solid character, his weather-beaten face the sort that never betrayed a mood. Probably the same applied whenever he was bound upon a legitimate cruise. But now his face, with a two-day crop of beard, was contorted in a bloated leer, as ugly as the glint from his narrowed eyes. The old cap that extended its visor above his face, caught the light from beside the wheel and reflected a livid scar that crossed the man's right cheek. That scar was jagged, like his leer.

Wrecker snorted as he pulled the whistle cord. He wasn't sending signals ashore tonight. He was drawing attention to the Clementine. The reason became plain when Wrecker clanged four bells for full speed ahead. He wanted other shipping to witness the Clementine going into a spurt that nobody would believe the old tug capable of. The Shadow could feel the deck grind and strain beneath him. Ahead were lights of moored vessels. Wrecker was putting on a show for them, but why?

Whatever the reason, it was time now to find Doug Lawton. The Shadow went below, which on the Clementine meant only one place, the engine room. There, below the water level, he stepped aside while two of the crew finished stoking the engine. As they turned, The Shadow merged with the blackness of the coal-bin. The two men were putting on life belts, adding baggy coats over them. The Shadow watched them go up to the deck.

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A low moan came from an opposite corner. There, The Shadow saw Doug Lawton. Doug was rubbing his head in dazed fashion. He looked beaten up or drugged; perhaps both. Doug mumbled as he heard the tug's whistle squeal.

"Darien Pier... two blocks south, two blocks east, two blocks –"

The Shadow was helping Doug to his feet, guiding him toward the hatchway. The Clementine was straining until every inch of her planking seemed to jar. Up the ladder, slowly, steadily, and then –

A snarl.

The Shadow and Doug Lawton were face to face with Wrecker Chaffin. The scarred skipper looked like a Frankenstein creation, for he had put on a life belt too, covering it with an oversized jacket. With his snarl, Wrecker yanked a revolver; up behind him popped two other bulging men, who pulled guns, too.

One hand steadying Doug, The Shadow had already drawn a .45 with the other. He jabbed quick shots, purposely wide by inches, for he didn't want to cripple any of this crew, so they could lie around trying to shoot back. He wanted to scatter them, to send them overboard, since they were already equipped for such action. Then The Shadow could take over the Clementine.

Wrecker realized it and howled as he dodged for cover. He howled for a mass attack and it came. The Shadow had emptied one gun and was shifting as he whipped out another. That was when the Clementine yawed.

Wrecker had got to the wheel and given it a slashing turn.

Doug lost his balance and would have pitched headlong into the engine room if The Shadow hadn't gone with him. The two shots that The Shadow delivered were wide; but landing safely with Doug, The Shadow was up on his feet, starting for the ladder, ready to chop all heads that came in sight.

None came. Instead, the crew above clamped a hatch shut and threw its bolt. Then from the sides of the engine room came a gushing roar. Wrecker had opened a series of pet-cocks. He was scuttling the Clementine!

Only it wouldn't look like a scuttle job, not the way the tug was racing. Once the water reached the fire-box, the whole engine room would become a mass of scalding steam with an explosion to follow. It was arranged for a quick job, too, for the water was pouring in from both sides like a creek flooded by a cloudburst. There was no use trying to time the sequel; the only thing was to escape it.

Hauling Doug with him, The Shadow practically leaped up the ladder to the hatch. He pumped his bullets at the spot where he was sure the bolt must be. Wood splintered, but the hitch did not yield. There was a sizzle below; the water was reaching the fire. Then, with the butt end of his gun, The Shadow smashed hard into the splintered wood. Metal met metal; the gun had cracked the bolt. Prodding Doug into life, The Shadow got action from him. Shoulder to shoulder, they hit the hatch once, twice, then lurched through to hit the deck.

Not a sign of Wrecker nor his crew. They'd jumped minutes ago. Nor did The Shadow tarry. Hauling Doug with him, he lunged to the rail, hit it hip high and somersaulted over, taking the rescued man with him. It was difficult to tell, though, whether they left the Clementine or it left them.

The whole interior of the tug lifted itself high in the air, splitting the sides outward as if they had been cardboard. Flying chunks of beams and planking scaled over the heads of The Shadow and Doug Lawton,

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splashing the water beyond them. All that was left of the *Clementine* was a great cloud of steam and those bits of floating timber.

Dragging Doug along, *The Shadow* swam to a small clump of debris, buoyed Doug on the floating wood and worked the improvised raft toward the Manhattan shore. For a moment there had been one great burst of flame, when the tug exploded. Now the fireworks were over and the river was black again. Like everything else, *Wrecker* and his crew had vanished, but *The Shadow* was sure they had found a safe spot. That was something they would have planned beforehand.

Yes, the fireworks were over, but only for tonight. The time would come when *The Shadow* would put on a special brand of his own. It wouldn't be healthy for *Wrecker* and Company to be around when that happened, but *The Shadow* intended to make sure they would be there.

CHAPTER XVIII. THE SHADOW TAKES A TRAIL

THEY were still taking inventory at the Maritime Library when Lamont Cranston came back there to meet the police commissioner. With Weston was Stephen Belville, who had come in from his yacht, the *Pandora*, to stay over night at the Cobalt Club.

Along with Cardona and Weston, Belville had been helping Pitcairn check the various exhibits and they were approximately halfway through the ship models. Now, however, they had taken time out, with Weston wondering if the job would prove worthwhile.

"This never would have happened here," Weston was telling Cardona, "if you'd handled things right at the Mortimer Building. What has Harkland had to say about it?"

"He wasn't home a couple of times when I phoned him," replied Cardona. "Finally, I talked to him and he practically said, 'So what?' He said he'd told us that the Havana Exposition bunch was phony and had jumped their rent. He guessed some of them had been around trying to pick up some stuff they left there."

Belville put a question of Cardona:

"Any lead on Anjou de Blanco?"

"The guy has skipped," returned Cardona, ruefully. "We'd located his apartment and apparently he was in there some time this evening, packing up. He may have been around that office tonight, but there's no way of proving it."

Belville walked out of the office, beckoning Cardona to follow. On a bench among some of the exhibit cases, Belville had a big suitcase that he had brought into town with him. He opened it, produced a file of papers.

"All I know about de Blanco," said Belville. "It's not much, but it may help some."

"Thanks," said Cardona. As they walked back, he drew out a report sheet. "Here's what we know about Harkland, in condensed form. It would take a file cabinet to cover him, and even then it would stack up one hundred percent legitimate. Still, I wonder—" Joe handed the report to Cranston, who was standing by. "See what you think of it, Mr. Cranston. Anybody who gets tied up in so many businesses might have a hidden one."

Cranston read the report. Apparently, Harkland believed in putting enough irons in the fire to smother it. He

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wasn't a man who started new enterprises; he preferred to take over old ones. In fact, for a long time, he had auctioned off businesses, keeping a few plums for himself.

Harkland at one time had been a ship-owner, buying out small, practically defunct lines in an effort to create a big one. He hadn't gone that far, but in selling most of his small companies, he had broken about even. He still owned one, the Indies Trading Packet Line, but it existed in name only. Another of his abandoned enterprises was the Scotian Ship Yard, which hadn't turned out a vessel in fifteen years.

Those, however, were freaks of Harkland's past. Currently, he was quite up-to-date, having bought over an independent movie studio that operated under the name of Black Knight Productions. According to the report, Harkland was scheduled to take a trip to the Pacific Coast, to arrange the first picture for the refinanced organization.

"We've checked on Black Knight," said Weston, looking over Cranston's shoulder. "It sounds like a stock promotion deal. But Harkland has been in such things before. You can't tell whether he has a lot of money or whether he's short."

"Perhaps I can," returned Cranston. "I'll phone Harkland and ask him."

Phoning Harkland, Cranston received a reply. He concentrated on the subject of Black Knight Productions, saying he was interested in buying into it. Hanging up, Cranston smiled.

"Harkland is coming right down," Cranston told the others. "Perhaps the way to learn things from him is to talk about business rather than crime."

Belville nodded as though thinking deeply on the subject; then he announced:

"I'll take my bag and check it at the club, commissioner, so I can be back when Harkland arrives. See you later."

Cranston began killing time by checking over some of the exhibits. This took him to the northeast corner of the ground floor, a spot where he was now convinced that Doug might have been intercepted after the upstairs fight. This portion of the exhibit room was confined exclusively to models of naval vessels beginning with the era of iron-clads. Checking the models, from the original Monitor, Cranston noted that every ship was equipped with armament in miniature. Not a thing was missing or out of place.

Going out to the center of the room, Cranston found Pitcairn and asked him about other naval models.

"I'll show you some fine wooden ships," offered Pitcairn. "Over in the southeast corner. I've been listing them."

They went to the corner and Pitcairn picked up some loose papers that he had left on the display case. The librarian then scratched his baldish head.

"That's odd," he said. "I was sure I had one sheet more. Let me see, I was checking over here —"

Pitcairn stopped, his finger pointing first to one display case, then another. He shook his head.

"That's not right," Pitcairn decided. "Those two caravels should not be in separate cases. They belong together."

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"I take it," decided Cranston, "that one caravel was used to replace a model that someone removed from another case."

Pitcairn nodded.

"Most distressing," he declared. "I can't begin to remember what model it is. My mind runs entirely to books."

"You have no master list?"

"None. These models came from different sources. We arranged them in types, that was all."

While Pitcairn searched his memory, Cranston moved along beneath the gallery and swiftly. Reaching the wall at the very center, he placed his ear there and listened. He caught a faint clang that could have been the dull clash of bronze, carrying down from directly above. Returning, Cranston walked past Pitcairn and out of the library.

It was time to investigate that house next door. Nor did Cranston revert to The Shadow's guise. He was anxious to draw attention, at least from the person he sought. It was a long walk around to the back street; there, with pick and flashlight, Cranston opened the back door of the empty house. Reaching the second floor, he found a locked room, opened it and discovered a closet that terminated in a hinged wall. Swinging the wall inward, Cranston found its surface covered with imitation brick. Beyond was a frosted window which he raised and discovered the bronze grill-work that marked the eastern wall of the library.

On his side of the grill, Cranston discovered hidden catches, ingeniously set in the frame. Springing them, he opened the grill and entered the library balcony. The grill locked from the outside when Cranston closed it. The inner clamps were solidly locked, because it was the entire frame that swung.

This answered the question of the stolen book, the mysterious raiders and Doug's disappearance. It now explained the theft of a ship model that belonged to the days of wooden ships, so far as how it had been done.

But why?

There The Shadow's analytical mind came to the fore. Why had someone fixed a way to rob the Maritime Library and yet waited until this date? The answer was obvious: The perpetrator had been sure that the library contained some volume of great importance, but he did not know what it was until Doug Lawton uncovered the record of the Nancy Lee.

The next question was why had that same perpetrator failed to steal the missing ship model at the time he had taken the book. Again an answer: Because only by reading the book had he discovered that the ship model was of equal importance.

From this, The Shadow was divining certain peculiar factors in the respective murders of Jeffrey and Malloy; things that marked a distinctive difference in the men as well as their cases. Those points might prove important later; at present there was other business.

Oswald Harkland was arriving by the front door, proclaiming his advent with the customary tap-tap of his cane, which was a new variety, a rough-hewn stick with the look of a shillelagh. Pretence on Harkland's part, that hobbly gait, but such sham did not prove a man to be a murderer.

Neither was a lurking man necessarily a killer.

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As he met Harkland at the door, Cranston saw a sneaking figure across the street; knew from the man's swift shifts that Anjou de Bianco was watching developments here. A cab pulled up and Anjou sidled from its glare. Belville alighted from the cab and when it pulled away, Anjou was gone.

It wasn't Shrevvy's cab that had brought Belville back from the Cobalt Club. Shrevvy was busy servicing The Shadow's agents after having taken Doug Lawton somewhere for a rest.

Harkland warmed immediately to the subject of Black Knight Productions, promising Cranston big profits if he bought into the movie company. The reason Harkland was offering stock was because he planned a really colossal picture, which needed more financing than he could afford.

"I'll make my share," clucked Harkland, happily, "so why should I deny the same chance to others?"

To Weston's amazement, Cranston agreed to buy a substantial block of Black Knight stock, whereupon Harkland declared that he could go to the coast immediately, which seemed to please him. It wasn't until after Harkland left that Belville asked incredulously:

"Why did you take that offer, Cranston?"

"Because the picture will make money," assured Cranston. He turned to Weston, who would have put the question if Belville hadn't. "We might just call it the Harkland story."

"Or the de Blanco story," put in Belville. "I still think he's deeper in this thing than Harkland."

That was all for the evening, where the Maritime Library was concerned. Pitcairn had about decided that he was wrong regarding a missing model; maybe his memory was at fault throughout. So the librarian made no more mention of the subject.

Belville, though, had touched a neat point when he said that there might be something in the de Blanco Story.

At her apartment, June Getty was receiving a phone call from Anjou de Blanco.

"From now on, I'm on my own," Anjou told her. "Why do I have to deal with Belville? Or why do I need you or Lawton? I'm working with Perique, and what we find, we'll keep. That's anybody's gold, if we can uncover it."

A tapping at the door caused June to end the phone call. She heard a whispered tone that she recognized; opening the door, she was grateful to find The Shadow there. Eagerly, the girl picked up some notes that she had typed, thrust them into The Shadow's hands.

"Here are some names in a list Doug Lawton gave me," the girl said. "They may prove useful to you. But where is Doug?"

"You'll hear from him within a few days," The Shadow promised. "Be patient until then and afterward. Meanwhile, here is a fair exchange for the list you have just given me."

What The Shadow gave June was a photostat of the all-important book that had been stolen from the Maritime Library. Harry Vincent hadn't missed his opportunity during his brief venture into Doug's nook at the Maritime Library. He had snapped a picture of the page that bore the Rigby record. The object that Harry had pocketed when Doug discovered him was a camera.

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Later, in his sanctum, The Shadow was studying his own photostatic copy of the Rigby record. To him, its meanings were very clear. It told him, among other things, why a ship model had been stolen from the Maritime Library and he could name the ship that the model represented.

There was something else that furnished another clue: The list that June had typed from data furnished by Doug. Reading one name on the list and some facts about the man, The Shadow gave a whispered laugh which proved that his campaign was ready. Calling Burbank, The Shadow gave detailed instructions for his agents to follow.

Toward dawn, Lamont Cranston arrived at LaGuardia Field, to board a north-bound plane. He picked up a morning newspaper, read a headline which told of a tugboat explosion. The tug was the Clementine, the blast was caused by overstraining the engine, which probably had a faulty safety valve, considering the speed the Clementine had been making.

There had been no survivors. That was a line Lamont Cranston liked. It meant that a certain master hand of crime would not be anticipating further trouble from The Shadow.

CHAPTER XIX. A QUESTION OF CHESTS

LATE the next afternoon, June Getty felt a break in the strain of the past few days. In response to an invitation from Stephen Belville, she went on board his yacht, the Pandora, and there was introduced to Police Commissioner Weston and Inspector Cardona.

The police had located June through an address book found at Anjou's apartment. They had let Belville phone June to assure her she would not be under cross-examination. They wanted June's report on Anjou, that was all, so the girl supplied it, but was unable to furnish any new details, except Anjou's declaration that from now on, he was on his own.

Belville's yacht was moored in the Hudson, above the George Washington Bridge and the contrast of the Palisades with their natural scenic beauty and the city with its towering buildings, was a pleasant sight, indeed. In fact, June felt so light-hearted that Belville invited her to join him on a cruise he was taking up Long Island Sound.

June was forced to decline the invitation, because of other engagements. Though she didn't say so, by "other" she meant just one. She was due to meet Doug Lawton that evening.

It was eight o'clock when Doug arrived at June's apartment. He was rather patched and carried one arm in a sling, but he looked very well for a man who had been through a tugboat explosion from which there were presumably no survivors. Vaguely, Doug detailed the experience to June.

"It was like a volcano explosion," declared Doug. "Like – well, like Vesuvius at its worst. Why do I keep thinking of that name Vesuvius? It seems I had it in mind, but something must have knocked it out."

"Just relax," suggested June. "You're going to have plenty of other things to figure out."

"The Shadow pulled me out of it," added Doug. "When I woke up, I was under the care of one of the best physicians in town. His name is Dr. Rupert Sayre; he has a Park Avenue office. He insisted that I get a full twenty-four hours of rest."

"Perhaps he knows The Shadow, too," said June, with a smile. "Don't worry, Doug. Your business was being

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handled. Here is a sample."

June handed Doug the photostat of the Rigby page and his eyes went wide at recognition.

"Say!" exclaimed Doug. "There was a fellow named Vincent –"

"Let's get right to the record," interrupted June. "I've been trying to figure it out all day and I've gotten somewhere, thanks to this."

June produced a second-hand book that bore the title "Old Sea Chanties" and then explained why she had bought it.

"Read the Rigby record, Doug," said June, "and note the theme running through it. Fifteen men – yo–ho – bottle of rum. Just forget all except that part. Does it hit a familiar note?"

"It seems to."

"Of course," nodded June. "It was the old chanty that was mentioned in Stevenson's 'Treasure Island.' 'Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest, yo–ho–ho and a bottle of rum.' Remember?"

"Dead Man's Chest!" exclaimed Doug. "That's what Rigby tried to tell Malloy and only half a century later, Malloy was trying to tell me!"

"Exactly."

"Malloy said I'd understand it better," recalled Doug, "if he kept the secret while he was alive. Jeffrey mentioned that fact, too. I see it now. Malloy had to be a dead man –"

"That was pretty obvious," broke in June. "But since I was thinking of chanties, Doug, I looked through other songs." She thumbed through the pages of the song book. "Here's one, read it."

Doug read:

'Twas Friday night, when we set sail

And we were not far from land,

When the captain spied a lovely mermaid

With a comb and a glass in her hand.

"The mermaids!" exclaimed Doug. "Or one of them at least!" He glanced at the Rigby stat and pointed out a phrase. "First one then t'other." Then, shaking his head, Doug said, "No, that applies to rocks, not to mermaids. It's all pretty deep, June. Apparently, though, Rigby was drunk and the captain put him in the brig; not once, but twice. He talks here about seeing the boxers spar, which means he must have watched a fight, probably while on shore."

Ruefully, Doug shook his head as though it ached, then the very action awoke an inspiration.

"We've missed the whole point, June!" Doug fairly shouted. "We're thinking of the wrong Dead Man's Chest!"

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It was June's turn to be puzzled.

"Don't you see?" continued Doug. "It was Rigby who talked about mermaids and hinted at the chest, not Malloy. Probably Malloy had those mermaids tattooed on his chest later, just as evidence. We've got to find the chest that Rigby meant!"

Things snapped home to June.

"A chest belonging to the man who reminded Malloy of Jonathan Pound," said the girl. "Wait, let's look in the index of the song book."

Looking through, June gave another excited exclamation. She had found the listing "Jonathan Pound" and could hardly wait to reach the right page.

"Why, it isn't a song," she declared. "It comes under the heading of 'Curious Epitaphs.' Look, Doug."

Doug looked and read:

Here lies the body of Jonathan Pound

Who was lost at sea and never was found.

"Give me that list!" exclaimed Doug. "The one you typed from my great-uncle's papers. It has a couple of dozen names of shippers, sea captains and what-not, but I know the very one we need."

Though Doug didn't know it, he was picking out the very name that The Shadow had spotted the night before. June read her own typing, slow carefully:

"Hamilton Tuft. Called Commodore Tuft because of his interest in longboat racing. Used to sell whale oil to Artemus Lawton. Lived in Eastport, Maine, until his unfortunate death in the summer of '99 while on a whaling expedition, when his ship was sunk by an iceberg; no survivors."

"No survivors," commented Doug, grimly. "I was in the same boat last night, but in my case, it was only a rumor. But let's stick with Commodore Tuft. You get it now, don't you, June?"

"Commodore Tuft," repeated June. "Jonathan Pound. They don't rhyme –"

"No reason why they should," inserted Doug. "Commodore Tuft was lost at sea and never was found, which makes his case resemble that of the fabled Jonathan Pound."

"You may be right, Doug –"

"I am right!" Doug was on his feet; his ideas were snapping fast. "Here's the proof!" Doug wheeled, gestured to the wall. "Look, I'm facing south, like Malloy was when he snapped the fingers of his left hand twice, like this."

Doug gave the snaps and inquired, "Get it, Getty?"

June Getty didn't get it.

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"The first snap means east," interpreted Doug, "because that's the direction in which my left hand points. The second snap means port, which is the left side of the ship. Eastport. That's where Commodore Tuft lived."

June was more than convinced. She was thrilled to the point of admiration. Then, gesturing to the Rigby record, she asked:

"How about cracking the rest of it?"

"We've got enough," asserted Doug. "We're leaving by plane for Eastport tonight. We've got to find a chest that belonged to old Commodore Tuft. That's where we'll find our fortune, if it isn't too late. We'll take along the Rigby record and that book of chanties, too, in case we need to dig for other clues."

June liked the idea. They phoned the airport, learned that a plane left at dawn with connections to Eastport. Then, in troubled tone, June asked, "What about Anjou?"

"He's on his own," reminded Doug. "That settles that."

"I know," nodded June. "But can't he make trouble for us?"

"I wouldn't know how he could."

"Of course, Belville might help us," said June. "He might still be interested in financing our quest."

"Certainly he would," rejoined Doug, "considering that now we've cracked the thing on our own. If we need Belville, we'll offer him a proposition. That's fair enough. It was the original idea, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it was, the way Anjou proposed it. But since Anjou is openly competing with us, that leaves us on our own. There's only one other reason though –"

"Oswald Harkland?"

"Yes." June gave a shudder. "It frightens me, the way he came into everything, so suddenly."

"Forget Harkland," declared Doug. "We're on our own and we have the facts. Our only worry is tracking down that chest belonging to Commodore Tuft. The Dead Man's Chest."

Again, June shuddered, perhaps at the term Doug used so lightly: "Dead Man's Chest." It occurred to her, too, that some other factor in this game, a murderer whose very name they had unquestionably mentioned, might have all their information and more. But June didn't express that thought to Doug.

June Getty was thinking of The Shadow, realizing that he, too, had access to all the information from which Doug Lawton had traced the name of Commodore Tuft. Perhaps The Shadow had found the answer, too.

All June could hope was that the coming events would cast their shadow before.

By that, June Getty meant The Shadow.

CHAPTER XX. IRON HEAD

THREE days had passed since the fast moving events in New York, which had reached their peak with the grand explosion of the tugboat *Clementine*.

To June Getty, they had been different days; the last two, particularly pleasant, for she had been living in a different world. That world consisted mostly of Eastport, Maine, the most northeasterly harbor in the United States.

Now, late in the afternoon, June was sitting in a coupe which she and Doug Lawton had hired in Bangor. She was looking over a sheaf of notes which puzzled her, while she waited for Doug. Doug was around the corner at the town hall, checking some old records, which both he and June hoped would give them the final trail to old Commodore Tuft.

June's reverie was interrupted by the opening of the car door. Doug climbed in, gave June a grin and said, "Iron Head."

June was still puzzling over that one as Doug started the car and turned it into a street that would take them out of town.

"It's the name of that big hill down the coast," stated Doug. "It has another name now, but they used to call it Iron Head, because of the way it juts out into the bay. It's right next to Lobsterman's Cove."

June nodded. She remembered Doug mentioning Iron Head before, but it hadn't seemed important at the time. For days, Doug had been gathering all sorts of local data, most of which seemed quite unrelated to Commodore Tuft. Now, apparently, Doug's research was producing dividends.

"Tuft used to live on Iron Head," exclaimed Doug, "and the old house is still there. Only the property wasn't in his name. I had to track down his relations for a couple of generations back in order to get this information."

"Does anybody live there now?" asked June.

"No," Doug replied. "The house has been empty for several years. I'll tell you how I spotted it. The Commodore used to go in for longboat racing. Well, Lobsterman's Cove is where they held the tests. I began wondering who lived on Iron Head, so finally I found out."

Nodding, June gazed from the window on her side of the car. She could see the expanse of Passamaquoddy Bay, with the mouth of the St. Croix River, though which was which, she wasn't quite sure. The tide was low and the mud flats spread along the shore. Apparently Doug was taking the wrong direction to reach Iron Head. June said so.

"You always start in the wrong direction hereabouts," laughed Doug. "It's a question of finding the right back roads and generally they cut off from odd places. We'll have to go past Quoddy Village and then swing around."

They went past Quoddy Village, a city in itself. Built as part of a gigantic project to harness the mighty tides that pour in from the great Bay of Fundy, the village was now basking in temporary abeyance, almost deserted, yet not a ghost town, for proponents of the Quoddy Project were still working to revive the plan. Doug commented on the fact as he veered toward a side road.

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"Those Fundy tides are tremendous," declared Doug. "As high as sixty or seventy feet, I've heard. Passamaquoddy Bay is an arm of the Bay of Fundy and this would be the ideal place to turn tides into power."

Looking back, June saw the bay again and noticed a car pulling out from the village. Probably there were caretakers around the place, she decided, but a minute later, June was curious enough to look back again. She noted that the car, an old roadster, was swinging onto this same road. For a moment, June had qualms; then, curbing them, she asked Doug:

"Where does this road lead, that is, except to Iron Head?"

"It goes to an old hotel called the Bayview Inn," replied Doug. "It's on this side of Iron Head. You can check in there. I'll start back to Eastport and swing around to meet you on the road that leads over to the Head. We'll wait until dusk, which won't be long."

From what Doug said, June decided that the car from Quoddy would have to show itself by the time they reached Bayview Inn, so she didn't bother to mention it. Nevertheless, as the coupe reeled off the miles along a winding dirt road, June kept noting the landscape. This looked like old forest land which had been either timbered or burnt out and was now covered by a second growth, much of which was scrubby. Evergreens predominated and the dusk was already gathering in the gullies and intervalles which forced the road to make so many twists.

There were a few farmhouses, individually isolated, and it might be that the other car intended to turn off at one of those. At least, June caught no further sight of it during the trip, but that wasn't too surprising because the wooded slopes cut off the view of the road in back.

They reached a fork that Doug indicated as the road leading around the hotel and up to Iron Head. Taking the other half, Doug skirted the car along the bay, where the road now afforded a broad view of the water with Iron Head rearing further on, a wooded hill with a craggy, brown-streaked mass of rock projecting from the trees that covered the summit.

Like so many of the hills in this area, Iron Head became imposing when viewed from a dip in the road. Such a dip came when Doug took the final swerve toward the hotel, which promptly came in sight from among the trees, an over-sized firetrap consisting mostly of verandas. Doug pulled the car beneath a portico, alighted with June and carried her bag into a big old-fashioned lobby where a drowsy clerk was seated behind the desk.

As June registered, the clerk awoke.

"Nice to see young folks stopping at Bayview Inn," he said. "Guess that fellow was right" – he gestured to a sign over his shoulder – "when he said the business would be coming if we made the place up-to-date."

The placard that the clerk indicated was an advertisement for seaplane flights, at prices from five dollars and upward. It stated that the plane could be hired at the hotel wharf.

"I'll probably take a plane ride," informed June, playing along with the clerk's notion. "But it's rather late tonight. What time do you serve dinner?"

"Supper's most over now," replied the clerk. "The last gong rang at five thirty."

"I'll take breakfast tomorrow," decided June. She turned to Doug and added, "I may want to go into Eastport in the morning, so be sure and stop out here for me."

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Doug nodded, but before he turned away, a parade of guests came from the dining room. June shuddered at sight of one man; drew back toward the desk. As Doug threw a quizzical glance, June undertoned, breathless:

"That can't be Oswald Harkland!"

The man in question was stooped like Harkland, leaning heavily on a cane. But when he turned his face in passing, June saw that he wore a pleasant, benign expression; smooth in contrast to Harkland's wrinkled countenance. June remembered Harkland's eyes as shrewd, his whole look canny; whereas, this man was decidedly amiable.

"That's Mr. Twambley," stated the clerk. "Isaac Twambley from Boston. Reckon you know him?"

"I reckon we don't," replied Doug. "Don't worry about Miss Getty's bag. I'll carry it upstairs."

That was Doug's opportunity to question June regarding the shudder he had seen her give.

"Why are you so afraid of Harkland?" asked Doug. "He wouldn't try to harm us."

"Not unless he's the man who murdered Jeffrey and Malloy," returned June. "He could be, you know, and we're getting pretty much in their category, now that we're tracking down the actual Dead Man's Chest. Besides, I was sure a car was following us here this afternoon."

"I didn't see one," said Doug, leaving the bag outside of June's room. "But if there was one and a murderer was in it, my money would be on Anjou de Blanco. Only he probably hasn't an idea that we came Down East – any more than Harkland. Besides, Harkland was going to the coast."

"Maybe that meant the East coast, not the West."

"And maybe not. Anyway, I'll take de Blanco. But whatever the case, if any, we're playing it safe. Duck out the back way to the other road and watch for the blink of my lights."

Doug went downstairs and out the front door alone. As soon as his car drove away, June found a back stairs and made her way to a rustic path outside the hotel. The dusk was deepening and all was now quiet around Bayview Inn, except for the chirping of the crickets and the occasional kerplunk of a frog.

Inside all was quiet, too, except for the sound of old Twambley's cane, rapping its way upstairs. The kindly faced old gentleman was carrying a large oblong package that he had just received by express.

Twambley went clear up to the third floor; there he entered a corner room that formed a sort of turret. Putting down the package, Twambley turned to a map that was hanging on the wall, a large scale map of this portion of the coast. There, Twambley moved various colored pins, putting two of them in the close vicinity of Iron Head.

There were telegrams on Twambley's table; evidently they had something to do with the placing of certain pins. Next, Twambley opened a letter attached to the package, read its contents and chuckled. The letter bore the scrawly signature of A. B. Pitcairn and the letter-head carried the title of the Maritime Library, New York.

About to open the package, Twambley halted. He was looking from the window, gaining a direct view of Iron Head, now outlined black against the afterglow that flooded the sky. He could see the sloping ridge that formed a saddle-back from the promontory to the mainland. Along that ridge, Twambley caught the glint of

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a car's headlights that dipped beyond, toward a road leading to Lobsterman's Cove on the other side of the Head. Then the same lights appeared again, making a sharp slant upward.

The car wasn't going to the cove. It was taking the winding road that led up to the only house on Iron Head.

Reaching to the map, Twambley set the two pins squarely upon Iron Head. Still watching from the window, he saw the lights of another car go poking toward the saddle-back. Guessing its destination, Twambley planted two other pins on the Head.

From a large suitcase, old Twambley took what appeared to be an evening cape. He hurried from the room and downstairs at a rapid rate which he slackened only when he reached the lobby. Nodding to the clerk as he went by, Twambley hobbled out front, past a summerhouse filled with elderly guests and off toward a lily pond. Out of sight, old Twambley became amazingly spry. He ploughed through bog and thicket, hopped a broad ditch and finally walked the whole length of a fallen tree that formed a narrow bridge over a deep gully.

Finding a path on the other side, Twambley skirted a portion of the Head and reached a lower ledge from which he gained a view of an old house in the distance, perched near the front side of the hill. There, Twambley could see new glimmers of light; not from a car, but the twinkles of a flashlight in the windows of the house itself.

Now car lights appeared, swinging up toward the house. Obviously, this was the second car; the occupants of the first were already in the house, investigating it.

A low laugh came from Twambley's dried lips; lips which gained their appearance from a special make-up. The cape fluttered in the dark and took the shape of a black cloak.

Isaac Twambley was The Shadow!

CHAPTER XXI. LAST OF THE LONGBOATS

IT was a barny old house, this former home of Commodore Tuft. Searching it was a long but comparatively easy process for Doug and June as they covered the rooms with their flashlights. On the first floor, they developed a system; each took an individual route, then found the other by the latter's flashlight.

When they reached the third floor, they had rummaged the house quite thoroughly, but to no avail. The whole place, closets as well as rooms, had proven quite barren.

"Down to the cellar," decided Doug. "That's where we'll find the treasure chest, if there is one."

"Which probably there isn't," rejoined June, ruefully. Then, blinking the flashlight upward. "This house ought to have an attic, though."

"I doubt it," said Doug. "It's built with a French roof. Flat on top."

"I'm not so sure," objected June. "When I first glimpsed it through the trees, I was sure it had some upper projection, like a tower."

Doug threw his light straight up in the center of the third floor where there was a little hallway. All the light showed was ceiling and Doug was about to swing it away when June halted him.

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"Look, Doug, that crack, over toward the left!"

There was a crack in the ceiling, only a slight one, but significant, for the plaster itself appeared to be unusually thick. Finding an old curtain rod that was standing in a closet, Doug began to thump the ceiling while June pointed the light. The result was even more than they anticipated.

The crack not only widened, it lengthened, then made a turn at right angles, ran a short space, turned into another crack that paralleled the first. Suddenly the whole ceiling gave way and Doug swung to fling June back. Plaster dropped, bringing woodwork with it, but instead of coming with a crash, it made a peculiar swing that missed the astonished witnesses.

Solid wood thumped the floor and June's flashlight was glaring squarely against a hinged stair-ladder that had dropped from the ceiling leaving a gaping hole above!

This was the route to the squatty tower that June had noticed from the distance. The hinged ladder was built in the woodwork of the third floor ceiling and ordinarily would have escaped a cursory inspection. But someone, probably the commodore, had sealed it with plaster to obscure it entirely. It had taken years of moaning winds, heavy snows upon the old roof, to produce the tiny crack that revealed the trick.

Losing no time about getting upstairs, Doug and June found themselves in a square room with lookout windows. All about were old pieces of furniture, enough to stock an antique shop and probably valuable. But the feverish hunt that Doug and June began was in quest of one item only, a chest.

They found it at last, under a pile of old hooked rugs. It was a heavy wooden chest, bound with brass strips, and its carved lid bore the initials H. T., which belonged to the commodore. The chest had a tarnished lock, but the key was in it. This was fortunate in one sense, since the chest could be opened readily; but on the contrary, no one would be likely to leave a million dollars in a chest without locking it.

Nevertheless, June could not refrain from gasping three words that described their prize:

"Dead Man's Chest!"

Flinging the lid open, Doug turned the light into the chest. If this marked the end of the quest, the answer was defeat. The dead man's chest was empty.

Disheartened, June began to look elsewhere in the secret room, when she heard a call from Doug. When June came back, Doug showed her what he'd found.

"Look at the interior of the chest," said Doug. "It's short on depth. That's a false bottom." Gesturing for June to turn the light into the chest, Doug bent forward and tapped. "I'll admit it sounds solid, but I'll bet there's something under it."

Probing the brass fittings that bound the interior corners, Doug suddenly gained results. One corner yielding slightly, he tried the other at the same time. That released a double catch, a heavy, rusted spring groaned into action. Up came the bottom of the chest, disclosing a shallow compartment underneath.

All that the hidden compartment contained was an old map. Bringing it out, Doug closed the chest, spread the map on top. The flashlight revealed that it was a very old map showing the Bay of Fundy and the surrounding areas of Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

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Most important was a heavy line, drawn with black ink. It started at Lobsterman's Cove, though the name was all but obliterated by the wide inked line. It continued out into the bay, made a great long curve, swung between two dots that looked like tiny islands, described a very slightly curved course that terminated in a larger island, shaped like a rectangle.

"I have it!" exclaimed Doug. "That's the course of the longboat races. The trial course, except boats didn't race it!"

"Why not?" asked June.

"It covers too many miles," replied Doug. "So it must mean something else. That's the course the munitions followed when they were shipped out. Commodore Tuft was the man who handled it for my great-uncle, Artemus Lawton."

"And other ships must have picked them up from the island!" expressed June. "That's where my grandfather told them they would find the shipments."

"Plausible enough," agreed Doug. "Naturally, the less Uncle Artemus knew about it, the better. Commodore Tuft didn't know your grandfather, so that broke the chain if anyone tried to track it down. It shows why the mystery was buried so many years."

It fitted perfectly. First, the death of Josiah Getty; then the disappearance of Commodore Tuft at sea; finally, the death of Artemus Lawton, had snapped the chain link by link, in reverse.

"If your grandfather sent the gold to that island," Doug told June, "the commodore wouldn't have known a thing about it; therefore, he wouldn't have gone to look for it. Then, when the commodore disappeared, my great-uncle was totally at a loss, because he didn't know about the island. He was waiting for word from your grandfather."

"Word that never came," added June. "The team of Getty and Lawton missed out. But what about that ship that brought the gold from Cuba?"

"It must have picked up the last order of munitions," asserted Doug. "The shipment blew up through some mischance and the only survivor was Ben Rigby. Now we're making more sense from his disjointed story. Move your flashlight closer, June, so we can check the map again."

"My flashlight?" queried June. "Aren't we reading the map with yours?"

A suave laugh answered, ending in a clashy note, as the flashlight was turned squarely in Doug's eyes. A hand gripped June, flung her over beside Doug and at the same time, a nimble figure leaped into the glow, extending a scrawny hand which held a revolver.

The man with the flashlight was Anjou de Blanco. His helper, Perique, was covering Doug and June.

"Very nice of you," spoke Anjou from the blackness behind the light. "Finding this map reminds me of the old Spanish term bonanza. Only the bonanza is to be mine, not yours. I have said that we are working on our own."

Doug's fists tightened, but June put out a hand to restrain him. Under Anjou's light, with Perique wangling the gun from a range of a few feet, any false step might prove fatal. But June couldn't restrain Doug's words.

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"You've been working on your own a long while," Doug told Anjou. "If you hadn't stolen that book from the library and had your mob drag me off to the Clementine, you wouldn't have found this place at all."

"The Clementine?" queried Anjou. "Who is she? Not the yacht belonging to Senor Belville. No, she is called the Pandora."

"Quit the stalling," snapped Doug. "What kind of a deal do you want to make now?"

"No deal at all," laughed Anjou. "Everything has been very simple because you have been very stupid. I telephoned to June the other night and said I would be leaving town, so you forgot me. Instead of going away, Perique and I kept watching from across the street. One night you came there; we followed you both when you left. You went to the airport; I learned where you were going from there."

The flashlight wavered, proving that Anjou had added a characteristic shrug to his statement. In Anjou's opinion, the rest should be quite obvious. He and Perique had come to Eastport, too, and had picked up the trail from that vicinity here to Iron Head.

Knowing Anjou, June was ready to accept the story, but Doug interrupted.

"You moved in ahead of us," Doug argued. "Why try to tell us something else? Anyway, this map is ours. How much do you want for it?"

"Not interested," replied Anjou. "I merely prefer to have both of you come along with Perique and myself, until we learn if the gold is where it should be. After all, amigo, this might be – what is it they call it? A bluff on your part."

Circling June and Doug with the flashlight, Anjou nudged Perique and the group began what June suddenly feared might become a death march. June was beginning now to think that Doug's appraisal of Anjou was correct; that the debonair Latin was the man behind the airgun. After all, Anjou hadn't fulfilled his promises to June, so she was the last person to insist that her original opinions were correct.

Down from the attic, Doug and June maneuvered the steep stairs, while long shadowy blackness seemed to rise and greet them. Perique came next with the revolver and behind him, Anjou with the light. Nor did the parade stop there. It continued down to the ground floor with Anjou still master of the show.

Out of the old house, Anjou steered them to a flight of rocky steps hewn in the side of Iron Head. As they descended they could hear the splash and surge of water. To attempt a break would have been fatal.

At the bottom of the cliff, the lights of a car appeared to greet them. Then, for the first time, the prisoners realized that Anjou had maneuvered this march alone. Perique had dropped off to bring the car down and around the hill, for he was the man who stepped into the glow of the headlights. When Anjou saw the surprise of the prisoners he laughed and quite contemptuously.

"Cover them with your gun, Perique," Anjou ordered. "Move them straight ahead into that boathouse. We may find something useful there."

The boathouse was a battered structure with a door falling from its hinges. Inside, however, was a stout-built rowboat, requiring four pairs of oars, that had weathered the test of time. June recognized that this must be a longboat belonging to Commodore Tuft. The boat was on rollers; it required only Perique's efforts to slide it into the water that entered the boathouse, for it was now close to high tide.

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"Leave them to me, Perique," ordered Anjou, thrusting a hand with a gun into the glow of the headlights that streaked the interior of the boathouse.

"Go to the car and get the motor and the gasoline."

June watched Perique go out to the car, which was facing straight toward the boathouse. Again, weird shadow shapes appeared to move into the glow as though trailing Perique at every move. But those could only be cast by the surrounding trees, for The Shadow, if here in person, would not be letting Anjou and Perique get away with this; at least June so reasoned.

From the car, Perique brought back a large two-cylinder outboard and an extra drum of gasoline. He attached the motor to the longboat, put the drum aboard, and added a box of provisions. As Perique clambered from the boat, Anjou gave a nudge with his gun.

"Get aboard." Anjou's voice came in a snarl. "We're taking you with us."

Doug helped June into the boat, then followed, still carrying the map that Anjou neither needed nor wanted, now that he had seen it. Both prisoners looked up to the dock beside them, then stared, totally amazed, at what followed.

Blackness wiped out the glow of Anjou's flashlight. A sibilant laugh rose to a crash of sardonic mirth that reverberated beneath the weather-beaten eaves. Then figures whirled in the midst of a kaleidoscopic light, produced by a flying flashlight. Guns shot futile flames into the air, while the laugh reached a triumphant crescendo that shivered the very echoes which it had created.

Doug was yanking the cord of the outboard motor. It started and he was at the helm, ready to throw in the clutch, waiting only for The Shadow. Again came the mighty laugh, its tone a command. No words were needed, for Anjou and Perique were dashing madly from the boathouse, wild, fugitive figures as they dodged the headlights of their own car.

If The Shadow intended to come along, he would not be issuing that command, which stood for one word:

"Go."

The longboat spurted from the old boathouse. Catching the full tide, Doug veered it toward the mouth of Lobsterman's Cove. Simultaneously, a car went roaring off in the opposite direction, back up the road that led round Iron Head, telling that Anjou and Perique were taking the shortest route to escape.

Then, above the sound of Anjou's fading car; higher, more strident than the roar of the motor which was propelling the longboat out to sea, June Getty heard the last notes of The Shadow's mighty laugh, bidding bon voyage to the prisoners he had rescued and was sending on their way to a quest of wealth!

CHAPTER XXII. OUT OF THE PAST

DAWN was streaking the Fundy sky when Doug Lawton and June Getty, far from shore in their borrowed longboat, sighted the first important milepost of their journey. Riding out with the tide, they had made remarkable progress; then, as their course veered, the incoming tide had continued to give impetus.

Now, at half-tide, with the flow still traveling landward, they saw a pair of rocks jutting from the sea itself, one noticeably higher than the other. Doug had cut off the motor; it was time to furnish more gasoline from

DEAD MAN'S CHEST

the drum. Meanwhile, the tide was drawing them toward their goal, those two rocks.

It was then that June had a happy inspiration. From her bag, she took something as important as the map which Doug had been consulting all night by his flashlight; namely, the photostat copy of the Rigby record.

"Those must be the mermaids!" exclaimed June. "Yes, that would be the right name for such rocks. Why, at low tide, they would be rising from the sea! It must have been off these rocks that Rigby was found adrift!"

"'Twas Friday night when we set sail,'" sang Doug, "'and we were not far from land.'" He laughed, then added, "But the captain only spied one mermaid, June."

"Naturally," June replied. "Because the bigger one would appear first. Wait, here's something else. The captain said: 'Come along, Ben – come along boat.' The last part isn't quite right. He meant: 'Come – a longboat.' They must have taken a longboat to get to these rocks.

"And here's more. The captain said: 'When the rocks sink – first one, then t'other.' That's what they are doing now, Doug. One rock is sinking first because it's smaller. When it disappears, it will be time to go through the channel."

Doug laughed, but his tone was an admission that June was probably right. Then:

"It's time to go through right now," said Doug. "Why wait, considering that the tide will carry us? It would take a bigger boat than this to have trouble going between those rocks, the way they are at present. But you're doing all right, June. Tell me what Rigby meant about watching boxers spar."

"I don't know," declared June, absently. "Being in the brig – wanting water because he needed water – watching the boxers spar. All those things still are puzzling."

The longboat was pointed toward the channel between the mermaids. Doug was at the stern, gassing the motor. Thus June, turned to face Doug, was gazing out to sea. Doug heard June give a gasp; looked up to see that her brown eyes were wider than he had ever believed they could be. Turning to look in the same direction, Doug sat astonished, too.

Heaving over the horizon was something belonging strictly to the past. It was as if the firm of Getty and Lawton had gone into business again, not as the present generation, but as a reincarnation of the original founders, who had operated and dissolved a half a century before.

Climbing into sight were the great sails of a full-rigged ship, which literally flew before the powerful wind, coming shoreward, like the tide. Then the hull was bulking, like the body of a man-made narwhal, looming down upon the tiny longboat like a monster seeking prey.

The ship had just two masts, both full-rigged. A sudden recollection of things he had heard about such vessels, stirred Doug to the statement:

"A full-rigged two-master. It's called a brig!"

"The brig!" echoed June. "They spent the night in the brig, to await the tide!"

"Because they needed water," declared Doug. "Water, to navigate between the mermaids. Since they didn't have water, they had to drink water, because they couldn't get ashore to drink anything else!"

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By then, the brig was almost upon them. Somehow, the reappearance of this ship that shouldn't exist was frightening, now that the thing was proving more than a phantom shape. Madly, Doug tugged at the motor cord, but the response was nil. Over-heated, the motor needed a cooling rest. Again, Doug tugged, and again. Then, the brig was almost upon them, its sails flurrying down from its masts as commands sounded through a microphone on the deck. The brig sidled past the longboat and June saw the name that was painted on the ship's stern.

"The Boxer!"

"If Malloy had only shown sense and used punctuation marks," groaned Doug, as he, too, looked toward the brig. "Then we would have known exactly what Rigby meant. Or maybe we were the people who didn't show sense. Rigby said he watched the boxers spar. What he meant was, he saw the spar of the Boxer; the Boxer's spar. That's what they call the beam they hang the sails on, across the mast. Rigby and the captain saw the Boxer just like we did; saw the spar of her front mast!"

"Ahoy, longboat!" A voice was calling from the Boxer. "Come aboard or we'll fetch you aboard!"

The brig had crossed the longboat's path, so Doug simply arose, spread his arms and gave a helpless nod. Members of the brig's crew threw them a line, dropped a ladder, and soon Doug and June were on board the Boxer, where a couple of rough-clad men with revolver-filled holsters promptly escorted them forward.

Near the bow they found the man in command. He was leaning on his cane, chuckling at sight of the arrivals, while the golden rays of the dawning sun gave his shocky hair a glow of silver.

The man was Oswald Harkland.

"So you got here," Harkland chortled. "Well, well. This is a real surprise." His sharp eyes narrowed in the sunlight. "What is that you have there?"

Harkland was looking at June, so she handed him the photostat of Rigby's record. Reading a few lines, Harkland smiled.

"I've known of this for several years," said Harkland. "Where did you get this copy? From the Maritime Library?"

"Why ask us?" demanded Doug. "You're the man who ought to know."

"I didn't know they had a copy," replied Harkland, blandly. "That map in your pocket looks more interesting. Let me have it."

Argument being useless, Doug handed over the map, then turned to watch the larger rock of the mermaids as the Boxer swashed past it. Doug had been right, too right, about a larger ship needing more clearance. He could picture the Rigby deal of fifty years ago almost as though it were happening today.

The Boxer had heaved to, off the mermaids. The captain had told Ben Rigby to come in the longboat. Probably they had taken soundings and when the tide was rising above the two rocks, the captain had told Ben to watch the Boxer's spar and signal for the brig to get under way. But this couldn't be the Boxer that Rigby had meant. There was something new about this craft. Doug could almost smell sawdust about her, as though the brig had come fresh from a shipyard.

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"Very helpful, this map," said Harkland suddenly. "If I had known of it, I wouldn't have needed the Boxer. Still, she is a fine ship and will come in very useful. After you have breakfast, I shall join you in my cabin and tell you all about her."

Two members of the brig's husky crew escorted Doug and June to the cabin and stood guard while they ate a hearty breakfast. Though the meal was fine, Doug couldn't forbear a few pointed statements, such as asking June to pass the arsenic and asking her how much strychnine she would like in her coffee.

When Doug talked that way, June threw worried glances at the guards but they didn't blink an eye. They looked friendly enough, those huskies, but they were Harkland's men. What orders he might give them, June feared they would obey.

It would be asking too much to hope for The Shadow again, particularly in broad daylight; but that wasn't the only reason for June's worry. Harkland had certainly progressed further than Anjou in the quest for the Cuban gold, otherwise, he wouldn't have gone to the trouble and expense of building a brig, just to hunt for the lost wealth. Therefore, Harkland must have been in the game all along. That made him the most dangerous person involved, in June's opinion.

Harkland, that dangerous man, made an appearance while June was in the midst of such reflections. He ordered the crew members to step outside but wait within call. Then, opening a cabinet set in the cabin wall, Harkland produced some papers, looked them over and put a few back.

Bringing the others to a table, he spread them out. Largest of the lot was a complete plan of a full-rigged ship. Others were printed pages bearing wood-cuts that pictured sailing vessels.

"Let me tell you the Boxer story," declared Harkland. "She was a fine brig, the original Boxer. She fought in the War of 1812, outdistancing frigates and overtaking merchantmen. Even toward the turn of the next century, square-riggers like the Boxer were in demand. Therefore, the Indies Trading Packet Line decided to have a duplicate of the original Boxer built from the old plans, still in existence. The new Boxer was built at the Scotian Shipyard in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia."

While he spoke, Harkland was studying faces cannily to note if either listener recognized the names he mentioned. They didn't, for this was outside the sphere of the Getty-Lawton partnership. Not having been at the Maritime Library during inventory time, neither June nor Doug had heard mention of those enterprises.

"The new Boxer was a very handy craft," continued Harkland, "particularly because she sailed the West Indies and could put into almost any hidden port. She made a practice of carrying munitions and supplies to the Cuban revolutionists. Just before America declared war upon Spain in 1898, the new Boxer dispatched to bring a cargo of munitions to the insurgent leader, General Garcia."

Here, Harkland was really striking home. Doug and June were listening so intently that they almost overlooked the crafty expression which registered on the old man's wrinkled face.

"The new Boxer never delivered that shipment," declared Harkland. "Apparently, she was blown up at sea. When I bought over the Indies Trading Packet Line" – Harkland's eyes glittered wisely as he spoke – "I gained a full claim on the Boxer. Not much was known about her fate, but I traced down a crew member named Ben Rigby; learned that he had told a disconnected story to a cabin boy of the Nancy Lee named Absalom Malloy."

The story was really coming up to date. June held her breath, hoping Doug would hold back the accusations that she knew must be on the tip of his tongue. Apparently, Doug was getting smarter. He kept quiet.

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"Where the Boxer picked up her cargo was a mystery," completed Harkland. "But it was likely that if she carried a certain shipment of Cuban gold, she would have left it at the rendezvous. So I decided to build another Boxer" – Harkland gave a sweeping gesture at the surrounding cabin – "complete in every detail; every detail, mind you, to the original Boxer and the one that had been constructed according to her plans. This is the result. Now, in the third Boxer we are repeating the cruise of the second Boxer, hoping to reach the same destination."

Doug came to his feet, savagely.

"So you murdered Malloy," Doug accused, "because he knew too much! You killed Jeffrey first, because Malloy had talked to him. Probably you did know about the Rigby record, but you stole the one I found, so I wouldn't learn what you knew –"

Harkland was interrupting Doug by pounding the table. Now the interruption brought results and in more forcible style. Doug's speech was cut off by a pair of sailors who piled through the door in answer to Harkland's summons and seized Doug bodily. They didn't slug him, just dragged him up to the deck, whereupon Harkland bowed to June and gestured for her to follow.

On the way up, Harkland said:

"I am sorry Lawton proved so unreasonable. I was going to tell him more. After all, I am indebted to him for giving me that map. I wasn't quite sure that this cruise would take me to the right goal. Now I am sure I can identify it."

June turned away, her own face white with anger. Anjou's suavity was pleasant compared to Harkland's sarcasm. June hated the sound of the crackly tone which she now was positive belonged to a murderer. The kinder Harkland might speak, the more June felt that she would hate him. She would have liked to hate him forever, but that couldn't be. Remembering Jeffrey and Malloy, June felt that she and Doug would not have very long to live, once Harkland found his chance to kill them, away from any witnesses.

That chance was coming soon; it was looming over the horizon. The Boxer had been riding in with the tide at a speed which full sail could not have equaled. Ahead, a coffin-shaped island was rising to block the course along which the tide had carried the brig.

Old Oswald Harkland delivered a triumphant chuckle that June felt was a double knell, foreboding the doom of the partnership of Getty and Lawton.

CHAPTER XXIII. THE RIDDLE OF THE CHEST

NAVIGATING the Boxer to a mooring was practically an automatic process. Timed to the tide, the trim brig came into the lee of the island, where eddying waters seemed to hold her and there was no breeze to drive her from shelter.

The brig's deck was alive with crew members, all as hardy a looking lot as the pair that had stood guard outside Harkland's cabin. Now, as a shiny new anchor chain was pouring itself from the ship's bow, Harkland was scanning the face of the blocky island with a glass. Beside him was Klauder, who had appeared for the first time.

As the Boxer anchored fast, Harkland pointed to a streaky ledge that slanted across the island's face.

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"There's the landing place," announced Harkland. "It must have been the one that Captain Yardley used when he brought the second Boxer in here. He arrived with the high tide as we did. Order the boat, Klauder. We're going ashore."

The boat that Klauder ordered happened to be the one that Doug and June had brought, which gave the situation an ironical touch. Apparently appreciating this, Harkland bowed to Doug and June, suggesting that they accompany him.

"After all," chuckled Harkland, "you should witness the recovery of the gold as well as its disposal. If it is not here, however, you must not hold me responsible."

Grimly, Doug spoke in undertone to June.

"This may be our one chance for a break," informed Doug. "We can't afford to miss it."

Harkland and Klauder took to the boat along with Doug and June. Unfortunately, Harkland also had the two guards man the longboat, which made the odds four to one against Doug, should he decide upon the break that he had mentioned. Coasting toward the ledge, the longboat reached it and grounded upon the sloping stretch of rock as neatly as if it had been hewn for such a landing.

Out of the boat, Harkland probed his way up the slant. His chuckle, his beckon, proved that he had found what he was after. Behind a clump of juniper bushes that sprouted from amid the rock was a narrow crevice that formed an archway. Keeping Doug and June under close surveillance, Harkland marched them in through that fissure. Within the rock, the fissure widened into a large chamber with jagged walls. Using his flashlight, the old man inspected the rocks carefully and finally pointed with his cane to a stony bulge higher up.

"We'll try there," Harkland decided. "You lead the way, Klauder."

Clambering up among the rocks, Klauder turned and beckoned excitedly. Harkland forgot his cane in his hurry to join the chunky servant. Watching from below, Doug and June saw the two dig deep behind the bulging stone and come out with small leather bags that clanked when they were dropped. The weight of those bags indicated that the clanking contents must be the long-lost Cuban gold.

Bag after bag came sliding down the irregular path that Harkland and Klauder had climbed. Slipping almost to the feet of Doug and June, those bags represented a fortune that was theirs, yet which they were powerless to take. Peering down from his rocky perch, Harkland gave a chummy chuckle which produced discordant echoes. This to Doug and June, represented the final touch of an old man's treachery.

"Don't worry about my crew," called Harkland. "I have told them of this quest and paid them well. They will take the Boxer wherever I order. I realize now what must have happened with the second Boxer. The crew realized that the master, Richard Yardley, had brought the gold here. They must have mutinied, intending to return, but in the fight the ship was blown up by the munitions it carried, leaving Rigby as a sole survivor. But that will not happen this time. Not with my Boxer."

In the light of an electric lantern held by Klauder, Harkland's shadow loomed huge and grotesque among the pointed rocks. As the old man leaped down from his perch, that same shadow spread into two. Doug took it for an optical illusion; to June it provided sudden hope. The girl gave a happy cry as a figure rose suddenly from the rocks almost at Harkland's elbow. Then, as a second figure followed the first, June's elation ended.

Two forgotten men had made their reappearance, Anjou de Blanco and his helper, Perique.

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Anjou and Perique had caught Harkland and Klauder flat-footed, as flatfooted as was possible among these irregular rocks. Guns drawn, they were holding the other pair helpless; but the words Anjou uttered were meant for Doug and June.

"You thought you'd left us where we couldn't find our way," scoffed Anjou, "but we saw that map, too. We hired the seaplane at the Bayview Inn. It brought us here shortly after dawn. Like I said, it's every man on his own and I'm the winner. We saw you come in with the longboat, Perique and I. Load the gold in it and we'll pull away. We didn't keep the seaplane; we didn't want to overload it."

From Anjou's laugh it was evident that he had told the seaplane to leave because he didn't want its pilot to know his purpose for coming here. There was no malice in Anjou's tone, however. Apparently, he was willing to follow a "live and let live" policy, so long as no one tried to stop him from carrying off the gold. But Doug, by this time, had reached a state of desperation.

"We'll break for it now," Doug whispered to June. "If Anjou tries to stop us, Harkland will take a whack at him, or vice versa. Let's get to the longboat and away. We'll figure out how to reclaim the gold later."

June nodded. Doug gripped her arm and spun her about. Next they were zigzagging toward a corner of the rocky chamber, where Doug hoped they could find shelter. Apparently; Harkland's two crew members had gone out to watch the stony archway, for neither popped into sight to halt this madcap dash. But the very shelter that Doug and June were seeking proved itself another trap.

As if at a concerted signal a dozen men arose to block their flight. Recoiling at the sight of guns that shoved out from behind low, jagged rocks, Doug and June dropped back. Then, the same guns were covering Anjou and Perique, as well as Harkland and Klauder. Into the glare of a whole battery of powerful flashlights stepped another master of the show.

The new contestant for outstanding honors was none other than Stephen Belville.

His blunt face grim but not unfriendly, Belville waved for the four men on the higher rocks to toss away their guns. They did just that and Belville promptly ordered his own crew members to gather up the bags of gold. Then, in a precise tone that produced a minimum of echoes from the cavern walls, Belville declared himself :

"I came here with my yacht, the Pandora. She is anchored on the other side of the island. We shall go out by a passage which my men and I discovered. When we are on the Pandora, we can settle the claims where the gold is concerned."

There was no other choice, but Doug for one felt satisfied now that Belville had broken the dilemma. Doug still had doubts as to which was the man of murder, Anjou or Harkland. That question, he felt, could also be settled on board the yacht. But June was gripped by a new fear, produced by the knowledge she had gained regarding human cupidity.

Belville seemed anxious enough to become the arbiter, but how would he act once the claimants, as well as the gold, had come under his full control?

They were practically under such control now and so far, Belville was acting fairly enough. Yet here in this underground darkness, June could only wish that The Shadow would declare himself. As the flashlights swung, she saw great shapes elongate into shadowy streaks that flickered on the walls and a thrill caught June when one of those fantastic outlines took the rough appearance of a cloaked form. But it filtered away, swallowed by the darkness of a side passage that showed in the gleam of the flashlights.

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This was the passage that Belville had mentioned. Slowly, the procession started along it, Belville's men bringing the gold as well as the claimants. There were too many men in the yacht's crew to brook any argument.

At the end of the passage, daylight struck with dazzling force. Blinded by it, June could hardly make out the faces of Belville's crew and her companions were much in the same condition. They stumbled into a pair of motor tenders that were waiting beside a jutting rock and a few chugs brought them around a corner of the island to the yacht. Long, sleek, white and shiny, the Pandora was nosed up to the island itself, but Belville had used the tenders to find a better landing place.

On board the yacht, they were conducted to a lavish cabin; there, Belville gestured his guests around a table. Not a member of the crew remained, but they left the bags of gold, a million dollars' worth of treasure, heaped in a corner, since the table might have cracked beneath the weight.

Diesel motors throbbed and the Pandora was under way, veering around the island to head out to the open sea. The tide had not yet changed, hence it was taking the full power of the yacht's engines to buck the seething waters. Blandly, Belville smiled at the people around him.

"We shall discuss our business privately," asserted Belville. "Since all of you will hold conflicting notions regarding ownership of this gold, I do not need to have any of my own crew present. So let me hear your claims and I shall judge them."

Before a person could speak, a door opened at the side of the cabin. Through the doorway stepped a figure cloaked in black, a slouch hat drawn over his head, far enough to obscure his features, except for a pair of burning eyes that seemed to probe the very minds of every person present.

Those eyes, like the whispered laugh that came from hidden lips, proclaimed the identity of the personage who had usurped Belville's position as judge.

The Shadow had become the new master of the show.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MESSAGE FROM GARCIA

THE expressions on the faces of The Shadow's audience were strange, indeed. They showed a mingling of fear, chagrin and hope. June Getty was, of course, the most hopeful; Doug Lawton a close second. They were the first to whom The Shadow spoke.

"I know your claims," declared The Shadow, his tone calm, yet with just a touch of the sinister. "I also know your stories. However the past may stand, you became victims of the present. Our first question is to decide who is responsible for a series of recent murders. You are both innocent."

That verdict given, The Shadow looked straight at Anjou de Blanco.

"Don't accuse me," Anjou protested, his suave tones shaky. "I'll admit I was getting information from Weasel Clegg, through Perique here. Weasel tipped me off when Lawton was to visit Jeffrey and told me later where I'd find Malloy. I went down to the Havana Exposition office to pick up some papers that were planted to incriminate me, but I didn't play a part in any crime. None – none except borrowing a thousand dollars from Lawton."

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The Shadow turned his gaze upon Oswald Harkland.

"I knew Skipper Malloy," admitted Harkland, with a nod. "But I was protecting him, not trying to kill him. That's why I moved him from one home for old sailors to another and finally established him over the Green Anchor. He'd been talking to too many people, Malloy had, despite the fact he'd promised me he wouldn't. I had been paying him regularly and handsomely, to keep silent on what he knew.

"Somebody wanted that information, but was afraid to go after it direct. That person planted Jeffrey and framed him at the same time. The idea was to murder him and pin the blame on Lawton or myself." So saying, Harkland paused to glare accusingly at Anjou. "That paved the way for a similar murder of Malloy. From then on, I was hampered, while Lawton was unable to talk to the police. The killer then had everything his own way."

To that, Anjou responded with a sharp, contemptuous laugh.

"If you mean me," declared Anjou, "I was dodging the law, too, and for the same reasons as Lawton."

"You were dodging the law in the first place," reminded Harkland. "I think Belville can testify to that."

Belville started a slow nod, then halted. His eyes went from Anjou to Harkland, back again. Belville shook his head as though he felt unsure.

"Suppose we begin with the tugboat whistles," decided The Shadow. "The man who handled those was Wrecker Chaffin, who later sank the Clementine to cover his part and dispose of the one man who knew about those signals, Douglas Lawton." Turning to Doug, The Shadow added, "When you visited Jeffrey, you arrived there early, by starting ahead of the signals."

Doug gave a nod.

"Therefore," continued The Shadow, "you were not supposed to learn about Skipper Malloy. Jeffrey's death was set for your arrival; being early, you gave Jeffrey time to talk too much. That forced another murder, the death of Skipper Malloy. Then came two other crimes, both thefts at the Maritime Library. The book containing the Rigby record was stolen, so was a model of the brig Boxer."

The last named theft brought surprised looks from around the table.

"One model was missing from the old wooden fleet," declared The Shadow. "The Boxer, the original Boxer, was one of the most famous ships of its era and should have been in the collection. Its absence fitted with the word 'boxer' in the Rigby record.

"We can be reasonably sure that Anjou de Blanco did not take the book or the model. His trail came by way of Eastport, where he claims he trailed Douglas Lawton and June Getty, which is very plausible. Also, he arrived on the island by air, locating it after he had seen Tuft's map.

"We know that Oswald Harkland must have seen the Rigby record long ago. Otherwise, he would not have been building a full-sized brig from the actual plan of the original Boxer. By that same token, Harkland did not need the model, since he had a completed ship awaiting him at the Scotian Yard.

"You must concede one thing, Harkland" – The Shadow's gaze fixed on the shocky-haired man – "namely, that if you knew the Maritime Library had finally gained a copy of the book containing the Rigby record, you might have wanted to remove that book. I take it, therefore, that you had been to the Maritime Library."

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"I had," admitted Harkland. "But finding the book was difficult. So difficult that I didn't know the library had it."

"But you would have taken it if you had found it."

"Probably. It would have been easy to walk away with anything from that library, right out the front door. That is, before the night the shooting started there."

"Then you could have taken the Boxer model beforehand," declared The Shadow. "You knew it was in the collection."

"Of course," replied Harkland. "I saw it there. But what use was it, even to anyone who found the Rigby record?"

The Shadow's answer was a whispered laugh. Harkland's admissions, like his question, proved that he was frank; indeed, a trifle puzzled.

"The Boxer model did prove useful," stated The Shadow, "as useful as the model of another ship, the Vesuvius."

Turning to a chair, The Shadow picked up a large oblong package and it was Anjou's turn to stare. He had seen such a package in the seaplane; it had belonged to the pilot, Kent Allard. Anjou didn't know that Kent Allard, like Isaac Twambley, was a personality The Shadow adopted when he did not care to appear as Lamont Cranston.

Opening the package, The Shadow produced the large model of the Vesuvius and laid it upon the table. Now Doug Lawton gazed in something resembling astonishment. He had seen that model before. But it had been different then. At the time Doug had been slugged, the Vesuvius model had gaped with an open hold. Now, from the front deck, loomed a miniature gun, long-barreled and with a large muzzle, more than an inch in diameter.

"The navy ship on which Malloy once served," remarked The Shadow. "Somebody who heard about it had a novel idea, which, incidentally, could have been used against Harkland, who had been friendly with Malloy. Except that Harkland could not have murdered Malloy any more than Anjou could have.

"You two" – The Shadow's gaze roved from Anjou to Harkland – "were fighting in the rear alley behind the Green Anchor when Malloy was slain. The murder took place above the kitchen, in Malloy's room, which had a bolted front door. A door" – The Shadow looked at June – "which you bolted. When you came downstairs" – The Shadow was including Doug in his gaze – "you went through the kitchen and ran into the fight out back.

"From then on, nobody entered the kitchen of the Green Anchor except myself. But when I went up through Malloy's room, I found its front door unbolted. I left it that way for the police to find; proof that Malloy's murderer did not flee by the alley, but came up again in the dumbwaiter and through the dead man's room. And that" – The Shadow turned to the back of the cabin – "brings us once again to the matter of the missing Boxer model."

Pressing a panel in the curved wall of the yacht's cabin, The Shadow slid it open and turned with the model of the Boxer in his hands. But while The Shadow was producing the missing trophy, Stephen Belville was even busier. Snatching the model of the Vesuvius, he flipped its deck open, hauling out the whole length of the projecting gun. From a table drawer, Belville snatched a knife with a rounded handle and pushed it handle

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first into the gun.

Belville's arms were actually filled with a squarish box from which the gun of the Vesuvius projected. Viewed in full length, the gun barrel itself measured more than a foot, for much of it had been hidden beneath the model's deck.

"You know too much, Shadow," sneered Belville, "but you also took too long to tell it. Yes, this is a working model of the gunnery device used in the pneumatic cruiser Vesuvius. She was used during the Spanish–American War to fire huge shells of dynamite from a mammoth airgun, operating below deck. She was sometimes termed a dynamite cruiser on that account.

"The Vesuvius had one fault. Her gun was stationary, so she had to head directly toward her target. But this smaller gun hasn't any flaw, not as I'm handling it now. It has the same power in proportion as the big gun on the Vesuvius herself. It can drive a knife hilt–deep in a human body, as I shall prove again, this time in front of witnesses."

Belville was aiming for The Shadow, wangling the amazing airgun to follow the cloaked avenger's shift. No one dared interfere, for fear that Belville would fire. It was a duel between the murderer and The Shadow, except that the latter was unarmed. In fact, The Shadow couldn't reach for an automatic, since his own arms were filled with the Boxer model.

"I stole the book with the Rigby record," admitted Belville. "It was easy, for I was watching every move Lawton made. I had Wrecker and his picked crew come into the library from the house next door and carry Lawton away. Unfortunately, Shadow, you saved Lawton from the wreck of the Clementine. I say unfortunately, because your bad fortune is still due.

"After I read the record, I stole the model of the Boxer while Pitcairn was fussing over the inventory. I did it while I was supposed to be going to the Cobalt Club and back. I wanted the Boxer model in order to estimate her size and draft and make calculations as to her course between the mermaids, in relation to the tidal conditions. Look there in the table drawer, and you'll find the evidence."

Doug caught a nod from The Shadow and brought out the evidence. Along with sheets of calculations were two maps, one very old, the other quite new. Belville was counting upon these to catch The Shadow's attention and throw him off guard.

"The new map shows soundings, tidal charts, everything that is needed," stated Belville. "But it doesn't name the island where the gold was hidden. You'll find that on the old map, Lawton. Read it to us."

Doug found the mermaids, with their name printed on the map. He traced through the bay until he reached the rocky, coffin–shaped island where Belville had so recently taken control over the rival factions. Reading the name, Doug exclaimed, "Dead Man's Chest!"

"That's right," laughed Belville. "That's the Dead Man's Chest that Rigby talked about. Not Malloy's tattooed chest, not an old wooden box belonging to Commodore Tuft, but the island where I brought the Pandora. The island that we're leaving now, and to celebrate our departure, you will see this knife buried in another dead man's chest!"

Belville meant The Shadow, who had stepped forward to lean toward the map. Belville was quick with his aiming of the pneumatic gun, prompt to press the trigger that actuated the device. But the weapon was too clumsy, compared to The Shadow's move. Belville should have limited it to knifing victims in the back.

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As the gun chugged, The Shadow dropped back, flinging his hands upward, outward, giving the Boxer model a toss that was perfectly timed. The whizzing knife caught the model amidships and was diverted upward with it. The result was a splintering of wood and a ruined ship model, proof of the power the pneumatic gun packed. But the knife, deflected in mid-air, its force spent upon the tossed target, merely became a harmless weapon that clattered to the floor.

Springing to the cabin door, Belville gained the deck and shouted for Wrecker and the murder crew. They were all on board the Pandora, for her tenders had picked them up that night when they had blown up the Clementine. Anchored in the Hudson, the yacht had become the perfect hide-out for the tugboat crew. To a man, they would have sworn that Belville was actually in New London the night he was committing murder in New York. Now, to a man, they were ready to help him finish The Shadow.

From the cabin door, The Shadow was blasting away with two guns, while Wrecker and a dozen more enemies jabbed shots back. The odds were all theirs; they had only to exhaust The Shadow's fire, then overwhelm him in a mass attack. The irony of the thing was emphasized by the present location of the Pandora. The yacht had rounded Dead Man's Chest and was ploughing past the Boxer. On the brig, the crew was hauling up the anchor chain and hoisting sail, but their efforts looked hopeless.

The tide had not quite turned. It was still coming in and the motors of the Pandora could fight their way against it, whereas the sails of the Boxer could not, for the breeze was comparatively slight. On the bridge, the helmsman of the Pandora was keeping the yacht well clear of the brig. Rifle shots could clear the gap, but Wrecker and his crew were allowing for such fire and keeping cover accordingly. As they popped away at The Shadow, they raised their heads to yell derision at the frustrated men aboard the Boxer.

Then, as before, when Doug and June had first sighted the Boxer, the past invaded the present.

Along the sides of the brig, wooden casings lifted open revealing the shiny mouths of old-fashioned brass cannon. Men sprang to the guns, swung them and applied the fuses. Like the Boxer of yore, the original warrior of 1812, the whole side of the ship belched flame that withered the Pandora with a solid load of cannon balls.

One shot cracked the yacht's bridge. Others raked her deck. The gingerbread trimmings were demolished above the cabin, where some of Wrecker's men had crept, planning to drop down upon The Shadow. Other shots from the mighty salvo clipped low beneath the stern of the Pandora, halting the spin of the yacht's propellers.

She drifted helplessly, the Pandora, while the Boxer gained sail and came alongside her. The gunners on the brig were swabbing their cannon for a reload. Others of the brig's crew were ready with the grappling hooks. Belville and Wrecker shouted for their own men to meet the attack; then, each from a flank, the murderous partners drove in upon The Shadow.

Belville and Wrecker were firing as they came, but The Shadow's shots were better placed. The Shadow held an advantage his opponents did not suspect. Instead of being an open target in the doorway, he was crouched amid the pile of fancy work that the cannon of the Boxer had knocked from above the cabin. Out of white woodwork came black-gloved hands that loosed the fiery red tongues of automatic muzzles as a sharp contrast to the gilt paint that formed the broken word Pandora.

Stopped dead in their tracks, Belville and Wrecker sprawled and stayed dead. The Shadow hadn't allowed them time to place their shots. It wasn't worth it.

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As for the rest of the yacht's crew, they didn't attempt to stop the boarding party from the brig. Matches were being set to the fuses of the cannon in order to rake the yacht's deck. Right under the brass guns of the Boxer, the Pandora mob flung their revolvers away and yelled for quarter as lustily as any old-time salts. The brig's party promptly cleared the rail and rounded up the crooks.

While the gold was being transferred from the Pandora to the Boxer, Doug and June recognized some of the brig's crew. They were The Shadow's agents; he had sent them to Yarmouth to ship aboard the Boxer when she started on her cruise. Harkland had unwittingly picked himself a batch of fighters who could outmatch anything that crime had to offer.

But the great surprise lay in the cabin of the Boxer. There, Oswald Harkland displayed his prize exhibit, prefacing it with a few pointed words.

"The Cuban gold was shipped aboard the second Boxer," stated Harkland, "and Captain Yardley sent the owners an all-important document, covering his operations, though it did not mention details. You have heard of the Cuban insurgent leader, General Garcia."

"Of course," nodded Doug. "The United States government sent him a message, assuring him of their alliance. It was a famous thing in history, the message to Garcia."

"What I have here" – smiling, Harkland spread the document on the table – "is a message from Garcia. It states that he had authorized the shipment of munitions by Josiah Getty and Artemus Lawton and that payment in gold was made with his approval. Therefore, there is no question of your claim.

"The gold is all yours. If you care to pay Anjou a slight commission for services indirectly rendered, that is your privilege. My connection is simply that of a ship owner, whose duty it was to carry and deliver cargo. And there" – Harkland waved his hand along the row of gold bags that rested on the floor – "is the final cargo.

"I can't charge you for the loss of the second Boxer, model 1898. Her shipments were paid in advance. She was partly covered by insurance; the rest of the loss was written off before I bought up the packet line. As for the present Boxer" – Harkland gazed about his cabin admiringly – "she is already bought and paid for. I am selling her to Black Knight Productions to be used in the biggest historical motion picture of all time. The picture will be laid during the War of 1812 and I shall title it 'The Cruise of the Boxer.'"

Strange in a way, that Harkland should have chosen the original Boxer, great ship though she was. Her namesake, commanded by Captain Yardley, had encountered remarkable adventures in her own right, during Cuba's struggle for independence. Living up to the name, the present Boxer, with Harkland as the master and The Shadow's agents as the crew, had staged an epoch of modern history during her maiden voyage.

Doug Lawton and June Getty went on deck to let the sea air clear some of their bewilderment. Sails filled, the Boxer was riding out to sea, with the tide now pouring behind her. The longboat was gone, though two of The Shadow's agents had returned in it, to ready their mates for the attack on the Pandora. It had obviously gone back to the island that was now dropping its coffin-shaped head beyond the receding horizon.

As they watched, Doug and June saw a seaplane rise from near the island. It circled the rocky mass before it headed landward and the hum of the motor came to them as if carried by the increasing breeze. A distant sound, reminiscent of a strange, weird laugh that vivid memory produced as an echo of a very recent past that now was beginning to seem far away.

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The laugh of The Shadow, marking another triumph over crime and the solving of a triple mystery that could be told in just three words:

Dead Man's Chest.

THE END