

CRIME OVER CASCO

Maxwell Grant

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I.

A singular telegram lay in the glow of the bluish light. It was addressed to Lamont Cranston, care of the Cobalt Club, New York, and its message consisted of a single word:

TONIGHT

The signature too was simple. Apparently the sender hadn't wasted time in writing his full name. Only the last name appeared; like the message it was in capital letters:

BROTHERS

What was happening tonight?

Who was Brothers?

A strange, whispered laugh stirred the darkness behind the bluish light, which was focused downward upon a

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polished table.

It was the laugh of The Shadow. This curtained room, pitch-black save for that circle of concentrated light, was the hidden headquarters that the master of crime investigators termed his sanctum.

Long, thin hands, The Shadow's hands, unfolded a map beneath the light. This was a topographical map, scaled an inch to a mile, and it showed an island-studded stretch of water titled Casco Bay.

The Shadow's finger rested upon an island. It was a sizable chunk of land, nearly two miles long and almost half as wide. It was marked with tiny black squares indicating houses, a larger one that represented a hotel. Its name was printed on the map:

BROTHERS ISLAND

The mere touch of The Shadow's finger unraveled the cryptic telegram. The signature was not a man's name; it was part of the message. Something was to happen on Brothers Island in Casco Bay, tonight.

Whoever had sent this telegram to Lamont Cranston unquestionably knew him as a friend. Furthermore, Cranston's status at this moment was that of a friend in need. It was not surprising that a telegram sent to Cranston should have reached The Shadow. It happened that the identity of Lamont Cranston was one that The Shadow used quite regularly while investigation crime.

The Shadow's sanctum was in New York, Casco Bay was in Maine. There were few hours yet before nightfall. Seemingly all that remained was for Cranston to take a plane to Portland, Maine, check in the Lafayette Hotel, become The Shadow, and head for Brothers Island.

There The Shadow could seek his unnamed friend or accomplish whatever task might be expected of Cranston.

Very simple, on any day but this.

The Shadow's laugh came grimly as he folded the map and put it in a pocket beneath his cloak, along with a well-stuffed envelope that was marked "Casco Bay."

Of all days, this was one when a swift flight from New York to Maine was anything but possible.

Impossible, most certainly, for a man who called himself Lamont Cranston. The Shadow's laugh told that as he placed a mirror in the light, removed his slouch hat and dropped the folds of his cloak, to stare at Cranston's face.

An impressive face, Cranston's. Calm, well-molded, in a sense mask-like, as though it veiled all that lay behind it, which indeed it did. For as The Shadow's hands spread across that face and drew themselves downward, they literally removed the fullness of those features.

The face was gone from the light before the hands had finished their peeling sweep. Rubbing together, the hands disposed of the peculiar putty substance that formed the base upon which Cranston make-up was overlaid. Then the hands placed the mirror in a flat box which contained the required substances for the replacement of Cranston's features, something which The Shadow could accomplish in a few minutes.

No need for The Shadow to look at the face which was actually his own, although he rarely used it. He

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intended to use that face now, as a passport on an assignment so extraordinary that no one else would ask for it, let alone hope that it would be granted.

The bluish light clicked off. Silence followed the departure of The Shadow. It was the only silence, perhaps, in all Manhattan, for the walls of the sanctum were thick.

Outside, a torrential fury received this man who called himself The Shadow, but who was now wearing cap and raincoat, carrying a small satchel containing the cloak and hat with other items.

New York City was taking the final lash of the sidewinds from a tropical hurricane that was now aimed for Nova Scotia and the Newfoundland Banks. The rain was now descending in a sweeping sheet that had already flooded half the subways. It was due for a let-up soon and until then, all vehicles had left the streets.

At least all vehicles but one.

A taxicab was waiting under the shelter of an old elevated structure. It was into this cab that The Shadow stepped. No need to speak to Shrevvy, the driver. The slam of the door amounted to an order.

Through the torrential rain, the taxicab set out for LaGuardia field.

At the airport, a plane was waiting in the hanger. Shrugging mechanics were standing by, wondering why they were needed. This ship had been kept ready for a mission that apparently had been abandoned.

Someone was wanted to fly out to sea, find the hurricane's center and bring back a report on his observations, provided that the reconnaissance plane returned at all. Probably the storm center would bounce it like something flung against a fly-wheel, and allow the pilot, at best, a chance for a forced landing somewhere along the coast of Maine.

So far there had been no takers. It seemed that the mission was off.

And then, as though making a forced landing of its own, Shrevvy's cab arrived and disgorged its passenger. The mechanics stared at the man with the satchel who strode into the hanger. Then, as he shook back the collar of his raincoat, the man's face was recognized.

A mechanic spoke the awed recognition:

"Kent Allard!"

He was a legend, Kent Allard, the intrepid aviator who some years ago had disappeared on a flight to South America, to turn up later as the chief of a tribe of Xınca Indians in Yucatan. He had been given a huge reception on his return to New York and since then had disappeared into obscurity.

The reason was that he preferred for practical purposes to appear as a gentleman named Lamont Cranston, friend of the police commissioner, and man-about-town. But that was a quiet secret between Kent Allard and his other self, The Shadow.

Now, as Allard, The Shadow was asserting a right that was truly his, that of undertaking an air mission worthy of his reputation. Allard, the man who had proved he could return from oblivion, was Candidate Number One when it came to an enterprise that was to test a hurricane's mettle.

One hour later, the first stage of Allard's adventure was behind him.

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Piloting the reconnaissance plane, this ace of adventurers was flying into the great black wall that girdled the slow-moving storm center of the monstrous hurricane. Tossed like a leaf, the stout ship was preparing for the giant fling that would toss it to an inevitable forced landing.

Except that Kent Allard had already picked the location where that leaf would land. That spot was an island called Brothers in a bay named Casco. The swirling vagaries of the great storm had stolen valuable time and the chances were certain that The Shadow would be late for the appointment.

This pilot was now The Shadow, wearing the cloak and hat that were his favored garb so that he could clip off the last few minutes when he arrived at the destination which he was defying death to reach.

But there were other hazards than the storm, dangers that threatened the sender of that telegram, whose name only The Shadow knew.

Hazards that meant death, already on its way!

Casco Bay was anything but lovely, that black September night.

A howling tempest was raging in from the northeast, hoisting waves through the channels between the outer islands, giving them new impetus across the broad expanses of the inner bay.

They called it a gale in these parts, in keeping in with the traditional definition. It was actually the left sector of a tropical hurricane that was twisting counter-clockwise as the storm center veered far out into the Atlantic to spend itself there.

Jud Fenwick knew what the storm was, but didn't say so. He didn't want to discourage the Commodore from making his last trip from Foreside Landing to Brothers Island, which was where Jud wanted to go. No mere gale would worry Commodore Tupper, but the term hurricane might deter him by its novelty.

Hence Jud gruffly said just "H'lo, Commodore" as he plopped across the bouncing gangplank from the big float to the good ship Starfish, alongside. When storm warnings flaunted along this coast of southern Maine, other skippers battened down their hatches and shoved their boats into coves, but Tupper simply brought out the Starfish, flagship of his pygmy flotilla.

The Starfish was a stout job, in appearance, as broad of beam as she was in length. Only an optical illusion, but it was what won the craft her name. Lobstermen always gave Tupper's pride a wide berth, claiming she might be aiming to port or starboard instead of dead ahead. A "lubbrey old starfish" they'd termed her, so the Commodore had finally given her that name.

Settling in the benched cockpit of the thirty-footer, Jud found himself the only passenger on board. Having reached the Foreside on the last bus from Portland, he expected the Starfish to pull out immediately, since its schedule depended on that of the bus. Nevertheless, Jud looked up from under the flapping awing, to glance along the pier by which passengers reached the float.

Something blue came knifing through the wind and the feeble lights that swayed along the pier identified it as a girl in a shiny slicker, who wore a Sou'wester hat of the same color. She reached the gangway that led down from the pier to the float and navigated its wooden cleats in expert style, but she met disaster when she reached the float itself.

The whole float was awash and more. The waves had been bumping its far end upward, so that it broke them in the fashion of the sea-wall, but now a wave came surging while the float was making a dip. What

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happened was the kind of thing you'd read about in a description of a storm at sea.

A great mass of green bay came all at once and lifted the girl right off the float. She'd have probably wound up as flotsam down among the Portland shipyards, miles to the south, if the Commodore hadn't providentially docked the Starfish on the lee side of the float, which in fact was the only spot where he could have placed it.

The wall of the water hit the heaving side of the Starfish with a crash, and over the gunwale sailed the chunk of blue humanity, flying so fast that she'd probably have hurdled the far side of the craft if Jud and the Commodore hadn't intervened. Up from the bench, Jud was driving one direction, while Commodore Tupper, arriving from the cabin, proved he could still be spry at eighty.

Between them they intercepted the girl and benched her, breathless, like some huge fish landed from the sea. By the dim lights from the posts of the Starfish, Jud found himself staring at a flock of blond hair as thick and twisted as seaweed, but a lot prettier.

Jud hadn't expected to encounter anything like this around Casco Bay, now that the summer people had pulled up stakes. Still, in that one long stare, he found himself wondering whether the girl was really native to these parts.

It struck him that the girl was Scandinavian, a fairly frequent ancestry in this section of Maine. Yet she had a foreign air, peculiarly at variance with the usual New England manner. For one thing, she accepted this incident with a hauteur, as though disallowing the waves their right to sweep her in such unseemly fashion.

Maybe the girl wasn't as haughty as she looked. Her face, framed in that flow of blonde locks, had a high aristocratic nose, which wasn't unlovely, because her remaining features had a contour that suited it. Her eyes, in turn, matched the blue of the sleek slicker that had fallen clear away from her shoulders.

Underneath, the girl wore a blue sweater and if the way it fitted her was a criterion of the way all sweaters fitted, Jud could understand why Hollywood had slapped a ban on sweater girls. Jud's roaming eyes met the girl's blue gaze long enough to receive an indignant glare, which the blonde accompanied by drawing the slicker up around her, clear above her chin. But the glare, Jud took it, was a bluff.

The tight fit of the sweater wasn't all he'd noticed. Jud had followed the criss-cross of the leather strap that ended in a sizable canvas dispatch bag that the girl was wearing at her side, under the slicker. It reminded Jud of a knapsack, the type that the Girl Scouts carried. Only this lady was a few years beyond the Girl Scout stage.

Old Commodore Tupper, a grizzled character as his eighty-odd years befitted, was quite as interested in all this as was Jud. Tupper's beard slackened its wag, proving he'd forgotten his tobacco chew, which was something. Giving the brush-off with a flick of her long eyelashes, the girl spoke to the Commodore.

"I am drenched," she declared, in a low precise tone. "I should like to change."

Foreign, all right, that accent. Likewise the girl showed a laxity of English by expressing the rest with gestures. She tapped the knapsack beneath her slicker to indicate that it contained a change of clothes, while with her other hand, she indicated her skirt, which was thoroughly soaked. She completed her want list with a wave toward the cabin at the front of the Starfish.

The old Commodore nodded.

"Suit yourself, lady," he declared. "Reckon though, first I oughta roust Homer out."

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Homer proved to be a scrawny thing that the Commodore roused from the cabin by the back of the neck. In age, he looked about eighteen, and acted about sixteen, which would make him fourteen by Jud's calculation, based on recent observations of the Coastal natives and the way they grew up fast. The hurricane was scaring Homer and he'd probably been under one of the cabin bunks, if they were high enough to crawl beneath.

The rousting of Homer accomplished two things: it cleared the cabin for the lady and it enabled Commodore Tupper to shove off. This was accomplished by untwisting the ropes from the float-cleats and letting Homer prod away with a boathook while the Commodore started the motor that was located amidships, where the gunwales were high.

Then the girl was in the cabin, the Commodore was at the wheel, Homer was crunched in a corner under the shelter of the high-built bow and the Starfish was plodding into the teeth of the gale and finding that the term teeth was a very mild way to describe it.

Finding he had sea-legs, Jud used them to join the Commodore beside the big wheel. He was careful to pick the windward side, so as not to block Tupper's occasional delivery of the tobacco juice, which went to the leeward.

"A tough night, skipper," said Jud.

"Gales is gales," philosophized Tupper. Then, with a chuckle that covered their recent adventure, he added: "Jest like gals is gals."

"A nice number, that blonde," commented Jud. "Ever see her before?"

"Yup."

"Know her name?"

"Yup. It's Nilja."

"Nilja what?"

Old Commodore Tupper gave Jud Fenwick a very sharp eye and held it.

"Been around here a spell, young fellow?"

"Not very long, Commodore."

"Long enough to read the names on the tubs the lobstermen call boats? I mean when they're painted good enough to read?"

"Why, yes," realized Jud. "They're names like the Nellie G and the Susan J or the –"

"That's enough," interrupted Tupper. "All first names, hain't they?"

"Why, yes."

"Then first names is all that matters."

With that philosophy, advice, or whatever it might be, the ancient mariner removed his eyes from Jud, turned to leeward, and aimed a quota of tobacco juice.

From the darkness of the bay a bell-buoy clanged as though Commodore Tupper had found it as a target.

Pitching hard, the Starfish kept on its blind course, with old Tupper's hands manipulating the wheel so tenderly that he seemed to be studying every caprice of the mighty wind. Almost as though talking to himself out loud, he stated:

"Names are funny things. Most often they don't fit persons, nohow. That's why I don't go asking folks what their names are. Of course when they start asking about other folks, it seems like they ought to give their own names –"

This was leading straight to Jud, which for reasons of his own was something he didn't like. However, an interruption ended the Commodore's probe.

Out of the blackness of the bay rose a white mass that Jud mistook for a tidal wave, as did Homer, who hid his head and bleated. All old Tupper did was give the wheel a jerk and hurl a few indiscriminate curses into the gale. Then the white mass became the sleek length of a trim, well-built yacht, a sail-rigged craft, with lights glittering from its rail and masts. There were shouts amid the wind, the silent scamper of men along the rail, as the Starfish veered off and lost herself amid the blackness. The old Commodore became coherent.

"The Rover," he identified. "Belongs to Greeley Thodor, drat him. A landlubber, for all he's sailed the Seven Seas. Dragging an anchor here in the Bay! Wonder he hasn't lost the Rover, the way the Equinox went."

Though he had a vague idea of what the Commodore meant; Jud didn't say so. He'd learned one thing in this region, that is, you closed up like a clam, nobody questioned you further. From now on, the Commodore could do all the talking, if he wanted. Jud didn't want to talk.

Neither did the Commodore. He didn't hanker for a one-sided conversation. So Jud worked back to his bench and sat there, watching for Nilja to come out of the cabin.

Only Nilja didn't come out.

Chugging motor, howling wind, smashing waves, all turned the fierce pitch of the Starfish into a huge monotony until the Commodore unerringly picked the landing on Brothers Island and swung his stout little ship into one of the really protected coves where an easy landing could be made despite the hurricane.

They came alongside an unperturbed float where Jud handed the Commodore his ticket and went up a steep gangway that barely wobbled. At the top, the wind was heavy, but Jud could see the lights of the Brothers Island hotel, the Bayview House, not far away among the swaying trees.

So Jud started up the slope to the Bayview House, only to turn and look back, hoping that Nilja would appear from the top of the steep gangplank. Instead, a curious phenomenon took place, one that could hardly be called an appearance.

One by one, the lights flickered as if a hand of blackness had twisted them, then turned them on again. It was as if something from the night had intervened, and Jud could almost picture a shrouded shape of blackness moving across his line of vision.

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It was something Jud Fenwick didn't like. Turning, he hurried onward, losing himself in the blackness of the trees, along the winding slope leading up to the Bayview House.

Odd, that fleeting blackness back at the landing. It was something that Jud Fenwick would remember when he met with someone called The Shadow!

II.

The Bayview House was just what Jud expected it to be.

Built longer ago than anybody cared to remember, the frame hotel was shivering in the gale. In fact, its shiver would have been alarming, if its very age had not been proof that it had weathered many storms like this.

A pug-faced clerk was asleep behind the counter that answered for a hotel desk, and above him, swaying to the howl of the wind, hung a large framed chromo entitled "September Gale" by Oliver Wendell Holmes, with the verse of that famous poem printed along with a portrait of the author.

Jud banged a brass bell on the counter until he woke the clerk, who looked surprised to see a customer, and finally collected his scattered wits enough to find the registration book, so that Jud could sign as the first guest of a blank week.

Maybe the clerk was suspicious, maybe he wasn't. The way his face kept changing could be due to the sway of the kerosene lamps that illuminated this ancient lobby. Jud Fenwick hesitated a trifle, then used a pen to sign his right name: Judson L. Fenwick. Hands on the counter, the clerk was impersonating a bull-dog looking in a window, anxious no doubt to see if Jud had brought any baggage. Jud forestalled that with:

"Room for the night. How much?"

"Two dollars," returned the clerk. "Of course, we'd like to —"

"In advance." Jud tossed the clerk a sample of the common currency of Maine, namely a two-dollar bill. "Where's the room?"

The clerk handed Jud a key with a tag half the size of an auto license plate. It bore the number 103. As supplementary equipment, the clerk provided a stubby candle in a crockery candle-stick.

"You'll find extras up in the room," he said, nudging toward a stairway that had a lean like a curved dip on a roller-coaster. "Use all you want, now that the season's over. Candles were kind of short this year."

Jud took it that the clerk meant short on numbers, not in length, as might have been inferred from the stubby specimen that the clerk had just lighted. Anyway, it paved matters for a query Jud had in mind.

"Guess it's a lot of trouble," put Jud, "going into Portland or over to the Foreside, for everything you want to buy."

"We deal here on the island," returned the clerk. "Buy from Harbison's, we do."

"Harbison's?"

"Yup. General store, down a piece from the landing."

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"Closed for the season, I suppose," said Jud. "Guess I'd have seen the lights if it had been open."

The clerk furnished a bull-dog snort at that one.

"Harbison's been open regular for ninety years," he stated. "Got some of the original stock in that upstairs store-room of his, I reckon. I mean what was the original stock his grandpap stowed away there. Course he closes nights, that's why you didn't see any lights."

"Ninety years," remarked Jud. "The Harbison's must have done a lot of business in that time, except in the winters."

"The store stays open winter," twanged the clerk. "Does some of its best trading, thenabouts."

"Trading?" queried Jud. "You mean business on a swap basis?"

"Might call it that," nodded the clerk. "Like when somebody moves and don't know what to do with their household things, Harbison's gets them –"

"Or like when somebody dies?"

The question was too pointed, like the barb on a fish-hook. Like the dog-fish he resembled, the clerk held fast to the bait once he snapped it.

"Like when one dies?"

For the first time the clerk was awake enough to study Jud's face, except that he couldn't see it. Jud had picked up the candle-stick and was artfully lifting the candle flame between himself and the questioner.

"Who'd you be talking about?" demanded the clerk. "Nobody has died hereabouts in quite a spell."

"Ninety years is a pretty long spell," parried Jud. "You spoke about Harbison's dating away back. Some of the stuff they traded in might be rated as antiques."

Taking Jud to be summer people, the clerk relaxed. He gave proof of his fading suspicions:

"Reckon they might."

"Nice to know the store is open," concluded Jud, turning away with the candle. "I'll drop in there tomorrow. Maybe I'll find some old furnishings from schooner cabins. Guess the old sea captains got rid of them when they settled here on Brothers Island."

Paws on the desk, the clerk was glaring across; his voice came sharp as a bull-dog's bark.

"Only one of 'em settled here and that was Cap'n Gorling. Sounds like you must have heerd of him. Cap'n Josiah Gorling. Purty near owned the hull island, Cap'n Gorling did."

Jud paused at the decadent stairway to nod back, still screening his face with the candle flame. The clerk was trying to peek around it, but couldn't at that distance. Funny, the way the bull-dog face swayed back and forth like the kerosene lamp that hung above the counter.

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"If you're wanting to know about Cap'n Gorling," the clerk added sharply, "you might be saying so. Only there's nobody will be telling you much about him, considering he was the last of the Gorlings and he's been dead twenty years. What's more, he minded his own business, which is good advice for anybody."

"Thanks," rejoined Jud. "I'll pass the advice right back. Give me a call for eight o'clock, unless the place starts to blow down before then." He jangled the big key. "I'm in one hundred and three. Remember?"

Sourly, the clerk scrawled the room number on the register and squatted back in his chair. He was swaying in tempo with the big framed poem when Jud took a last look from the turn of the stairs.

It took a lot of candle wagging to find 103 and it wouldn't have mattered much if Jud hadn't found it. All the doors were open, showing gaping, empty rooms. The key was of the simple variety that would probably have locked any door, so Jud took 103 just by way of formality.

Closing the door, he rammed the key home, twisted it so it was crosswise. It would take a lot of clatter to knock that key around and shove it from the other side. Jud didn't intend to sleep too hard to be unaware of such gyrations.

In fact, Jud Fenwick wasn't sure that he was going to sleep at all.

Even while he dabbed flames on the extra candles, Jud was disturbed by the tremors of the old hotel, the rattle and rip of its shutters. Rain battered violently against the grimy window panes as though ready to smash them with its pelt. But even the perpetual whoosh of the wind didn't drown the crinkle of the paper that Jud could feel deep in his pocket.

Jud started to draw it out, the letter that he carried; then, looking past a candle flame, he saw his own face in a cracked mirror and gave a short, blunt laugh.

That laugh suited Jud Fenwick.

Blocky of face, Jud had a look that could be politely termed rugged, though some people might have called it hard. Maybe Jud liked the latter definition and was trying to live up to it. His eyes, closed to slits, made a line as straight as his lips. Jud always laughed that way, with a shove of his chin.

Then a voice spoke; Jud's voice:

"Who's there?"

It was only the wind, rattling the door. The hurricane must have cracked a few windows somewhere and sent a chunk of itself whistling in through the hotel. The rattling stopped and Jud waited to see if it would start again.

It did, but differently.

Somebody knocking this time. Probably the pug-faced clerk, nosing up here on some excuse. Jud stepped over to the door, twisted the key neatly and gave the knob a sharp yank, hoping he'd bring the fellow pitching through.

Only it didn't prove to be the clerk.

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In the candlelight, Jud found himself confronted by someone too smart to be caught by the old door trick. It was the girl Nilja, standing erect in the hall; in the dim light, her blue eyes were reduced to a cold steel gray. That was just the term for it: cold steel. If the eyes didn't have it, the gun did.

The gun that Nilja was aiming straight for Jud's top vest button.

Like her eyes, Nilja's revolver lacked anything that could be called a come-hither look.

III.

Jud Fenwick took it all quite coolly. Maybe he was absorbing some of the cold freeze from the gun. He let his hand reach for the door edge as he stepped back slowly and gave a gesture with his other arm.

"Sorry, I didn't ring for ice water," declared Jud. "There's a pitcher here and all I'd have to do would be hang it out the window and let the storm fill it."

Nilja was across the threshold, with a sinuous advance, swift as the way she'd poured herself into the Starfish. The turn of her gun was toward the door edge, ferreting out Jud's hiding place.

"Sorry, lady," conceded Jud, lifting his hand in view. "I guess the woodwork is too flimsy. I should have brought some brass knuckles to back it. Now about the ice water —"

"Stand where you are!"

It was firm, the foreign tone that stopped Jud short of the pitcher on the old wash-stand. The girl wasn't giving Jud a chance to start flinging things, not even of an improvised variety.

"Maybe I picked the wrong room," Jud apologized. "If this is your lucky number, keep it, and I'll take another —"

"Silence!"

Nilja really meant it, so Jud silenced. His eyes though, weren't included in the order, so he used them. It was the same girl, all right, only she'd made a considerable change in Tupper's cabin. Blue was still her favorite color, but of a darker shade. She was wearing denim slacks and a flannel shirt instead of the trim skirt and sweater. She'd replaced her high heels with blue sneakers and she'd ditched the blue slicker and its accompanying hat, along with the Girl Scout knapsack. Nilja's blonde hair was completely packed away in an oversized man's cap that she'd probably borrowed from the Commodore's cabin. The only femininity that she still revealed consisted of a pair of nylons, an ankle's length, just under her rolled-up cuffs of her slacks.

Jud waited for a question. One came and it rather surprised him, Nilja's tone was sharp:

"Who are you?"

Jud decided to keep a few traces of that thing called sangfroid, so he forced a sharp reply.

"You wouldn't have found this room," he argued, "if you hadn't looked at the register. I wrote my name there."

"I saw what you wrote. Who are you?"

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"My writing isn't that bad. I guess you just can't read English. It's Judson L. Fenwick, the name. The L is for Louis and the Judson is for Jud."

"You lie!"

If the girl's trigger finger had tightened like her lips, Jud's vest would have needed a new top button. But Nilja shoved the gun forward instead of dispatching its contents and Jud found himself backing behind the candlelight, toward the wind-battered window which was now reminding him of a rattlesnake with its clatter.

"Why did you steal that name?" Nilja gave the word 'steal' the hiss that completed the snake illusion. "Or maybe it was already written." The girl's eyes widened with a blink that made them blue. "So you just came to this room to wait. Eh?"

The 'eh' was like a stab and Jud didn't like it. Evidently Nilja recognized the fact that she repeated that form of punctuation.

"You will answer, eh? Or you will want me to kill you, eh?"

She pronounced 'kill' like 'keel,' but it didn't matter which she meant. Both would apply to Jud if Nilja began talking with that gun. Any help from the bull-dog clerk would be too late, even if he should hear the shots, which Jud doubted that he could with all the howl of the hurricane. In fact, putting the idea in reverse, Jud was getting the impression that Nilja might have tried a little target practice on the way up, with the clerk as the recipient.

Something had to be said and quickly. The gun wasn't blinking and it wasn't turning blue. Nilja's finger was getting so taut that as the building wobbled from the hurricane, the jar might shake a few bullets loose.

"My real name," began Jud. "That's right, I've got to tell you my real name." His seemed a voice far away, like something coming from out of the hurricane. Odd how the glitter of the gun was fascinating him in the wavery candlelight. He was even wondering what kind of a gun it was. "My name –"

He paused, at a loss in this dilemma, his throat so suddenly dry that it seemed as though all its moisture had gone into the beads of sweat that were streaming his face. Then, suddenly a name popped:

"It's it's Remington Colt."

"All right, Mr. Colt," declared Nilja, referring to Jud and not the gun, "and now you will tell me why you pretend to be Mr. Fenwick."

The hurricane helped at that point. Nilja's gun grip had relaxed, so the Remington, Colt or whatever it was, didn't blast when the building jarred. It beat so hard, the storm, that a couple of window panes came crashing through and the candles gave a weird, wild flicker. Big shadows streaked the walls, elongating and wavering; the candle flames seemed sucked toward the window by the back-draft of the wind. Blackness, too, came pouring in from the hallway, mammoth blackness as grotesque as a living form. Nilja was dropping back a pace, her face distorted, but whether through sheer fear, grim determination, or just the candlelight, Jud didn't know. All Jud knew was, finding his advantage going with the candlelight, he'd be likely to start shooting, just to regain his nerves.

Needing the gun to get his nerve back, Jud made a mad grab for it. His face must have looked as venomous as the fierce snarl that he uttered, for Nilja gave what could have been called a scream, if it hadn't been so metallic.

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Back-stepping, the maddened blonde brought the gun up between Jud's clutching hands. Nilja's finger tugged the trigger and the whole room roared in Jud's ears, particularly the ear that felt the red-hot singe of a passing bullet. Missing at that close range was a miracle on Nilja's part, or so Jud thought until he saw what had happened to the girl. Nilja was in the clutch of a cloaked form, a thing of blackness that was alive and real, a tangible figure that had literally created itself out of the mass of dark that had swarmed in from the hallway with the dwindle of the candle flame!

Only for an instant did Jud Fenwick sight that incredible form that couldn't be anything but unreal. Then the candle flames were gone as if the living blackness itself had snuffed them. There was a strange, weird laugh amid the blackness, and Jud heard a crazed shriek that could only have been Nilja's. For the girl was fighting, wildly, and her gun was stabbing upward with a flame like lightning in the blackness as Jud found himself bounced back by the pair of unseen strugglers. One was Nilja and the other might be anything. In any case, Jud preferred the hurricane to either or both.

Landing shoulder first against the window, Jud didn't try to stop. The storm wanted in and he wanted out. There was a crash and Jud went though, plunging into blackness that promptly swallowed him.

Anyway, it was empty blackness, not the solid kind that became alive, the kind that had saved Jud Fenwick from his own folly, though he hadn't waited to thank it!

IV.

The Bayview House was built against the slope, and ground outside was sodden with rain. What Jud Fenwick hit was thick, soft turf, coated with a lot of pine needles, that sent him skidding as he came to his feet.

And Jud kept right on skidding around the corner of the old hotel, down another slope, with the hurricane blowing him along the path that the pine needles greased for him.

Through a window, as he passed, Jud saw the bull-dog clerk slumped in his chair behind the desk, whether asleep or dead, Jud didn't know. If the former, Jud saw no advantage in waking him; if the latter, it wouldn't do any good to try. As for Nilja, Jud didn't care to find out whether she was gripped by her imagination or his own.

It was a crazy dream, the whole thing, probably some foolish concoction that had grown in Jud's brain during the lucky dive he'd taken through the window. He'd banged his head against the window frame, and that could account for the silly business. In fact now as Jud remembered it or tried to remember it he'd grabbed for Nilja's gun, dodged a wild shot she'd made when she took a tripping backstep and then the window had been Jud's spontaneous goal.

The living blackness explained itself as Jud passed the dim lights of the landing where old Commodore Tupper had docked. That was where Jud had seen something resembling weaving blackness that looked alive; he remembered now. Only now there was no time to waste, because with Nilja loose, Jud couldn't wait until tomorrow to complete the job that had brought him here.

Harbison's store demanded an immediate visit.

On Brothers Island, all roads lead to Harbison's because there was only one road and it went past the place. The store had been built before the road, which was why the road jogged around it. Jud didn't stop until he reached the store, and then it was the store that stopped him.

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Flattening against a big wooden wall, Jud let his senses crawl back into place. This was Harbison's all right; it couldn't be any place else. Old too, the building, so old that its dried slatboards had soaked up the rain from the storm and seemed dry still. It felt like a blockhouse, but it must have doors and windows. Stores usually had them, even on islands like this.

Probing around, Jud found a door locked with a big padlock. Climbing a porch that crunched underfoot, he discovered a window by its rattle and decided it was weak enough to jimmy by what was now Jud's favorite method, a good jolt with his shoulder.

The window went through and took Jud with it, landing him in the feed and grain department. Crawling out from a bin of oats, Jud came directly into hardware and knocked something off the counter that proved to be a stack of flashlights. They had batteries in them, as Jud discovered by a proper test, and thus equipped he was really ready to complete tomorrow's business tonight.

Next stop, the storage room above.

Past a lot of oil-skin coats that hung stiffly on a rack, Jud found the only stairway in the store. It ended in a trap door which wasn't bolted, but which was not inclined to yield until Jud gave it the good old shoulder treatment, but with his other shoulder for a change. Up went the trap and Jud took a hurdle over a box of canned goods that spilled its contents along with him. After that, the trap door slammed again.

Coming to his feet Jud flickered the flashlight cautiously at first, then freely when he discovered that the store room had no windows. Puggy, back at the hotel, hadn't been exaggerating when he said that some of the contents might date back a century.

There were boxes, crates, big chunks of furniture that included antique organs and old highboys. A great place for kids to play hide-and-seek, except if they did, the one that was "it" would have to grow up and be elected sheriff, in order to find the others with a search warrant.

Using improvised pathways, Jud cleaved his way through cobwebs, finding occasional open spaces where he had to wade through dust. He was scanning everything with the flashlight, looking for anything that might have come off a ship; and at the end of a peculiarly clear path, Jud found exactly what he sought.

The thing was a sea captain's medicine chest, a blocky hunk of furniture about the size of two installments of a sectional bookcase, though a trifle higher and somewhat narrower.

The thing had a front that dropped and a key was in its lock, so Jud turned the key and dropped the front. Inside, along with a lot of little pigeonholes was a brass plaque that bore the initials J.G., so the thing probably had belonged to Josiah Gorling.

These old contrivances weren't unfamiliar to Jud Fenwick. In fact it was his knowledge of such articles that had made him think old Cap'n Gorling must have had one. Getting the drawers loose from the pigeonholes, Jud found exactly what he expected. There was a space behind them that came open under proper probe, revealing a nice wide secret compartment well adapted for hiding things like brandy bottles and potent medicines that prowling crew members might want to sneak without the skipper's knowledge.

It was empty, this hidden compartment, and finding it so, Jud laughed. What he noted most particularly were the dimensions of this built-in cache. Those dimensions didn't compare with the total size of the drawers that Jud had removed.

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Therefore, this was the secret compartment that was supposed to be found. It was impossible to hide the fact that there was one; therefore the game was to camouflage it. That fooled them back in the old schooner days, but antique dealers had caught onto the stunt long ago.

Going around to the back of the cabinet, Jud studied the brass bindings along the edges of the mahogany. He pressed for hidden springs; then decided he should have borrowed a screw driver from the hardware department, to loosen this binding. Jud wiggled the binding, though, in hope that he could first find the dummy screws, and under his pressure, a portion of the cabinet back slid upward as though it had been oiled only yesterday.

Squarely in the glow of Jud's flashlight was an open space that could properly be called the secret secret compartment. Only it was empty, like the other. So the quest was hopeless, after all.

More hopeless than Jud thought.

From behind Jud, a voice spoke: an icy voice, that said in simple terms:

"If you want the map, here it is."

A click accompanied the words and Jud turned to stare into the glow of a bull's eye lantern, set on the big chest just behind him. Leaning there were a pair of folded arms, a chin and its accompanying face resting upon them. Right in front of the hands was a rolled chart, of just a nice size to fit into that long, shallow compartment that Jud had discovered in the back of Gorling's cabinet.

The face was blackish, partly because it was withdrawn from the light; again, because it bore the stubble of a two day's beard. It was a flat face, what Jud could guess of it. Eyes glittered, but they were blackish, like coals, though they could readily have been brown.

One hand lifted from the arm that hid it. The right hand, for it brought with it a slip of paper and a pencil that the man had drawn from the breast pocket of his coat.

Then the cold voice, speaking what Jud thought was mockery:

"If you want the map, sign for it."

The paper flattened in front of Jud and the pencil would have rolled from the chest except that the man's hand stopped it when Jud made no move. Thick fingers, yet not ill formed, lifted the pencil and held it Jud's way. Again the voice said:

"Sign."

Jud was trying to think fast. One thing crossed his mind: that box of canned goods that had flopped when he opened the trap door. Of course this intruder had planted it there, just so he'd know when somebody like Jud came shoving up here.

There was a hard laugh: Jud's.

Whoever this person, he was playing a different game than Nilja or was he? Why did he want Jud Fenwick to sign what amounted to a receipt and what name did he expect Jud to use? Probably he was just trying to draw Jud closer before whipping his other hand still hidden into sight.

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There was a way to test it and yet spring something that might change these odds. Jud reached, but not for the pencil. He reached for the map.

Flat-face was a jump ahead. His hidden hand twisted into sight; empty, it caught the map and gave it a neat flip back over the man's shoulder. Where it landed, Jud didn't know, but it couldn't have gone far. The hand dropped back to where it had been before and Jud again suspected that it could have a gun in reach.

"All right," declared Jud suddenly. "I'll sign."

He looked at the face as he spoke and saw it more clearly now. Not as hard a face as it might have been, but a firm one. It might have been a friendly face, until Jud saw a leer. A curious leer, the lips pursing in a pained expression, the eyes glistening wide, as though the man really felt hurt at finding Jud so simple-minded.

Simple-minded, indeed, to sign a paper at the request of an unarmed accouter. Except that now Jud was quite sure that this stranger was anything but unarmed, considering how he still kept his left hand hidden. As though to prove his point, the man clutched the pencil tighter, pressed its heavy point against the paper and scrawled something himself. As he finished, he released the pencil and this time it rolled across the chest. The man's right hand flattened, slid the paper to Jud, who stared at it despite himself.

If the man couldn't sign his own name, at least he had graduated from the class that considered a mere "X" customary. What the flat-faced man had written was a long wavery line.

A grim sort of jest, that scrawl, here in this forgotten store room with a hurricane knocking off the outside eaves with its howl. Either grim or stupid, and preferring to regard it as the latter, Jud angrily crumpled the paper and thrust it in his pocket.

Jud was wondering what the other man would do about that. He was still wondering when he heard the answer, a sharp thud. Looking up to witness the reasons, Jud saw that the flat-faced man had let his arms spread forward, with the result that he had flattened right on his flat face, his body following until his hands dangled on Jud's side of the low chest.

But it was grim now and very much so, considering what bulged into the light from a spot just midway between the man's shoulders.

The thing that bulged was the handle of a knife that had been buried hilt deep.

V.

Jud Fenwick was learning to act fast.

This time he didn't stop to think things over, to reason that the pained expression registering on the flat face had been real, the pain induced by the swift, silent delivery of a death stroke.

Nor did Jud think about the map which had dropped so silently to the floor, but into a waiting hand of an assassin creeping up in the back of an occupied victim.

All Jud wanted was darkness and he didn't stop to reflect that it might bring living blackness of the type that had conjured itself into the hotel room. With a sidesweep of his arm, Jud batted away the bull's eye lantern so hard that it crashed when it struck the floor.

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By then, Jud had traveled further than the lantern. Something came flying into his path, a blocking figure that propelled an old chair ahead of it. Reeling away, Jud blundered into Captain Gorling's cabinet and flung it in return. Then other things began to fly and Jud was hurling a path right and left, using anything he laid his hands on to flay off enemies who apparently preferred knives to guns and therefore should be kept at a distance.

How many those foemen were, Jud didn't know, but he imagined the place was full of them. At least his sense of direction wasn't at fault, for Jud reached the trap door in the corner, recognizing it when he stumbled over the upset box of canned goods.

Then Jud became all fumbles. He was trying to get the trap door open, but couldn't, because he was on top of it. Of a sudden, a match flared; then a lantern caught the flame. It was an old ship's lantern and it came swinging Jud's direction in a fashion most elusive.

Nobody could have covered that distance in such rapid, silent fashion, considering the way this loft was stocked with obstacles. Even the unknown intruder up at the Bayview House couldn't have maneuvered it, in Jud's opinion. Still, there was no telling what a ghost might do and Jud was inclined to think that he'd met a solidified ghost up here.

The present business, however, was more apparent. The lantern was the type with a wire handle and it was being swung on the end of a long pole. How long the pole was became a different question. The man at the other end of it was obviously using this device to keep Jud puzzled.

Probably he figured that Jud had a gun; but the term "he" could be better transcribed as "they" for Jud was more than ever conscious that his enemies were plural. The whine of the lashing wind covered creaking sounds from the floor, but the wind wasn't blowing over the tables and what—not, here in the storage room. That, Jud could attribute to men who were creeping closer, blundering as they came.

It was a fine bluff if Jud could only follow it through. How he was to accomplish that was another proposition. Even if he'd had a gun, Jud couldn't have done much except pick off the lantern. Maybe he could sock it with a tin can, so he reached for such a missile, determined to have a try.

Then Jud halted his hand. Maybe it would be a giveaway, slinging a tin can, a proof that he didn't have a gun. He could picture flashlights responding from everywhere, with dirks promptly slicing through their beams. A better plan, Jud decided, would be to get that trap door open and do a rapid sneak downstairs.

Jud's reach had carried him partly off the trap, so the rest seemed easy. Easier in fact than it seemed. Before Jud could turn about, the trap came whamming upward, pitching him headlong. With the clatter, flashlights glared, a pair of them, and the lantern did a backward slide along the pole, to a hand that gripped it and then swung it forward. But in those moments, more happened.

Up with the trap door came a laugh, a fierce, challenging burst of sinister mockery that fairly echoed from the rafters like a myriad of ghoulish taunts. The invader who had flung Jud with the trap door, wasn't wasting any time in declaring himself.

He was the same personage who had suppressed Nilja's gun up at the hotel.

The Shadow!

Although Jud didn't know The Shadow by name, his enemies must have, or at least recognized its equivalent. For they made a concerted surge, raising a shout with it. Flashlights, lantern and all were coming at once, and

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the knives were there too, glittering from the hands that were flying forward to fling them at the luckless invader who was only head and shoulders through the opening in the floor.

Three attackers, these men who had lurked in the loft; three, where Jud had expected half a dozen. Three, however, were just three too many, considering The Shadow's disadvantage. Long known as a master of invisibility, The Shadow depended upon certain circumstances to display that ability. Either he needed darkness with which he could merge, or strong light cast upon others, that its glare might aid The Shadow in the exercise of hypnotic powers.

Here, all was in reverse. All the lights were focused on The Shadow. It was too late to drop back down the trap, yet The Shadow was still short of opportunity to draw his guns. In his path lay two buffers that might have combined to ward off knife flings; one, a human type in the shape of Jud Fenwick, the other an inert object, the overturned box of canned goods.

With a mighty sweep of his rising arms, The Shadow flung the first aside to reach the second. Thoughtful indeed, where Jud was concerned, but how long Jud would last after The Shadow's finish, was a question. About the time required to snuff a candle, most probably.

As for the overturned box, it was inadequate to shield The Shadow. In their return sweep, his arms brought the box on end, but what it gained in height it lost in width. Attackers were veering to flank The Shadow. The converging lights showed their poised hands ready for their murderous down-snaps, when The Shadow gave the box a series of thumps, jolting it semicircular style.

Out from the open box top poured a spreading flood of tin cans that scattered like a flock of roller-skates on the loose, and with the same result. The Shadow distributed them in every path, giving a fair share to each charging attacker. All three gave imitations of surf-board riders hitting a wrong wave.

Knives went flying along with flashlights. The ship's lantern crashed the wall, splattering its kerosene amid boxes stuffed with excelsior, which immediately started to gobble the flame. Though he'd stopped the onslaught, The Shadow was getting light and too much of it, as he made a quick grab to haul Jud down through the trap.

Sprawled men were grabbing up the tin cans that had floored them, hoping to bombard The Shadow with his own missiles and then reclaim their knives. The Shadow didn't give them time, either to pepper him or Jud. He disappeared in a twisting slide to the store below, carrying Jud with him.

The maddened men above weren't willing to let their advantage slip them. They came piling down the stairs, tin cans bouncing with them, pulling guns as they came. With the building on fire, there wasn't much use in stalling for silence any longer. The Shadow recognized it too and his first act was to rush Jud across the store and out through a door, where the hurricane was better company than a gunfray, for anyone who didn't have a gun.

The door slammed and The Shadow was back inside again. Jud heard the muffled stab of guns, then the crash of windows proving that some folk at least were making a hurried exodus. Jud wasn't too bewildered to guess where they'd head next; if he wanted to get off this island in a hurry, he'd make for Tupper's boat.

So Jud started there. Whoever the cloaked fighter who had aided him, Jud intended to repay in kind. Cutting through brushy ground, he reached the wharf more quickly than he realized and found the Starfish. The old plugger was squatting down by the float, quite deserted except for one mournful little pilot light.

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Maybe there'd be a gun in the Commodore's cabin, unless it was the one that Nilja had brought along. Jud reached the boat, then stopped short, empty-handed except for his grip on the gunwale.

It was Nilja again.

The denim-clad blonde had stepped from the cabin and she still had her gun, or at least had regained it. In the dim light, she was giving Jud the same challenge that she had before.

There wasn't any use in argument. The wind and the waves were making too much racket here; besides, back on the island a flaming beacon had begun to rise. It was the fire in Harbison's Store, lifting itself like an accusing torch, explaining the reason for Jud's rush, so far as Nilja was concerned.

Jud stepped back on the wobbly float, his hands raised. Over to the right, he heard a slow chug-chug and realized that another boat was waiting there, its engine throbbing in the darkness. A boat that Jud couldn't see, but wished he could reach.

Then Nilja's voice stabbed suddenly above the tumult of the wind-crashed bay:

"Look out!"

Jud swung about. The gang from the store had reached him. One was aiming with a gun, the other was about to swing a similar weapon. Jud knocked the first gun aside as he heard Nilja's revolver bark valiantly but wildly, the most the girl could do in Jud's behalf.

She was out of the Starfish, Nilja, circling for the gangway to the wharf above, so she could get the right aim at this crew of killers. Only, before Nilja completed her maneuver, the swinging gun reached his head.

Jud Fenwick folded right back into a thorough oblivion that seemed to swallow the hurricane, the bay, and everything else along with it. Oddly, during his last conscious instant, he thought he heard the singular sound that could be called the trade-mark of darkness itself.

That sound was the rise of a weird, mocking laugh: The Shadow's.

It was more than illusion, that challenging mirth. The men who heard it dived for the shelter of the boat that was idling at the end of the float; piling into the craft, they chopped the straining ropes and the motor roared, scudding them away.

Nilja, meanwhile, had reached the wharf, but before she could explain a thing, a cloaked arm caught her and whisked the girl off into thicker blackness. Lights were coming from everywhere; the people in the island had aroused and were arriving in full quota, not only to fight the fire in Harbison's Store, but to deal with any malefactors responsible.

It wasn't the right time to start making explanations, not even for The Shadow. Even Commodore Tupper, a man well acquainted in these parts, wasn't anxious to be answering questions put by the outraged islanders. For the Commodore made a very sudden appearance from the back door of a well-hushed cider mill not far from the wharf, hauling along the funny thing called Homer.

Very soon, the Starfish was ploughing away from Brothers Island, a patch of land distinguishable only by the dwindling flames of a brief-lived fire that marked a scene of murder!

VI.

The sky was very clear and blue when Jud Fenwick saw it through the rolled canvas roof above the Starfish. What wasn't pleasant was the way Jud rose, jolted and fell back again, getting a pang through his head and an ache in his shoulders with every pitch.

Finding that his elbows still worked, Jud used them to prop himself up. A voice said to "Lay down" and when Jud didn't obey, a big hand came from somewhere, slapped itself around his neck, and hauled him from the bench where he sat. Next Jud was tumbling down a few short steps that brought him into a cabin where he found himself looking at the bearded face of Commodore Tupper.

"Lay down means lay down," translated Tupper. "If folks saw you poking your head over the gunnel, they'd figger I'd brung in something different from a clam haul."

Jud's eye's narrowed in puzzled fashion.

"What's more," added the Commodore, "you're dead, and you hain't choosing to be anything else until the tide gets high enough for me to run this packet up to Yarmouth and bring back my nevvv."

Jud took it that "nevvv" meant "nephew" but couldn't understand what that had to do with him. The Commodore delivered a sympathetic "tsk-tsk" through his beard and opened a copy of a Portland paper for Jud to learn what it was all about.

It was rather overwhelming, the amount of misinformation that one story could contain.

The newspaper stated emphatically that one Judson L. Fenwick had been most heinously murdered on Brothers Island by a vicious killer who had sought to destroy the evidence of crime by committing arson as well. Fortunately the firebrand had fled before completing the job. The flames had been brought under control before Harbison's Store had suffered too badly.

The old Commodore closely watched Jud's reactions to all this. So baffled was Jud that he couldn't help showing genuine sentiments.

Finally, Jud sputtered:

"But I I'm Jud Fenwick!"

Commodore Tupper gave one of those nods that tangled his collar button in his beard.

"I didn't tell you who I was," stated Jud, his eyes going straight and narrow. "What makes you so sure when everybody else isn't?"

"Mebbe 'twas this."

The Commodore produced a letter that Jud immediately recognized, the letter that Jud had carried in his pocket. It was the only thing that Jud carried bearing his own name and obviously the Commodore had found it on him. Jud's hand made a hurried reach for the letter; then relaxed. After all, the Commodore must have read it.

"Couldn't have been jest this that you was after," expressed the Commodore, referring to the letter. "If you'd

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wanted papers, there was a lot more you could've taken. I might say would've taken."

"You mean from the dead man?"

"Yup. His pockets hadn't been scarcely touched, if any."

"Because they didn't have time," declared Jud. "They killed him swiftly and silently, but I was there."

"Who do you mean by they?"

"Three men, as I remember. I thought there were more at first. They had a boat down at the float. Wait, though! The girl was there too." Jud put a hard clamp on the Commodore's arm. "You said her name was Nilja. What's the rest of it?"

Old Tupper brushed off Jud's hand neatly and gently. The Commodore's eyes took on a stare that was either very wise or very bleary. Then:

"Suppose I hear a few more facts from you, young man. I want to see how they jibe. Kind of can get my own bearings better after you've set yours straight."

Nodding, Jud beckoned the Commodore out of the cabin and its stuffy atmosphere. Tupper paused long enough to add:

"Do you good to spit out your story. Only make it straight."

The Commodore illustrated how that could be done by sizzling a supply of tobacco juices straight through the center of one of the cabin's undersized port-holes. Then, joining Jud on the bench, Tupper nodded approvingly when he saw his young friend keep his head down. Tilting one ear, the Commodore became attentive.

"The letter explains a lot," stated Jud. "As you can see, it was from a lawyer, telling me about my uncle's estate, or what was left of it. All it amounted to was an island here in Casco Bay, an island known as Little Gorling. Ever hear of it?"

The Commodore shook his head.

"Neither did anybody else," continued Jud, dourly. "It's supposed to lay off Gorling Island, but there's not one by that name either. That makes two islands that don't exist."

"Wouldn't be too sure don't," returned Tupper. "There's three hundred and sixty-five islands in this here bay, one for every day in the year, though some folks say three hundred and sixty-six, figuring they was counted during a leap year, though the odds is more than four to one agin it, considering the turn of the century hain't a leap year."

"Only nobody's ever made sure of the number and folks that don't bother to count up their islands don't logically stand particular on names, nuther. If you can find me any two maps with all the names of the islands alike, I'll eat 'em, the maps I mean. No doggonit! I'll go further. I'll eat the islands too!"

Jud brightened at this news, not at the Commodore's appetite, but at the mistakes of the map-makers.

"You're sure about that variance in names?"

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"Variance ain't the term for it," assured Tupper. "Some of them names is as different as north and south and that's a lot more difference than just a variance. Take Cushing's Island. They called it Andrew's, Bang's and Portland Island at different times. Great Diamond was Great Hog.

"And there's Peak Island; some call it Peak's, proving people can't make up their minds even when they've made 'em up. It used to be called Munjoy's and one time it was Palmer's. Agin, it was Pond's, and they onct was called the 'Coney Island of the East' when this part of the country was really Down East, which it still is, rightfully."

At that, the Commodore paused to brood or something, which gave Jud a chance.

"Those names," said Jud. "Like Andrew's, Bang's, Munjoy's and Palmer's. They sound like the names of people who owned the islands."

"Reckon you hit it, nevvv."

"So that means I had the right idea!" exclaimed Jud. "I took it that somebody named Gorling must have bought a couple of islands and sold one to my uncle."

"Reckon you're right agin, nevvv."

"The only Gorling I could trace," continued Jud, "was Captain Josiah Gorling, who died on Brothers Island. That's why I went there, to see what I could find belonging to old Gorling, particularly a map that would show the two islands named after his family."

"Right smart, nevvv."

The repetition of the "nevvv" was drumming home to Jud. He gave the Commodore a sharp look.

"Why keep calling me nephew?"

"Just to make it a habit," replied Tupper. "I kind of lost the habit of making habits, now that I'm getting along toward middle age."

"But I'm not your nephew."

"You will be, come high tide, when I take you up to Yarmouth so I can meet you. Figgered people would wonder less if I took my nevvv cruising round the bay, instead of a stranger."

"You mean you'll help me find my island?"

"Can't be interpreted much different," asserted Tupper, aiming a deluge of tobacco juice at a sea-gull that was about to light on the Starfish. "Lost islands ought to be found, so's people won't go ramming them in the wrong places. I favor finding them."

Jud extended his hand and the old Commodore shook it, with a grip like a lobster claw. Then:

"Get back to your story," Tupper suggested. "I'm hankering to hear the rest on't."

"I checked in at the Bayview House," related Jud. "The Nilja number showed up and accused me of being somebody else. Say –"

Jud paused, tapped the newspaper.

"Had she anything to do with this?"

The Commodore shook his head.

"Papers found on the dead man done it," he informed, turning the newspaper to another page. "All identifying him as you. Kind of a mysterious, that's what I'd call it: a mysterious."

The Commodore meant a 'mystery' and Jud thought the misuse of 'mysterious' was intended as a bit of humor, since Tupper was showing a tongue-in-cheek expression. But the Commodore proved to be very serious and his facial contour was simply his tobacco cud.

"'Acomin' on high-tide," announced the Commodore. "Better bunk in the cabin for a while, until I've shoved this old scow across the bar and up Yarmouth way. Be seeing you then, nevvv."

An hour later, the Starfish was completing its chug around the final bend of the Yarmouth River, one of the tidal estuaries of Casco Bay, to the meeting place where Tupper's imaginary nephew was to become a reality in the person of Jud Fenwick.

VII.

During the return trip to Casco Bay, Jud Fenwick, now known as Davy Tupper, the Commodore's nephew, found time to assert a few opinions that he had formed while lounging on a cabin bunk.

"Somebody knew I was around here," declared Jud, "and that same somebody knew what I was after."

"Nobody ever heerd about you, Davy," returned the Commodore reproachfully. "Nobody except me, your old uncle, and the only thing you came here after is lobsters. That's why I'm taking a vacation, me and the Starfish, while I let Homer ply the islands with the Jennifer B."

Jud smiled at that. He'd seen the Jennifer B, an open-sided launch belonging to the Commodore's flotilla. However, anybody who criticized the Jennifer B should have a look at the really broken-down barges that formed the rest of the ramshackle fleet.

"You were saying last night," reminded Jud, "that first names were all that counted. Girls' names, I mean, like those on your fleet. But why the last initial?"

"The skipper might have two gals with the same given name," explained Tupper. "Got to tell 'em apart, hain't he?"

"A good point," admitted Jud. "But you must have run out of girls when you named the Starfish."

"Used to be the Harriet J, the Starfish did," Tupper declared. "Only she run off with a schooner's mate, a short while back, 'bout thirty year, I reckon. Getting wedded changed her last initial, so it made the name sort of obsolete."

"Maybe I'll buy a boat," remarked Jud, "and name her the Nilja X, a good initial for an unknown name."

The idea brought a snort from Tupper.

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"Since you've got your heart set on learning that last name," the Commodore said, "it's Lunstrom. Don't reckon your knowing it will help us much. Finding that girl would be about like catching herring in a whaling net, if anybody ever heard tell of a whaling net."

"We found her last night."

"She found us, I'd reckon," retorted the Commodore, "and we'll sooner be taking on a mermaid for supercargo than her again."

"What do you know about her?"

"Only that she's been over to Hemlock Island onct or twict."

"And where is Hemlock Island?"

"I'll point it out to you later," promised Tupper. "It's where Austin Shiloh lives."

"Who is Austin Shiloh?"

"Asking question is the worstest of habits," denounced Tupper, "particularly when they're the kind that don't have answers. I wouldn't know Shiloh by sight if him and me was hauling in a lobster trap together."

"Then who does know him?"

The Commodore's face showed pained through his whiskers at Jud's insistence on the question business. This was one, however, that he could answer, at least in a general way.

"You'd be doing best to ask some of the strangers that land on Hemlock Island," decided Tupper. "Except as how they only land at night, the same as when they leave. Only 'tain't too healthy to be mixing round with stranger on islands after dark. There was a chap named Jud Fenwick found that out."

"Which Jud Fenwick?"

"Both of'm. But if you mean the dead one" Tupper gave Jud a steady stare "I'd say he knowed the real one was due and wanted to get there ahead. That's why he went heeled with proper papers and they're why Jud Fenwick is counted dead."

There was a slow nod from Jud.

"It figures simple enough," Jud declared. "He was after Gorling's papers too. He probably planned to check in at the hotel the way I did, but he took a crack at the store first. Whoever he was, this girl Nilja knew him. She went to Brothers Island to warn him."

The Commodore was tending hard to his navigation, dodging the mud flats that were creeping up at the river's mouth beneath the outgoing tide. Silence with the Commodore, Jud had now learned, was an easy way of saying: "Go on."

"Nilja must have known that the danger was coming from Hemlock Island," continued Jud. "She went there to spy, which in this case may be to her credit. Those strangers you talked about were working for Austin Shiloh. A man who doesn't let himself be seen or known has the marks of a dangerous character."

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More silence from Tupper. Jud proceeded.

"Nilja went to the hotel," affirmed Jud, "expecting to find her friend there. She found me instead, registered under the name he intended to use. She thought it was one of Shiloh's tricks. Only Nilja guessed wrong."

Silence became mutual. Tupper finally broke it as they plugged out into a wide expanse of bay.

"There's Hemlock Island," said the Commodore. "Looks like it was a chunk of Brothers Island, being right in line with it. 'Bout a mile apart, but Hemlock is the closest island to Brothers. Lot littler, Hemlock is."

"A mile apart," muttered Jud. "Not much of a haul, even in a hurricane."

"Lights was blinking off from Hemlock last night," recalled Tupper. "That was afore you came to the Foreside Island. Curious, them lights. Always seem to blink like signals on the nights when strangers go there. Might add that to your calculations, nevvvy."

Jud had already added it. The total came out solid. Shiloh had summoned his clan and had sent them to Brothers Island. Nilja, spotting the signals from the mainland, had taken the Starfish to reach the island ahead of Shiloh's crew, to warn her friend, Jud's impersonator.

There was no need for Jud to express those details to Tupper. He was sure the Commodore had already completed the same reckoning.

"'Twould start a curious commotion, nevvvy," declared Tupper, "if some young man should show up and prove he was Jud Fenwick, 'stead of the man they've taken to the cemetery on the mainland."

"Maybe the real Jud Fenwick could prove who he was," returned Jud. "He might have received a letter from a lawyer he'd never met."

"That would be a caution," asserted Tupper. "Only maybe the bona fide party might have some friends by which to identify himself."

"Friends in the Orient," supplied Jud, "where he was stationed when the war broke out. Suppose this Jud Fenwick had been fighting with Chinese irregular troops and only just came home, considering that home could be a place where nobody knows him."

So quietly emphatic was Jud's statement that its simple truth impressed old Tupper. The Commodore trimmed ship by shifting to one leg while he tongued his tobacco chaw to his other cheek.

"'Twould be kind of desolate, being that destitute," admitted Tupper. "Well, nevvvy, having relations like me and the Starfish ought to keep you feeling purty shipshape. Kind of helpful, knowing you got kith and kin."

Maybe sea captain's could legalize adoptions on their ships, just as they could perform marriage ceremonies. Anyway, Jud appreciated Tupper's sympathy and hoped he'd retain his self-appointed family for a long while to come. The old Commodore still had some good years in him, probably more than the Starfish, considering how she was meeting the hard swells of the bay. Those waves were really shivering the old scow's timbers.

Relics of the storm, that heavy sea through which the Starfish now was smashing. Clear weather, slackened wind, everything but calm.

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"Really riding in," commented Tupper, busy with his wheel. "I can smell the mackerel the fish-ships was after when they had to head in for port. She'll be quieting down by sunset, though. I hain't spent a dozen years on this bay without learning her moods."

"Only a dozen years?" inquired Jud, in surprise.

"Yup," replied Tupper. "You ought to be knowing, nevvvy, that I come here from Boothbay and afore that I was settled up at Passamaquoddy, 'cept that was afore your time."

Subtly, the Commodore had revealed another fact, namely why despite his many years he wasn't acquainted with the Casco Bay old timers like Captain Josiah Gorling, of Brothers Island, twenty years back. Jud had planned to quiz the Commodore on that point; now, he realized it would be useless.

Still, Commodore Tupper knew Casco Bay, as another relation by adoption. They were passing a long jutting headland which Tupper named as Pine Point; then, ploughing through waves that were less strenuous, they hove in sight of a sleek sailing yacht, long, high-sided, that was taking the waves in lazy, ladylike indifference.

"The Rover," defined Tupper. "The ship we was near ramming when she was dragging her anchor last night. We'll be hailing her and telling Greeley Thodor he oughtn't to be mooring over mud bottom."

They chugged up beside the Rover with the Commodore saluting through a fish-horn. A smiling man in spic-span yachting attire appeared at the rail where others in natty sailor uniforms were polishing the brasswork. Like the owner, the crew members grinned indulgently down at the tossing chunk of boat-shaped timber that called itself the Starfish.

"Howdy, Mr. Thodor," greeted Tupper. "You come nigh being rammed last night."

"It was the other way about," returned Thodor, cheerily. "We nearly rammed you. Our dragging anchor was making better headway than your motor."

"Mebbe so," chuckled Tupper, "only it's hard calculating the Starfish when she's doing full speed."

"So that was what saved you!" exclaimed Thodor, in mock seriousness. "I wondered why you were traveling straight to starboard. Now I know."

"Full speed for starboard," laughed Tupper, "reverse for larboard. That's why we don't use bells on the Starfish. They wouldn't do her justice."

"You've got a good ship, Commodore." Thodor was serious now. His eyes were kindly as his smile and the grayish hair beneath his yachting cap added to the dignity of his broad, virile face. "You deserve credit for the way you man her." He turned his smile downward to Jud. "You and your crew."

"Just breaking in this crew," returned the Commodore, thumbing at Jud. "Meet Davy, my nevvvy." He paused, gave another look toward Jud. "My grand-nevvvy. Come all the way from Montreal by train on the Grand Trunk. Just brought him over from Yarmouth."

Thodor nodded and accompanied his smile with a parting wave as the Starfish, true to form, bucked sidewise straight to windward when the Commodore gunned the motor. Then Jud, having been certified as a genuine Tupper, was looking back from the stern, watching the Rover dwindle.

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He'd won a new friend, Jud felt sure, in Greeley Thodor, a man whose whole manner was magnetic. Perhaps Jud Fenwick could depend on Thodor too, should trouble develop from a source named Austin Shiloh.

VIII.

"Gales," declared Commodore Tupper, "is contrary critters, and I mean gales, not gals, though I hain't saying the rule don't apply to both of'm. Look it, now across the Bay thar, and see how peaceful and purty she's become."

By 'she' the commodore meant Casco Bay and Jud Fenwick admitted the beauty of the scene. Dark seemed to have calmed the waters by settling upon them, while the sky spread itself with a gorgeous Casco sunset.

"Look eastward," suggested Tupper, "and you'll see more sunset than most skies show in the west. Them colors is 'bout as beautiful as a splotch of oil poured on water."

From the east, a chunky white steamer was rounding the end of an island. To Jud she looked like a craft chartered for a holiday tour and he said so. The Commodore shook his head.

"Just one of the bay liners," he identified. "Making her regular round out of Portland. She'll be around again along toward dawn, but don't worry about her finding us here. She won't, because she passes on 'tother side of Saddleback."

The name Saddleback applied to a fair-sized island near whose shelter the Starfish was moored. Like other island names it was descriptive, because Saddleback consisted of two wooded humps with a scrubby dip between. One of the tree-clad knobs was much larger than the other, but both showed large, jutting rocks along their steep banks.

"Maybe you're right about gales," declared Jud, "but the storm that passed here was a hurricane."

The Commodore gave a scoff at that.

"'Twarn't no hurricane," he insisted. "It was just one of our regular line storms. Couldn't touch some of the big ones I've seen. Take the gale of ninety-eight, you know what she did to Orr's Island?"

Jud didn't know.

"Cut a path right across, the storm did," stated Tupper. "Trees went like toothpicks, they did. Like to have chopped the island right apart, if she hadn't been so sturdy."

Jud's eyes went quizzical.

"You were here in ninety-eight?"

"During the gale, yes," replied the Commodore. "Had to put into Portland instead of going back to Boothbay Harbor."

Conversation halted while Tupper tugged musically at his corn-cob pipe which he preferred to a tobacco chaw on calm evenings. Then:

"This island of yours," remarked Tupper. "Little Gorling, you call it. In order to have a title on't, somebody

must have built a habitation there."

That roused Jud's immediate interest.

"A habitation?"

"Walls, roof and fireplace," specified the Commodore. "Most important, the fireplace. Don't count otherwise. Claimant has gotten to live there four days in one year to prove squatter's rights. Leastwise that's the statistics as I remember 'em."

"A small island off a big one," mused Jud, "with a cabin and a chimney on the small island –"

"Maybe not now," interrupted Tupper. "Could've been burnt or demolished. Happens that way oft–times. It might take a long while to find the remnants."

It was a clue, nevertheless, that Jud regarded as helpful. Scouring the islands of Casco Bay, one by one, might be a long and thankless task, but he could attempt it if other prospects failed. The bay, though, was very big, some two hundred square miles in area, Jud had learned.

Of course the larger islands could be eliminated from the quest. The same applied to little chunks of rock which could be called islands only through courtesy. Of the rest, Jud had already begun to consider them in three terms: Outer, Middle, and Inner.

The outer islands were rocky, like headlands. This would explain why Orr's, which belonged in that category, had withstood the storm of ninety–eight, though its timber had been cross–cut in a huge swath. The inner islands, deep–sheltered in the bay, were sandy, like great shoals that had sprouted into islands, through ancient centuries. The middle group of which Saddleback bulged as an example right at hand, were combinations of rock and sand formation.

But Jud was thinking of other islands. Off across the purple–tinted bay, he could see the streaks of magenta sunset between two isles that interested him more: Brothers and Hemlock.

Big Gorling Little Gorling.

Considered in those terms, you had something.

Brothers Island was really big, rating among the large ones in this section of the bay. Hemlock Island, though quite sizable, was small in proportion to Brothers. Assuming that Brothers Island had once been called Gorling's, Hemlock could have been titled Little Gorling. The right map might show it, but the problem was to find the right map.

Meanwhile, Jud had a better idea. He'd go over to Hemlock Island and have a look at Shiloh's house. Maybe it would prove to be the habitation establishing the title of Little Gorling.

Commodore Tupper interrupted Jud's thought by beating a rat–tat–tat with the corn–cob on the rail of the Starfish. Having shaken out his pipe, the Commodore used it as a pointer to indicate a jewel–studded stretch of jutting mainland.

"More folk over on Pine Point," declared Tupper. "Looks like Thodor will have more'n a full load for the Equinox if she ever gets here."

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Mention of Thodor interested Jud, and the Equinox was something he hadn't heard about.

"Should've told you about Pine Point," declared Tupper. "Seems like crowding a man's mind plump full of unimportance makes him forgetful. It's where the Wayfarers gather every seventh season, like a plague of locusts."

"What Wayfarers?"

"The World Wide," replied Tupper. "Greeley Thodor is their head. They follow him off to all parts of the world, like they did with Ilion Troy, the hair-brain who founded the Wayfarers."

"What's the idea?"

"They form what they call social communities, or some such thing. I guess they call Troy the founder because the Equinox founded with him. But that was the old Equinox. She was a barkentine. The new one that belongs to Thodor is a steamer."

Jud was beginning to understand. He's heard of such a group, somewhere in Maine, but hadn't connected it with an intelligent man like Thodor. Still, as Jud considered it, the idea wasn't entirely unintelligent. It consisted of forming groups of harmonious persons who voluntarily migrated to far section of the world where they set up small but independent communities operating under local laws, if any.

The plan must have been successful, or it wouldn't have survived throughout the years. But right now, it meant more than that to Jud. Since the World Wide Wayfarers were headed by Thodor, it was likely that Thodor had paid visits to Casco Bay at various intervals. Maybe Thodor was the man who could furnish Jud with information regarding the islands hereabouts.

If Thodor couldn't, his recruits might, since many of them must be gathered locally. So Jud marked Thodor on his mental list, but Shiloh took precedence. Thodor was a man of kindly mien; Jud could vouch for that from having seen him, and Tupper's tribute to Thodor's leadership bore out Jud's opinion. He would be glad to help Jud gather facts, Thodor would.

But Shiloh, mystery man of Hemlock Island, was the one who probably knew the facts that Jud wanted. It wasn't a question of whether Shiloh would talk; the problem was, could Jud force him to do so.

That was something Jud intended to find out. Shiloh first; then Thodor.

It didn't matter whether Commodore Tupper would agree. The Commodore wasn't going to know about this until later. Right now, the Commodore was bunking early and Jud wasn't disinclined toward a little sleep himself. But as an early riser, Jud intended to be first.

The velvet night that finally closed above Casco Bay blanketed the tiny speck that was the Starfish. Off toward the mainland, the Rover was blacked out too, and the twinkling lights on Pine Point vanished gradually. Night passed, much as a moment would, as if awaiting dawn to stir this scene to life.

But there was life before dawn.

On the Starfish, at that darkest hour, a figure stirred. The creeping sounds produced by Jud Fenwick were drowned by the snores of his adopted uncle, Commodore Tupper. Likewise the scrape of a small boat passed unheard, as Jud drew the rope attached to a little dinghy that Tupper had towed behind the squatty cabin cruiser.

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Tide, not wind, was what caused the dinghy to drift when Jud was aboard her. It was going out, the tide, and that was perfect. She'd look like a drifting craft, bound in the direction of Hemlock Island, and when the tide turned, the dinghy would come drifting back.

Such was the beginning of Jud's journey to Hemlock Island, where he hoped to match wits with an unknown man named Austin Shiloh. But Jud sped the trip with the dinghy's oars, once he had drifted beyond what he thought was earshot, where the Starfish was concerned.

At that, Jud was cautious.

You could hear far, over these silent waters. Somewhere, Jud was sure he heard the slightest of rumbles, which for all he knew might be as distant as Portland. He was conscious, too, of a ripple that passed the dinghy, something which he attributed to a school of large fish.

When Hemlock Island bulged in the faint streaks of dawn, Jud guided the dinghy into a cove that he saw there. Paced by a school of jelly-fish, the little boat drifted shoreward. The jelly-fish were finally left behind and scudding crabs were the greeters, when Jud's boat scraped a rock and nudged into a patch of accompanying sand.

Skirting the foamy line that the retiring tide had left, Jud found a little dock, alongside it a trip speed-boat, probably belonging to Shiloh. Nearby was a boathouse with an upstairs that was probably a sleeping apartment. More important, however, was a path leading up toward the high center of this well-grounded isle.

That was the path Jud Fenwick took, to what he hoped would be a show-down with a crafty genius of crime.

IX.

Shiloh's house proved to be a monstrosity that gaped hideously at Jud when he reached it, as if preparing to swallow him outright. The thing might have been called a cabin, but Jud preferred to define it as a lodge, because of its somewhat elaborate construction.

Perched on a mass of rocks that had been hewn out to receive it, the lodge was a square-walled structure with slope roofs pyramiding down from a peak. The front roof came over a snug porch, giving the effect of a huge upper lip, while the jagged rocks, running along the veranda edge, combined with the porch to form irregular teeth of a lower jaw.

High up on the roof itself were two tiny bay windows that looked like sharp, nasty eyes, watching for prey to feed the gullet below. Maybe by daylight the effect wouldn't have been so horrendous, but when Jud stole into the cavern that was a porch, he definitely felt that he was being gobbled by something.

It was Stygian black here.

Small wonder, considering that clouds had retarded the dawn and that Shiloh's lodge was overlapped by hemlocks that sprayed their long branches into an arch above. The silence was as ominous as the darkness and Jud felt it would be unwise to disturb either.

Right now, Jud found himself thinking of The Shadow, that weird master of darkness who had blown in with yesterday's hurricane and had, for all Jud knew, gone sailing away with its vortex. This set-up would have been perfect for such a prober, so perfect in fact that Jud found himself imagining that The Shadow might

already be lurking in this very darkness.

Not a long stretch of the imagination either, considering how The Shadow had twice materialized himself into the affairs of Jud Fenwick.

Then, with a short laugh that he immediately suppressed, Jud decided that such a circumstance would be in his favor. The Shadow had been Jud's rescuer on those other occasions. Probably such luck would hold if Jud needed it, but he didn't expect he'd need it.

Having a good idea of what was going on, and lacking a hurricane to bother him, Jud Fenwick felt he was quite qualified to handle that show-down with one Austin Shiloh. What Jud wished, though, was that he had The Shadow's skill at getting in and out of places surreptitiously. It wouldn't do to crash one of Shiloh's windows as Jud had Harbison's.

The door would be better, if Jud could find it. Find it he did, and then came the question of how to handle the lock, bolt, or both that Shiloh used to keep marauding gentry out of his preserves. While Jud was so debating, he tried the door handle and it turned so smoothly that when the oiled hinges responded just as easily, Jud was practically slicked into the big room of Shiloh's lodge.

As he released the door, it started to close behind him, and Jud made an effort to grab it before it slammed. Too late, the door was shut; except that it didn't slam. Its self-closing spring, the rubber buffer that silenced the door's closing, were both as efficient as the knob and hinges.

Very nice or was it?

Those interlacing trees outdoors gave these premises a webby effect and Jud was beginning to think in terms of a human spider dwelling in the center of that web. This was certainly "walk into the parlor" stuff, with Jud the fly and Shiloh the spider.

But how would Shiloh know that Jud was coming?

Logically, considering that Shiloh rated as the hidden brain who had trailed a fake Jud Fenwick over to Brothers Island. Those huskies – Shiloh's men who had knifed Jud's counterpart by now had reported back to their chief. Maybe Shiloh wasn't sure which of the Juds had been dirked, the false or the real, but in either case, he might be expecting the other to do some investigation here.

This was sound theory that should have scared Jud off these premises, considering that he hadn't even armed himself with one of Tupper's motor wrenches before starting this foolhardy expedition. But Jud preferred to stay, banking on a different possibility.

Maybe this wasn't a trap. The door might have been left unlocked to admit certain clandestine visitors of the type that Tupper reported as common on Hemlock Island, after signals blinked there. Jud hadn't seen any such signals during the night, but he hadn't been awake all night to watch for them.

Anyway, Jud was ahead of any other visitors so he decided to make the most of it. The floor had grassy rugs that Jud couldn't see, but they stifled his creeping footsteps. He found doors along the wall and one of these made him pause.

From beneath the door came a crack of thin light. Maybe Shiloh was sleeping in that room, but that would be all the better. This blackness, this silence, were combining to give Jud the jitters. So he tried the door carefully and it opened as easily as the other had.

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Jud found himself in a little room much like a study. The light came from a desk lamp. Except for its odd furniture, the room was empty. Closing the door softly, Jud moved to the most important object, a large desk. There, by the lamplight, Jud saw an open drawer and in it a most tantalizing object, a teak-wood box.

Teak was a common sight to Jud, or had been when he was in the Orient. Here, such an object was uncommon, and Jud was sure that Shiloh must prize its contents highly. The box wasn't locked; it was merely clamped. The result: in a few moments, Jud had the box open on the desk.

Among some papers, Jud found some old photographs and gave them his first attention. One was a camera portrait, signed by Austin Shiloh to his good friend Terry Talbot. This being Jud's first meeting with Shiloh or a facsimile of same, he gave the photo a thorough scrutiny.

Shiloh's was a gaunt face, thin-featured and high of cheek-bone. He had the look of an adventurer, which applied particularly to his eyes, which were narrowed in the straight style that Jud himself affected. Shiloh's forehead was broad, hence his whole face trended toward the triangular. His age was difficult to judge from the photograph, but he was probably ten years older than he had been when the picture was taken.

There were a couple of small snap-shots of Shiloh, rather poor ones that included other people. One individual was of stocky build, with a flattish face that was vaguely familiar to Jud. An inked arrow pointed to the man; above the arrow were the initials T.T.

Now Jud was finding other snaps of the flat-faced gentleman, all adorned with the initials, the arrow, or both. They gave a fairly good idea of the man's changes of moods, for in some he was grinning, in others glowering. In the latter case, his eyes were not visible in these small photos and Jud found himself wondering what those eyes were like if viewed at close range.

As for T.T., it obviously meant Terry Talbot, the man to whom Austin Shiloh had autographed his camera portrait. Why Shiloh should have gone to the trouble of marking all of Talbot's pictures with the initials was something of a puzzler. Maybe the papers would explain it, so Jud started to go through them.

Some were newspaper clippings, involving Talbot; others letters that Shiloh had written to Talbot. But before Jud could go beyond a cursory examination, something interrupted.

The something was a sharp, repeated buzz from beside the desk. Jud decided it couldn't be a telephone, because there probably weren't any on Hemlock Island. But when he looked he found it was a telephone, but not of the usual variety.

Hanging to the desk was a combination mouthpiece and receiver of a home-rigged type, though the device looked quite efficient. Where the call was coming from or why, Jud hadn't an idea, but he took it that somebody was trying to find out if Shiloh happened to be around. It seemed most likely that Shiloh wasn't around; that he'd probably gone out of the house leaving the study light burning. But if Shiloh intended to be back soon, it wasn't a good idea for Jud to stay.

The main question now was the teak-wood box. There wasn't much time for Jud to decide which of its contents he wanted to pilfer; in fact he was inclined to believe he wanted all. In that case it would be easier to take the box. Whether Shiloh found it missing, Jud didn't exactly care. What impressed him was the box's heft, its value as an impromptu missile in lieu of a weapon. So Jud parked the photos back with the clippings and clamped the box.

Lifting the box from the desk, Jud turned to the door and stopped short. He'd forgotten the habit of Shiloh's doors, the way they slicked open, absolute in their silence. This door had done it again.

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On the threshold stood a tall man wearing the incongruous combination of a pair of corduroy trousers and a polka-dot pajama jacket. He was armed and heftily, for he clutched a rifle in what was approximately a port-arms position.

Gaunt face, hollow, tapering to a strong but narrowed chin. Half-closed eyes, under the brows of a broad forehead. Those characteristics not only described the man, they identified him.

Jud Fenwick was really face to face with Austin Shiloh.

X.

Mincing words apparently wasn't a habit with Shiloh; he grated them:

"Who are you? What are you doing here?"

Maybe Shiloh was only pretending that he didn't know who Jud was. Certainly he didn't have to ask what Jud was doing; it was pretty obvious that this hardy young man was attempting to do a sneak with Shiloh's own teak-wood box.

So Jud simply shrugged and sneaked himself a few sidesteps toward a window, whereat Shiloh laughed.

"You won't get out that way," he told Jud. "Those windows are shuttered and there's steel inside their woodwork. Like all this building, it is structural steel. You wouldn't think I'd be fool enough to live in a place that wasn't attack-proof, would you?"

Relaxing, Jud shifted a short distance toward Shiloh. The door being the only exit, Jud would have to work through it somehow.

"Living alone has advantages," informed Shiloh, crisply. "You can invite in persons when you want them. If you've got a solid stronghold, you don't need a lot of flunkies to protect you and there's nobody on hand to double-cross you. What's more" he was swinging the rifle, significantly Jud's way "you can deal in your own way with a stranger who won't answer questions."

Jud looked along the rifle barrel toward the telescopic sight that was up at Shiloh's end. The sight was a couple of times larger than the muzzle, but it didn't look anywhere as big to Jud. For a place to crawl into and hide, that rifle muzzle looked like the best choice, considering that its threat exaggerated it to the proportions of a tunnel, the more Jud stared.

Only somehow, Jud had the knack of remaining cool. Right now he was listening to somebody talk and realizing that the somebody was himself.

"Nice gun you have," Jud was telling Shiloh. "A Mannlicher. Terrific at long range with that telescopic sight."

"You talk like Stoeger's catalog," sneered Shiloh. "Let's get back to the main subject."

"The rifle is the main subject," argued Jud. "If you let ride with it in here, you're likely to blow us both out of the place along with those steel shutters."

That didn't impress Shiloh. The gaunt man's lips contorted into what he probably regarded as a contemptuous

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smile. Meanwhile, despite himself, Jud was working closer to the gun muzzle.

Despite himself was the proper term. Jud had half-argued himself into believing what he said about a Mannlicher's use at close range. Certainly such a rifle was very potent; admittedly it was designed for extra-long range. Maybe it wouldn't ruin the room, but it certainly couldn't ruin Jud if he played smart.

Playing smart in this case meant playing tag with the gun barrel, which Shiloh would find an unwieldy thing to aim at close range. Grabbing a rifle barrel was akin to snatching at a rattlesnake on the first bounce, but if Jud started festivities by slinging the teak-wood box, he might put Shiloh off balance at the start.

So Jud was moving closer, admiring his own nerve as though it were somebody else's. However, Shiloh didn't share that admiration. Those narrowed eyes of his analyzed Jud's automaton approach. Simultaneously, Shiloh took two back steps through the doorway.

"Try something now!" came the gaunt man's challenge. He was wagging the rifle barrel from one side of the doorway to the other. "Try to find elbow room here. Dodge if you want, and see how quickly I cover you!"

He was right, Shiloh. A forward thrust and he'd have the room covered; a slight withdrawal and Jud would have to rush the gun through the doorway. All of which spurred Jud's other self to a mad effort at settling this question before it became too late.

Jud charged, wielding the teak-wood box ahead of him. Shiloh took one more back step, what should have been the fatal step, speaking in terms of Jud.

The blackness of the big outer room swallowed Shiloh; he gave a gargly cry as he disappeared backward, his rifle upward. Shiloh's cry was instantly supplanted by a tone Jud recognized.

The Shadow's laugh!

From its very start, that rising mockery expressed the fact that The Shadow was in control. Invisibly, like a part of the darkness itself, Jud's rescuer had plucked Shiloh out of circulation. The laugh was reaching a crescendo that shivered from everywhere as Jud raced through the big room, carrying the precious teak box with him.

Jud could hear the crash of furniture. Chairs came scudding his way and one brief pause in The Shadow's laugh brought a brief, snarly cry from Shiloh that was promptly repressed. Jud couldn't see Shiloh any more than he could The Shadow, but that was partly because he didn't stop to look. One thing Jud could certify: The Shadow was in full control. That was enough.

Things were tumbling, thudding, as Jud wrenched open the outer door and loped across the porch. One of the thuds sounded as though it might be Shiloh, a consummation for which Jud thoroughly hoped. Dawn was really showing out here and Jud lost no time scrambling down the rocky path. The lodge was forgotten along with its commotion, which included those buzzing sounds.

Come to think of it now, Jud realized that the buzzing of the phone had persisted all during his tense scene with Shiloh and during the scuffle that followed the gaunt man's sudden disappearance.

It took Jud nearly two minutes to reach the dock beside the boat house. As he approached there, he looked back and saw a singular figure emerge from in front of Shiloh's stronghold.

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It was The Shadow, cloaked and visible against a background that he seemed to have purposely selected, the very center of the cloud-streaked sunrise.

The Shadow was brandishing an object that could only be Shiloh's rifle and his keen eyes must have made out the scene down by the boat house, for The Shadow came to aim. Startled, Jud was about to turn for cover, when he saw that he wasn't alone.

Two bulky men were springing his direction from that of the wharf. Sweatered, clumsy, but armed with guns, they reminded Jud of the foemen that he had met in Harbison's store. Madly, Jud ducked beyond some rocks to escape the aim of revolvers and the huskies pounced after him. It was then that the Mannlicher talked.

Jud heard bullets ping the rocks, followed by an overtaking whine. The brawny pair darted the other way, one firing futile shots at the distant figure of The Shadow, the other jabbing back at the rocks which sheltered Jud. Another boom from the Mannlicher kicked up rocky soil under the feet of the sweatered men and they didn't wait around. When Jud last saw them, they were racing along a path that led to some other sector of the shore.

By then, Jud was out from cover, looking for his dinghy, hoping he could row away in it before Shiloh's men tried to double back. Only the dinghy wasn't where he'd left it. Jud saw its white shape bobbing out in the bay. Apparently Jud hadn't drawn it far enough up on the beach.

That left one choice, Shiloh's trim speed-boat docked by the wharf. Cutting down below the rocks, Jud reached that prize, but before he could board it he met another challenger. As she had barged into Jud's business before, Nilja did it again. Only this time the blonde made too much clatter.

She was coming from the boat house, Nilja, wearing the denim outfit to which she'd changed the other night, her flowing hair suited to a sea witch, but her gun destroying any illusion that she was a mythical creature.

That gun was waving Jud's way in a fashion too excited for Jud's comfort as he heard Nilja screech:

"Stay out of that boat! Stay out or I'll —"

Nilja didn't add the word "shoot" because Jud stayed out. Only Jud didn't stay out of the boat long. What he did was meet Nilja with an interrupting lunge, give her a quick twist around the wharf as he thrust her gun hand upward.

"Swing your partner!" Jud gibed. "And how do you like the polka pardon, I mean the gavotte."

Nilja wasn't liking the polka. She was getting her wrist free and starting a gunswing when Jud mentioned it. As for the gavotte, Jud introduced the subject with a twist of his arm and a thrust of his foot, behind the girl's heels. Nilja took a beautiful tumble and she picked the perfect place for it, or rather Jud did.

That place was the side of the wharf opposite where the boat was docked. Hardly had Nilja answered "Plop!" in the form of a resounding splash, before Jud was bounding over the other side and into the waiting boat.

It had a handy starter, this speed job, and Jud kicked it. He gunned the motor as he hooked away the half-hitched rope. Hugging the curve of the cove, Jud was spurting the boat out from Hemlock Island, in the direction opposite that which the sweatered men had taken.

When he looked back, Jud didn't see The Shadow, and for a good reason. High trees between the dock and the lodge had cut off sight of the dawn-bathed rocks above. But as Jud cleared the stubby end of Hemlock

Island, he heard from The Shadow, at least.

A strange, weird laugh carried across the pink-tinted water and Jud stared back to see the cloaked figure clambering up to a high cliff that poked from amid the jack-pine. He also saw The Shadow beckon with his free arm, but Jud took it as a token of good-speed rather than a signal to return.

There Jud guessed wrong.

Recognizing that the speed-boat refused to heed his summons, The Shadow raised the rifle to his shoulder and deliberately crackled a shot across the bow of that departing craft!

XI.

And Jud Fenwick had counted The Shadow as a friend.

It didn't take too much to make Jud fighting mad. He always allowed a little leeway, out of sheer fair play, but after that, no holds were barred.

If The Shadow wanted him back, he could keep on waving, but this sharpshooting stuff didn't suit Jud at all. If he'd had a rifle of his own, Jud would have tossed a few potshots in return, he was just that mad. Instead, Jud waved derisively and gave the boat what extra speed it had.

Anyway, The Shadow wasn't much of a hand with a rifle, considering how wide that first shot had whined, and he'd have to be a lot better than he wasn't to even dent the foam behind this speed-boat. The bow was right up out of the water and the stern was riding like a greased pig down a chute.

Again, Jud's estimate was off.

The Shadow's next shot ripped that hoisted bow. He followed it with another bullet that clipped a prong from the steering wheel right under Jud's nose. Then, as Jud zigzagged, heeling the boat The Shadow's way, the marksman on the distant rock politely put a splintering missile down through the bottom of the craft.

Water was spurting through the bottom as Jud banked the other direction. Another shot came boring up through the high side, bringing a flock of splinters with it. Two leaks instead of one, when the speed-boat leveled off, but Jud decided he would keep on running for it until The Shadow was out of bullets.

It would be silly to head for Saddleback Island and the Starfish, because then Jud would be revealing his one place of refuge. Convinced now that The Shadow had turned against him, Jud wasn't trusting anyone too much. He could see the Starfish, a white speck against wooded Saddleback, while nearer, he made out the trim shape of the Rover, Thodor's yacht. But Jud wasn't heading for either of those craft.

Where Jud was bound for was the Foreside Landing, where he would have all the mainland in which to scatter. Jud had found the islands too cramped for comfort and he couldn't say that boats were any better.

A bullet whined past Jud's head. That Mannlicher seemed to improve with distance. Maybe The Shadow was just beginning to get used to the telescopic sight and was taking Jud as the final target. Jud gave the wheel another swing and a hard one; he'd go the limit now, to beat this rap. The Shadow, firing a split-second after Jud banked, reached the high side off the boat and the bullet clipped off a great slice of woodwork.

Luck, maybe that the shot hadn't clipped Jud. He'd use more than luck to defeat the next one. Slapping the

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speed-boat around, Jud put her into a reverse turn like a racer rounding a buoy, figuring the stunt would really knock The Shadow's calculations. Instead, Jud erased his own plans.

The Shadow had literally goaded Jud into that high-speed turn and the narrow speed-boat did just what was to be expected. She practically turned over, as she hit the waves of her own wake, something Jud hadn't anticipated. The craft righted with a series of wild jounces but in the course of things, she shook herself free of excess balance in the person of Jud Fenwick.

More surprisingly than Nilja, Jud found himself bounced into Casco Bay and he was only a speck way out in the middle of it. The speed-boat was riding uncontrolled bound for any of some three hundred islands, to say nothing of her chances of ramming the mainland.

Wherever it was aimed, the craft didn't go more than a hundred yards toward its destination. Jud was still tasting the salt foam that the propeller had churned when he was shocked by something more stupendous than a jounce. The speed-boat seemed to gather herself together for the thing that happened, a sudden, terrific explosion that promptly sank, leaving Jud all alone in the pink-blue sea.

It left Jud very dazed and dazzled.

Keeping afloat was practically automatic with Jud, for he happened to be a good swimmer. Nevertheless it was good to hang on to something, until aid came, so Jud looked for whatever might be afloat. He couldn't see anything belonging to the speed-boat, but there was an object quite close at hand.

That object was Shiloh's teak-wood box. It had been tossed overboard, too, by the squeamish speed-boat. So Jud paddled over to the floating prize and clutched it.

By then, rescue was headed Jud's way. Over by the head of an island, Jud saw the same bay liner that had skirted Saddleback the night before. Attracted by the explosion, the pilot must have seen Jud bobbing in the water, for the steamer was on its way. How long it would take to arrive, Jud couldn't guess, for distance was hard to judge at water level. So Jud waited patiently until he heard the echoing chugs of a motor coming from the opposite direction. Turning around, Jud saw another boat much closer by.

From its direction, Jud decided that it must be the tender from Thodor's yacht and he was right. When the motor boat arrived, Jud recognized the natty sailor uniforms of its crew. They were efficient chaps, Thodor's men, for they hoisted Jud on board, the teak-wood box with him.

As the motor boat swung around, it came within hailing distance of the bay liner which bore the name of Aucocisco in big gold letters. Jud's rescuers shouted to the pilot through a big megaphone, assured him that they had completed the rescue of the one and only man on board the demolished speed-boat, then they began a quick return to the yacht.

Looking over to Hemlock Island, Jud saw nothing of The Shadow, but the island itself was dwindling so rapidly that it would have been impossible to distinguish a figure upon that highest rock.

What Jud did see was the Starfish, plodding out from the shelter of distant Saddleback Island. Commodore Tupper's favorite tub was on its way to intercept the Aucocisco, from which Tupper would probably acquire information. Remembering that he was presumably Tupper's nephew, Jud intended to play the part until the Commodore finally came to the Rover, where Jud was sure he would eventually show up.

A ladder was hanging from the yacht when the motor boat reached it. Jud climbed up over the rail and the teak box was passed to him. Then he was shown to a cabin where he was provided with a change of clothes.

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Greeley Thodor was waiting on the deck when Jud arrived there and the gray-haired man smiled broadly when he recognized Tupper's nephew. Then, his eyes fixed on the mysterious box, Thodor became serious, as he said:

"Come to my stateroom, Mr. Tupper. We may have something to discuss."

The stateroom was magnificent, much larger and more lavish than the little cabin in which Jud had changed attire. Thodor closed the door and spoke briskly:

"You were on Hemlock Island?"

Jud nodded.

"You met Austin Shiloh?"

Another nod from Jud. Thodor's grayish eyes were clinging hungrily to the box. They raised, met Jud's gaze squarely, as he asked:

"Shiloh gave you that box?"

"Not exactly," replied Jud. "To be truthful, I took it. If you want to see what's in it, you're welcome."

He laid the box on a table and admired the deliberate way in which Thodor took it upon himself to examine into the affairs of the mysterious Mr. Shiloh. As coolly as a presiding judge, and with all the dignity of such a worthy, Thodor went through the photographs and gave the clippings a brief survey.

Then came a surprising sequel.

Rising from his chair, Thodor bowed, extended a friendly hand and spoke with a broad but knowing smile:

"My congratulations. I am glad that you are alive. It is a privilege to meet you, Mr. Fenwick."

XII.

No feathers being available, there was nothing that Thodor could knock Jud over with. Maybe Jud was on the point of falling through sheer astonishment, but Thodor thwarted that by politely gesturing him to chair. Wits returning, Jud queried:

"How did you guess who I am?"

"I didn't guess." Thodor gestured to the items from the teak-wood box. "I just added that evidence to this."

By "this" Thodor meant a photograph that he already owned, and which he promptly handed Jud. It was a picture taken by a newspaper camera man, showing a face that looked dead, yet recognizable. The face was the same as the one bearing the initials "T.T." in Shiloh's collection.

"Obviously Terry Talbot," declared Thodor. "But this more recent I might say very recent picture is that of a murder victim identified as Judson Fenwick."

Jud was studying the news photo hard.

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"You mean this was the man who was found in Harbison's Store on Brothers Island?"

"Absolutely," nodded Thodor. "I was given this picture so I could post it on Pine Point, where I have assembled a colony of people who intend to go abroad. The local authorities thought some of my group might recognize the picture and give some information on Judson Fenwick."

"And now when you learned that he wasn't Judson Fenwick," spoke Jud, musingly, "you decided that I must be."

"It seemed logical," responded Thodor. "Realizing that Fenwick was still alive I couldn't think of anyone more likely to be visiting Hemlock Island and finding trouble there. Particularly as it was something of a coincidence that Commodore Tupper should have his nephew visit him at this precise time."

Thodor's tone became an amused laugh when he mentioned the Commodore and Jud laughed too. Then, a bit disturbed, Jud suggested:

"We'd better not tell the Commodore –"

"Of course not," interposed Thodor. "He's reached an age where he'd be annoyed to know that his clever game had slipped. It wasn't his fault, but he wouldn't like it. Besides" Thodor's manner had returned to its serious phase "it may be safer for you, if you continue with the part that you are playing."

Jud nodded his agreement and Thodor caught its significance.

"I take it the Commodore told you about Shiloh," said Thodor. "He's a mystery man and such people are sometimes dangerous."

Again, Jud nodded.

"So much a mystery is Shiloh," continued Thodor, studying the camera portrait, "that nobody knew what he looked like until now. You say you saw Shiloh?"

"I did," declared Jud. "He matched the photograph. I saw Talbot, too, over at Harbison's. Those snapshots looked familiar, but it took this" Jud was fingering the newspaper picture "to bring back the full details of his face."

Seated at the table, Thodor rested his chin between his doubled hands. "Tell me more of your story, Fenwick."

Jud sketched it briefly. He told how he had returned from the Orient to look into the matter of his real uncle's legacy. He showed Thodor the letter, now water-soaked, which a lawyer had written him regarding an island called Little Gorling in Casco Bay. Telling Jud to go on with the story, Thodor started digging into a drawer that was well-filled with maps.

"I couldn't find any Little Gorling," declared Jud. "I figured that something belonging to old Captain Josiah Gorling might contain a map showing the island. Every time I mentioned the name Gorling, people spoke about Old Cap'n, as they called him."

"Of course they would," acknowledged Thodor. "The Captain was a well-known character. I met him myself, years ago. Only he never mentioned any islands bearing his name."

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"Somebody else swiped my idea," continued Jud. "I thought Shiloh was responsible, but I'd never heard of Talbot. I wonder what the connection was."

"You'll find it right there," returned Thodor, gesturing to the contents of the teak-wood box. "Read those clippings carefully; maybe you'll notice even more than I did."

For the first time, Jud really studied the clippings and found out a lot.

They were quite old, the clippings, and most of them were from English papers printed on the Chinese coast. They told a lot about Terry Talbot, how he'd helped to uncover the strongholds of Chinese pirates, back in the days when such unworthies flourished, when suprisingly was not very long ago.

Some of the clippings mentioned Austin Shiloh as a man who had suffered heavy losses through piracy and who had helped Talbot pursue his investigation. One clipping, dated later than the others, covered the sudden disappearance of Talbot during his final investigation.

"You'd take it that Shiloh and Talbot were great friends," declared Jud. His eyes went narrow, on a clipping. "Or were they?"

"That's what I'm beginning to wonder," returned Thodor. "Have you found something covering their case?"

"This might." Jud showed Thodor the clipping. "It mentions an insurance investigation in Shanghai, but it isn't very specific."

Thodor was going through the letters, all of which had been written to Talbot by Shiloh. Encouraging letters, commending Talbot's work, but Thodor apparently was reading between the lines, a policy with which Jud agreed.

"I wonder whose box this really is," said Thodor, suddenly. "Talbot's or Shiloh's?"

The same question was in Jud's mind. He looked from a cabin window; saw the Starfish in the distance, pulling away from the Aucocisco. There would still be plenty of time before Commodore Tupper arrived.

"Let's put it together," Jud said to Thodor.

Put it together they did, like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, except that too many were missing. However, Thodor was prompt to supply the equivalent of those pieces.

"You say that Shiloh sent thugs to Brothers Island," remarked Thodor. "They were the men who murdered Talbot. Therefore we know that Shiloh is crooked."

"Right," agreed Jud, "and Talbot knew he was in danger. He had a girl working with him and she came to warn him. She knew he was using my name, too."

"A girl? What was her name?"

"Nilja Lunstrom, Tupper tells me. A blonde with looks and a Scandinavian accent. Nilja Lunstrom. Ever hear the name?"

Thodor shook his head. He was sorting the maps, spreading those that included Casco Bay. Meanwhile, he pursued the subject of Shiloh and Talbot.

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"Since Shiloh is crooked," declared Thodor, "we can assume he was faking his losses from those piracies on the China coast. He might have been working with the pirates. Such practices were common in that territory, I understand."

Jud gave a knowing nod. He'd heard a lot of such talk in the East.

"Shiloh was just the man to steer Talbot right," decided Jud, grimly, "and by right, I mean wrong, when Talbot got too close to the truth."

"Apparently Talbot was smart enough to disappear," agreed Thodor. "He followed Shiloh here and brought this box along. One of Shiloh's men must have found where Talbot was staying and picked up the box to bring it to Shiloh."

"Logical enough," nodded Jud. "The photograph is autographed to Talbot and the clippings are the sort that would have interested him. But why is Talbot marked in all the other pictures?"

"Because Shiloh must have marked Talbot for death," asserted Thodor. "He loaned those snapshots to the men who were to trail Talbot and dispose of him. They didn't go to Brothers Island hunting Judson Fenwick. They were after Terry Talbot and they found him."

The details meshed in Jud's mind, and perfectly. Naturally, Shiloh's thugs had been inclined to murder Jud too, since he'd been a witness to their crime. But when Jud had fled, thanks to The Shadow, it had been as easy to let him take the blame as an unknown killer.

A curious boomerang, Talbot adopting Jud's name as a disguise. It had certainly carried the brunt from Shiloh after crime was completed. It had hampered Jud, too, immobilizing him because he couldn't use his own name without too many explanations. On the contrary, it had a certain advantage for Jud, because he was classed as dead, and therefore wasn't the object of a man-hunt, at least not under his own name. However, since Jud wasn't using his own name, that left him right back where he was, which seemed to be nowhere.

All that must have occurred to Thodor, for his smile was sympathetic every time he glanced at Jud. What changed Thodor's mood to a troubled one, was the lack of information on the maps. He kept laying them aside one by one, and Jud did the same, every time he looked them over.

No trace of any islands bearing the name of Gorling; not on any of those maps, old or new.

They had finished with the maps when a wheezy motor chugged outside the port-holes. It was Commodore Tupper in the Starfish, coming to reclaim his unfortunate nephew. Thodor promptly placed the teak-wood box on top of the spread-out maps.

"Leave them here," he suggested. "We can go over all this later. Talk the Commodore into bringing you over to Pine Point for the Sunset Session that is being held there today. I'll post Talbot's picture with your name on it and I may have some further information."

It sounded like an excellent suggestion, so Jud acquiesced. On deck, he reached the rail while Commodore Tupper was about to climb the ladder and promptly joined his adopted uncle in the Starfish.

Thodor was at the rail of the yacht when Starfish chugged away and it was then that Jud remembered something that he'd forgotten to add to the pieces of their patchwork puzzle. Not once had Jud made any mention of a personage far more mysterious than Shiloh.

Jud hadn't included any details of The Shadow.

Maybe it was just as well. Greeley Thodor was a sane man as well as logical. He probably wouldn't have believed that portion of Jud's true story.

XIII.

Commodore Tupper had bought a peck of good Maine apples from someone on the Aucocisco while he'd been hanging alongside getting details of Jud's shipwreck. So uncle and nephew had apples for breakfast.

In serving apples, the Commodore insisted on slicing them in half.

"Got the idea from the way people eat oranges," the Commodore explained. "What's good enough for oranges is good enough for apples. Besides, slicing apples tells you if they're wormy before you find out by biting into them. Anyway, the two halves of a thing is as good as the hull of it, however you reckon it."

That helped Jud's reckoning a lot. He'd told half his story to Thodor, now he was telling the other half to Tupper. What was good enough for apples ought to be good for the truth, though Jud didn't say so.

The half Jud didn't tell the Commodore was the story of the teak-wood box and its important contents. Such data would have forced Jud to admit that Thodor had discovered his real identity.

"So you went over onto Hemlock Island," clucked Tupper. "I knowed it the moment I saw the dinghy was gone. A peck of trouble you got yourself, afore I got me my peck of apples."

"Anyway, I had a look at Shiloh," declared Jud. "I'd recognize him if I saw him again. He has a long thin face, a bit hollow toward the jaws. Sharp eyes, too."

"Sharp along a gun muzzle, eh?"

"They were until The Shadow grabbed him. That's what they called the chap in the black cloak Shiloh's gang did when he popped up at Harbison's."

"So The Shadow cleared the way for you. Reckon you felt obleeged."

"I would have," admitted Jud, "if he hadn't let Shiloh get clear and picked me instead. Down by the dock I ran into a couple of Shiloh's muscle-boys and right then The Shadow started shooting with Shiloh's rifle."

"Accommodating, I'd call it," returned Tupper. "Don't see as you've any complaint, nowhow."

"None except that after I shoved Miss Nilja out of the way and took off in that speed-boat, The Shadow tried his best to clip me with the Mannlicher. What's more, his best was mighty close."

The old Commodore shifted his tobacco to his other jaw.

"You sure he didn't come no closer than he wanted?"

"How do you figure that?" demanded Jud. "It was just luck that The Shadow forced me to bail out before he blew the gas tank with a bullet."

Tupper shook his head.

"Thar warn't no gas tank explosion," he declared. "It was something a sight more powerful. Something they stuck in the boat, maybe fixed so it would joggle loose an' go off all to onc't."

"They?"

"Sure as a red jelly-fish is a stinger. Shiloh's men, down there at the dock. They was they, just like pigs is pigs."

"But why would they set a blast in Shiloh's own boat?"

"Cause they reckoned you'd be taking it after they set the dinghy adrift."

"You mean they did that?"

"Couldn't have been nobody else, lest you count the girl. Only she was trying to keep you from getting in the thing, warn't she? That means she must've seed them and was on your side. Only you wouldn't listen."

"Then Nilja told The Shadow!"

"Must've, I reckon. He gived you a warning shot across the bow, strict nautical style. You warn't heeding naval regulations, so he had to heave you to, somehow. Tried to make you jumpy, peppering them bullets right close. Jump you did, dumping yourself into the bargain."

The Commodore gave an appreciative chuckle, then added:

"Ought to know, I ought. Time of the first World War, I was the second oldest ensign ever commissioned in the navy. Nigh onto sixty, when they put me running a sub-chaser, cause I knowed the harbor. One man older'n I was and he come from here in Casco. Met him once when he came down to Boothbay. Up you'd call it, we call it down –"

"If I only knew you were right!" interrupted Jud. "About the dinghy, I mean!"

"Can't help but be right. You hauled her on the beach, didn't you?"

"Not very far. The water could have lifted her."

"Not whilst the tide was still agoin' out," clucked Tupper. "She'd have roosted high and dry if somebody hadn't shoved her off."

That settled it. The Commodore was right. Rescuing Jud was getting to be a habit with The Shadow. However, Jud could stand it if The Shadow could and he was glad the point was settled. Then:

"Not to change the subject," said Jud, adroitly changing it, "what is this Sunset Session that Thodor talks about?"

The Commodore grunted.

"You mean what he talks at," Tupper corrected. "It's a Wayfarers meeting. That's how Thodor gets 'em World Widened. I don't hold no truck with it."

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"Mind if we haul over there for it? Thought maybe it would help me establish this nephew business."

Tupper gave Jud a sidelong look.

"How do you calculate that?"

"Because I saw a photograph with my name on it," explained Jud. "Only it wasn't me. It was the poor fellow they found dirked in Harbison's. Thodor is going to post the picture at Pine Point. I ought to be there to look at it, so people would notice the difference."

The idea appealed to Tupper's sense of humor. He agreed to the Pine Point trip.

All afternoon, they chugged among the islands, to give Jud his bearings as the Commodore put it, but they found nothing that seemed to fit the description of the Big and Little Gorling. Old Tupper began to feel that the wangly Starfish was inadequate for survey purposes.

"Take us a week short of Doomsday to cover all this Bay," Tupper opined, "and that's a mighty long spell, but it's a mighty big bay. There's the kind of contraption you ought to hire for the job."

The Commodore pointed to the mainland and Jud saw a small blimp hovering above the woodland.

"Navy job?" queried Jud.

"Was during the War," answered the Commodore. "The last War, I mean. A couple of aircraft spotters reported 'em as flying submarines. But that's no more curious than what the scientific folk are doing with them now."

"What's that?"

"Sending 'em up to track down shooting stars," asserted Tupper. "Now ain't that one caution?"

"That can't be right."

"If tain't right, lobsters don't have claws. Did you ever hear tell of a thing called a meteor, nevvvy?"

"Of course."

"It's another name for a shooting star, hain't it?"

"Yes," agreed Jud, "but specifically it's a shooting star that lands on earth."

At that, the Commodore swelled triumphantly.

"Just as I figured," he declared. "They hain't satisfied at waiting for a meteor to drop. They want to go up and study 'em at close range. Otherwise, why'd they need to use a blimp at all?"

"Who do you mean?"

"These scientists. The kind that call themselves meteorologists. They're using that balloon contraption."

Jud managed to smother a laugh into a smile.

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"Meteorology is a broad term," Jud explained. "It means atmospheric phenomena in general. A meteorologist is a weather bureau man. They're probably studying wind conditions following the hurricane."

The Commodore gave a humph and shifted his chaw.

"Might as well fly a kite," he declared. "Anyway, 'twould be nice for studying the bay, the blimp would. It would give old Casco the same perceptive or whatever you call it that them fancy maps used to have."

"What fancy maps?"

"The bird's-eye kind. Like you was looking in on the bay from out at sea with all the islands spread around like patches on a crazy quilt."

Jud was immediately agog.

"I never saw one of those maps!" he exclaimed. "There was a lot of maps on Thodor's yacht and I looked them over, but he didn't have the type you mention."

"Reckon not." The Commodore brushed a sea-gull from the rail with the usual tobacco treatment. "They're purty, but they hain't accurate, those maps. They sold 'em to lubbers who was taking steamboat trips around the bay. Mebbe they had their points though, the maps I mean. I never yet looked at a map that didn't show something some other map missed."

"Where could I get one of those maps?"

"Guess they don't sell 'em anymore. Gov'ment banned them this last War. They left one hanging in a frame down on the wharf where the Casco steamers dock in Portland, so folks could look at it though, and mebbe take pitchers with a camera, if they were spies."

"It's still there, that map?"

"Reckon so. Only there's about a dozen different varieties, I reckon. Guess the summer people complained every time an island wasn't placed right and all such changes got included in new editions and mebbe throwed out later, some of 'em because they were wronger than before."

The Starfish swashed around an island and the Commodore headed toward Pine Point as it came in sight beneath the lowering sun. "Somebody had a collection of those maps," he recalled, "and that's how I knowed there was so many kinds. Who 'twas, though, is something I disremember, but it will be coming to me after a spell. Most everything always does. Forgetting is one habit I never could help, nohow."

Silently, Jud Fenwick vowed there was one thing he wouldn't forget and that was to keep hounding Commodore Tupper until his mind's eye told him who collected bird's eye maps of Casco Bay!

XIV.

The Sunset Session was over and Jud had learned a lot. For one thing, the World Wide Wayfarers weren't a lot of fanatics as he might have expected. Still, Jud shouldn't have expected it, considering that Thodor, head man of the organization, was highly intelligent.

There were some curious characters, of course, among the group of a few hundred, and those were the kind

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that Commodore Tupper not only pointed out, but circulated among, to gather their opinions. The Commodore considered crackpot notions as a sort of mental ballast that helped a person's brain trim ship, as he put it.

With his mind loading ballast, there wasn't much room in it for his memory to stir, so Jud abandoned the Commodore and roamed over to where Thodor was discussing the World Wide Wayfarers with a group of interested visitors.

"Good evening, Mr. Tupper," greeted Thodor, with a twinkle in his eye. "Just make yourself acquainted."

Jud introduced himself to a quiet-mannered young man, whose name proved to be Harry Vincent and who in turn intruded him to a gentleman named Lamont Cranston. Further introductions were postponed, because everyone had begun to listen to Thodor.

"Frankly, the W.W.W had its faults," admitted Thodor, "but that was in the early days. Ilion Troy was a man with vision, but his farsightedness went beyond the limitations of his generation. Take my family for instance" Thodor's tone became mildly indulgent "they named me Greeley because they believed in the slogan 'Go West, young man' which was the famous saying of Horace Greeley.

"Go West I did, the family with me, as members of a Wayfarer colony. We went so far West, we arrived East and our colony dwindled on a small island off the coast of Madagascar. The same was true of many other ventures. The colonies just dwindled."

It was Cranston who made comment.

"You mean they were absorbed into their surroundings?"

"Liquidated would be a better term," put in Thodor. "Self liquidated of course. Most of the colonists returned. They disappeared chiefly because they had lost interest in the Wayfarers. But in the future that will not happen.

"Go Everywhere, is now our motto. Thousands of square miles of new territory have been made inhabitable during the last War. Distant ports, forgotten mountain lands, the coral reaches of the South Seas. We shall settle in those spots, we Wayfarers."

Thodor concluded with a magnificent gesture out to the bay, where the Rover lay distant at anchor.

"I shall take the first group on my yacht," he declared. "Our new ship, the Equinox Third, will not be available for a few months, She is a small but fine steamer, just finishing troop transport duty."

Jud was watching Cranston, this while. The man's silence was somehow as magnetic as Thodor's speech. Perhaps it was because Cranston's features were so immobile, giving the impression of a mask without being one. Naturally it was difficult to contrast Cranston with Thodor, one being silent, the other voluble.

The comparison that did strike Jud was between Cranston, the man of sunset, and Shiloh, the man of dawn. It was strange, but one represented everything that commanded confidence, whereas the other was the sort to create suspicion. Appearance might account for it: Cranston's face seemed molded while Shiloh's had been hollow, but the more Jud thought it over, the more he attributed it to manner.

Cranston had acquired the rare art of making a passive expression speak for itself. Shiloh had rendered his features active, as though he had forced an ugly nature to betray itself. Possibly appearances were deceitful.

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Cranston might be masking the workings of a scheming mind and Shiloh's snarly pose could have been purely artificial, but Jud didn't see it that way.

Summed up, Jud would be ready on an instant's notice to trust anything Cranston suggested, just because the man was the direct antithesis of Shiloh, toward whom Jud's mistrust had assumed the proportion of hate. In brief, Jud couldn't have pictured two persons who reminded him of each other because they were so totally unlike.

Settling dusk reminded Jud that Commodore Tupper would soon be pulling out with the Starfish, so he decided to find the old codger. Jud discovered him down near a bandstand where musical-minded Wayfarers were gathering for a concert.

"Pulling out, I am," asserted Commodore. "Music sounds better the further away you git and I reckon the lee shore of Saddleback is about the right range. Besides, some of these folks is loonier than loons. I ain't agin any of 'em, but they keep telling me I am."

"Who tells you?"

"Commencing at the start," returned the Commodore, "most of these folk says they're all utilitarian. Am I right?"

"You are," agreed Jud. "Thodor said in his speech that the Wayfarers were fundamentally utilitarian."

"Now there's some," added Tupper, "who are vegetarians. I got nothing agin 'em nuther. The folks I'm agin, without knowing it, is the agenarians. Ever hear of one?"

"An agenarian?" Jud was puzzled. "No."

"Well, I'm agin 'em. I must be. I was talking about times from away back, and somebody says I must be a non-agenarian, which means I'm opposed to agenarians."

Jus smiled.

"A nonagenarian," he explained, "is a word all its own. It means a person who is past ninety years of age."

The Commodore's jaw dropped; then his fist rose.

"Let me find that fellow!" he declaimed. "I'll show him with this" – he meant his fist "that I ain't no more than going on eighty-nine. I'll knock him higher than a sail-loft, that's what. Higher than –"

Tupper paused and let his fist come down to lay a grip on Jud's lapel.

"That's it, nevvvy! The old sail-loft!"

"If you mean what's a sail-loft," returned Jud, "don't ask me."

"It's a place where they make sails," explained Tupper, "and a fellow who works there is the one who has them maps. I still disremember his name, but it don't matter, because he keeps 'em in a drawer marked maps, along top of the sail plans."

"Is it too late to get in there now?"

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"Too late? Who's going to lock up a sail-loft! Anyway, you'd be foolish to go asking for that bunch of maps. We'll jest head for Portland in the Starfish –"

"Not a chance," interposed Jud. "You hang onto the Starfish, for a decoy, while I take the bus, here on the mainland. Tell me how to reach the sail-loft."

The Commodore drew a sheet of paper from his pocket and began to scrawl a diagram.

"That Portland waterfront is as hard to find places," he said, "as it would be to plug a lobster's claw blindfolded. This will show you where to go. You'll know the loft when you see it, because it's all second story and it's wood-colored. Now –"

Jud gave a quick interruption, "Somebody's coming!" and Tupper thrust the paper in his pocket. Jud stepped back to the shelter of a pine tree, so nobody would notice him talking to the Commodore. Yet Jud was still close enough to appreciate the full surprise.

The somebody was Nilja Lunstrom!

In a low, confiding tone, the girl spoke to the Commodore and her topic was none other than Jud. Evidently Nilja had recognized Tupper by his white captain's hat, without seeing that someone else was standing by.

"The night I went to Brothers Island," said Nilja, "there was a young man on your boat. Do you remember who he was?"

"Course," acknowledged Tupper. "My crew, Homer."

"I don't mean Homer. I mean a passenger."

"Him? That was murdered? Don't reckon so. Still, I hain't looked close at the picture they posted. Too many folk was crowding around to see it."

"You'll admit at least," declared Nilja, tersely, "that there was such a passenger on the boat."

"Course. Who wants to know?"

"I can't tell you. But I'd like it in writing, signed by you."

The Commodore hesitated, then drew a paper from his pocket, spread it in the dim light and scrawled a brief statement that he'd carried an unknown passenger on the last trip to Brothers, during the big gale. Nilja thanked him and left.

Almost immediately, Jud was beside Tupper.

"Why did you give out that statement?"

"Had to," snapped Tupper. "She could've demanded an official report if she'd brought the right authority. I don't want trouble with authority, none of it. Anyway" Tupper made a few folds in his pocket and handed Jud a wadded paper "here's your chart. I'll put the Starfish back on her regular run tonight, so as to meet you at the Foreside Landing."

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They parted and Jud followed a group of people who were going toward the bus stop on the highway just inland from Pine Point. On the way, he passed Thodor's group, talking under an electric light. Just then the first discords of the band concert came blaring through the pines and the group began to break up.

Jud paused to stare sharply through the trees, but he saw no sign of the placid man, Cranston. For that matter, Vincent too was absent. Probably they'd gone their way together. At least so Jud felt sure, until he reached the bus line and boarded the waiting vehicle. Others entered the bus after Jud and among the last was Vincent.

Probably Vincent was just going into Portland like others who had visited Pine Point. Cranston must have stayed at the colony to learn more about the World Wide Wayfarers and the intelligent way in which Thodor planned to distribute a surplus population throughout the globe.

But most important in Jud's mind was Nilja. He wondered who had insisted that the blonde get that statement from old Tupper. The answer was somebody that Jud would never have guessed!

XV.

The Portland waterfront loomed darkly, a mass of strange, conglomerated buildings that could scarcely be distinguished by the lights along Commercial Street. Above was moonlight, but it was straggly though the clouds and its glow was kindly to old buildings, unfair to new.

There were plenty of solid structures here, but they were interspersed by ramshackle affairs that probably dated back before the railroad switching line was laid along Commercial Street. The tracks were still here, and in regular use.

Parked freight cars hid some of the buildings, as Jud viewed them from the land side of the street, and there were sidings going out to some of the piers. Certain of those piers were long; they looked as if they jutted half way out into the harbor, when viewed at night. Some of them so teemed with odd old buildings that they gave the impression that the land had grown outward with the piers.

Crossing to the wharf side of the very wide street, Jud made a mad scramble when he heard a terrible clatter coming at him, straight up the length of the thoroughfare. A switching engine had shoved into a string of freight cars and the jarring of the couplings produced the clangor.

Jud laughed as he reached the far siding. His nerves just couldn't take it. Despite himself, he was glancing back, fearing that even the action of the shifting engine was meant as a threat against his safety. In that glance, Jud thought he saw a man go ducking beyond a freight car.

Probably only a brakeman. Nevertheless, Jud wasn't taking chances. Any waterfront could be grim at night, and this was no exception. Huddling near a freight car, Jud used the glow of a street lamp to study the slip of paper that Tupper had given him. Then came a new surprise.

The wad that Jud unfolded proved blank!

Funny, Jud had seen the Commodore draw the diagram of the waterfront; in fact, Jud remembered some of the details. Fumbling through his pockets, Jud found other papers, but they were very few.

The lawyer's letter wasn't there, for Jud had left it with Thodor, but what Jud did find was that slip on which the dying man, at Harbison's, had written that illegible scrawl. Jud had forgotten to show the slip to Thodor.

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Now Jud studied it anew, wondering at the cryptic attempt that the man now identified as Terry Talbot had made to write a word or name.

It certainly meant nothing, that zigzag. But Jud could still picture the scrawling hand Talbot's hand trying to lift itself against the sheer weight of the slumping body to which it was attached. Talbot just hadn't been able to start writing anything, that was all.

Thrusting the slip back into his pockets, Jud decided to locate the sail-loft from memory. The trouble was, every little alley that led out to a pier looked exactly like every other little alley. There were names on windows along the waterfront, those of fish markets, ship's chandlers and coal companies, but Tupper hadn't listed any of those as landmarks.

All Jud could do was foray blindly a short way out on each pier and look for a building that answered the vague description of something wood-colored that was all second story, neither term being really understandable.

At least not until Jud found himself looking squarely at the sail-loft and even then he didn't recognize it at first.

It was half way out one of the shorter piers, an ancient and practically unpainted building, which was what Tupper had meant by wood-colored. The first floor contained a fish market specializing in lobsters and crabs. That floor was a high one, as floors usually went, but it was utterly dwarfed by the story above.

Nearly tall enough for three ordinary floors, the upper portion of the building had what looked like pitifully tiny windows, above them a high stretch of wall that was topped by an enormous sloping roof that literally towered to its gable.

The pier here was wide, with buildings down each side of the paved center alley. There was water on both of those sides, but Jud didn't know it until he looked to the big unpainted building. There, a narrow passage sliced right through to the dock edge and the water lay beyond.

More important, Jud saw the entrance to the sail-loft. A steep flight of the steps ran right up the outside of the building as if glued to it, while on the other side of the very narrow steps, posts supported a rope rail. At the stop of the steps, there was a turn, leading into a doorway at the end of the loft.

Jud scrambled up those steps as though something were after him and at the top, he began to wonder if something weren't. Clutching the rope rail, he looked down to the bottom of the steps and again thought he saw a man slouch from sight.

Probably just some bum, shambling out to the end of the pier to breathe what sea air permeated the harbor's smell and shake off the effects of an evening's binge. The sail-loft was more important; the door was locked. But the whole thing was so rickety that a mere shove of Jud's shoulder cracked it inward.

So this was a sail-loft.

It looked like any loft, except that about all it contained were sails. Some were in heaps, others were hanging half way up to the rafters, which were very high. Away up was the ridge pole of the roof, supported by two stout posts running from the floor, and everywhere were pulleys and various tackle used to raise the sails.

What Jud wanted to find were the maps and he picked a huge old wooden cabinet in a far corner as the probable place. As Tupper had said, this cabinet contained the sail-makers' plans and one of two small top

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drawers was marked "Maps." Using a flashlight that he'd borrowed from the Starfish, Jud discovered the batch he wanted, the bird's-eye maps of Casco Bay.

Before Jud could start to look through the maps, each of which was contained in its separate folder, a creaky sound intervened and with it, Jud extinguished his flashlight automatically.

Someone else was in the sail-loft!

Into Jud's pocket went the maps, shut went the drawer and he began providing creaky footsteps of his own, as evasive as those others, which Jud could guess were coming from the direction of the door. They played at hide-and-seek for several minutes, Jud and this other man, whose footsteps at times seemed like echoes of Jud's own. Jud was working toward the door, hoping to reach it while his prospective adversary was going deeper into the loft, but the show-down came at one of the big posts supporting the roof.

There, Jud brushed the post, just as the other footsteps turned his way. Thinking he'd found his adversary, Jud suddenly flicked on the flashlight, only to find it blazing full upon the post.

Then another flashlight gleamed, flooding Jud's own face. A hand bearing an automatic thrust itself into the glow as a steady voice ordered:

"Don't move!"

Naturally Jud didn't budge, except to let his hands come slowly upward. If this proved to be another of Shiloh's thugs, Jud would have to spring to the attack, so he was easing his hands forward, to have them ready. Somehow, though, Jud sensed that this was a different situation and he was right.

A face pushed into the light above the gun. Jud recognized the man who had come to Portland on the bus with him: Harry Vincent.

"All right," said Harry. "Relax."

Jud let his hands descend. Harry's gun lowered.

"I wasn't quite sure it was you," stated Harry. "I followed you down to the waterfront, just to see you didn't get into trouble. Now let's get out of here."

Before Jud could agree, there was an interruption. A window slashed open at the far end of the loft and a powerful flashlight hurled a burning gleam. Without a word, Harry twisted Jud back around the post and made a side-dodge of his own, neither action coming too soon.

Arching through the path of the light came a fast-riding knife that slashed the very space where Jud and Harry had been, finishing its trip by burying itself into the woodwork of the post!

Flashlights blinked off and Harry's automatic chattered, bringing responses from a corner to which the knife hurler had ducked. Though wild, those responding jabs weren't healthy, particularly for a man like Jud, who didn't have a gun of his own.

Harry must have known it, for in the brief lull that followed, he drew Jud up beside the post and pushed him against a taut rope. Harry undertoned:

"Grab."

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As Jud clutched the rope, Harry yanked the knife free from the post. The man in the corner must have known that something was going on, for he came creaking forward. Then Harry gave the rope a hard slash, diving away with the same action, just as things began to happen.

First, revolver shots blasted from the corner for the spot where Jud had been. The bullets missed Jud, for he was flying to the rafters on the rope end, hauled by a huge weight of sail over the other side of a big pulley. A moment later, the revolver shots were smothered as the mass of falling canvas blanketed the foeman who was charging from the deep corner.

A dozen feet up, Jud was doing a crazy pendulum swing on the rope end as it carried him deep into the loft. As the improvised trapeze began its return trip, a fresh flashlight blazed, this time from the doorway.

In that glare, Jud Fenwick saw Harry Vincent turn flat-footed to meet a new enemy who had already gained the bulge!

XVI.

Maybe Harry had a chance in a dozen, maybe only one in a hundred. Whatever his chance it depended upon quick action, for this was an instant wherein hesitation would be fatal. Knowing it, Harry turned and lunged.

It was a long, low lunge, with Harry's gun swinging in ahead of him, but the attempt merely brought a hardened laugh from the doorway. The man was taking a sure bead with a revolver, since silence was no longer necessary. He was allowing Harry a few fragments of a second, just to decrease the range and thereby render the death shots all the more certain.

A finger on a trigger, hard eyes above a steady muzzle, all spelled death, with Harry still three paces short in his drive, and a foot wide with the gun that he was swinging to aim. Then, zooming ahead of Harry, down across his shoulder came a flying missile in human form, outspeeding his mad drive.

It was Jud Fenwick. He'd let go of his rope trapeze on the finish of his incoming swing.

Feet first, Jud hit the man in the doorway just before the fellow tugged his trigger. The thug went sprawling back out through the doorway, gun, flashlight and all. Sprawling with him, Jud made a grab for the fellow, who promptly headed over the far end of the landing.

On hands and knees, Jud saw the thug's flying leap end with a big splash in the deep water beside the pier. A clatter was coming from the other direction and as Jud turned about, he found a new attacker lurching for him from the head of the steep steps.

This man had a knife that he was trying to burrow in Jud's back. Jud had time enough to ward one jab, but couldn't have stopped the next if Harry hadn't come along. Lunging out from the doorway, Harry hadn't time to get his right hand busy with its gun, since the man with the knife was half around the corner to the right. Harry's left fist simply provided a hard hook that grazed the landing and turned itself into an uppercut to the chin that was just above the topmost step.

The man with the knife performed a beautiful series of back somersaults all the way down the rope-railed steps, finishing in the blackened alley below. Then Harry wheeled to deal with the chap in the loft, provided that fighter had untangled with the sail.

The chap had untangled, but he didn't wait.

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There came a crash through a window, a rattle of a figure hitting a shingled roof below it, and then a dull splash from the water. Grabbing Jud, Harry hurried him down the steps to the alley and when they arrived there, they found that the somersault specialist had disappeared in the gloom.

"Keep going," Harry told Jud. "We aren't clear of trouble yet."

They kept going and they emerged clear of the trouble. As they emerged from the alley entrance to the pier, they were spotted by men across the way, who were stationed on a steep street leading up from the waterfront. Again, Jud found his new friend Vincent helpful in a pinch. Harry took Jud on a darting dive in what seemed the wrong direction, only to prove right.

There was a freight car on a siding close at hand, such a logical shelter, that the men across the way promptly opened fire to cut Harry and Jud off from it. But already, at Harry's guidance, the two fugitives were bound the other way, toward the last of a string of freight cars that was moving further on.

They reached that shelter before their attackers could change the direction of their fire. Harry kept goading Jud ahead, faster than the freight train, even after it was between them and their enemies. Jud couldn't understand the reason for the rush until they had passed three cars.

The fourth box-car was open and Harry climbed into it, beckoning Jud along. In the depths of the empty car they sat there panting while the train's speed increased.

"They'll be coming around the end to get us," declared Harry, in breathless style. "Now they'll think we've ducked into a doorway. Meanwhile, this train is taking us right where we want to go."

As the train veered to another track, Jud peered from the door and saw men racing back across Commercial Street to reach a waiting car that promptly shot away. The whole waterfront was roused and police whistles were blaring, proving that the law was on the job.

"They're locating the right pier," asserted Harry, "and if the harbor boats join into it, they'll box those three men on the pier."

Harbor boats were on the job. Deep-throated whistles joined with the shrill screams of tug-boats. Leaning back, Harry spoke loudly above the rattle of the box-car.

"Read about it in tomorrow's newspaper," Harry told Jud. "That bunch on the pier can't hope to get away like the shore crew did."

No questions were asked by Harry and the train rattled along its way. He was more interested in watching the passing scene, dim though it was in the dark. At last, Harry gave Jud a nudge.

"She's slowing down," said Harry, referring to the train. "This is where we drop off."

They dropped off and Harry guided Jud up a quiet street of a suburban area, though it wasn't far from the center of the city. At a corner, Harry told Jud to wait; then gestured to a bright light in the center of the next block.

"That's the lot where I parked my car," Harry explained. "I drove in alone, so I'd better come back for it alone. I'll pick you up here."

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Jud was doing some quick thinking as soon as Harry was gone. One thing that crossed his mind was just how far he should trust this new friend, Harry Vincent. Nice work, Harry's helping Jud from a tight jam, but it might be that he was planning some trick of his own.

For right now, Jud was remembering a man who might have pulled the selfsame stunt: Commodore Tupper.

How many people were interested in Jud's lost island was one question; why they were interested was another. What they would do to find it for themselves or to keep Jud from reclaiming it was the only clear part of the situation. They'd do anything, including murder.

Right now, Jud, for all he knew, was carrying the needed evidence in the shape of those bird's-eye maps. Maybe Vincent was after those maps too and was playing smart to get them. Nothing like posing as a friend and gaining someone's implicit trust as the first move toward a double-cross. One person Jud couldn't trust was Shiloh and he had doubts regarding others, beginning with The Shadow.

Nilja first; now Tupper.

One man though had proven himself a friend, that man was Thodor.

In his inside pocket, Jud had a large envelope already stamped. He had intended to address it to his real uncle's lawyer and send in it all the papers and other evidence that might be important in this case.

The envelope took the stack of maps quite neatly and Jud was sure the postage was more than ample. Instead of addressing it to the lawyer, he wrote the name of Greeley Thodor, at Pine Point. There was a mail-box at the corner and Jud squeezed the envelope into it. He was waiting there, indifferently, when Harry arrived with a coupe.

Politely, Harry inquired:

"Where now?"

Jud suggested the Foreside Landing, saying that the Starfish was to meet him there. He surveyed Harry closely as he spoke and decided that his new if only temporary friend had heard of the boat but attached no special significance to its name.

They drove out to the Foreside in silence and stopped above the pathway leading down to the pier. In the clearing moonlight, all was deserted there, which was quite to Jud's liking.

"Thanks, Vincent," said Jud. "I'm cruising with my uncle, Commodore Tupper. You'll find us on the Starfish any time you like."

Not a ripple disturbed the surface of the bay, when Jud viewed it from the wharf above the float. It was half-tide and the gangway down to the float was at an average slope, not as steep as the time when Nilja had first stumbled down it. So Jud went down to the float and stood there, listening to the fade of Harry's car as it pulled away along the road high above.

Life seemed very placid, trouble far away. Yet as Jud looked out into the bay, occasional splashes impressed him with the fact that nothing could ever be wholly serene. Fish snatching bugs, maybe big fish snapping little fish, something was always going on that wasn't helpful to all concerned.

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From the bay came a thin, slicing swash, like the fin of a large fish, cutting a wake that gradually rippled away. The bay had no sharks and porpoises were probably rare, so it must have been a salmon, and a large one. The Commodore had talked of schools of salmon that sometimes appeared in these parts.

So Jud thought no more of it until he decided to go back up on the pier and gain a more distant view that might include the Starfish which should soon be heading here. It was when Jud turned that he faced the trouble which somehow those ripples had presaged.

Men were springing toward him from the rear of the float. How they had arrived there, Jud couldn't guess, for he'd surely had heard them if they had come along the pier. They seemed to be springing from a boat, but that wasn't possible, considering that an arriving craft would have attracted even more attention.

Still more astounding was the identity of those men. Jud couldn't make out their faces, but from their manner, he recognized them as old acquaintances, though certainly not friends. They were the men who had been at Harbison's, the same crew that tricked Jud on Hemlock Island, when he went on to investigate Shiloh, the very trio that had only lately invaded the sail-loft on the Portland waterfront.

The men that Harry Vincent had been so sure would not be able to escape, once the law closed in on them!

Escape they had, but how, Jud couldn't guess, nor was he able to duplicate the process on his own. They swarmed upon Jud before he could begin a struggle. Off guard, overwhelmed three to one, Jud Fenwick sagged under a barrage of blows that beat him into rapid submission.

All went black before Jud's eyes and this was one batch of blackness that didn't contain The Shadow!

XVII.

Minutes hours maybe years.

Any of those intervals might have gone, when Jud found himself awake once more. Gradually and very gradually, he recognized where he was.

Jud was still at Foreside Landing, lying on the pier above the float, well-obscured by a rail that went around it. He could tell that, because he was gazing straight up at the corner of the rail.

Bound and gagged, Jud could tell by the aches of his arms and jaws that the job had been done well. Moreover, to suppress any struggle he might make, they had lashed him to the posts of the rail itself.

Over Jud was resting a layer of rough cloth that he recognized as burlap, coming clear to his chin. His captors had folded the edge back to allow him some chance to breath. Old boards crackled and creaked nearby, proving that one of the captors was on patrol. At intervals, the pacing stopped and Jud could occasionally see the guard's hulky form. But there was something else that soon interested Jud much more.

That was the chug-chug of the Starfish, approaching the landing. Jud couldn't help but recognize the motor and knew that Commodore Tupper was completing his last trip.

Time seemed interminable until the Starfish finally scraped the float. The tide was high now, for Jud could hear the swash of the water from a level only a few feet below. The motor's wheeze cut off and the Commodore's voice hailed the man on the pier:

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"Hi there, nevvv."

"Howdy," the man returned. "Only I ain't your nevvv."

"Seen anybody around that might be?"

"Nobody."

There was a spell of good old New England silence. Then:

"What's in the burlap bag?" came Tupper's query. "Apples?"

"Aroostook potatoes," the guard responded. "Going over to Harbison's. Want to haul 'em now?"

"They can wait 'til morning. I'm going out to moor. Why are you needing the shot-gun? Going duck shooting?"

"Wouldn't mind. Only right now I'm guarding the potatoes."

"Who's going to steal them? Ain't no thieves hereabouts now that the summer people have gone hum."

"Harbison's orders," gruffed the guard. "He didn't take to what happened over in his store the other night. He's paying to have his 'taters watched, so I'm watching."

The guard's accent lacked the proper twang and his use of various words was forced, but that didn't excite Tupper's suspicion. As the Commodore had once expressed to Jud, Maine was full of "furriners" and he'd added that they "warn't all from New Hampshire and Vermont, nuther," those places representing the limit of Tupper's knowledge of the mainland.

Foreigner or no foreigner, Tupper decided to make the man useful.

"Since you're watching your 'taters," decided the Commodore, "you may as well be watching this dinghy that I've got in tow. I'll tie her up and if my nevvv comes, tell him he can row out to where I'm moored."

If Jud could have reached out, the Commodore would have been within reach while he was tying the dinghy alongside the pier. That only made Jud's plight the more painful, for it wasn't long before the Starfish was blending its chugs into the distance, marking the final fade of Jud's hope.

Then came a slight swash from nearby, followed by a dull scraping at the other side of the pier. Footsteps creaked the boards and voices announced that the other two men had returned.

"Orders is to get rid of him," Jud heard one say, "since he didn't have anything important on him."

"Where do we croak him?" queried the guard. "Somewhere up on shore?"

"We dump him in the bay," was the reply. "We'll use those salt bags stacked up in the old shack. Better keep watch at the shore end of the pier while we're going there, so as to tip us if any cars stop."

Footsteps pounded away toward what was to be Jud's death march. He heard the guard lag at the inner end of the pier while the others continued to the shack. How much longer that gave Jud to live was a question, but he was quite sure that it could be answered in terms of minutes.

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Then, as if from nowhere, came a whispered voice, a thing that seemed to inject from the recent past.

"Don't move," the tone told Jud. "Not until you are completely loose."

Where the voice came from Jud couldn't guess until a knife followed it. This blade however, was not intended as a harmful weapon. It came up through the cracks of the pier and sawed neatly and efficiently at Jud's ropes, severing them one by one.

The Shadow worked from the darkness of Tupper's squatty dinghy, which had drifted underneath the pier, as small boats so often did.

All the while the guard was keeping something of an eye on Jud, for the pacing approached at intervals, then went away. This was why The Shadow had given that whispered warning for Jud to remain motionless.

The cords were all cut when Jud whispered back:

"Loose."

"Then wait."

Wait Jud did, while The Shadow timed the guard's pace and checked the exact moment when the man turned shoreward again. Then the whisper told Jud:

"Ease under the rail and drop."

Jud did just that, his motion accompanied by slight rippling sounds below. Not only was the dinghy there to receive him, The Shadow broke his short fall and made it a silent one. Moreover, the dinghy was no longer tied and the long shove The Shadow gave it sent it gliding well away from the wharf, where the tide, beginning its outward flow, increased the boat's drift.

A brief but rocky promontory jutted out a hundred yards way. The dinghy reached it before Jud's guard approached the pier end to inspect the alleged potato sack. The Shadow worked one oar in muffled style, and the dinghy buffered itself noiselessly against the seaweed that strewed the rock on the far side of the little point.

There, the cloaked figure stepped to shore. However grim Jud's previous adventures, the present moment topped them. Though clouded, the moonlight etched the scene in precise detail, proving its full existence. Yet there was a touch of the unreal, a dream sensation that held Jud in suspense, as he awaited the awakening.

If the scene had dissipated itself, Jud would not have been surprised. Instead, it remained, but its principal factor evaporated. This happened when The Shadow gave Jud's boat a shove and finished with a pointing gesture toward some islands that hugged the shore; then, with an undertoned laugh, a symbol of departure, The Shadow turned and blended into blackness.

Gray rock, streaked with the mesh of deep brown seaweed, seemed incapable of swallowing a living figure. But Jud had previously witnessed The Shadow's chameleon qualities and realized their possibilities now. With the boat sliding from the shore, The Shadow's figure had diminished, and the moonlight, clouding at that moment, gave another aid to The Shadow blending with the dark-streaked rock.

Now Jud was carefully using the oars so their sounds wouldn't carry back over the rocky point. Even if his absence had been discovered, his former captors couldn't trace him, for he'd reach the first island very shortly.

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Reach it Jud did and when he rounded it, he caught a distant view of Foreside Landing. No figures were in sight, so Jud took it that his enemies must have discovered he was gone. If they'd connected The Shadow with Jud's impossible escape, they'd probably traveled all the faster. For Jud to bring friends like Harry would be bad enough in their estimate; to have The Shadow return in vengeful mood would be even worse.

All that disturbed the bay was another of those ripples that Jud attributed to a school of salmon. It made an outward track, disappearing at intervals, and finally was gone beyond a far island. Plodding along in the dinghy, Jud intended to cover considerable distance, too.

Jud was bound for the Starfish where he could sleep off tonight's adventure. He'd feel safe there, even though he now mistrusted Tupper, for he doubted that the Commodore would make any overt move, even if so inclined.

But in the final analysis, Jud's confident mood was due to his trust in a friend whom he now felt would rescue him from anything.

The Shadow.

XVIII.

It was afternoon when Jud awoke to find the Starfish lumbering though a drizzle that filtered through the port-holes. Coming out of the cabin, Jud nodded to Tupper who was at the wheel, eyeing the rocky shore of an island that they rounded.

"No sign of our island yet, nevvv," announces the Commodore, cheerily. "Hard to tell which is the little ones when you can't see the big ones to judge by. Mebbe a bird's-eye map would help. Bring any of'm back with you?"

Jud shook his head.

"They didn't show much," he replied. "Of course I went through them in a hurry, but I guess I saw enough."

"Didn't have any trouble finding the sail-loft, did you?"

"No." Jud prolonged a pause; then in the terse style of Maine coast speech that he found he was beginning to acquire, he added: "Why?"

The Commodore cackled a chuckle.

"D'you 'member that chart I gived you, nevvv?"

"Sure."

"Funny thing. Thought I'd put it here" the Commodore tapped his left coat pocket "instead of tucking it over here." He patted the pocket on the right. "And if that's what I'd done, I would have wrote the note I gave Nilja on the back of your chart, nevvv."

The Commodore paused and tested a portion of Casco Bay with a two ounce shot of tobacco juice.

"Shoal water," decided Tupper, judging from the splash. "Better I'd veer off." He swung the wheel

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accordingly. "Glad I didn't give that chart to the gal by mistake. I reckon it wouldn't have been fitten or proper, now would it?"

Jud judged that it wouldn't, so he shook his head. Steering the Starfish away from a looming rock, Commodore Tupper broached a new subject.

"They'd have given us blazes," he said, "if we'd cruised around here a year or two ago. They didn't want nobody snooping around the fortifications."

"What fortifications?"

"The hull parcel of'm," declared Tupper. "Thicker than a swarm of jellyfish, the Navy boats that was using Casco Bay as an anchorage and they was all watching to see that nobody found out nothing about the way these islands were being made into forts."

These facts intrigued Jud. The way to find out more was to let the Commodore spill it, which he always did when nobody said anything to encourage him.

"Now during the first war," reminisced Tupper, "when I was ensigning around this bay, it was a submarine base that worried everybody. They was a lot of talk of an enemy sub base, hid right here in Casco Bay."

"Was there one?" asked Jud.

"Reckon not," replied Tupper, "but 'twould have been a caution if there had been. This last war, though, there wasn't much chance for the Nazis to slip a sub in here."

"Why not?"

"On 'count of the nets. The navy rigged 'em in every channel atween the outer islands. Big steel nets that would've strained a jelly-fish if it tried to git through."

"Those nets have been removed?"

"Reckon so. Guess maybe they'll have them ready though, when the Navy turns Casco Bay into an anchorage, like the papers have been saying they will."

While Tupper spoke, Jud's thoughts were reverting to another subject.

"About Nilja," asked Jud. "You don't know where she took that report you wrote?"

A head-shake from Tupper.

"She couldn't have gone to Hemlock Island?" inquired Jud. "Or could she?"

"She might've gone most anywhere."

"Then I know where we're going," returned Jud, firmly. "Head for the Rover, Commodore. I want to talk to Thodor about the Wayfarers. His idea interested me."

Out of the drizzle, Tupper uncovered the Rover and Jud climbed the ladder leading to the deck of Thodor's yacht. The Commodore remained in the Starfish, claiming that he had no truck in anything newfangled,

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which covered all advances since the year nineteen hundred and therefore included the World Wide Wayfarers which Ilion Troy had founded a few years after that date.

Asking for Thodor, Jud was conducted to the big stateroom and as soon as he arrived, Thodor greeted him with a smile and pointed to a packet lying on the table. It was the envelope that Jud had mailed the night before and it was still intact.

"This came from the Point," declared Thodor. "I had an idea you might have mailed it, so I have been waiting for your arrival. What is in the envelope?"

"Plenty," returned Jud, "and plenty means maps, of a type you may not have seen."

Jud ripped the package, opened the bird's-eye maps and spread them wide. Soon Jud and Thodor were devouring the details, comparing the different maps.

The maps were quite as the Commodore had described them. Each was an artist's conception of Casco Bay as if taken from a camera at an elevation of some ten thousand feet from a spot five miles or more at sea. They were lithographs, printed in color, showing the red-bricked city of Portland at the extreme left, the blue of Casco Bay stretching to the right, interspersed with green islands forested with brown trees.

Each map covered from Portland harbor at the left to Merriconeag Sound at the right, thus including the greater part of Casco Bay. In the background was the mainland, fading away back to the White Mountains, but that was unimportant.

What mattered were the islands.

There were plenty of islands and their names varied or had been altered through the years, as indicated by the dates printed on the maps themselves. Being pictorial, the maps were not accurate in scale. Nonetheless, not only were their details precise as to the contours of the islands, but they gave a much better effect of the actual bay than did regular maps or navigation charts.

Apparently observers had visited the islands, made sketches of their general appearance, and an artist had later portrayed them in relation to the bird's-eye view. Changes had been made at intervals, even to the addition of conspicuous buildings, like hotels, stores, or piers.

Noting the features, Jud remarked:

"I wonder if they show what happened to Orr's Island after the big gale of ninety-eight. The Commodore was telling me how the wind mowed down the trees clear across the island. Maybe they hadn't grown up again before the next map was made. Little details sometimes lead to big ones."

Important words those: little and big.

On a map dated 1912, the first dated later than the year of the great storm, Jud saw that Orr's Island was just about the same, which indicated that new trees had filled the swath. But as his eye drifted to Saddleback Island, Jud saw something that captured his full interest.

"Look there!" exclaimed Jud. "See what happened to Saddleback! The storm must have cut it right in half!"

Thodor looked and saw. The knobs that formed Saddleback's two humps were separated, not just by a gully, but by an actual channel that cut it into two islands, one small, the other large.

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Both bore the name Saddleback, but all other maps, before or after, showed a single island, until Jud found the very first map of all, which was dated away back in 1866. There he again saw two islands, but this time they bore the names that Jud wanted:

Little Gorling Big Gorling.

It was Thodor's turn to show amazement.

"A very rare map," Thodor declared. "It must have been printed just before the Great Fire of 'Sixty-six, which practically wiped out the city of Portland."

"And before the next map was printed," added Jud, "that narrow channel had filled with sand and the two islands were given one name: Saddleback. The Gorling family must have owned it and considered it to be two islands. That's when my uncle and I mean my uncle bought his half from Captain Gorling; that is, the little half."

Thodor nodded. The theory held.

"Speaking of uncles," he remarked, "do you think your adopted uncle knows?"

"The Commodore?" Jud laughed, then halted. "I wonder. Sometimes" Jud was wondering what had happened to the note that Tupper had given Nilja "I think that maybe the Commodore knows more than he wants to talk about."

"But you can trust him, can't you?"

"I'm not so sure."

"In that case," decided Thodor, "you'd better not mention this discovery to him."

"I certainly won't," promised Jud. "As soon as it's dark, I'll find a way to get to Saddleback on my own and find out if it is my own."

Jud's emphasis brought an approving nod from Thodor and with that, Jud left to rejoin his old friend Tupper in the Starfish. The term "old friend" was running through Jud's mind as he saw the Commodore and Jud was wondering, just how far it carried.

If the islands of Casco Bay could be judged by halves, maybe the same applied to some of the skippers. That Commodore Tupper was old, Jud agreed; that he was a friend, Jud was by no means certain.

XIX.

It was pitch-dark on the lesser half of Saddleback Island, formerly Little Gorling.

Picking his way among tree roots and pine needles, Jud Fenwick was keeping his flashlight close to the ground, through necessity as well as policy. People who talked about impenetrable jungles should try their hand at penetrating a chunk of unspoiled Maine woods where the evergreens really sprouted thick. Hemlock, balsam and spruce had spreading limbs from ground level up; those branches were not only the thickest, but the longest, and they interwove so thoroughly that it was impossible to tell which tree each belonged.

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Thus Jud was practically crawling his way through this miniature forest and he was glad that Maine lacked poisonous snakes to provide wiggly competition. But it was still policy to keep his flashlight focused low.

Off in the distance, the huff of the wheezy motor that propelled the Starfish told that the old cabin cruiser was still on this side of Pine Point. If Commodore Tupper looked back, he might glimpse the tiny light of Jud's flashlight. Despite the trees, such glimmers could carry far across the water. The way Shiloh's lights had been spotted on Hemlock Island was proof of that.

Jud didn't want anyone, particularly Tupper, to know that he was here on Saddleback. If this happened to be Little Gorling, it was Jud's own job to prove it.

The Commodore thought Jud was asleep in the cabin of the Starfish, Jud having claimed that he was fatigued from the night before. Instead, Jud had slipped into the dinghy while Tupper was up on the front deck, casting the Starfish loose. Tonight, the Commodore had left the dinghy moored; all Jud had to do was release the little boat and let it drift to the shore of Saddleback.

Continuing his crawl, Jud did his best to measure the ground he covered. He was going over this terrain as systematically as possible. The ground was dry, for the drizzle hadn't penetrated the overhanging evergreens that practically dominated the nob. Lately, the drizzle had ceased, but the sky was still thick with clouds, cutting off every trace of moonlight.

Rocks, moss, ferns Jud found no end of them every time he reached a spot that was slightly open. He seemed to be going over the same ground, time after time, but he was sure he wasn't. The sound of the Starfish had ended; there'd been silence for a long while now, but Jud was still cautious with the flashlight. No reason why anybody should be prowling the uninhabited acreage of Saddleback Island.

Large leaves brushed Jud's shoulders and spattered him with rainwater. Jud thought he was in a clump of high bushes, until he flicked his flashlight about him and saw that he was surrounded by enormous maple leaves. These trees were moosewood, so named because moose fed from their leaves. But since there were no moose on this island, Jud preferred to call the trees by their other name, striped maple.

Little trees with big leaves.

Something like Little Gorling and Big Gorling, which added up to make Saddleback. Jud was smiling at the notion, when suddenly he wondered what so much moosewood was doing here. It wasn't that the island lacked moose; the question was, why did the evergreen permit it?

The answer shot home.

This was an old clearing from which the evergreens had been cut. When the clearing had been abandoned, the moosewood had sprung up. This spot, high on the smaller half of the island, was where Jud would find whatever evidence remained of his uncle's domicile!

That thought spurred Jud. He thrust himself among the thin trunks of the miniature maples, sweeping his flashlight in search of anything solid. Jud saw some stones poking from among a batch of dried leaves; pulling the leaves away, he discovered what might have been a portion of a chimney and its fireplace.

Just a small, crazy stack of stone, but there was mortar with it, and the next job was to trace something of the building that belonged with it. Pushing ahead, Jud came to the brink of a cliff, the edge of what had once been a channel between the islands, but now was covered with sturdy trees, rearing from a gully. Turning back, Jud rustled his way through leaves and felt the slippery footing that went with pine needles, but

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beneath, the surface was hard.

Stooping, Jud found a cracked rock that his flashlight proved to be a slab. Next, he was hauling up the broad flat stone, and looking down into a cavern that had steps, in the form of crudely hewn rock.

Wild thoughts of treasure were buzzing through Jud's brain. He'd heard the Commodore tell of pirate loot, presumably buried in the neighborhood of Casco Bay. Old Tupper had even suggested that they might find some of it, just toward sweetening the hunt for Jud's island.

But it wasn't treasure waiting at the bottom of those steps.

When he arrived there, Jud's flashlight revealed a singular thing. The steps ended in an underground pool of dank, deep water. It seemed odd, until another thought sprang to mind. This was the old channel that had filled with sand, many, many years ago, then had been cut asunder by a gale.

The channel which according to the maps had filled again, but which still existed in the form of a subterranean cove!

This mystery would have held Jud for hours, if it hadn't solved itself in a peculiar and dramatic way. Under Jud's flashlight, the water rippled, then heaved. Up came something with a swash, and Jud literally saw the underground harbor fill itself with the small but surprising bulk of a miniature boat which he recognized as a submarine!

It was bigger than any two-man sub that Jud had seen in pictures, but not much larger. It was equipped with a periscope, conning tower and hatch; while Jud still blinked, the lid of the hatch popped open. A sweated man came thrusting out of it and when he saw the glow of the flashlight, he drew a gun and shouted.

Jud didn't wait for the echoing shout to die. He was making echoes up the stone steps, because he wasn't anxious to die himself. Shots followed him, then pounding footsteps, but Jud kept well enough ahead to take advantage of the upward sloping roof.

By the time he was plunging out through the slatted opening, Jud knew much of what this was about. The crew from the undersized sub were the men had been hounding him all along, Shiloh's men from Hemlock Island. They'd been the murderers on Brothers Island, the night when Talbot had been slain. They'd planted the explosive in Shiloh's speed-boat to dispose of Jud when he took it instead of his drifting dinghy.

Using their under-water craft, these workers had reached the Portland pier, where they had mysteriously vanished after their invasion of the sail-loft, thanks to their secret mode of transit. The ripples off the Foreside Landing accounted for their arrival and departure from that place, before and after their capture of Jud.

Tearing his way down through the evergreens, Jud was making more noise than a maddened moose and pretty near as much headway, despite the clutching branches. His pursuers were probing with flashlights and with gunshots, but with little luck.

Jud wanted to reach the dinghy, not realizing that then his luck would end. Once in that little boat, he'd be sure target for these gunners. Jud's plight was recognized, however, for as he reached the shore, too far from the dinghy to even think of doubling back to it, Jud was bathed in the flood of a small searchlight, that brought with it a rapid and familiar chugging sound.

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The Starfish, coming at full speed to Jud's rescue, and plodder though she was, The Commodore's flagship was due to reach shore ahead of Jud's pursuers!

Just as the Starfish hoisted her cumbersome bow upon the tiny bit of beach between the rocks, Jud's enemies spied him from among the trees, and crashed their way through to the open stretch. They saw Jud fling himself upon the deck and as he slid head-foremost toward the cockpit, the searchlight went off. That didn't hold back the assassins for an instant.

Over the deck they crowded, dropping into the boat alongside the open top. Their flashlights, sweeping the cockpit, showed no sign of Jud, nor anywhere that he might hide. They hadn't heard Jud jump overboard, hence the only place where he could have ducked in his last minute of grace was into the ship's cabin.

That was where the three invaders stormed, into the two-bunk cabin, only to find it deserted!

Ten seconds of amazement for these men who sought Jud Fenwick. In those same ten seconds, blackness was stirring from the bench at the very stern of the Starfish, blackness that became a living figure. The cloaked form of The Shadow moved forward to the cabin and reached it, just as Jud's enemies were turning to come out.

A strange laugh quivered from the darkness, flung itself into the hollow confines of the cabin and shivered into the echoes of a fierce titanic challenge that would have numbed less hardened customers than these.

It took more than the laugh to numb them.

Snarling, the three murderers swung their guns to aim, only to be greeted by the blazing tongues of automatics that spoke from the door and had both the first and last say in this argument.

Silence followed, save for the rippling lap of wavelets against the side of the beached Starfish.

Then, grim as a knell, came the low whispered laugh of The Shadow, the victor of that fray.

XX.

Jud Fenwick was finishing the most astounding ride that he had ever experienced. He was seated beside a trap door, down through which hung the double rope that had brought him up here. Somebody had caught the loop of the rope and was hauling it downward.

Jud was in the compact cabin of a little blimp, the small-sized dirigible that he had once seen engaged in a weather survey. The pilot of the blimp was Harry Vincent; he was the person who had helped Jud into the cabin. Now, as the blimp descended, an open boat showed just below. Jud dropped through the trap and Harry followed. They found themselves in a clumsy motor boat belonging to Tupper's flotilla, with the Commodore in charge and Homer serving as his crew.

The Commodore gestured for Homer to start the motor. Then, with the blimp in tow, but up where it was invisible in the darkness, Tupper turned to Jud with a chuckle.

"Consarded if they didn't do it!" The Commodore cackled. "They blimped you right off'n the Starfish afore them buzzards could snag onto you. So they come on board, looking for my nevvvy Davy, only to figure he'd gone to Davy Jones. I reckon they come to regret it."

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Tupper looked to Harry for corroboration and received a nod. From the blimp, Harry had heard the results of The Shadow's afterpiece.

"It even fooled me," admitted Jud. "One moment, I was on board the Starfish, next The Shadow had me roped like a knapsack. Then I was taking off for nowhere, until Vincent hauled me in with him. That blimp was just waiting to get going."

Jud took a breath, then added grimly:

"And I'm waiting to get going, over to Hemlock Island. I want to meet Austin Shiloh again, and just once."

As if to certify Jud's purpose, Harry handed him a loaded automatic. Seeing that Harry held one of his own, Jud was more than pleased. The boat plodded along in the general direction of Hemlock Island until suddenly the motor chopped itself off.

Jud looking inquiringly at Tupper.

"Stopping here at the Rover," the Commodore informed, gesturing to the side of Thodor's sleek yacht, which was looming out of the dark. "You and Vincent are going on board to see him first."

On board they went, by the usual ladder. As they came over the side, two of the natty crew members stepped into sight. Harry shoved his gun at one and gestured Jud to do the same with the other. Surprised, Jud complied:

"Hold them," ordered Harry, "and keep them that way."

"I'm doing both," cackled old Tupper, as he poked above the rail. "Run along, young fellows, and have your chat with Thodor. This shot-gun has got two barrels and that's all the barrels I'll be needing."

Jud looked about, saw the Commodore, wagging a shot-gun from one man to the other. Then Harry was drawing Jud to Thodor's stateroom. Without bothering to knock, Harry thrust open the door and they shoved across the threshold, to be halted by two warning guns that awaited them.

One revolver was held by Greeley Thodor. The other was in the small but efficient fist of Nilja Lunstrom. At Thodor's snarl, Harry and Jud let their own guns drop to the thick rug.

Stepping forward, Thodor brushed the pockets of his prisoners to make sure there were no other weapons on them. He noticed a wad of paper in Jud's pocket, brought it out, and spread it with one hand. For the first time, Thodor's eyes showed how nasty a glare they could supply.

"Who wrote this?" demanded Thodor.

It was the paper bearing the dying man's scrawl, from that first night on Brothers Island.

Hesitating, Jud finally spoke bluntly:

"Terry Talbot."

"And those fools of mine passed it up," snarled Thodor, "when they grabbed you last night at the Foreside. But you were as big a fool, Fenwick. Can't you see what this meant?"

Jud shook his head.

"Talbot was trying to write three initials," declared Thodor, with a smug smile. "Three letters and all were the same. He wanted to write W.W.W, which signified World Wide Wayfarers. And that" Thodor's smile stiffened "meant me."

Thodor paused, to study the effect on Jud, whose face was anything but happy, which pleased Thodor the more.

"Unfortunately," added Thodor, "Talbot couldn't lift his hand from the paper, so he wrote the three letters all as one. That was unfortunate for Talbot but not for me."

From the way Thodor's smile broadened, he regarded it as unfortunate for others than Terry Talbot, one such person being Jud Fenwick.

"It is all quite humorous," declared Thodor. "Austin Shiloh was watching me and Terry Talbot was watching him. I sent my men to Brothers Island to liquidate one of Shiloh's men and they disposed of Talbot instead. This girl" he gestured to Nilja "was working with Talbot, so I knew that I could win her over to my cause."

Jud was looking straight at Nilja, wishing that he'd never seen her. He could understand her hatred of Shiloh, but why she would side with Thodor was something he couldn't quite fathom. It was plain now that Nilja had taken Tupper's information straight to Thodor; that he'd asked her to learn what she could about Jud. For that, Jud never could forgive her. Yet as he thought about it, Jud was puzzled.

Something didn't quite fit. Since Thodor acknowledged himself the man behind murder, where did Shiloh stand? Certainly Shiloh couldn't be the master mind.

Only Thodor could explain it and from his satisfied smile, he had no intention of doing so, until something more expressive than a smile forced its way into the scene. That something was a laugh, strangely sinister, that crowded its way between Jud Fenwick and Harry Vincent. They separated, those two, as they saw Thodor freeze and let his gun come downward.

In from the doorway, spreading Jud and Harry each to one side, had stepped The Shadow, his gloved hand clutching an automatic, aimed straight for Thodor!

"You have admitted your guilt," spoke The Shadow, in a tone that carried an accusing throb. "Your guilt in a game that was simple but certain. Will you give the details, Thodor or shall I?"

Thodor's lips were dry and smileless. He licked them back to life. Then:

"I shall tell the story," declared Thodor. "During the first World War, the enemy as you term them planned to turn Casco Bay into a submarine base for operations against your coast. Unfortunately, the war ended before that base was quite completed.

"It left us" Thodor was speaking for the enemy "with a hidden submarine base in the channel between two small islands, Little and Big Gorling, which were erroneously called Saddleback Island. A storm had separated those islands. We changed them back to one, but only on the surface."

Jud could have testified to that fact, for he had seen the hidden cove. Thodor's eyes were fixed on Jud, as though to probe his thoughts, but Jud said nothing.

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"During the second World War" Thodor was speaking as though he expected more "one submarine arrived here. Unfortunately, the channels were closed, before we could bring more. So our submarine, having no mode of escape, remained inactive.

"With the war's end, the channels have been opened. Departure is now a simple matter. But there are agents, saboteurs and others, who must be removed. They are leaving tonight, on this yacht, under the guise of World Wide Wayfarers, the advance guard of a lot of dupes who will follow on our steamer, the Equinox.

"But we have not been idle while we waited. We have acquired these" – he gestured to a large packet on the table "and they will be important in the next war. These" he stepped over and lifted the packet "are the plans for all the fortifications in Casco Bay, upon which millions of dollars have been spent.

"After all" Thodor's smug smile had returned "our submarine was useful. It made its way about the bay very easily and quite unobserved. Only one man suspected it and his name was Austin Shiloh. He came to Casco Bay because he was suspicious of me. He knew or thought he knew that the World Wide Wayfarers were being used as a cover-up for an international group that still believes it can some day rule the world and will."

Despite the defiance in his tone, Thodor let his gun drop to the floor. Then, as The Shadow's automatic relaxed accordingly, Thodor swung quickly with these words:

"Quickly, Nilja! Cover him!"

It was unnecessary. Nilja already had The Shadow covered. His gloved hand opened and his automatic dropped.

"And now" Thodor was speaking sharply to The Shadow "let us see your face Mr. Cranston!"

Back went The Shadow's hat; his cloak dropped away. Fully revealed, perhaps for the first time under such persuasion, were the calm features of Cranston. Then, despairingly, The Shadow's hands went to his face, as though in a last effort to hide his identity. Those hands lowered; as they dropped, they seemed to peel away an outer layer of Cranston's features.

That calm, well-molded face was changed into the thin, gaunt features of Austin Shiloh!

Amazed, Thodor stared first at the transformed Shadow, then at a photograph that lay beside the packet on the table. In response to Thodor's bewilderment came The Shadow's laugh.

"Austin Shiloh is dead," declared The Shadow calmly. "Your men killed him, Thodor, in the store on Brothers Island, where he went in person, pretending that he was Judson Fenwick."

So amazing was this revelation that even the swash of water from the bay seemed lost amid those moments while The Shadow paused. Then:

"I took Shiloh's place on Hemlock Island," The Shadow declared. "I had known him, years ago, when I was in the Orient, making a round-the-world flight as myself, Kent Allard."

The name drilled home to Thodor and Jud was able to recall it. Kent Allard was a forgotten aviator, a man who belonged strictly to the past. People had wondered what had become of him. No wonder, considering that he had dropped his identity and become The Shadow!

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"Among Shiloh's effects," continued this forgotten man, "there was a snap-shot of myself with Shiloh. There were other pictures of Shiloh, group photographs that he had put away, because he too preferred to keep himself unknown.

"I marked those pictures of Shiloh with the initials T.T., to stand for Terry Talbot. With them I placed a camera portrait of myself, Kent Allard, to which I signed Shiloh's name. I wanted you" Allard's eyes were fixed upon Thodor "to think that Shiloh was still alive."

Think it, Thodor had, and all because of Jud, who realized now that The Shadow had played a double part, that night when Jud had visited Hemlock Island. How cleverly The Shadow had faked it, showing himself as the man who matched the photo signed by Shiloh's name, only to drop back into darkness and deliver The Shadow's own laugh, which Jud already knew and recognized!

All this linked back to a scene which only The Shadow could have described; that prologue which had taken place in The Shadow's own sanctum.

That telegram to Cranston had been sent by Shiloh. It had always been The Shadow's practice to have Cranston make the acquaintance of persons who had once known Allard. Of Shiloh, Cranston had learned but little in past meetings, yet enough for Shiloh in his turn to believe that he could call on Cranston as a friend in need.

Realizing his affairs were becoming far too deep, Shiloh had wired Cranston, never realizing that he would bring Allard to his aid, with a file of documents from the past. Though too late to save Shiloh's life, The Shadow had espoused his cause and brought it to the climax that Shiloh himself had sought.

These were facts behind the story, although they were totally unknown to Jud Fenwick, whose mind at least had grasped the visible and more immediate details of the present situation.

But where did Nilja stand?

As a friend of Shiloh, she must have told all to The Shadow, when he whisked her away that night on Brothers Island. Only to mislead Greeley Thodor could Nilja have pretended that she was a friend of Terry Talbot, the man who had really died in China, who had therefore never come to Casco Bay at all!

All this struck home to Jud and when he looked toward Nilja, he saw that he was right. The girl had turned half around and now her gun, the only one still in operation, was trained straight upon Thodor!

She was lovely, Nilja.

Vengeful, vicious, ready to deliver death at The Shadow's word. Hatred of Thodor seemed to flow from her and Jud loved her for it. She looked as though she wished she had a dozen bullets in a gun that only held half a dozen and Jud wished that the gun contained half a gross.

Even an illiterate could have read death in Nilja's gaze and Thodor happened to be educated.

Quick as a lashing snake, Thodor grabbed up the packet-load of fortification plans, flung them full force at Nilja and broke for a door at the rear of the stateroom.

Nilja's shots went wide. She wanted to plant them all in Thodor and in her urge she rushed them too fast, considering that she had to sidestep the bundle that was flying at her.

CRIME OVER CASCO

In one move, Allard whisked himself into his cloak and hat; with the same stooping lunge, he scooped up his automatic, and became The Shadow, first and foremost in the pursuit of the notorious Greeley Thodor!

The chase reached the deck, with the rest of the pack close behind The Shadow. Always a jump ahead, Thodor made his last jump into the Bonnie J., which was the name of the open motor-boat that Tupper had brought along for this important voyage. There, Thodor fell upon a pair of ropes that were hooked to the boat's stern.

Commodore Tupper saw all this. His keen old eyes included The Shadow in the scene. The Commodore was where he could aim at Thodor before The Shadow arrived and aim the Commodore did. He aimed low.

The blast from the Commodore's shot-gun blew the stern of the Bonnie J. right out from under Thodor, without nicking the fugitive crime master. Tupper paused to project his tobacco cud overboard, then hoisted his shot-gun to do better with the second barrel.

It was The Shadow who stopped him.

With a long, diving lunge, The Shadow clamped a gloved hand on the shot-gun and slapped it down against the rail of yacht. The Shadow didn't want Tupper to drop Thodor with that load of shot. Sporting of the Commodore to wait until the game was on the rise, but he'd done quite enough.

Those ropes that Thodor had tangled about him were the mooring lines of the baby blimp. In blasting the stern from the Bonnie J., Tupper had released the blimp and the wind was blowing out to sea. Thodor, the man who claimed he had traveled everywhere, was going somewhere from which there would be no return.

Screams died high in the darkness of the night as the blimp headed for the bosom of the Atlantic Ocean, a fitting grave for that man who had owned no country, Greeley Thodor. The planner of the future was writing himself off as a pest of the past.

After the one-man flying squadron whose destination was oblivion, trailed the strange, weird, taunting laugh of his conqueror, The Shadow!

They rode back to Foreside Landing, Jud and Nilja, in the stern of the Starfish, which The Shadow had brought from Saddleback. Commodore Tupper was at the wheel, reciting an old sea ditty about thirteen men on a dead man's chest when he should have been talking about three who were sprawled in his own bunk room. The Shadow had remained on the Rover, retaining Harry Vincent, to keep the crew helpless while The Shadow gathered the stolen fortification plans to return them to the right authorities.

So it was to Jud alone that Nilja explained the last few facts that The Shadow already knew.

"Thodor thought I hated Shiloh," stated Nilja. "He tried to make me think that Shiloh had murdered my friend Talbot. But I'd never even heard of Talbot. Understand?"

"I understand," nodded Jud. "Your actual friend was Shiloh."

"And a real friend," added Nilja. "He helped me out of Norway during the Quisling regime. I was returning the favor by helping him here. I was keeping an eye on Thodor and watching signals from Hemlock Island, while I pretended I was interested in the World Wide Wayfarers."

"So that's why Thodor thought you were on his side and asked you to get that statement from the Commodore, regarding me."

CRIME OVER CASCO

"Exactly. He wanted to check your story. But I didn't know that the note the Commodore gave me had those plans of the waterfront on the other side. It was a mistake, Jud, and the mistake was Tupper's, but please don't blame him!"

"Why should I?" asked Jud, with a smile. "We all make mistakes. I was rather dumb about a message too."

From his pocket, he brought a slip of paper that he had reclaimed from the floor of Thodor's stateroom. He showed it to Nilja, who turned her eyes away. It reminded her too much of her poor friend Shiloh.

Those turning eyes met Jud's and he understood the appeal they carried. He drew Nilja close and as he kissed her, his hand let the slip of paper flutter. It traveled overboard and floated in the waters of Casco Bay, where the propeller of the Starfish churned the foam white.

Briefly, before blackness again swallowed it, the cryptic message showed its symbol in the foam, as though spelling the end to this strange adventure which had marked another of The Shadow's triumphs over crime.

THE END