



# DEVILS OF THE DEEP

## A Doc Savage Adventure By Kenneth Robeson

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### Chapter I. A NEW FISH YARN

DOC SAVAGE missed the start of it by only ten minutes. In fact, he was flying back from Central America at the time, and went right over the place where the "sea serpent" first appeared. But he was too early by just those few ticks of the clock.

That was the first bad break.

Doc did notice a party of fishermen as he swept up over the Gulf of Mexico headed toward New Orleans on his fast flight northward. But there was nothing unusual about the fishermen-then, that is. There was nothing to warn him of the drama about to occur.

Those on the fishing boat craned their heads upward as Doc's golden-colored ship flashed overhead. There were ten on the boat besides the captain and his helper. Most of them were visitors from the North.

The captain shot a stream of tobacco juice carefully to leeward before he leaned back his weather-beaten face. Then interest flickered in his wintry eyes.

"That's Doc Savage's ship," he announced. "Saw it when he come through here two weeks ago headed south."

Excited exclamations came from others on the boat. From all, rather, except one man. He was a tall man with a square face and ramrod back. He seldom spoke, but when he did his companions had noticed he seemed to have a faint accent, although he used perfect English.

The tall man had taken only one quick glance above him, then he had turned back to watch his line. At the sudden buzz of comment he looked up, puzzled.

"Who's Doc Savage?" he asked harshly.

The captain's jaw dropped. He didn't think there was anyone who hadn't heard of Doc Savage. He gave the tall man a hard glance.

"Doc Savage is one of the greatest men in the world," the captain said flatly.

The tall man looked mildly amused. "So?" he queried politely.

The captain opened his mouth to answer. He didn't get the chance. It seemed that every other man on the boat had the same idea. They all started to talk at once. They all talked about Doc Savage.

Doc Savage, it seemed, was a man who spent his life fighting evil. He had defeated many bands of desperate criminals and had had many thrilling adventures. In addition, he was a famous scientist and surgeon.

"He's been trained since he was a boy for the job he does," one of the fishermen explained earnestly. "Every day he goes through a series of physical and mental exercises to keep fit."

"If I ever got into a jam, no matter how bad, and it seemed like no one in the world could help me, he's the guy I'd go see," another added solemnly.

The tall man shrugged, his restless eyes straying constantly toward the water. He apparently had lost interest in the subject.

The captain regarded him narrowly. There was something about the tall man that didn't ring quite true. He'd been going out with fishing parties every day for the last two weeks, but he didn't seem particularly interested in fishing. Most of the time he just stood by the rail and watched the water. Hahln, he called himself. A peculiar name and a peculiar man.

Anyone, the captain thought savagely, was peculiar who hadn't heard of Doc and wasn't interested in him.

That was when the sea erupted under them. The captain forgot all about Hahln. He even forgot about Doc Savage.

ACTUALLY, the fishermen decided later, the gigantic marine eruption that occurred wasn't directly under them. They wouldn't have survived if it had been. But it was far too close for comfort.

That was the only thing any of the twelve aboard the boat did agree upon.

A startled scream from the man at the helm gave the first warning. The fishing boat shook violently as its engine was thrown suddenly into reverse.

Then the water ahead of them was whipped into foam. What seemed to be huge, long tentacles flashed up from the depths only to whip down again instantly.

Eleven of the twelve men were screaming, eyes popping in terror. Even the weather-beaten features of

the captain were panic-stricken.

The twelfth man was Hahln. He alone was silent-but he was far from inactive.

Hahln had been standing almost at the stern of the fishing boat. The attention of the others was centered on what was going on ahead of them. No one was looking at Hahln.

Thus it was that no one saw him whip the camera from his pocket, focus it on the strange, terrifying scene.

The camera was an expensive one. It took pictures almost as rapidly as if it had been designed for movies.

A surprised, almost incredulous look was on Hahln's square face. He pressed his finger on a button and the camera went to work.

The sea was even more disturbed than before. There was a faint, rumbling sound also, barely discernible above the roar of the boat's engine. A huge object seemed almost to be jumping up and down not far below the surface of the water. It sent big waves crashing against the fishing boat.

The captain had stopped yelling long enough to grab the helm himself. He spun the boat around, and it was almost capsized when a wave caught it broadside. Then it righted itself, started racing toward shore.

Behind them, the water was quieting, but no one cared to suggest that they go back and investigate. All had the same idea. They wanted to get away from there, and they wanted to get away fast.

"It was a giant octopus battling a whale!" one of the fishermen yelled excitedly.

"That was no octopus," shouted a red-faced lawyer from Philadelphia. "That was a sea serpent! And it was headed right for us!"

The argument went on from there.

Opinion was divided almost equally between the sea serpent and the octopus theories. Those who favored the latter story cited the tentaclelike appendages that had thrashed out of the water. The sea-serpent adherents insisted those had merely been arched loops of a big snake's back.

Hahln alone took no part in the arguments. His camera had disappeared, but his big hands worked nervously. His square features were taut, and his eyes bore a worried, anxious look.

When the fishing boat reached its pier at New Orleans, he slipped over the side and hurried away.

HAHLN was the only one who did get away immediately. The captain saw to that. The captain had been doing a lot of thinking on the way back. He'd decided that this story, properly exploited, ought to get him a lot of business.

As soon as the boat was moored he herded his party of fishermen into a small office on the pier and called the newspapers.

At first he had difficulty getting anyone even to listen to him. Then he put a New York banker on the phone. The banker's name was enough to make news alone. That got action. Newspapermen and photographers swarmed to the pier.

The stories that appeared were frankly humorous despite the banker's solemn protestations of truthfulness. One started:

## SEA SERPENT-OR WAS IT

### AN OCTOPUS?-SEEN IN GULF

A party of fishermen aboard the *Conga* returned from the Gulf today to tell a thrilling story of seeing a giant sea serpent-or perhaps it was an even bigger octopus-battling a whale. The sea serpent-or octopus-almost got the *Conga* as well when it stirred up such a rumpus that it created waves ten-or perhaps twenty-feet high.

Captain Teold of the *Conga*, who swears his passengers drank nothing but water on their trip, bore out their story and added some details of his own. He said-

One newspaper even hired a plane and took Captain Teold along to point out the exact spot where the sea battle was supposed to have taken place. Later it printed a picture of a placid section of water. Nothing was to be seen, not even from the air. But that wasn't surprising, Teold pointed out, even if the sea serpent or octopus, or whatever it was, still was about. The water was deep in that particular place.

Teold wasn't taken seriously. The newspapers called it the best fish story of the year.

Teold didn't mind. He found that a lot of people wanted to go out and look at the scene of the battle just the same. His boat did a rushing business, even though none of the curious saw any more than was shown in the newspaper picture.

There was one set of pictures, however, that would have created a real sensation had they been seen. They were the pictures the tall man Hahln had taken. But the newspapers never saw those.

Hahln developed the films himself. He had a suite of rooms in the Kirkland Hotel and had fitted up the bathroom so he could use it as a darkroom. The hotel management thought he was an amateur photographer, evidently with a private income, since he never seemed to work. He also was known to tinker with radio some, but nothing much was thought of that. Lots of people did the same.

Perspiration was on the tall man's square face as he took the film from the fixing solution, rinsed it briefly, then held it up before a light. After that his eyes became stony and his lips set in a tight line.

When the film was dry, he made an enlargement of one of the pictures and studied it closely. Once he shook his head unbelievably, but he could not dispute the evidence before him.

He put the picture aside and went to his radio set. The radio was his own property, not the one furnished by the hotel. He unlocked the cabinet and took out a pair of earphones and a small microphone.

When he spoke, it was in a foreign language. He talked at some length and the tone of his voice showed he was apologizing for something. After that, he listened. A voice crackled harshly in his ears.

Hahln's fingers were trembling as he removed the earphones. He looked like a man who had just been sentenced to death. He sat for a long time without moving.

IT was almost dusk when Hahln stirred again. He cleaned up the bathroom, emptying chemicals from many bottles. Then he went through papers he had locked in a suitcase. A great many of these he burned, making a small fire in the bathtub.

His clothes came next. Carefully he went over each suit he had, destroying tailors' labels and laundry marks. His face was a frozen mask.

When everything else was done, he turned to the radio. For long moments he looked at it. Once it

seemed he was going to don the earphones again. Then he changed his mind. He got a heavy boot and smashed the tubes and inner works until not even an expert could have re-assembled the set or could have told it could send as well as receive. After that he paced the floor, ten steps forward, a right-about-face and back again. His back was still ramrod stiff, but his eyes showed pain.

His mind flashed back to the events of the day. Once again he could see "tentacles" lashing the water, could hear the screams of frightened men.

It had all come so suddenly. Just a few minutes before a plane had passed overhead, a plane piloted by a Doc Savage-

Hahln halted abruptly. A strange expression flashed over his square features. Then he leaped forward, grabbed the picture he had printed, studied it once again. His lips split in a thin smile.

Ten minutes later he left the hotel. The night clerk nodded to him casually. Hahln smiled pleasantly.

At the corner he stopped. He took a big envelope from his pocket, dropped it into the mailbox.

The envelope was addressed to Doc Savage.

## **Chapter II. MONK PULLS A BONER**

THE envelope was delivered to Doc Savage's office on the eighty-sixth floor of one of New York City's tallest skyscrapers, the following afternoon. There was only one thing wrong about that. Doc wasn't there at the time.

That was the second bad break.

The envelope was received by a man who looked like an ape's first cousin. Or possibly a brother. He was heavy-set, with big shoulders, and long arms that reached below his knees. His fists were hairy, and his face was so homely that it usually won grins of sympathy. Tiny eyes were set in pits of gristle. His big nose had been flattened; his ears looked mournful.

It was easy to understand why Andrew Blodgett Mayfair was known as Monk.

Ordinarily, Monk had a most cheerful disposition. But he wasn't cheerful now. He felt abused.

Doc had just returned from two weeks where the weather was hot. It was cold in New York, and Monk had wanted to go along. Doc had thought otherwise. He was going on a confidential mission for the government. So Monk had stayed in New York.

Monk was one of Doc Savage's five aids. A famous chemist, he could have made a fortune in the business world. But he preferred adventure. And he was loyal to Doc. The only trouble was, he didn't know the importance of the envelope that came in the afternoon mail.

The mail came direct to Doc's office from the main post office by pneumatic tube. That was because Doc daily got such a huge volume of mail.

When this batch arrived, Monk glanced at it with distaste. For two weeks he had been doing nothing but receive and inspect mail. He was tired of it. There had been lots of letters-a majority asking money-but nothing at all that had held any promise of action.

Now he wearily took his feet off the desk and got up. He started toward the mail. Then he stopped. A sly grin crossed his homely features. He gave a low call.

A pig waddled out from under the desk. At least it might have been called a pig. It had a razor back, a long snout and big ears. It also had a pair of unusually intelligent eyes.

"Habeas," Monk said solemnly, "the time has come to see whether you're any danged good."

The hairy chemist moved swiftly. He produced a small silk hat, jammed it on the pig's head. Then he gave a command. Obediently, Habeas Corpus reared up on his hind legs. Monk stuck a small cane under one of the pig's front legs.

Habeas strutted across the room. He was still strutting when the door opened.

The man who came in seemed to strut just like the pig. He wore a silk hat. He carried a cane under one arm.

MONK doubled over with explosive laughter. The newcomer halted, face frozen. But only for a moment. Then he dived forward, arms swinging.

"Blast you, Monk, you offspring of the missing link!" he yelled furiously. "Teaching Habeas to imitate me is the last straw."

Monk scuttled about the room, trying to evade the other's onslaught and laugh at the same time. "B-but daggonit, Ham!" he managed at last. "He does look like yuh."

Ham, otherwise Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks, Harvard's fashion-plate gift to the world, grabbed the silk hat off Habeas' head, slammed it to the floor angrily.

"At that, Habeas did look something like Ham," a new voice put in dolefully.

Ham whirled, glared at the thin, sallow-complexioned man who had followed him into the room. "*Et tu, Long Tom,*" he rasped.

Long Tom, the electrical wizard of Doc Savage's band, grinned broadly. Known to scientists as Major Thomas J. Roberts, Long Tom appeared a physical weakling. He was not very tall, his skin had an unhealthy tint-but those who had tangled with him in the past knew that appearances were deceiving.

"Imagine a lawyer knowing two words of Latin," he gibed gently.

Ham sputtered wordlessly. Monk recovered himself with an effort. It had taken him two weeks to train Habeas Corpus to strut properly wearing a hat and carrying a cane, but he thought the time well invested. The only thing he liked to do better than quarrel with Ham was to fight, and there had been no fighting to do.

Long Tom's glance strayed to the unopened mail. He grunted, walked toward it.

Monk looked slightly abashed. He grabbed a major portion of the letters, started to open them rapidly.

The letter from New Orleans was near the bottom of the pile.

Monk examined the picture it contained without interest at first. There was no communication with it, but on the back had been written:

This should be investigated.

The handwriting had an odd, foreign twist.

Monk took a second look at the picture. His small eyes lighted with curiosity. He recalled seeing a story in a New York paper about the big sea serpent-or was it an octopus?-that had been seen off the Louisiana coast.

A light flashed on a panel on the desk. Monk's head shot up. That meant someone had entered Doc's private elevator, was shooting upward toward the eighty-sixth floor. A similar signal a few minutes before had warned the hairy chemist of Ham's approach.

Monk thought swiftly. He didn't think there was anything to the sea-serpent yarn, but he did want an excuse to make a trip South. If he showed the picture to Doc, it was more than probable that Doc would point out that it was a fake. The hairy chemist folded the picture swiftly, put it in a coat pocket.

That was where he made his boner.

A moment later Doc Savage entered the office.

CLARK SAVAGE, JR., seen alone, did not give the impression either of height or of exceptional muscular development. It was only when he was in a crowd that these features stood out. But his bronzed skin, set off by hair only a shade lighter, was, alone, enough to attract attention. His eyes, however, were the most striking item of his appearance.

Those eyes seemed pools of flaked gold, compelling and piercing.

His aids swooped toward him, shaking his hands, shouting questions. It had only been two weeks since they had seen him, but they acted as if it had been two years.

It was some time before peace was restored.

"Did anything occur during my absence?" Doc asked finally. His voice was low, but it had a peculiar carrying quality.

Monk gulped. "No, daggonit," he replied truthfully. The hairy chemist hesitated. "B-but, Doc," he ventured, "you probably saw the story about that sea serpent near New Orleans. Ham and Long Tom and me thought we'd like tuh go down and inquire about it, even if we do know there ain't no such animal."

Ham had difficulty in keeping his face straight. Long Tom opened his mouth as if to protest, then closed it. He was tired of the cold also.

"Of course," the bronze man said. He apparently had little interest.

His three aids started immediate plans for their departure. Long Tom rushed out to a sporting-goods house to buy some fishing tackle.

All of them took it as a joke.

None of them saw anything unusual about it when Doc Savage suggested they rent a plane for the trip instead of using one of the ships he owned. They understood that the bronze man might have sudden need for one of his planes.

And none of the three grumbled much when Doc asked them to wait another day before leaving, while he went to Washington and made a report there.

The first indication Monk had that Doc had thought about the purpose of their trip at all came shortly

before their departure.

Doc called Monk aside. "One of the fishermen who saw the 'sea serpent' must have had a camera," Doc said quietly, his gold-flecked eyes on Monk's homely face. "Make every effort to find and obtain a picture if one were taken."

Monk gulped. The picture in his pocket seemed burning a hole in his coat. But the hairy chemist still didn't believe there could be anything to the yarn.

"Sure, Doc," he blurted.

All the way to the airport he wondered if Doc had added mind reading to his other accomplishments.

He paid no attention at all to the rather grimy-faced pilot who lifted their rented plane into the air, headed it toward New Orleans.

The third bad break came little more than an hour later. The plane developed motor trouble as they neared Washington. After they landed, the grimy-faced pilot told them it would be morning before it was O. K. to go on.

After his three passengers had departed, the pilot went to a telephone booth. He made several long-distance calls. One of them was to New Orleans.

A LOW fog had rolled in from the Gulf when two boats left the New Orleans water front, several hours later that night. Both boats left as silently as possible, seemed anxious to avoid attracting attention.

One was a large cabin cruiser. It contained at least thirty men. The other, little more than a sea sled, had a single occupant.

The big cabin cruiser headed directly out into the Gulf. The small sea sled trailed at a discreet distance, its motor muffled.

There was little conversation on the cruiser. In the bow were three men. Their shapes and features were almost hidden by slickers and oilskin hats. Their attitudes were furtive, almost fearful. When one leaned over to light a cigarette under protection of his slicker, the others growled warning.

Toward the stern, and in the cabin of the cruiser, the other passengers huddled patiently. They seemed to have little interest in what was to occur.

In only one thing were these passengers alike. Each one of them was armed. Some carried guns in shoulder holsters. Others had automatics tucked in the tops of their trousers. All looked capable of using those guns.

The pilot of the cruiser apparently knew exactly where they were going. There was a chart before him, but only occasionally did he glance at it.

Once they were well out into the Gulf, the cruiser's speed increased. Behind them, the lone occupant of the sea sled increased speed also. When the fog rolled thick, there would be long minutes when the sea sled's pilot lost sight of the cruiser. Apparently that did not worry him greatly. He, also, seemed to have a general idea of their destination.

Beside him he cuddled a submachine gun.

When the cruiser finally slowed, it was near the spot where the fishermen had seen the "sea serpent."



The three men in the bow of the boat went into action without words. Each produced a heavy rod and reel. With various degrees of skill they made their casts.

Several things were unusual about both the fishermen and the equipment they were using. For one thing, there was no bait attached to their lines. For another, their "lines" were of thin, tough copper. The weights to carry those lines down also were of copper.

For some minutes they made their casts. A curious tension settled over the cruiser, was apparent in the stiff, intent postures of those watching the fishermen.

Then came a low, gratified grunt from one of the three in the bow. He tugged hard on his line, but nothing happened.

His companions reeled in swiftly, laid their rods aside. Then one pushed forward what appeared to be a heavy, squat box. A low, humming noise filled the air.

There was a tremendous disturbance under the water. A huge, whalelike object shot up, stood high in the air for a moment, then came down with a crash.

It was only seconds after that when the first shots came.

THE lone occupant of the sea sled had stopped only a hundred yards behind the cruiser, invisible in the fog. The man winced as he heard the shots. One hand reached out for the submachine gun, only to relax. The man smiled bitterly.

Cautiously he broke out a pair of oars, pushed the sea sled forward. After a while he could make out the bulk of the big cabin cruiser.

Lights were flashing on the cruiser now. Men appeared to be jumping back and forth in some kind of frenzied desperation.

Once the lone watcher thought he saw a diver go over the side of the cruiser, but it was difficult to make out individual details.

The low hum that had come from the cruiser had ceased, but there were other sounds just as difficult to understand. Once there was a heavy rasping, as if a huge hawser were being hauled over the wooden side of a boat. Metal clanking sounded clearly.

For a second time, the lone watcher brought the submachine gun forward. He pressed it against his shoulder, hesitated, then squeezed the trigger.

The sound, magnified by the fog, was like the roar of a thousand riveting machines. Hot lead bounced off metal with queer, whining wails.

Somewhere ahead a man screamed frantically.

The submachine gun shut off. The motor of the sea sled thundered with sudden life. It scooted off in a frantic half-circle as a rain of lead poured toward it.

The battle raged for some time. The man on the sea sled had the advantage of speed and of being practically invisible. Those on the cruiser had the advantage of numbers.

The cruiser was the first to retreat. It headed back to New Orleans, guns still roaring.

The occupant of the sea sled did not pursue. Instead, he headed toward the spot where he had seen the

huge, whalelike object flash up from the sea.

### Chapter III. A CALL FOR PAYMENT

THE sea battle attracted little attention. One New Orleans newspaper did get a telephone call from an excited boatman saying he had heard a lot of shots, but no one believed him.

The newspaperman who took the call decided the fellow merely was trying to cut in on the "sea serpent" publicity. He didn't print the story.

Consequently, Monk, Ham and Long Tom knew nothing about it as they took off from Washington in their rented plane. None was in a very pleasant mood, anyway.

Ham and Long Tom had spent much of the evening arguing with Monk. They had protested that Doc should be given more details of what they were after. The hairy chemist insisted they didn't know they were after anything and that he didn't want a vacation trip interrupted.

They were still arguing when they reached the airport. If their pilot was interested in the least, his features, still grimy, showed nothing.

As they were walking toward the plane, the pilot tripped and fell against Monk. He regained his balance almost at once, but Monk howled at him angrily, anyway. Monk wouldn't admit it, but his conscience was bothering him also.

"Daggonit, for two cents I'd toss you over the fence and pilot this crate myself," the hairy chemist barked.

The pilot shrugged, busied himself stowing luggage into the baggage compartment. It seemed to take him quite a while.

As he was going toward the cockpit, the pilot stumbled again. For a second time he lurched into Monk.

It took the combined efforts of Ham and Long Tom to quiet the chemist. In fact, the plane was in the air before Monk stopped yelling.

Then a sudden thought seemed to strike Monk. One huge paw plunged toward his inside coat pocket. He breathed a sigh of relief as he found he still had the picture he'd received from New Orleans.

Ham saw Monk's grab, understood what it meant. The dapper lawyer's features furrowed. It was strange the pilot had stumbled twice, and each time against Monk.

"One of us better keep an eye on that pilot, at that," he decided.

Long Tom twisted uneasily. "I'd feel better if Doc was along," the electrician admitted.

IN New Orleans, a tall man with ramrod back was also thinking of Doc Savage. But his thoughts were different from Long Tom's.

Hahln's square features were set in hard lines. He walked down the street swiftly. One hand gripped the butt of the gun concealed in his coat pocket.

"This Doc Savage is overrated," Hahln thought bitterly. But then a thin smile cut his square features. He shrugged. "It is just as well," he told himself. "I now know all that I care to know. I can handle the rest of it myself-and without danger of interference."

Hahln walked on rapidly, turning off onto a side street. He halted before an ancient office building. Hahln

knew all about that office building. He had made it his business to know.

It was the type of building where anyone could rent anything from one room to a suite, and for one day or one year, and with no questions asked.

The day was not hot for New Orleans, but perspiration was on the tall man's square features as he walked into the lobby. His ramrod back was even straighter than usual.

There was an old type of elevator, but Hahln ignored it. He walked up three flights of stairs, turned down a corridor and stopped before a door that bore only the name:

JEROME GADBERRY.

Hahln opened the door and entered.

ACROSS the room a girl glanced up quickly. A metal sign on her desk bore the name "Alice Dawn." Hahln did not look at the sign; he looked only at the girl. And she was worth looking at.

Dark, curly hair set off a face that would have made a hit of any movie. The businesslike frock she wore failed to hide the outlines of a perfect figure. Large brown eyes flashed over Hahln's erect figure.

Those eyes did not change, but a faint tightening of very kissable lips showed she saw the betraying bulge of the gun in his coat pocket.

"I would like to see Mr. Gadberry," Hahln said quickly. His voice seemed loud, almost loud enough, in fact, to carry through the closed door to the adjoining office.

"And your business?" the girl asked. Her voice also was clear and carrying.

"About a shooting party in the Gulf last night," Hahln said.

The girl rose, started toward the door to the private office beyond. The door snapped open before she reached it.

"Send him in," a voice ordered harshly.

Hahln moved forward quickly, closing the door behind him. Facing him, with a big desk between, was a man as large as the visitor. The man's poker face betrayed nothing as he motioned Hahln to a chair.

"And what did you wish of me?" Jerome Gadberry asked quietly.

Hahln's hand came out of his pocket. The gun came with it.

"I," Hahln said, "have come to kill you."

FOR some moments there was silence. Jerome Gadberry did not change expression. Hahln had spoken softly. He appeared almost indifferent, but the expression in his eyes showed he meant what he said.

There was a faint rustling sound nearby, but neither man moved.

Alice Dawn was glad of that. She was afraid she might have been heard.

The girl held a gun in her hand. It was a big gun, and it was trained on the office where the two men sat. She was peering through a tiny slit in the wall. The muzzle of the gun was held at another such slot.

She was concealed in a small closet that apparently had been built purposely for some such purpose

between the two offices.

Jerome Gadberry broke the silence. "You are the man who fired on us last night?" he asked. His voice remained calm, conversational.

"I am the man who drove you from the scene," Hahln corrected.

Gadberry nodded. The fingers of one hand tapped the desk reflectively. "Then you must know something of what it is about," he agreed. "But still, why kill me?"

Hahln's lips drew back in a snarl. For the first time he showed emotion. "You should know the answer to that. You and two others. And they, also, will die."

Tiny beads of moisture came out on Gadberry's face. But when he spoke his voice remained calm.

"There is no chance of a deal?" he asked.

Hahln shook his head. His gun came up.

Jerome Gadberry shrugged. He reached toward a humidior on his desk. "I would like one last smoke," he began. "Even a condemned man is allowed that-"

Hahln's eyes had followed Gadberry's hand. Alice Dawn's had not. She had been watching the fingers tapping on the desk. Those fingers flashed toward a shoulder holster.

*Blam! Blam! Blam!*

The three shots sounded almost as one.

ALICE DAWN got out of the closet in a hurry. She put her gun in her handbag. Then she ran to the door leading to the corridor, eased it open and listened.

Few of the offices on the third floor were occupied. The shots apparently had passed unnoticed. She stood there for a long time listening.

As she turned back, a tall, square-faced man with ramrod back came from the inner room.

"You did well, Alice," the man said. He spoke at some length, then went to the door. "Wait five minutes, then call the police."

Alice Dawn was sobbing when the first homicide detectives stormed into the room. She pointed dramatically toward the inner office.

A dead man was there. A very dead man. He was seated in a chair on the far side of the desk. One of his hands was on a humidior filled with cigars. The other held a gun pulled from a shoulder holster.

The man's head was down on the desk. One of the detectives pulled it back gently, then almost dropped it. The man virtually was without a face. An explosive shell had eliminated most of it.

The detective bounded back to the side of the still weeping girl. It was some time before he could get a coherent story.

"Yes," she sobbed, "the dead man was Jerome Gadberry. He was a scientist, a famous scientist. And now he is dead," she wailed.

One of the detectives clucked his tongue sympathetically.

"Wasn't there a story about him in the paper recently, about him bein' down here to get treasure of some kind out of the Gulf water?" he asked excitedly.

The girl nodded dumbly.

After a time she quieted down and explained what had happened.

"A little man with baggy clothes and a dark mustache did it," she said. "He came rushing in, swearing poor Mr. Gadberry had cheated him out of an invention."

The sympathetic detective patted her shoulder as sobs came again. The detective decided that patting her shoulder was the kind of a job he could stand a lot of.

"T-then this little man whipped out a gun. M-mr. Gadberry tried to protect himself, but he was too late."

After some prompting, she gave a detailed description of the little man. His hair was gray; his suit had a blue stripe in it.

"And I think he had blue eyes," she said. "B-but I was so frightened I cannot be sure. I . . . I hid behind my desk as he ran out. I thought he was going to kill me also."

The detective agreed she had been wise. Police photographers and fingerprint experts were on the scene. Reporters and newspaper photographers, held in the lobby by unsympathetic patrolmen, were clamoring to get in.

The shoulder-patting detective never did decide just who suggested it, but he found himself escorting the girl out a rear entrance.

No need for her to be annoyed, he agreed. He took down the telephone number and address she gave him, and said that he himself would be out to question her more at length later.

It wasn't until he returned to the murder scene that he discovered the small closet. The smell of powder fumes still was strong inside the small space.

The detective didn't say anything. He slipped out and called the number the girl had given him. His face became very white at the answer he received.

No Alice Dawn was known at that number or address.

## **Chapter IV. A NOSY REPORTER**

EXTRAS telling of the murder of Jerome Gadberry were on the streets when Doc Savage's aids reached New Orleans. They might have been more interested if there hadn't been a message waiting them from the bronze man when they reached the airport.

The message had been filed from New York the night before. It read:

TAKE DIVING EQUIPMENT WHEN YOU GO OUT TO INVESTIGATE THE SEA SERPENT. MAKE A CAREFUL INSPECTION OF THE SEA FLOOR. WATER NOT EXCEPTIONALLY DEEP THERE.

Long Tom's sallow-complexioned features brightened. "Doc is taking an interest in this," he blurted. "Maybe everything will be all right, after all."

Monk's homely features reddened. Ham roared delightedly. "Doc knew you wouldn't think of that all by yourself," the dapper lawyer gibed.

Monk opened his mouth, then closed it. He hadn't thought of getting diving equipment, as a matter of fact. There was nothing much he could say about that.

"But just the same, you shyster," he howled, "you'd better let me be the one that goes down. Sharks like pork, and if I lost you, I really would have a job explaining to Doc."

Still squabbling, the three piled into a taxicab and set out to find a hotel, charter a boat and rent diving equipment.

Even Ham forgot that they had agreed one of them should keep an eye on their grimy-faced pilot.

No one else paid any attention to the pilot, either. But he seemed greatly interested in the story of the murder.

As soon as the plane was housed in a hangar, the pilot took a small bag and entered a washroom. When he emerged, he looked far different.

For one thing, his features were no longer grimy. He wore a neat blue serge suit. A dilapidated hat replaced the cap he had worn. Horn-rimmed spectacles even gave his face a different appearance.

Checking his bag, he hailed a cab. About half an hour later, he appeared at the office building where the slaying had occurred.

REPORTERS had already left the building. So had all the police and detectives, except one. That one was left to guard the premises.

He was a very disgruntled detective, with the disposition of a bear just roused from his winter's sleep. His ears still were red from a tongue-lashing from the chief of police.

It was the sympathetic detective who had permitted Alice Dawn to slip away. Alice was still missing.

When the mild-appearing man in blue serge and horn-rimmed spectacles appeared, the detective exploded. He tried to toss the mild-appearing man out.

Much to his surprise, the other caught him by the wrists, held him so he couldn't move. "Take it easy, copper," the mild-appearing man said. "Maybe I can help you out of the doghouse."

The detective's jaw dropped. The other let go, dug out a police card. It was a New York police card, issued to "Jack Warren, of the New York *Press*."

"Give," Warren advised briefly.

The detective drew in a deep breath, prepared for a new outbreak. Then he looked at Warren and changed his mind. He started talking.

Warren listened sympathetically. That really opened the floodgates. The detective talked at length and in detail.

"I thought she was on the level," he concluded at last. "I didn't see how anyone that pretty could lie."

His face became doleful. "But she did. A shot had been fired from the closet. Maybe it was even the murder shot. Now she's hidden out."

Jack Warren didn't say anything for a while. He walked about the two office rooms, inspected the closet. He asked a great many questions. In particular he went over all the walls very closely.

The detective watched him hopefully. There was something about this guy that gave him confidence. He made no objection at all when Warren opened the drawers of Gadberry's desk, inspected all the contents.

Few papers seemed to be there. In fact, here was little evidence that Gadberry had done any work in the office at all.

"He rented this place a couple of months ago, but spent little time here," the detective explained.

Jack Warren nodded. He was inspecting a map he had found in one of the drawers. It was a very good map.

"The secretary here often?" Warren asked.

The detective nodded glumly. "Every day. But no one seems to know what she did."

Jack Warren slipped the map into his pocket unnoticed. He turned to leave.

"Hey," the detective cried in alarm. "You said you might help me. Did you find out anything?"

The mild-appearing man paused. "If I were you," he said slowly, "I wouldn't waste time looking for a small man in baggy clothes as the killer. I believe I would hunt for a tall man, probably as big as Gadberry."

The detective started to speak. Warren beat him to it. "Since you already know the girl lied on some things, doesn't it sound reasonable she might have given you a description exactly opposite of the truth?" he asked reasonably.

A slow grin spread over the detective's features. That was so. Maybe he could get out of the doghouse yet.

Warren started to close the door behind him, then stuck his head back in. "I think you might investigate, also, to see if there might not be a connection between this killing and the 'sea serpent' that was seen several days ago," he advised.

The door slammed shut. The detective's grin vanished. He started forward angrily. He'd been played for a sap again, he thought bitterly. Now, how could there be a connection between a sea serpent and a murder?

THE mild-appearing man made his way to the street rapidly. He found a telephone booth and put in a call for New York. He did not call the *New York Press*.

It was almost dusk when he went to the Kirkland Hotel.

The clerk on duty was the same one who had seen Hahln leave the hotel several days before. He was wondering what had happened to Hahln when Jack Warren appeared.

The mild-appearing man explained he was an amateur photographer. He was looking for a hotel where he could fix up his own dark room. Was that permitted here?

The night clerk beamed. The Kirkland Hotel desired permanent tenants. Certainly, it could be arranged if Mr.-

"Jackson," the other supplied.

"We have a Mr. Hahln here now who also is an amateur photographer," the clerk added.

The mild-appearing man seemed interested. He suggested he would like to see how Hahln had arranged his room.

The clerk looked disappointed. He didn't believe Hahln was in. "Call 651," he instructed the telephone girl.

There was no answer. The mild-appearing man seemed undecided. Then he said he would come back later. He left the building.

Across the lobby a man rose casually, went to the elevator. He asked for the seventh floor. After the elevator left he went down the hallway to the stairs, then walked down to the sixth floor.

The mild-appearing man did not know that. When he came back into the hotel through the service entrance he made his way direct to the sixth floor, found Room 651.

The door was locked. He took a small metal object from his pocket, put it in the keyhole and manipulated it swiftly. The door opened.

He had closed the door behind him and was reaching for a light switch when the two men hidden inside jumped on him.

At least, the two men intended to jump on him.

Something went wrong. They crashed into the closed door instead.

There was a brief flurry of action. The two attackers were big men. They jolted the floor when they landed. Alarmed cries sounded from down the corridor.

The mild-appearing man turned on the light. The two men on the floor were out cold. One of them was the man who had slipped up from the lobby a few minutes before.

Jack Warren-or Jackson-looked around swiftly. Hahln's rooms showed the effects of thorough searching.

Pictures had been pulled from the walls. Rugs had been torn from the floor. Even the mattress on the bed had been torn out.

Footsteps were racing up the hall outside. The mild-appearing man locked the door from the inside just before heavy fists started to pound on it.

"Open up! This is the house detective!"

Warren-or Jackson-did not seem to hear. He examined the radio Hahln had so carefully wrecked. He examined it closely. Then he went into the bathroom. The wash-basin was discolored.

From some place in his clothing he produced several slips of paper. He moistened these and placed them against the spots in the basin. The paper changed color.

The hammering on the door was increasing. The mild-mannered man went to a window, opened it. He vanished through it just before the house detective broke down the door.



A COUPLE of hours later, Doc's aids got another telegraph from the bronze man. It also was from New York. It read:

IF EXACT SPOT OF SEA SERPENT BATTLE LOCATED, TAKE UNDERWATER PICTURES OF LARGE AREA OF SEA BOTTOM AT THAT POINT.

Monk looked mystified. "Daggonit!" he complained. "Doc ain't going to let us have any vacation at all, if we're not careful."

Ham grinned. "Remember," he reminded. "You're the one who didn't mention a vacation. You mentioned a sea serpent."

Long Tom also was looking puzzled, but for another reason. "Strange Doc didn't call us, if he wanted to give any instructions," he commented.

Monk looked startled. Ham also showed surprise. The dapper lawyer went to a telephone. He asked the telegraph company to find out how the message had been filed.

All looked serious when the answer came. "It was telephoned in," they were informed. "Efforts to reach Mr. Savage for confirmation failed."

"A trap?" Ham queried.

Monk's homely face stretched into a grin. His big fists opened and closed. "Sounds like action, dang it!" he howled.

Long Tom did the logical thing. He called Doc's office. He used a private number, known only to the bronze man's aids. Doc's voice replied.

"The instructions were legitimate, but use care," came the message.

The three followed orders. They had engaged the boat of Captain Teold. Teold still insisted he knew the exact location of the sea battle.

They found nothing the first day, but they took a great many underwater movies.

They also were sure their actions were unobserved. In that they were wrong. They were watched by a mild-appearing man wearing a blue serge suit and horn-rimmed glasses.

There was something else they didn't know, also. The mild-appearing man did some diving as well. He did his at night, but, since it was impossible to see far under water without the use of special lights, that didn't make any difference.

The mild-appearing man also took underwater movies. The third day they got another message from Doc. "Return at once," was all it said.

Monk grumbled, but the others knew he really was glad to go. Spending most of their time beneath the sea, they hadn't even got the good tan they had expected.

"I'll show Doc the picture, daggonit," the hairy chemist said as they prepared to leave. "But you guys can back me up that the sea-serpent yarn really was a hoax."

That remark also was overheard by their pilot. The pilot again looked grimy-faced. He no longer resembled the nosy reporter.

Their plane was speeding toward New York as terror struck for the first time on the Atlantic coast.

## Chapter V. A PIRATE RAID

THE S. S. *Bellina* was the victim. The *Bellina* was a rusty tramp steamer of Argentine registry. It was plodding slowly off the Florida coast when it happened.

The *Bellina* was out of Boston. It was loaded mostly with food supplies. It was well within the neutrality zone established by Pan-American nations after war started in Europe. It was flying a neutral flag.

The captain wasn't expecting trouble. At least, not serious trouble. The only squalls he saw ahead were those he intended to break himself. One small cabin boy by the name of Juan Lucke was to be the unfortunate recipient.

"Lucke might be his name, but Lucke won't be his fate," the captain promised grimly and loudly.

The captain was short and stout, with a very short temper as well. Juan Lucke was responsible for the temper.

Juan had signed on after assuring the captain he would be the "most wide-awake boy in all the Americas."

He might be wide-awake in the Americas, the captain once admitted, but he undoubtedly was the most sleepy boy on the seven seas.

At first it had been comparatively easy to find Juan. But as day after day had passed, he had become more and more adept at finding out-of-way places for concealment-and sleep.

The captain was swearing furiously when the first mate called him to the bridge. Those of the crew within hearing grinned wisely. The first mate was a kindly man. He was undoubtedly trying to distract the captain's attention from the luckless Juan.

The first mate was not interested in Juan for the moment. He directed the captain's attention excitedly to a point just off starboard. A white streak of foam was approaching the S. S. *Bellina* from that direction.

"A submarine!" he gasped.

The captain looked, and he forgot all about Juan also. Then he shrugged. "True, but we are neutral," he said scornfully.

As the two watched, the conning tower of the submarine came into view. Men leaped to the deck, rushed to the gun there, swung it toward the *Bellina*.

The captain looked startled, but still he did not foresee trouble.

A man in officer's uniform appeared in the conning tower, shouted through a megaphone:

"Heave to! Do not attempt to signal with your radio, or we will sink you!"

The captain's squat figure swelled angrily. Then he relaxed. Once more he shrugged.

"Follow instructions," he told the first mate.

He didn't know it, but that was the last order he was ever to give that would be obeyed.

The captain knew little of submarines, but this one appeared unusually large to him. Possibly that was

because he was beginning to feel for the first time that there might be danger.

There wasn't much time to think about anything. A boat came up through a hatch on the submarine, was put overside. A dozen men in various types of uniforms, accompanied by the officer who had done the signaling, got into it. All were heavily armed.

The boat pulled up alongside the *S. S. Bellina*. All but one of its occupants swarmed up the Jacob's ladder that had been thrown overside.

Even as they did so, the big submarine started to pull in closer.

The leader of the boarding party was a tall man with hard features. A vivid scar on the left side of his face gave him a perpetual leering expression.

The *Bellina's* captain approached apprehensively.

"B-but what is wrong?" he stammered. "My papers are in order. We are neutrals."

The scarred-faced officer glanced at him briefly.

"Take me to your quarters," he snapped. He spoke in English. His voice had the incisive clip of one accustomed to giving orders and to being obeyed.

Others of the boarding party went into action. Apparently they had been instructed in advance as to their duties. They spread out, guns ready, rounding up every member of the crew in sight.

The first mate protested, but a gun in his ribs stopped that. He, along with his men, was forced below decks.

As the *Bellina's* captain led the way to his tiny cabin, he noticed that the big submarine was now directly alongside. Mooring lines were being tossed to it aft, where it was lined up with the cargo winches.

On the deck of the submarine a big hatch was being raised.

The fat captain's face paled. Some things were becoming clear-too clear. But even yet he had no idea of what was in store for him.

"You would not violate international law, señor? You would not commit an act of piracy?" he said.

The scarred-faced man's sneer broadened. He slapped the other with the palm of his hand, forcing him ahead.

"Let's see your papers, swine!"

With trembling fingers the captain produced the manifest. His tall captor scanned it swiftly, eyes lighting briefly.

"Good! We can use most of this," he rapped.

From somewhere in the bowels of the ship came a man's scream. It was silenced instantly by a shot.

"*Madre mia!*"

the captain moaned. "Murder and piracy. May your soul rot in hell, señor!"

The scarred-faced man laughed. There was no humor in that laugh. The gun in his hand swung slightly.

"At least you'll be there first, fatty," he said casually. His finger pressed the trigger twice.

A surprised, shocked expression came to the captain's face, like that of a child wrongfully punished. Thick hands tried to stop the crimson that spurted from the two holes in his belly.

His killer didn't even glance at him as he fell squirming, to die slowly on the cabin floor.

HATCHES already had been raised on the S. S. *Bellina* when the scarred-faced man returned to the deck. A cargo boom was swinging into place.

A thin-featured thug, almost lost in the uniform he wore, grinned. "We got 'em all locked up down below, Pete. Had to bump one of them," he reported cheerfully.

The scarred-faced man swore fiercely. "Damn it, call me Captain or Mr. Mills," he snarled. "I'm going to have discipline, or do some blasting myself."

The other lost his smile. "Y-yes, P- I mean captain," he stuttered.

Pete Mills turned hard eyes on the scene before him. Cargo was being shifted rapidly from the *Bellina* to the sub.

"Make another search," he ordered curtly. "We want no survivors."

The thin-featured thug scurried away.

Those shifting cargo worked rapidly. Packing case after packing case was lowered into the submarine.

Soon afterward a number of packages were transferred from the submarine to the *Bellina*. The men handling them treated them carefully. These packages were taken below decks also.

It was about this time that Juan Lucke woke up.

For some time Juan lay quietly, grinning as he stretched lazily. This time he had really put one over on that pig of a captain. It had been well worth the few slaps he might receive.

Then he reached up and pulled the cotton plugs out of his ears. Experience had proved to him that unless he used something of the sort, his stolen sleep might be interrupted by angry bellowings.

A few seconds longer he remained quiet. Then his small body tensed. The ship's engines had stopped, and that was strange.

Strange, also, he decided, was the absence of noise. True, there were a few faint sounds from the deck, but these soon ceased. And if he knew his captain, that fat one would be shouting orders, even if there were no need to shout.

He rolled over on his side. A pair of shoes almost hit him in the face. Cautiously he thrust one hand out, tried to move the shoes.

It was some seconds before he realized the shoes still were on a man's feet. It was some time after that before he realized the man was dead.

Juan became a very small boy then. He tried to scream. He couldn't. When he thought that one over, he came to the conclusion there was no need to scream, anyway. A dead man couldn't hurt him.

He rolled from under the captain's bunk, the one safe sleeping hide-out he had ever found, and looked

down on the captain's body.

JUAN stood very straight and very still. In the distance, it seemed, he could hear the faint hum of motors. And now, for the first time, he became aware of a pounding far below decks.

Juan Lucke didn't know what was wrong; he only knew that something very terrible had happened. He raced from the cabin.

The decks were empty. A hundred yards away a dim object moved close to the surface of the sea. For a moment, Juan was tempted to yell for help. Some instinct warned him against that.

He raced downward, toward that faint pounding noise. And then he saw the bombs.

It seemed to Juan there were bombs everywhere. Actually there weren't so many, but they had been so placed that they would blow the vitals out of the ship, would sink it within seconds.

Juan tried to put out the fuse in the first bomb he encountered. He saw he couldn't do it. The fuse was inclosed in a metal tube. He had to have help.

Desperately, frantically, he raced toward the sound of the pounding. Now he could hear men shouting, screaming.

He reached a barred door. It was the steel door to the stockroom. A huge iron rod locked the door from the outside. More than the rod was there now. Chains had been wrapped about it and padlocked.

And there were no keys.

Juan Lucke knew terror then, knew despite his youth that there was no hope for those men behind the door, and probably little for himself.

But he tried. He threw his tiny strength against the rod and chains and padlocks. He added his screams to those of the men inside.

It was one of those men who saved him, a hero never identified. The man recognized Juan's voice, understood what was happening.

"Run, *nino!* Run, lad!" the man shouted. "We are gone. Save yourself!"

Juan ran. He grabbed a life preserver just before he leaped overside to swim wildly from the doomed S. S. *Bellina*.

Then the world came to an end in a series of terrific blasts. When Juan recovered consciousness he found that the life preserver had saved him.

But the S. S. *Bellina* and the submarine were gone.

Juan was picked up next morning by a big cruise liner en route to Havana. His terror-stricken story was flashed to New York in time to make the early editions of the afternoon newspapers.

That story created an international sensation.

## **Chapter VI. ANOTHER PAYS**

MONK was first to reach Doc's office with a newspaper telling of the *Bellina's* sinking. The headlines read:

## **SUB SINKS ARGENTINA**

### **BOAT IN U.S. WATERS**

#### **KILLING NEUTRAL CREW**

"We didn't find action in New Orleans, but daggonit we oughtta do somethin' about this!" the hairy chemist howled.

"It could mean war," Long Tom rapped excitedly.

Ham grabbed the paper from Monk's hands, scanned the story beneath the headlines swiftly.

"Yes, but who with?" he asked logically. "The sole survivor was a cabin boy. He saw a submarine, but he saw no markings to indicate its nationality."

"What difference does that make? We can go find out, can't we?" Monk bellowed.

A low, trilling sound filled the office suddenly. It was a peculiar sound, vibrant and carrying, yet seemingly coming from everywhere, not one particular spot.

It was a sound Doc Savage made unconsciously when he was surprised.

The bronze man's three aids spun, startled. Doc had appeared from an inner room, but so silently had he moved that none of the three had heard him.

Without a word, Ham handed the paper to Doc. The bronze man's gold-flecked eyes whirled strangely as he read of the terror that had struck so close to the shores of the United States.

"Dang it, Doc!" Monk burst out. "This is really somethin' we should get busy on. That sea-serpent thing was a bust-"

"Yes, we could find nothing in New Orleans. The story must have been a hoax," Ham put in.

"For the first time, Monk and Ham agree on something, and I'm forced to admit I concur," Long Tom added maliciously.

Doc said nothing for the moment. Then he turned to Monk. "I am not so sure," he said gravely. "Let me see that picture that was sent us from New Orleans."

Monk's face turned crimson. Even his ears got red. Ham snickered outright, and even Long Tom had difficulty in keeping his features straight.

The homely chemist pulled out the picture, handed it to Doc. The bronze man produced a magnifying glass, held it so the others could see the enlarged image it made.

"You will notice," he explained, "that there are several tentaclelike objects in the foreground. Close examination I believe will prove those 'tentacles' really are cables of some kind. But behind them, almost hidden, is another object. Look closely."

Ham leaned forward excitedly. "It- Blamed if it doesn't look something like the conning tower of a submarine!" he blurted.

"Yes," Doc Savage agreed. "That is what I thought when I first saw the picture."

HIS aids looked at each other quickly. They were accustomed to having surprises pulled out of the hat, but they hadn't expected this one.

Monk was the first to see the answer. "Dang!" he howled. "That pilot. The one that fell against me."

Comprehension dawned on the others. The grimy-faced pilot who had taken them to New Orleans had been Doc Savage.

The bronze man was a master at disguise, but even so he occasionally put over one that his closest friends could hardly credit.

"I agreed with you Monk that the 'sea-serpent' story needed investigating," the bronze man was explaining. "But there was nothing to indicate that it might prove as serious as this. However, although you did not seem to want me, I decided to go along."

For one of the few times in his life, Monk felt humble. Then he brightened. At least, no matter what happened, Doc had been along. And that was something.

Then he thought of something else. "But that stop in Washington--"

"I had not seen the picture then," Doc reminded. "However, I knew the navy often experiments with new inventions secretly. I thought it best to check with high officials so that we would not go blundering in where we did not belong."

"But this picture--" Long Tom began.

"Look," Doc said simply.

The bronze man turned the picture over. The back apparently was blank. Doc produced a pair of colored glasses, handed them to Long Tom.

A howl came from the electrical expert. The glasses had been especially made. They brought out secret writing that ordinarily could be read only under infrared light.

"There's a message here," Long Tom shouted. "It says: 'I am at the Kirkland. If I am gone, check on Gadberry.'"

Ham's jaw dropped. "Gadberry. That was the inventor who was killed just before we got to New Orleans."

"Exactly," Doc agreed.

It is doubtful if anyone could look more crestfallen than Monk. Monk was a chemist, and a good one. And he had failed to detect the secret message.

Ham and Long Tom were shouting questions.

Doc explained briefly. He told of his investigations in the guise of Jack Warren, and of his visit to Hahn's rooms at the Kirkland. His instructions to his aids over the phone had been transmitted by a phonographic device.

"But who is Hahn?" Ham asked.

"A spy," Doc said flatly. "I found traces in his washbasin of a secret-ink chemical used only by one country."

His aids didn't ask how Doc knew that. Doc had been to Washington and to Central America on an undercover mission for the government. And among his many abilities was that of being among the best "black-chamber" experts in the world.

Monk's big shoulders lifted and fell. His homely features were still crestfallen, but he was beginning to see a light.

"Was it Hahn that killed Gadberry?" he asked.

"At least we are safe in assuming that murder, the sea-serpent story and the attack on the *Bellina* are related," Doc answered quietly.

DOC wasn't alone in that opinion. One of those who shared it with him knew it to be more than a theory. He knew it to be a fact.

He was a distinguished-appearing man. He wore a small black goatee. His dignified clothes of black bore the label of an expensive tailor.

But not many nights before he had been one of three men in the bow of a cabin cruiser. He had worn a slicker then. He had joined in using a rod and reel. And it had been he who had caught the huge "tin fish."

Now he was slipping down a busy New York street. The street was crowded, but Turner Vineland's actions were furtive. And his eyes showed fear.

Occasionally he darted a quick glance over his shoulder, trying to determine if he was being followed. One hand clutched the butt of a small gun in his pocket.

In his other pocket was a newspaper. It was one of those whose headlines screamed of the "*Bellina* Outrage." It was because of those headlines that Turner Vineland was on his way to see Doc Savage.

Because of that, and because Vineland feared death!

Only a few days before there had been three of them. Now there were only two. Gadberry was gone.

And that mysterious voice over the telephone only a few minutes before had told Vineland he was to be next.

Vineland hadn't stopped to figure that the threat might have been designed to draw him out into the open, put him where he could be killed.

He knew only that he couldn't go to the police. He knew of only one other place to turn. That was to the bronze man.

Vineland was rapidly nearing the towering skyscraper where Doc had his office. His pulse slackened its pounding; he began to breathe easier.

If he could only reach the bronze man, tell him what he knew, then Doc, if anyone, could stop what yet was to come.

Behind him, scarcely half a block away, a delivery truck was moving along slowly. The truck was loaded with scrap iron. The iron made a great deal of noise as the truck bounced along.

Vineland had noticed the truck, but that wasn't what he was watching for. He was expecting the killer, if there was one, to come from the crowds around him.



His pace increased as his goal neared. And behind him, the truck loaded with scrap iron also speeded up. The driver spoke briefly over his shoulder.

"You were right, boss. He's headed for Doc Savage."

The man hidden in the inclosed part of the truck nodded. He was a tall man with a square face and ramrod back. He brought out a gun, peered through two holes cut in the body of the truck.

It was then the scrap iron clattered particularly loud. The sound drowned out almost completely the sharp bark of the gun.

VINELAND went down. He felt as though he had been kicked by a mule. He had heard no shot. It was seconds before he knew what had happened to him.

A curious crowd had formed about him. Someone was helping him to his feet. Others were asking what had happened to him.

A dark splotch started to form on the side of his coat. Vineland's hand covered it. He knew he was dying. But he knew, too, that he had to go on.

"D-doc S-savage," he gasped weakly.

Those about him thought he was either drunk or had suffered a heart attack. But all had heard of the bronze man. Willing hands sped him forward. He found himself in a high-speed elevator, being shot rapidly upward.

The elevator starter had put Vineland in Doc's private car. Then he had pressed the button that signaled those above that a visitor was on the way.

Doc and his aids heard the elevator arrive. They waited for a few moments, but no one came to the door. Instead, there was a faint, crawling sound.

All leaped for the corridor. The bronze man did not seem to move fast, but he was far in the lead when they reached the door.

For a second time that day Doc's low, compelling, trilling sound filled the air. The bronze man leaned down.

Vineland's eyes were glazed, but he still was trying to crawl ahead.

"S-stevens," he gasped. "S-see Stevens. H-he knows-" The voice ceased.

Turner Vineland was dead.

## **Chapter VII. HOW ONE HUNDRED DIED**

DOC SAVAGE'S bronzed features were stern. He had seen death often. He never had become accustomed to it.

And he had known Vineland. The small man with the black goatee had achieved an enviable reputation in the research world. On several occasions he had asked Doc's aid.

The bronze man inspected the body swiftly. It seemed impossible that anyone could have lived more than a few seconds, wounded so.

Vineland apparently had been hit by an explosive bullet. It had torn a huge wound in his side.

"Just like the one that killed Gadberry!" Ham said.

Monk's breath came out in a long sigh. "Then this isn't a new case. It's just some more of the same one," he said.

Doc nodded. "I am afraid so."

In silence they did what had to be done. The police were notified. The body was removed. None of them mentioned to the police that Vineland had spoken before he died. Nor did they tell of their suspicions.

But there no longer was any doubt that they faced a tough problem.

A sea-serpent yarn in New Orleans, even a murder there, could be connected with a submarine attack off the Florida coast without meaning the criminals they opposed had a wide organization.

But when murder occurred at their door, when it was apparent the killers wanted to keep Doc Savage out of the case, they knew their job would not be easy. Experience had proved that.

Identifying the Stevens mentioned by Vineland was not difficult. Stevens was director of the research bureau for which Vineland had worked.

"Must be Roland Stevens," Long Tom said shortly. "He knows something about electricity, too."

Long Tom's companions forgave him his pardonable pride in his own ability, but Monk did point out that Stevens knew something about chemistry, physics and a few other subjects as well as electricity.

Locating Stevens proved somewhat more difficult. It was the following day before they learned he was at a private laboratory in New Jersey.

By then the terror had struck twice more.

THE newspapers hardly had space on their front pages for anything but headlines.

For one of the latest two ships to be sunk had been German. The other had been British.

The German ship, from all accounts, had been first. It had darted from a Florida port in an effort to elude the British blockade and get home with a valuable cargo of machinery.

When the German "SSSS" hit the air-the signal adopted by all belligerents to replace the old SOS in indicating a submarine attack-American destroyers had rushed to the location given by the ship.

They had arrived just in time to see the ship vanish in a gigantic explosion. There was no sign of a submarine.

For quite a while the destroyers had thought there were no survivors. Then two sailors were found clinging to wreckage. Both were in critical shape, could hardly give a coherent account of what had happened.

But they confirmed the story of Juan Lucke of the *Bellina*. The mystery submarine had locked the crew below decks before setting off the explosives.

The survival of even two men could only be classed as a miracle.

And these two men swore the crew of the submarine spoke only English.

An English submarine might have been blamed, if a British freighter hadn't been sunk only a few hours later.

The British ship didn't get a chance to send out a distress call. It was figured out later the submarine must have fired at least one shot into her, disabling the radio equipment, before even ordering her to halt.

And it was only from wreckage that the tragedy was learned. The American destroyers were on their way back to their home ports when they encountered it.

There were no survivors from the freighter, although several bodies were recovered and wreckage revealed the ship's identity.

If the press had screamed before, now it went wild. It was apparent, the consensus said, that none of the belligerent nations could be responsible.

A minority, however, was not so sure. The terror was striking inside the American neutrality zone. Some thought it might be a Red plot to involve the United States. Still others blamed one or the other of the warring nations, declaring the guilty side was ready to sacrifice lives of its own countrymen in an attempt to win support of the world's most powerful neutral.

The President ordered part of the Pacific fleet to reinforce the neutrality patrol on the Atlantic.

One newspaper recalled the panic that had spread along the Atlantic seaboard when submarines raided shipping almost at the entrance of New York Harbor.

New York City, it was pointed out, had experienced its first "blackout" in those days. Other cities along the coast had taken similar precautions.

The present situation, it was declared, was even more perilous. Now, no one knew whom to blame. No one knew where the terror would strike next.

The wave of fear swept inland swiftly.

ROLAND STEVENS apparently had been caught in that wave.

The scientist's hands were shaking, his eyes appeared panic-stricken, when a secretary telephoned that Clark Savage, Jr., and two of his aids, Andrew Blodgett Mayfair and Theodore Brooks wished to see him.

Roland Stevens was a big man. He must have weighed at least three hundred pounds. Rolls of fat hung under his chin. Usually those triple chins bounced jovially. He seemed that type of man.

That is, as a rule. He certainly wasn't now. He had to swallow hard several times before he could tell the secretary it was all right to admit Doc Savage.

His agitation increased when he saw the bronze man's gold-flecked eyes. Stevens felt as if those eyes were looking right through him.

"I'm afraid," he apologized as his guests took seats.

Monk looked at the big man with frank disgust. The hairy chemist didn't think much of those who showed fear when Doc was around to protect them. He wished Long Tom could have been with them to see his fellow expert. But Long Tom had been left at the office.

Ham, more dapper than usual, swinging the latest in canes, also had difficulty in hiding his feelings.

Only Doc showed no emotion. "You know about Vineland?" he asked quietly.

Roland Stevens gulped. His triple chins quivered even more violently than before.

"T-that's it," he managed at last. "Once we were three. Then Gadberry was killed. Now Vineland. I am the only one left."

Doc Savage said nothing. He sat quietly, his peculiarly colored eyes steady on the shaking mass before him. Gold flakes were revolving in those eyes.

Roland Stevens straightened slowly. He seemed to draw courage from the man before him. Other men had experienced that same sensation in the past.

"I am afraid," he said, and this time his voice was quiet and controlled, "that I am really responsible for all that has happened."

Monk and Ham sat forward swiftly. Monk's big fists clenched. He seemed on hair trigger, ready to leap into action.

Doc gestured slightly. Monk relaxed.

"Go on," the bronze man prompted.

Roland Stevens drew a deep breath. His shoulders straightened, his layers of fat steadied.

"I, Mr. Savage, devised the horrible instrument that brought all this about. With the aid of Gadberry and Vineland, I perfected that instrument, made it the most fearsome underwater device ever known."

MONK stirred uneasily. He didn't quite understand the complete change that had come over the fat man. From an object of terror, Stevens' last statement had contained more than a little pride-and bragging.

Ham swung his cane casually. The dapper lawyer wondered that if just this once Doc wouldn't approve if he used the sword inside that cane to see just how far it would penetrate an overweight body.

Doc's words punctured that thought. "I gather, however, that you had no idea what was to happen as a result," the bronze man said.

Roland Stevens nodded swiftly.

"Tell us," Doc commanded.

Stevens' air of pride left him. He deflated like a punctured bladder. When he spoke his voice was dead, monotonous.

"This device of mine was to end the submarine menace for all time for whatever nation owned it. It is the most efficient antisubmarine device ever known.

"I will not go into detail now, except to say any submarine coming within yards of it is caught, is held helpless beneath the surface until all life inside is dead.

"We took this device-the so-called sea serpent of the newspapers-off the Louisiana coast for testing. We intended, Mr. Savage, to ask either your co-operation with your submarine, or the aid of the navy in that

task."

Doc nodded, but did not speak.

"But we were careless," Stevens went on. A note of hysteria came into his voice. "We did not expect any submarines to wander in that area. We did not move as rapidly as possible. And then came the story of the sea serpent."

Stevens paused, swallowed hard, then continued:

"Vineland and myself knew nothing of it until Gadberry called. He was in New Orleans. Vineland and I rushed there as swiftly as possible.

"And then we became afraid. We knew the device would not release its prey until sufficient time had passed for those trapped to die. We were fearful we could not point out the exact location swiftly enough if we called on the navy for aid."

A swift look passed between Monk and Ham. Part of this was sounding fishy.

"But when the time came, we went to the scene. We were hoping for the best. We used another device we had contrived and found the trapped submarine. We released it. Air in its tanks brought it to the surface."

Stevens stopped. Cold beads of perspiration stood out on the fat layers of his face. His voice dropped to little more than a whisper.

"When we entered the submarine, our worst fears were realized. It was a coffin of dead. Of one hundred dead!"

## **Chapter VIII. A TRAP FOR DOC**

THE phone rang sharply, breaking the spell created by Stevens' words.

The fat man started violently. Color flowed back into his heavy features. He reached for the receiver.

Doc turned slightly, as if to address Ham. Instead, the bronze man's fingers worked with lightning speed.

Doc Savage had long worn an equipment vest beneath his clothing. The contents of that vest varied from time to time, but he always carried articles he believed might become useful in whatever case he was involved.

His fingers sped to this vest now. Even Ham, seated directly at his right, could hardly see what happened.

The object the bronze man palmed was small. It consisted mostly of fine, almost invisible wire. At the other end was a small plug, slightly larger where it connected with the wire.

One of Doc's hands brushed against his smooth hair. The plug went into his ear. The fine wire streaked across the floor, covered the insulated cables leading to Stevens' phone.

It was in place when Stevens answered the call.

Long Tom could have explained the plug and the wire. He had helped work on it. It was a simplified arrangement to listen in on a telephone call while in the same room with one of those talking.

The small plug consisted not only of a tiny receiver, but also of a midget battery strong enough to set up

an inductive current in the almost invisible wire.

Stevens' end of the conversation was definitely unenlightening. He identified himself. That was about all. After that, he confined himself to affirmative grunts. His heavy brow became even more wrinkled. He offered no explanation when he hung up.

Doc Savage made no comment on the call, either. The plug and fine wire vanished. The bronze man acted as though there had been no interruption.

"And after the submarine came to the surface?" he prompted.

Stevens' breathing became more strained. "We knew we had to get rid of it," he said simply.

"Could you not simply have re-sunk it?" the bronze man asked.

Stevens shook his head slowly. "We had thought of that. We were afraid that sometime someone might really investigate that sea-serpent story. So we had arranged something else."

"And that?"

"We had a crew with us, a small crew, but of men who knew submarines and who we thought could be trusted to keep their mouths shut. They were instructed to take the submarine to the Florida Everglades and hide it there."

The bronze man nodded. If he knew that Stevens was omitting part of the story—that of the shots when this crew had boarded the submarine and of the surface battle that had followed—he gave no indication.

"And so you believe—"

"I believe these men saw a chance to become pirates. To prey on the shipping of every nation. They have a submarine and they have something even more valuable."

Stevens paused impressively. "They took with them the device that trapped that submarine—the sea serpent. And in their hands, used in a way that never was intended, it becomes a weapon that will make it virtually impossible ever to capture them."

MONK snorted openly. The hairy chemist had become more and more skeptical as Stevens talked. Maybe there was something to the yarn. But he didn't believe all of it. Particularly, he didn't believe the last statement.

Ham adopted his best witness-baiting manner. "You are prepared to prove to us, of course," he said insultingly, "that there really is such a 'sea-serpent' device as you claim? One that you invented?"

Stevens rose to the bait. He flared angrily, his three chins doing the minuet. "Naturally," he snapped. "I intend to put the plans in the hands of Mr. Savage at once."

He half-rose from his chair.

That was when the girl knocked at the door.

Ham didn't know she was the girl then. In fact, his disgusted comment was, "Saved by the bell," as Roland Stevens changed his mind about immediately producing the plans of his mysterious invention.

Then Ham got a look at the newcomer. He whistled softly to show his admiration. Monk, always a sucker for a pretty face, was practically speechless.

Neither Monk nor Ham had seen Alice Dawn when she was acting as Jerome Gadberry's secretary. If they had, it is doubtful if they would have recognized her. She had changed her appearance greatly, but only as a movie star changes one type of beauty for another.

No longer was her hair dark. Now it was a flaming and attractive red. The large brown eyes were changed, also. Colored glass lenses made them just as large and just as seductive a blue. Properly applied make-up broadened her cheekbones, narrowed her chin.

But the result was still perfection.

"May I speak to you privately for a moment, Mr. Stevens?" she asked. Her voice was low and husky.

Stevens bounded to his feet surprisingly swiftly for his three hundred-odd pounds. He tried to smile charmingly as he led the way to a far corner of the room.

The girl spoke to him in a low tone of voice, too low to be overheard by others in the room. Her back was turned toward Doc. There was no chance of reading her lips.

Stevens' smile vanished. His chins came down almost to his chest. He appeared to have difficulty swallowing.

Doc spoke briefly to Monk. There seemed no danger of their being overheard, but even if they were, it would have made little difference. The bronze man spoke in a language few outside his aids understood.

He gave the hairy chemist instructions in ancient Mayan.

Monk grinned broadly. Ham groaned in mock disgust.

"Some descendants of apes were born with luck," he said.

Monk's grin grew even wider. "Apes could win more beauty prizes than pigs," he retorted. "This is my kind of a job."

The homely chemist eased quietly toward the door.

When the girl ended her conversation with Stevens a few moments later, Monk had already disappeared.

AFTERWARD Monk was to blame himself for not stopping what came next. But then Monk always had to come in direct contact with danger, and physical danger at that, before he'd believe it. And this time he hadn't-so far.

He saw the man outside the laboratory. But he thought the man was a gardener.

The man's actions gave that impression. He was around at the far side of the laboratory when Monk came out the front door.

The one brief glance Monk gave him left the impression only of a tall, rather unusually erect man, spraying vines on the walls of the building.

Had Monk looked more closely, he might have thought it strange the man was protecting his nose and mouth with gauze. He also might have seen that the "spray" was being directed not at the vines but at a window, open scarcely more than an inch, directly above the vines.

The tall man saw Monk as the homely chemist raced toward an auto parked in front of the laboratory. He smiled, but entirely without humor.

After a few more strokes with the spray gun he closed the window. Then he vanished in nearby shrubbery where he could see without being seen.

Some minutes later, Alice Dawn emerged from the laboratory. She looked about her uncertainly for a few moments, then went to a smart-looking roadster.

Again she hesitated, but only for an instant before stepping down on the starter. She drove away rapidly.

As her car turned a corner, Monk's homely features bobbed up from the floor of Doc's car where he had been hidden. He took out in pursuit.

The tall man with the unusually erect back grinned slightly. He turned his attention back to the laboratory. In particular, he watched the window where he had been using the spray gun.

He watched it for quite a while before anything happened.

That was because of Roland Stevens.

After the girl left, the heavyweight scientist became very reluctant to produce the plans he had promised.

It took an implied threat by Ham that he would have Stevens arrested for mass murder to get action.

Stevens' attitude had changed completely. Where, before, he had seemed to want to talk, now he acted like a Republican at a Democratic convention.

But he finally gave in.

"I've got the plans in a safe at the back of the building," he said wearily. "Walk to the end of the corridor and turn to your right. I will join you in a moment."

If Doc saw anything strange in the request, he said nothing. The bronze man, in fact, led the way toward the designated room.

It was the room that had occupied the attention of the "gardener" with the spray gun.

Doc opened the door, Ham at his heels.

It was then the explosion came.

The blast was terrific. Walls popped out, windows were shattered. The door through which Doc and Ham had entered was thrown fifty feet back down the corridor.

A heavy pall of smoke spread swiftly.

Roland Stevens pulled a handkerchief from his pocket, wiped a river of perspiration from his triple chins. He made no attempt to investigate the blast.

Instead, he left the laboratory. He left it rapidly and by a side door, running with the curious jolting motion of the ultra-fat.

He was joined by the tall man with the ramrod back.

"They're dead," Stevens gasped. "L-let's get away from here in a hurry."

They did.



## Chapter IX. SPIES CLOSE IN

MONK was in a hurry, also. But he was having a good time. There could be no better assignment, he decided, than trailing a pretty girl.

And of all the pretty girls he had ever seen, he put the one he was chasing now at the top. The only trouble was that she drove so fast.

Not that the hairy chemist minded driving fast himself, but he was afraid the girl would notice that another car was trailing her.

There seemed no question but that she was heading back toward New York and probably would go through the Holland Tunnel. Had he been sure of catching her at the other end, Monk might have dropped back a ways.

But he wasn't. And once she arrived on the other side of the river, it was imperative that he saw where she went and the person or persons she talked with.

Those had been the instructions he had received from Doc Savage.

Then traffic increased and Monk's job became easier. He was only two cars behind the girl when they went through the tunnel.

Soon after they reached the New York side, he was glad he had been that close. Otherwise he might not have realized what happened.

A second car drew alongside the roadster the girl was in. The second car was a sedan. Neither car stopped. But one moment the girl was driving the roadster. The next, and a man was at the wheel.

Monk was probably the only one who saw the rapid shift that had been made. The girl had transferred into the sedan and in the same instant the roadster whipped around a corner one way while the sedan went another.

The homely chemist smiled slightly. The trick was a good one. It would have fooled the average trailer. Monk permitted himself a slight glow of pride. He forgot what usually follows pride.

The sedan, with the girl hidden in the back seat, proceeded uptown at a more leisurely pace. Monk dropped back.

When the sedan parked near an apartment house in the Seventies, however, he was close enough to see the girl get out while the sedan drove away.

Monk parked, and followed. Entirely unsuspecting, he approached the lobby of the apartment house.

He was just in time to see the girl open the outer door with a key. Monk thought the girl had never seen him. He stepped forward, held the door for her.

"A pleasant day," he said politely.

"Not for you," the girl replied surprisingly. She caught hold of Monk's arm, yanked him into the apartment lobby with her. Then she screamed.

"Masher! Masher! This man is annoying me!" she cried.

Monk thought he had never seen so many men arrive at one spot so fast in his life. They appeared so

swiftly it might have seemed they were waiting for him.

He never got a chance to explain. He was landed on from all sides.

Monk liked to scrap. Usually he was at his best in a rough-and-tumble. But not this time. He had never been accused of being a masher before. It upset him.

He knocked out only three of his attackers before they got him down and went to work on him. He didn't even resent the arrival of a patrolman who broke up the scrap.

And that was unusual, also.

ANOTHER strange thing was going on at almost the same moment. But it didn't become known until long afterward. Had the public learned of it at once, the already increasing panic on the Atlantic seaboard would have been even greater.

The "sea serpent"-or octopus-appeared again!

This time it claimed a government boat.

The boat was one of the first of the newly ordered "mosquito fleet" of the United States. Of all-metal construction, it had tremendous speed. It was armed with machine guns, torpedo tubes and depth-bomb charges.

It had been assigned to help run down the mysterious raider.

The "mosquito" boat was cruising off the Florida coast, not far from where the wreckage of the British freighter had been found. It was a clear afternoon, with practically no seas running.

The crew was quite proud of the ship. They wanted action.

It was quite by accident that they spotted the dim object far below the surface. What happened after that wasn't an accident.

One of the crew was using a new type of under-water glasses when he saw what might be a submarine.

A shouted order was given by the commander. The "mosquito" boat slammed into motion at high speed.

Directly over the dim object under the sea a depth bomb was dropped.

It was then the unbelievable happened.

There was a tremendous flurry beneath the water. A long, slinking tentacle appeared to flash upward through the sea. It wrapped about the depth bomb, held it motionless.

The bomb, designed to explode only when it was one hundred feet down, did not go off.

The crew of the "mosquito" boat did not get another chance. Two other "tentacles" shot upward.

One fastened on the bow of the speeding boat. The second caught about the stern. The boat halted as if it had hit a breakwater.

Spray shot high in the air. When it landed, the sea was bare. The "mosquito" boat had disappeared beneath the surface, pulled there by the giant "tentacles." The crew of the boat never had a chance.

Some time later there was a tremendous explosion. That was when the depth bomb was discharged. But

it did no damage then. There was nothing in the vicinity to kill except fish.

NOT even fish had been killed by the explosion in Roland Stevens' laboratory.

Doc Savage had seen to that.

Ham was confident that Doc, like himself, had suspected a trap when Stevens sent them ahead of him. But the bronze man never mentioned it.

Doc did, however, take precautions.

The one thing Stevens hadn't noticed was that the bronze man paused for an instant after he touched the knob of the door at the back of the laboratory.

Few persons except Doc would have recognized the tiny current of electricity that flowed through that doorknob.

The bronze man did. And he knew at once the type of trap that awaited them. For coupled with the electricity there was a faint but unmistakable odor.

It was the odor of silicate.

The trap was unusual, but it was one of the most deadly that could be prepared. When the atmosphere is filled with silicate, an electric spark will set off a terrific explosion.

Opening the door would create the necessary spark. For that matter, if Doc let go of the knob after once grasping it, the spark might be created, depending on how the wiring had been arranged.

Doc took no chances. With his left hand he whipped a small length of wire from his equipment vest. He hooked it to the doorknob at one end, and fastened it against the metal sill on the opposite side.

Then he swung the door open. The wire kept the circuit from being broken, prevented a spark.

Without hesitation Doc stepped over the wire, into the room. Ham followed.

Three small balls appeared in the bronze man's hand. He smashed the first on the floor. Instantly a thin mist appeared to fill the room as condensed moisture saturated the air, destroyed the danger of a blast.

A moment later, Doc yanked Ham to one side, threw a second ball toward the far wall and third at the door through which they had just entered.

This caused the explosion Roland Stevens heard.

The small, glass pellets were a type of directional explosive Doc had invented. They caused an outward blast, did not injure those behind them.

Ham darted back down the corridor in search of Stevens. He was just too late.

When the dapper lawyer returned, he found Doc inspecting an open safe. Casual examination was sufficient to show it had been rifled.

"Someone was here before us?" Ham queried.

The bronze man nodded.

"Stevens?"

"I do not think so," the bronze man said. Doc searched the wrecked room rapidly. His low, trilling sound brought Ham to sudden attention.

But when Ham looked at what Doc held in his hand he failed to see its significance. It looked to him as though Doc had found only the core out of a toy electric dynamo, the type used by children.

"A clue?" he asked excitedly.

Doc did not reply directly. Instead, "I think we should return to the office and see what Monk has discovered," he said.

It was a decidedly abashed Monk who made his report.

"Daggonit, I had a devil of a time convincing that flatfoot I wasn't a masher," the homely chemist said. "An' when I did finally get that over to him, the girl had disappeared and so had the mugs that jumped on me."

Ham howled with laughter. Monk's discomfiture made up for a lot, as far as the dapper attorney was concerned.

The homely chemist made a pass at Ham. Ham retaliated.

Doc paid no attention. Nor did he seem concerned over Monk's lack of success.

He showed Long Tom the object he had retrieved from Roland Stevens' laboratory. It may have meant nothing to Ham, but it brought a whistle of amazement from the lanky electrical expert as he examined it.

The bronze man gave Long Tom a rapid sketch of what had occurred at the New Jersey laboratory, and of Stevens' story.

"I can duplicate this," Long Tom said quietly.

"I believe it can be improved upon," Doc agreed.

Long Tom vanished into Doc's well-stocked laboratory. The bronze man sketched rapidly.

Soon Long Tom returned. His arms were loaded with supplies.

Monk and Ham still were squabbling as Doc and Long Tom left. Neither the chemist nor the attorney was concerned about that. They knew that if they could help, Doc would call upon them. Until then they would wait, and would show as little curiosity as possible.

But if they exhibited no curiosity, others did.

The bronze man and Long Tom secluded themselves in a big workshop in an ancient-appearing building on the North River. It bore the sign "Hidalgo Trading Co." Doc was the Hidalgo Trading Co. The building housed much of his equipment, including planes of all types, a dirigible, a trim yacht and even a submarine.

As several days passed, the "Hidalgo Trading Co." building became the center of considerable activity.

At one end of the block, apparently there to get seamen's trade, appeared a peanut-and-hot-chestnut stand. The owner wore ancient clothes and a tattered cap. These contrasted strangely with manicured fingernails.

Directly across the street, a new lunch wagon opened for business. It attracted few customers, but those it did get seemingly liked it very much. At least, they spent most of their time there.

At the same time fishing became a popular sport at a pier directly adjoining Doc's workshop. The fishermen didn't have much luck, but that didn't seem to discourage them.

The owner of the peanut stand apparently knew the fishermen. But, strangely enough, neither the fishermen nor the peanut man paid any attention to those who hung out in the lunch wagon.

## **Chapter X. MONK AND HAM GO HUNTING**

THE terror of the Atlantic struck next just off the Florida keys. An American tanker was the victim. The raider took on fuel, blasted the ship with a torpedo, then machine-gunned the crew members as they tried to swim to safety.

Only three managed to escape. Two of these went insane.

Delegations from every State along the seaboard called on the President. Something had to be done, and right now, was the message they brought.

None could suggest what the remedy was to be, however.

Denials had come from every warring nation that they had a submarine near American shores. Denials also came from Russia and other neutrals.

Heated notes were exchanged between all the countries still on speaking terms. Some of these stopped speaking.

Despite the denials, each of the belligerents still blamed its foes. Publicly they announced they would stay a long way from American shores. Privately, orders were issued to increase whatever naval forces they already had there.

Without exception, every country that owned a submarine sent one in that direction. The idea seemed to be to set a submarine to catch a submarine.

More of the United States battle fleet was brought from the Pacific.

Merchant vessels shunned what they thought was the danger spot. The mystery submarine promptly appeared in the Panama Canal sea lane.

Six ships were sunk with all hands before this was discovered. The attacker was impartial, as usual. One each of the ships had belonged to Italy, Japan, Germany, Britain, France and the United States.

War talk increased in Congress. The speakers differed in their choice of an enemy, but all wanted to fight.

Secret agents of a dozen nations flocked to the Southern States. More of the same descended on the eastern Mexican coast on the theory the mystery attacker might have a base there.

They had no more luck than Monk and Ham did in their search for Roland Stevens.

It didn't seem possible that a man as big as Stevens, and one who couldn't very well disguise himself, could literally vanish.

But that apparently was the case.

Doc suggested the hunt. He even gave Ham several pertinent questions to ask should that search be successful.

So Monk and Ham went to work. They started at the wrecked laboratory-and got nowhere. No one had seen Stevens leave, and none of the employees there had seen him since.

They checked at Stevens' home; they checked with his friends. They even traced down his bank account, and after a lot of wire-pulling found that no checks had come in with his signature after the explosion at the laboratory.

"He might be dead," Monk suggested hopefully.

Ham snorted. The dapper lawyer had picked Stevens as the villain of the piece. "He perjured himself constantly when we were talking to him," Ham said flatly. "He's not dead."

But he might as well have been. There was nothing at all to show he was still alive.

Monk was the one that finally had the brainstorm.

"You remember that girl?" he asked suddenly.

Ham chuckled. He had been reminding Monk of that girl on an average of once an hour for several days.

"Daggonit, that's just the trouble," Monk howled. "You pestered me so much I forgot all about somethin' that might give us a lead."

He glowered at Ham. He made his face even more ferocious than usual. "An' if I hear you cry 'masher' again in that falsetto you call a voice, I'll really mash you!" he promised grimly.

Ham sobered. There were times when Monk could be kidded-and then there were other times. This was one of the other times.

"When she went into that apartment house she used a key," Monk explained briefly. "Now that means she either lived there or someone connected with this bunch we're after lived there. Let's go see."

"If you'd worried more about your simian brains and less about your simian beauty, you'd have thought of that before," Ham said airily. He took the precaution, however, of stepping back and getting his sword-cane ready for action.

Monk merely glowered. Here might be a chance to get revenge for the licking he'd taken before. And this time he would be ready.

They called a cab, gave the address of the uptown apartment house.

Had Doc been at the office, they would have reported where they were going. But he wasn't.

As things turned out, that was too bad.

THE apartment house looked just like a dozen or more others in the same vicinity.

It was a good-looking structure with a neat row of names outside the main door. Beside each of those names was a button.

When you went calling, you were supposed to press a button and your host would release the main door so you could enter.

Monk and Ham studied the names carefully. They didn't see any they recognized. That is at first.

Then Ham gave a startled grunt. He pointed at one of the name plates. The plate read: "Steve Roland."

"Roland Stevens, or I'm a shyster! Reversing names is an old trick."

"You're a shyster in any case," Monk agreed, "but on this thing I believe you're right."

They didn't press the button beside that name, however. "Roland's" apartment was listed as 410. They pressed all the buttons they could find where the apartment number began with 5.

When the door clicked they went in, waited a while for the people they had disturbed to return to their apartments, then went to the fourth floor.

Neither saw the man who had been reading at the back of the lobby.

As they went up the stairs the man went to a house telephone.

"Suckers finally on way," he reported briefly.

After that he went out of the apartment house, went around the corner and got behind the wheel of a big sedan. He started the motor, lighted a cigarette and settled down to wait.

The door to 410 was locked. Consequently Monk and Ham weren't suspicious at all. On the contrary, they were quite proud of themselves when they picked the lock after ten minutes' hard work.

They opened the door cautiously. No sound came from the apartment.

Monk muttered disgustedly. "Dang it, and I was looking for a fight!"

After they got in the apartment they wondered if their hunch that it belonged to Roland Stevens was right, after all. Stevens wasn't their idea of a lady's man.

This place smelled strongly of perfume. There were even etchings on the walls.

Neither stopped to figure that perfume might have been used to deaden the odor of cigarettes and cigars.

The apartment was a large one. There was a big living room, with a real fireplace. A corridor led off at one side to three bedrooms. A dining room and kitchen were on the other side.

At one side of the room was an old-fashioned secretary type of desk. Both headed that way.

Monk grabbed one drawer, Ham another. There were letters inside each of the drawers. The letters were addressed to "Roland Stevens."

"We found the right place, at that," Ham exulted.

"You sure did, buddy. You sure did," a calm voice said behind them.

They spun. Three men stood facing them, men who had slipped out of the hallway leading to the bedrooms. Each of the men held a gun, and seemed to know what it was for.

"JUST put 'em up, buddy. Put 'em up," advised the man who had spoken first. He was a tall man, with battered features. He appeared bored about the entire proceedings.

When he'd been assigned to this job, he'd been told that all Doc's men were tough. These punks

weren't tough. They'd walked right into a trap. And now there was nothing they could do.

That was the gunman's mistake. Ham darted a quick glance at Monk. "Looks like they've got us, doesn't it?" he asked in English. He added several other words rapidly, and in Mayan.

"Cut out the double talk, buddy. Cut out the double talk," the tall gunman advised.

"O. K.," sighed Ham. His arms started up. One of those arms held his sword-cane. The sheath dropped off that cane as Ham pressed a button. The point of the sword flicked out twice with lightning speed.

The tall gunman tried to pull the trigger of his automatic. He couldn't. The point of Ham's sword had barely flicked the gunman's wrist, but that had been enough. That point was covered with a fast-acting anaesthetic.

The tall gunman dropped. The man beside him fell also. The third man tried to swing his gun for a shot at Ham. He didn't get it because Monk hit him just then. Monk put all his pent-up feelings of a week into that blow. His luckless victim sailed clear across the room.

It was then that the rest of the ambushers appeared.

They poured out of the corridor to the bedrooms. They rushed in from the kitchen.

The fight that followed was good, judged even by Monk's standards.

The hairy chemist had one of the best times of his life. No matter where he swung, there was always a target. That target usually went down.

Loud, howling noises came from Monk. He couldn't fight well unless he yelled. Ham said nothing at all. He merely backed up against a wall and went to work with his sword-cane.

The only trouble was there were too many in the attacking party. Both Monk and Ham realized that. But they enjoyed themselves while it lasted, which was more than their opponents could say.

The driver of the big sedan had smoked half a dozen cigarettes before his pals finally emerged from the apartment house. They carried a huge trunk. Monk and Ham were both in that trunk.

"Took you long enough," the driver complained.

He never did quite understand why one of his pals, without a word, slugged him in the jaw as hard as he could. But, then, the driver didn't know what the others had been through.

Monk and Ham never had been knocked out. But they had been knocked down. And when that happened, a little man who had stayed out of the fight previously had jumped in.

The little man had given each a shot from a hypodermic. In the hours that followed, first Monk, then Ham would have faint periods of consciousness. These were never very long or very clear.

But some way they had the impression that they were first in an automobile, then in a plane.

The plane ride seemed to take a very long time. After that there was the sensation of heat. The hot, pressing type of heat that comes from the tropics.

They were moved from the plane, and soon after the feeling of heat disappeared. Instead, it seemed they were in some sort of clammy place.



For a time all impression of movement about them ceased. Light ceased, also. They knew they must have fully recovered from the drug they had been given, but they did it in their sleep.

Monk was the first to come out of it completely. When he did, he didn't believe it. He thought he was dreaming.

He found he was looking into the face of Alice Dawn.

## **Chapter XI. THE RAIDER REPORTS**

NEITHER Doc nor Long Tom were worried about Monk and Ham the first day. But when two days passed and the pair had not returned or reported, Doc left Long Tom working alone in the big warehouse.

Doc had several ways of getting in touch with his aids under ordinary conditions. One of these was an infra-ray signal that worked through a wrist watch. Another was a "hot foot" device built into the shoes they wore, and operated by a short-wave radio signal.

He tried these without success.

The bronze man then made several telephone calls. In each case his conversation was the same.

In a very short time calls flooded back. Doc had asked the co-operation of New York City's taxicab companies. There was hardly a driver in the city who did not know the bronze man and his aids.

The calls soon provided a perfect record of trips Monk and Ham had made. The last trip any taxi driver reported had taken the pair to an uptown apartment house.

The bronze man went there.

Doc Savage himself did not mind personal danger. He had risked his own life many times. He knew that sooner or later he would risk it once too often. That did not worry him.

He did worry about his aids.

The bronze man knew before he entered the apartment building that Monk and Ham had not left it under their own power.

There was only one set of footprints visible for each. Both of those led into, not out of, the building.

The average passer-by was not aware of those footprints. Doc saw them because of special eyeglasses he wore.

The soles of the shoes worn by all the bronze man's aids were impregnated with a special powder that filtered through and clung to whatever it touched. It took several days for signs of the powder to vanish.

Invisible to the naked eye, it left a clear print when seen with the aid of ultraviolet rays.

Doc went directly to Apartment 410. It took him less than ten seconds to open the door. One glance inside was sufficient explanation as to why Monk and Ham had not returned.

The room looked as if a cyclone had struck it. The apartment itself was deserted.

There was no clue to show where Monk and Ham had been taken or whether they were alive or dead.

The bronze man's gold-flecked eyes were agate-hard. Given time, it undoubtedly would be possible to

pick up the trail of the pair.

But there was no time. Terror was striking again and again on the seas. It had to be stopped.

Doc returned to the warehouse on the Hudson River. A miniature riot arrived at the same time.

ONE of the fishermen from the pier next to the warehouse was the cause of it all. He didn't intend to be, however.

The fisherman was squat and heavy-set. He had seen Doc Savage leave, and after a while had decided it would be a good time to see just what was going on inside the Hidalgo Trading Co.'s place.

The trouble was that he set off an automatic alarm before he got very far and started to run out the way he came in.

He arrived at the door at the same instant a giant of a figure blotted it out. The fisherman had the advantage of speed and momentum. He knocked the giant back and scurried frantically for the adjoining pier.

The giant was Renny, otherwise Colonel John Renwick, another of Doc's five aids. Renny, a famous engineer, was still more famous for his size and for his hamlike fists.

Renny said "Woof" first. Then he bellowed. His voice was as big as his body. It could be heard three blocks, at least, through heavy city traffic.

He set out after the man who had run into him. Renny could run as well as bellow. The fisherman sent one terrified glance over his shoulder and saw he wasn't going to get away.

So he dived into a watchman's shack at the head of the pier, slammed and locked the door behind him.

Renny didn't even stop. His big frame smashed into the shack, knocked it over. Instantly his huge arms shot out, lifted it up again, then one of his big fists cracked out.

The door broke. Most doors did when Renny hit them. The fist went right on through and caught the cowering fisherman by the coat collar, yanked him out.

"What were you doing in there?" Renny roared.

The fisherman didn't get a chance to answer. His fellow anglers, whether through the spirit of good-fellowship or another and deeper purpose, had rushed to his aid. They piled on Renny's back.

The big engineer swung one huge fist. It happened to be the fist that held his luckless captive. When Renny let go the man sailed on out into the river.

Renny spun to do some more fighting. To his surprise, he saw his attackers of a moment before in full retreat. Then he saw the reason.

Doc Savage had arrived.

"If I'd known fun like this was going on, I'd been here sooner," Renny grinned.

The bronze man's features were set in an expression Renny had never seen there before.

"I am afraid Monk and Ham are gone," Doc said quietly.

Renny lost his grin. His features also became hard and deadly as Doc explained briefly all that had occurred.

"I came as soon as you called," Renny said. For once his bellowing voice was muted.

The bronze man nodded. Renny had come swiftly. The big engineer had been on a dam project in southern California when he had been called in.

The last member of Doc's band arrived only a few hours later. Johnny, or rather William Harper Littlejohn, was the archaeologist of the group. He had been in Mexico.

Long Tom filled him in on details.

"I'll be superamalgamated," Johnny said harshly. Johnny was tall and so skinny he might have been mistaken for a scarecrow. He was addicted to long words and usually had a monocle in one eye. But that in no way interfered with his fighting ability.

"I'll aid in the extermination of the enemy with complacency," Johnny added.

"You got some ideas, Doc?" Renny asked harshly.

The bronze man did not answer for a moment. Then his gold-flecked eyes whirled strangely. "I know who we are after. We will find him," he said.

Long Tom's head shot up. It was the first time the electrical expert had ever heard the bronze man make such a flat statement. Long Tom felt an uncanny thrill. He only hoped those they sought would not be found by others.

THERE seemed no danger of that; at least for the moment. The periscope had shown both the sea and the air to be clear before the hunted submarine came to the surface slowly.

The sea was flat. The sun beat down hotly. Nothing was to be seen except a small island dead ahead.

That island looked like scores of others that dotted the sea. It apparently reared straight up from the bottom of the ocean. It was small, and covered with thick vegetation. It appeared uninhabited. Navy planes had flown over it without noticing anything unusual.

The speed of the submarine slacked as it neared the island. More and more of its steel plates came into view. A man appeared at the top of the conning tower. He was a tall man with a vivid scar on the side of his face, a scar that gave him a perpetual leering expression.

The man, submarine and all, vanished. Or rather they appeared to vanish.

Actually they slipped into a narrow channel that led to a lagoon directly in the center of the island. The channel was covered over. Part of the cover had been formed by nature. Some of it had been helped by man.

It made a dimly lighted tunnel.

The submarine did not go all the way to the lagoon. It halted just out of sight.

Pete Mills' hard face relaxed slightly. He lighted a cigarette with evident enjoyment, the scar on his cheek twisting oddly.

Then he looked down, spoke harshly: "All hands remain on board until I return. If the boss says O. K.,

you can take a stroll in the moonlight-after it gets dark." He laughed at what he evidently considered a joke.

He stepped from the submarine directly to a small wharf. The wharf appeared new. Hoisting machinery was at one side. Moored to the wharf were several large speedboats.

Pete Mills paid no attention to these. He stepped from the tunnel onto a wide path. But that path wasn't visible from above either. Shrubbery had been cultivated so that it formed a perfect screen.

After a ways the path turned downward, ended at a doorway set in ancient, weather-beaten stone. The door opened as Pete Mills neared, closed again after he had entered.

For a moment the scarred-faced man could see nothing in the gloom, but he seemed to know where he was going. He walked forward, then turned to his right, entered a large room.

With a sigh he lowered himself into an easy-chair. The stiffness went out of his body. He relaxed.

"Home again, boss," he said conversationally. "Only got four this trip, but the haul was big." He paused, smiled reminiscently. "One of them had a couple of good-looking dames on board."

"You didn't bring any women here, did you?" a voice asked sharply. The speaker was not in sight. The voice seemed to come from a wall.

Pete Mills smiled. "Of course not, boss," he mocked.

Neither Pete Mills nor the unseen "boss" behind the wall knew they were overheard.

Alice Dawn had been at the far side of the big room when she heard Pete Mills approaching. She had dropped out of sight behind a divan.

THE voices went on. Alice Dawn didn't hear the next few remarks. She had her hands pressed up tight against the flaming red hair that covered her ears.

Then she heard orders being given for unloading cargo from the submarine. Still later she heard the "boss" bragging about the capture of Monk and Ham.

Pete Mills came to life sharply at that. "B-but, boss," he argued, "I thought you was goin' to try and keep Doc Savage out of this. That guy's dynamite!"

The unseen speaker laughed shortly. "If he tries anything-"

His voice broke off. A faint hum could be heard. The hum grew steadily louder, until it was a deadening roar. Then it faded.

"What was that?" Pete Mills asked sharply.

"A navy plane," the unseen speaker said scornfully. "But it saw nothing, as usual. However, this game is getting hot. Get ready to start out again by dawn. One more raid and then we will stop."

The scarred-faced man started to protest. Then he changed his mind. He left the room.

Behind the opposite wall a tall, square-faced man with ramrod back grinned slightly. Mills undoubtedly was thinking of his share of the pirated treasure.

The tall man's grin grew broader. Mills had fed the fishes for others often enough. He shouldn't mind

feeding them again.

Then the tall man's grin vanished. A voice came out of a small radio at his side. "Doc Savage is gettin' ready to move, boss," the voice said.

The tall man swore. Then he issued instructions swiftly and curtly.

## Chapter XII. ONE AGAINST THE WORLD

DOC didn't know that his imminent departure had been reported. But it was true that he and his aids were getting ready to start.

They were loading a curious affair aboard the bronze man's submarine. It was an object which Doc and Long Tom had been laboring on for several days.

Big Renny gasped when he saw it. "A giant spider," he hazarded.

Long Tom grinned. "If it works, it will get a larger haul than any spider ever made."

Johnny, his wide forehead furrowed, his monocle stuck in one eye, tried to ask questions. He got nowhere. Long Tom merely grinned more broadly. Doc didn't seem to hear at all.

The combined strength of the four was needed to carry one feature of the device to the submarine's hatch.

"A truly prodigious agendum," Johnny gasped.

"If you mean that was a hell of a big job, I agree," Renny rumbled.

Supplies already had been placed aboard the submarine. As additional equipment was loaded, floodgates were opened and water rushed into the drydock that housed the underwater craft.

The submarine was not of the military type. Originally it had been designed for work under ice on a polar trip.

Peculiarly shaped fenders slanted along the deck. These had been added protection for the submarine when it had slipped under the frozen sea of the North.

Now Doc seemed to be using them for another purpose. Renny and Johnny looked on puzzled as the bronze man placed huge cables along these fenders. The cables then went completely around the craft, but in such way that they did not interfere with the diving planes or rudders.

"The *Queen Elizabeth* used something like that when she made her maiden voyage here from England," Long Tom explained, "but we've added a few improvements to the idea."

"Oh, yes," Renny agreed. The big engineer looked pleased with himself. "That was for protection against magnetic mines. I suppose we do run some danger in that regard."

Long Tom's face sobered. The lean electrical expert shook his head. "I wish that was all there was to it. But it isn't. The thing that might get us is far worse than any mine-it's a sea serpent."

Renny looked bewildered, started to ask a question.

Doc Savage interrupted. The bronze man was carrying a small box aboard the submarine. He was carrying it with unusual care.

"We are ready to go," he said simply.

Johnny bellowed gleefully. Even Renny looked pleased.

They had started up the gangplank when the shots came from just outside the warehouse.

A single shot came first. Then there was a minor pause, then two more shots came in quick succession-and then the deafening roar of sub-machine guns.

Doc Savage flashed from the submarine. He held large, queer-looking weapons in his hands, gave one to each of his aids.

The four raced toward the front of the building.

DOC doused the lights in the warehouse as they neared the door.

"Careful," he warned tersely. "It may be a ruse to draw us in the open."

The others had thought of that also. Each held one of the queerly shaped weapons ready. They had used those weapons many times before.

The guns really were oversized pistols with large drums on the top, permitting them to be fired at an amazing rate. Occasionally those drums were loaded with explosive bullets, but usually they contained only "mercy" shots-bullets that barely penetrated the skin, but which contained an anaesthetic that caused quick unconsciousness.

The firing outside increased as they reached the door. Near at hand a man was groaning in agony. Farther down the street came the scream of someone mortally stricken.

Then the four were outside.

The noise had been loud before. It was as nothing compared to the racket that started now. Doc and his aids opened up with their guns.

The weapons bellowed like oversized bull fiddles.

Knowing that they would not kill, but uncertain who was friend or foe, Doc and his aids fired impartially at every moving figure they saw.

"This may have been a private fight once," Renny chuckled, "but it ain't now."

The blasts from the four guns cleared the street as a hailstorm beats down wheat.

The bronze man dropped his gun, knelt at the side of the badly wounded man who had been groaning near the door of the warehouse.

The man looked up at Doc with eyes filled with pain and hate. "Damn you, Doc Savage!" he gritted. "I didn't believe it until now. But you are mixed up in this. And you'll hang for it!"

THE bronze man's aids halted, frozen. Long Tom looked quickly at Doc as Johnny and Renny exchanged a startled glance.

Long Tom peered closely at the wounded man. "That's one of the birds that's been hanging around that diner across the street," he exclaimed.

Doc said nothing for the moment. He reached in the man's vest. When his hand emerged it held a gold shield. The wounded man was from the F. B. I.

All attention was centered on the hurt Federal Bureau investigator. None noticed the small man who darted behind them into the warehouse.

The man was barely five feet tall, with wizened, evil features. He clutched a small package to his chest as he raced down the darkened interior of the warehouse.

Doc felt of the Fed's pulse. It was beating weakly, but unconsciousness had come.

Sirens were sounding nearer and nearer. They seemed coming from all directions. In just a matter of seconds police-and aid for the wounded-would arrive.

"If we are to leave, we must leave now," the bronze man said. His gold-flecked eyes were whirling swiftly. He led the way into the warehouse.

Long Tom was the last to follow. The electrical expert wasted valuable seconds to inspect the body of one of those who had been mowed down by the mercy bullets.

"The guy that ran the peanut stand," he muttered.

Police were hammering on the door of the warehouse as the four poured into the submarine. For the moment they wasted no time on questions or speculations.

The conning tower was closed. The submarine nosed ahead. Huge doors, operated by photo-electric cells, opened slowly, the submarine slipped into the river. Only moments later it vanished beneath the surface.

No one knew better than Doc the danger of running submerged in the busy Hudson. But there was no help for it. His aids also knew the risk they were taking-and knew why.

The bronze man's standing with the government had been excellent. But someone evidently had tipped off Federal men to watch Doc in connection with the terror that had struck the Atlantic. With public hysteria at the breaking point, the Feds were taking no chances. They had set up such a watch.

But it was apparent also that another group had been watching.

"Those fishermen and that peanut guy," Long Tom explained to Renny and Johnny.

"So the two bunches have a run-in, some government men get killed, some more get wounded-and we'll get blamed," Renny rumbled disgustedly.

DOC SAVAGE was maneuvering the submarine carefully, but as speedily as possible. And he seemed to be depending as much upon a set of earphones as upon a compass.

There was a reason for that. The earphones were connected with special sonic microphones in the submarine's outer shell. They picked up the sound of other ships' propellers.

Twice Doc sat the submarine down on the bottom of the river, stopped its forward motion entirely. Once they felt the keel of some large vessel scrape across the fenders on the top of the sub.

"If the whole country hadn't gone nuts, nobody could believe this against us," Renny complained.

"But the country has," Long Tom pointed out. "And the people can't be blamed. Besides, think how this

will look when it's reported. The surviving Feds will tell of us joining the battle, of shooting some of them down. What else can they think but that we're mixed up with the terror?"

Johnny nodded soberly. The thin archaeologist appeared unusually grave.

"I imagine that is why the fight was staged," he said. The fact that he didn't use big words showed the extent of his anxiety.

Long Tom agreed with Johnny's hunch. The man they were fighting was smart. He had known Doc would not want to lose the time it would take him to stay in New York and prove he was innocent. And by fleeing, the bronze man apparently had confessed at least a guilty knowledge.

It was hot in the submarine. But not all of the perspiration was caused by the heat. Some of it was caused by the strain of wondering when the inevitable would happen.

Johnny put it in words. He rumbled, "I wonder just how long before police boats, the coast guard and even destroyers will be out trying to stop us?"

Nobody answered that one. All knew the answer would come soon enough.

It came just after they had moved past the Battery.

Doc stopped the motors of the submarine with one quick move. A minute later and the others understood, even without the use of earphones.

There was a swish and a roar in the water above them. The submarine rocked slightly.

The first destroyer, racing out of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, was headed for the Narrows to intercept them.

Long Tom's expression was grave. That destroyer would be equipped with listening devices also. It would be able to pick up the sound of the submarine's propeller.

It didn't seem possible that they would be able to slip by the blockade that was rapidly being laid for them.

A few minutes later it seemed even more impossible. The submarine was a mile from the Narrows, but still it shook and rocked violently.

The destroyer was laying down a depth-bomb barrage directly in the Narrows—a barrage that would crush the submarine like an eggshell if it came even within six hundred yards of one of the deadly blasts.

LONG TOM'S sallow features appeared even more pale than usual. The monocle dropped from Johnny's eye. Renny's big fists clenched helplessly. This was one time those fists were absolutely powerless.

Only Doc Savage showed no emotion. In fact, the bronze man did not seem concerned.

Slowly, a yard at a time, he was moving the submarine. Renny took a look at the compass and at the chart before the bronze man. Bewilderment was pictured on the big engineer's features.

Doc was putting the submarine directly in the Ambrose ship channel.

Then the submarine stopped, but Doc did not leave the controls. He appeared to be waiting patiently for something that had to occur.



An hour passed before he spoke. Then he gave quick directions to Long Tom. The lanky electrical expert grinned jubilantly with sudden comprehension.

Faintly, from the stern, came the beat of a ship's propellers. The vessel, evidently a small freighter, was going to pass directly over them.

The propeller beat became stronger. Doc forced water from the forward ballast tanks. The bow of the submarine lifted slightly. Then the stern came up.

Carefully, trimming the submarine with the precision of a watchmaker, Doc brought it up a foot at a time.

The roar of the propeller above them grew deafening in the earphones.

Then came a faint scraping. And Long Tom went into action. He pulled a big switch. A low hum filled the undersea boat.

Instantly Doc cut off the motors. But this time the submarine did not stop. It continued to move ahead. It went at a steady, regular speed.

Above them, the captain of the 4,000-ton freighter *Electra*, outward bound for Boston, wondered why the speed of his ship had been slowed, almost as though it were dragging something. Then he decided the strength of the tide had been more than he had estimated.

Doc's big shoulders rose and fell. That was the only sign he gave of the strain he had been under.

His submarine was riding along, hooked to the bottom of the freighter, held there by magnetism. At the bronze man's signal, Long Tom had sent current racing through the cable wrapped around the sub.

In effect, this had converted the submarine directly into a magnet. The steel hull of the freighter had done the rest.

But Doc's maneuver had been a daring one. He had been forced to estimate distances entirely by ear. The slightest mistake and the submarine would have been too near the surface, would have been sliced in two.

The sound of the depth bombs ceased as the freighter neared the Narrows. Those on the destroyers were confident anyway that they could pick up the sound of the submarine's propellers should it attempt to slip by.

But the sub wasn't using its own power. It was clinging to the bottom of the freighter as a pilot fish clings to a shark. And in the same manner it rode clear of the harbor.

An hour later and Doc cut loose from his involuntary tow. They were free in the open sea.

But all knew they were far from in the clear. By now the navies of every country would be searching for them.

They were one against the world.

### **Chapter XIII. DOC GOES FISHING**

DOC turned the controls over to Johnny. Then he did a curious thing.

He took a compasslike object from his pocket, held it in his hand as he made a tour of the boat. The needle in the "compass" rested on a small drop of mercury, held in a tiny cup. The point of the needle

looked like platinum.

Only once did the point of the needle waver. That was when Doc neared a small closet filled with rope and other gear.

Doc did not enter the closet.

He returned to the control room and opened the package he had handled so carefully when he had first boarded the sub. The object in the package looked like a glass-enclosed radio. At least there were a number of tubes and dials on it.

Doc hooked this in relay with several small batteries and with the listening device attached to the outer hull.

Johnny looked at it with interest. Doc explained briefly:

"This will aid us in identifying any ship we may hear overhead and save the use of earphones."

The bronze man got out a Lloyd's Register and a copy of Jane's "Fighting Ships," flipped through them rapidly. Figures, written in ink, had been added to the description of almost each ship.

"The propeller beat of every ship is distinctive," Doc explained. "By consulting the number shown on the dial of this-'propelcheck' shall we call it?-we can identify any ship that comes near us."

The value of the "propelcheck" was proved when Doc's submarine was scarcely a hundred miles south and east of New York harbor. But even that would not have saved those aboard the sub had it not been for the bronze man's astounding knowledge and quick action in an emergency, his willingness to see all possible chances and to take the only one that offered any hope.

The dial on the "propelcheck" spun to 280. Long Tom was at the controls at the time.

"An American destroyer! Approaching fast," the electrical expert yelled.

Doc dived to the control room. His gold-flecked eyes flashed to the chart, estimated their position.

Since their listening device had picked up the destroyer, it was reasonable to suppose the destroyer had heard them. Depth bombs would be coming at them in the space of minutes.

The bronze man took over. The submarine went down in a steep dive. It went down to 290 feet, to 300, to 360-the maximum it could stand.

"B-but the ocean bottom is only 260 feet here!" Long Tom protested.

Doc said nothing. The depth bombs shook the submarine. They did not damage it.

Later Long Tom figured out the explanation. He had plenty of time for that as the submarine moved steadily southward, came closer by the hour to the place where the mystery raider had last been reported.

Long Tom was trying to keep from thinking of Monk and Ham at the time. It was strange to feel that he might never again see that pair. They fought continually, but Long Tom knew that when it came to a pinch each would gladly die if he could save the other.

The electrical expert found the explanation of Doc's move in an almanac. He happened to be reading of ocean depths when he came across the paragraph:

The submerged channel of the Hudson River extends along the floor of the Atlantic Ocean out to the edge of continental North America, 100 miles south and east of Sandy Hook. Toward the submerged mouth, the channel descends until it is 1,600 feet below the surface of the water, while the ocean beside it is only 260 feet deep.

Doc had known that. He had taken the submarine over that underwater ravine, had dropped it down beside the submerged cliffs. Those cliffs had saved the sub from the real force of the depth bombs.

Several times after that the submarine dodged lurking warcraft. Steadily it moved southward.

Only at night did they come to the surface. Then they usually cruised slowly while they recharged the electrical batteries needed for subsurface maneuvering.

It was then they learned just how bitterly they were being sought. And just how much America's love for Doc Savage had turned to hate.

American news commentators talked of but little else in their nightly radio discussions.

"A more vicious traitor than Benedict Arnold," one florid speaker declared.

"We must hide our heads in shame," another asserted dolefully. "After accusing, secretly at least, every other nation in the world of fathering an unscrupulous pirate who has pity for neither men, women nor children, we find he is one of our own. Worse than that, he is one whom we considered a hero."

None seemed to consider on how little evidence Doc had been convicted by public opinion. But none of the bronze man's aids was surprised. Mass hysteria always induces loose thinking.

Doc's aids would have refused to listen to the radio. It was the bronze man who instructed differently.

Then they understood. The news flash came that Doc had been waiting for.

The mysterious raider had struck again. A freighter had been sunk less than fifty miles from where they were, and only a day before.

THEY were not far from the coast of Cuba at the time. The freighter that had been sunk had been bound for Havana.

The ships of the American neutrality patrol, British and French warships, rushed to the scene.

Doc didn't.

The bronze man ordered a course set toward the Panama Canal. It seemed logical that the raider would not remain near a spot where it might be trapped. It also seemed logical that it would head for probably the most popular shipping lane in the world.

And again, for the second time, Doc made a tour of his undersea craft holding the strange-appearing "compass." This time, as he neared the small locker room, the needle of the "compass" vibrated rapidly.

The bronze man's expression did not change. He did not open the locker room.

Renny took over the controls. Johnny gave all his time to the motors.

Long Tom and Doc became busy with the strange equipment they had loaded on the sub just before they sailed.

The equipment was shifted to a large compartment at the stern of the submarine. That compartment was different from any on naval submersibles. It had been designed especially by Doc.

When the submarine was at rest, or moving slowly, the entire compartment could be flooded gradually. A hatch moved back. It was possible to leave the submarine provided a diving suit was used. Aboard the sub were several diving suits of the type that use portable oxygen tanks so that no lines are necessary.

The diving suits also were taken to the compartment at the stern.

Then came the period of waiting. Johnny forgot to use big words. The words he did use were short and to the point.

A dozen times the "propelcheck" shot into action. Twice they barely got out of listening range of warships. And once a bomb, dropped from an airplane, came too close for comfort.

After that they submerged even deeper.

They were scarcely fifty miles from the Canal when the strange signal came.

It was a signal they could not identify by use of the "propelcheck" and Jane's "Fighting Ships." But it was clearly the propeller beat of a submarine.

A fighting grin creased Renny's big face. Johnny recovered his good spirits. Long Tom's eyes glistened gleefully.

Only Doc Savage showed no emotion. The bronze man gave curt instructions.

The ambush was set.

THE motors were slowed until they were barely moving. They did not need to move. Sounds from the listening device showed they were almost directly in the path of the oncoming underseas craft.

Doc and Long Tom vanished into the compartment at the stern.

After that, there was nothing for Johnny and Renny to do but wait. They waited for quite a while. From the sudden loginess at the stern, they knew the compartment had been flooded.

Then compressed air hissed again and the stern lightened.

Long Tom and Doc reappeared. The electrical expert wore a pleased grin. Doc's gold-flecked eyes were whirling.

The beat of the oncoming craft's propellers grew steadily louder.

"An' a-fishin' we will go!" Johnny exulted.

"But I still don't see how we're going to catch anything," Renny complained.

Long Tom grinned wisely.

Doc produced several lengths of strong cord. "Tie yourself to something solid. Stand so that your heads will not be injured should we be shaken up," he advised softly.

Renny looked even more doubtful.

Far overhead, an army plane from its base at Panama was making a wide circle. The observer was using

high-powered glasses in an attempt to penetrate the depths beneath.

The water was clear. But the water was deep, too, and the bright sun, which caused heavy reflection, did not make the observer's job any easier.

Then he shouted suddenly, pointed far beneath them. The pilot looked over the side-and did not believe what he saw.

A tremendous upheaval was threshing the water below. Spray leaped high in the air. The calm surface of the sea was being whipped into foam.

They might have thought it was caused by a subterranean earthquake, except that it seemed localized in one small spot.

The pilot pivoted the plane swiftly, cut downward in a sharp dive.

Far below the surface, Doc and his aids were holding on fiercely as their submarine bucked and shook. There was a queer grinding, rasping sound above them.

That sound continued for several seconds. Then it stopped. Their craft stopped bucking at the same time.

At almost the same instant, the pilot of the scouting plane leveled off not far above them. He took another look over the side.

The sea was calm. The pilot glanced back at his observer. The observer looked as if he didn't believe it, either.

"Mustta been a fish," the observer finally decided.

In that he was right, but he didn't know the kind of a fish.

"We did it, Doc! We did it!" Long Tom burst out happily "We've caught our 'tin fish.'"

## **Chapter XIV. A WARNING**

BACK in the locker room on Doc's sub a little man, scarcely five feet tall with evil, wizened features, rubbed a flock of assorted bruises.

He had had no warning of what was coming. A terrified scowl was on his face.

Feeling around on the floor, he found an object he had dropped a few moments before. It looked like a small piece of rubber hose with a cup at one end and a small earphone at the other.

Quickly he jammed the cup against the wall of the submarine, held the phone to one ear. The device was simple, but it enabled him to hear any signal Doc might send.

And signals were being sent. They echoed swiftly from the shell of the sub. After a short time, more signals came. They were dimmer, but still easy to read.

An alarmed look crossed the little man's face. He dropped the earphone and knelt before a square case in front of him. It was the case he had carried when he'd dodged into Doc's warehouse and slipped on the submarine.

He turned a switch, and a faint hum came. When the hum quieted, the little man spoke. His voice was soft, but pitched to carry.

"Boss, it's happened!" he rattled excitedly. "This Doc Savage has done it, somehow. He's just got our ship. He's got it held fast up above him. They can't do nothin' there, can't fire no torpedo or anything, but he could shoot up. He called on them to surrender. They did."

Then the little man waited. He waited for some time before the answer came. His evil features showed sharp disbelief at first. Then he laughed; he laughed a long time.

DOC SAVAGE wasn't laughing. For one of the few times in his life the bronze man was showing emotion.

And the emotion he was showing was embarrassment.

The surrender of the captured submarine had been expected. Not only could Doc destroy the other craft from below, but he could, if necessary, hold it beneath the surface until all life on it was extinguished.

That had been explained. Surrender had followed.

Then had come the message that had caused embarrassment. The captured submarine wasn't the mystery raider.

It was a British underseas craft, itself hunting for the pirate ship!

AN interchange of messages convinced Doc of that fact. But he insisted on seeing for himself.

The bronze man donned one of the self-contained diving suits. He left his sub, moved up to the surface. At the same time, the British ship was slowly eased upward until the conning tower was barely awash.

The British captain appeared.

Doc no longer had any doubts. He returned to his sub.

It was the first time the bronze man's aids had ever seen him flustered.

Doc had often admitted to himself that he could make mistakes. In fact, he knew he had made them. But his aids had always thought that impossible.

There was more than a mistake to consider now.

"We seem to have a lion by the tail," Doc admitted wryly. "I naturally offered to release their submarine at once. Their captain informed me that if so, he would give no parole. That we were considered pirates, and that he would do his best to destroy us at once."

"Let me go up and talk to that guy man to man," Renny bellowed angrily.

"I'll be superamalgamated," Johnny offered.

Long Tom's face was very red. He felt as guilty as if he had done the whole thing himself.

"We could turn 'em loose and run for it. We've got the speed to get away," he suggested.

Doc shook his head. "We could elude them, of course, but they might be able to trail us long enough to bring surface ships," he said quietly.

The bronze man's brief period of embarrassment had passed. He was himself again.

"There is another way," he added briefly.

Long Tom looked puzzled. So did the others.

Doc didn't explain. He went to the small laboratory he had on the submarine. When he returned, he was carrying more than a hundred yards of small but powerful rope. The rope was of a pale, almost oily, color.

For a second time the bronze man donned diving equipment and left the sub. He was gone scarcely fifteen minutes.

"Release them," he said briefly as he came back.

Long Tom's expression revealed his doubt.

"They will not pursue us," the bronze man explained briefly. "Their propeller and diving planes are fouled in the rope."

"B-but won't that mean they'll eventually perish?" Renny asked.

Doc Savage shook his head. "The rope is of the type that dissolves in water. It will retain its strength for only about thirty minutes before they will be able to escape."

With Doc at the helm, they sped swiftly from the scene.

THE next few hours were a revelation for those aboard the bronze man's craft.

It had seemed reasonable to suppose that only the pirate submarine would be in this vicinity.

This was not the case. The waters appeared alive with undersea craft.

On a half dozen occasions they crept close to a lurking submarine, only to identify it at the last moment through use of the "propelcheck" as American or British.

"We wouldn't been fooled the first time, except the sub we caught was a new type, and we had no dope on her," Long Tom said.

The presence of so many submarines made their task harder. All they could do was to stay in the vicinity and try to nab anything that sounded suspicious.

"After lucubration, it occurs to me the knaves we seek might be in one of these submarines," Johnny said. "In that case we might overlook them."

Doc nodded. "That is a chance we have to take."

It was two hours after that they caught their next "tin fish."

This one proved to be German.

But this time, the bronze man did not appear surprised. The captured U-boat was held, powerless to move, almost resting on the deck of Doc's sub. Ballast tanks were blown in the bronze man's craft. Linked together, the two boats moved toward the surface.

"I've at least solved one thing," Renny said dryly. "Whatever this thing is that Doc and Long Tom have figured out, it at least uses our boat as the anchor."

The U-boat commander sputtered angrily as Doc appeared at the side of the conning tower. Only the

certainty that such action would result in the loss of his own craft halted him from shooting the bronze man.

Doc talked swiftly and rapidly, and in German.

The U-boat commander's attitude changed.

"Forgive me, Herr Savage," the commander said politely. "I did not understand at once. Yes, I will give you the information you wish."

"You believe the pirate submarine to be-or rather to have been-one of yours?" Doc asked.

The U-boat commander looked old and tired suddenly. "I am afraid you are correct, Herr Savage. But"-and his eyes flashed-"you understand of course that it is no longer in charge of a German crew."

Doc nodded. "I understand," he said. Briefly, he told the other of Roland Stevens' story, and of Stevens' statement that the original crew of the submarine was found dead.

The commander nodded. "I am glad you know this," he said simply. "Eventually you will be able to tell the world how a hundred brave men died. The craft-and it was one of our latest-was en route to your country on a peaceful mission. It was designed as a cargo craft, although naturally it had some armament-one gun, two torpedo tubes."

"And the speed of the motors, the size of its propellers?" Doc asked.

The U-boat commander's face lighted. "I see your point," he said excitedly. "Of course. It does have a distinctive propeller beat."

He explained swiftly.

"Thank you," Doc Savage nodded. He prepared to slip back under water, back to his own submarine.

The commander's hand came up in a salute. "Good hunting," he said. "Although of course we would like to find the craft first. It is a matter of honor with us."

THE little man with the evil, wizened face could not hear Doc's conversation with the U-boat commander. But he did hear when the bronze man reported that conversation to his aids.

The little man became very excited. Again he spoke into the small, powerful radio sending set he had with him. This time he had to wait for more than an hour before he got an answer.

Then he got some water from a big canteen he had with him. He poured some powder from a small envelope into his hand.

He took the powder, washed it down with the water.

A moment later he tore open the door of the locker room, rolled into the companionway. He screamed.

Big-fisted Renny was the first on the scene. The huge engineer's face bore a startled look. He lifted the little man up with one gigantic paw, swung his other palm for a slap that would have loosened the man's neck.

Foam gushed from the little man's lips. His eyes rolled wildly.

Johnny skidded to a stop behind Renny. The thin archaeologist carefully placed his monocle in one eye,



gazed gravely at the scene before him.

"I'll be a superannuation!" he exclaimed. "What a phantasmagoria."

"If you mean what a funny sight, I agree," Renny said grimly.

Sounds came from the little man's throat. "Don't do it! Don't do it! I was told you didn't hurt people who were sick."

"Who is sick?" came the calm voice of Doc Savage.

The little man looked at him appealingly. "I am, Mr. Savage. Save me from this giant."

"Put him down, Renny," Doc said quietly.

Renny grumbled loudly, but obeyed. The little man went to his knees, peered up shrewdly. When he saw he no longer was in immediate danger of annihilation, he popped to his feet with surprising speed, grinned smugly.

"I thought that would get you," he rasped. "And what a bunch of mugs you are. None of yuh knew I was here."

"Your presence has been known almost from the time you got on the boat," Doc Savage contradicted quietly.

The little man jeered. "Yeah? Then why didn't you do something about it? Answer me that."

"I had hopes that your conversations with the one you called 'boss' might eventually give us some clues as to his whereabouts," Doc explained.

The little man lost some of his arrogance. "Y-yuh mean you've been hearin' what I've said to him?"

"And his replies as well," Doc said. "Unfortunately, we had no way of making a two-directional check, so that we might have found from where he was broadcasting."

The little man regained some of his assurance. "Then you even know the last instructions I got?"

Doc turned to a tiny room nearby. He removed a disk attached to a recording machine. This disk had turned every time there was sound from the locker room, had recorded all messages both received and sent from there.

The bronze man played back the last message received:

-so tell that bronze devil that unless he stops looking for our submarine, we'll kill those two aids of his right now, the ones he calls Monk and Ham. I mean business.

The little man was watching closely the faces of Doc and his aids. He expected to see fear, or at least some faint sign of apprehension. What he did see made him doubt his own sanity.

Renny's huge palms beat jubilantly on Johnny's back. Long Tom jumped up and down, yelling gleefully.

Even Doc Savage's gold-flecked eyes seemed to reflect pleasure.

"Oh, boy!" Long Tom chortled happily. "They're still alive. Those mugs aren't dead!"

## **Chapter XV. AN ESCAPE ATTEMPT**

MONK and Ham were still alive, but they were far from happy.

"In fact," Monk grumbled, "I am downright tired of this place."

"With your disposition, you'd probably get tired of heaven if you ever had a chance of getting there," Ham said pleasantly.

"Heaven's supposed to be up above, daggonit. This must be the other place," Monk pointed out reasonably.

Ham snorted. The hairy chemist might have something there, at that.

They were quite alone, and quite in the dark-both figuratively and literally.

The girl Monk had seen when he'd first recovered consciousness hadn't stayed around. She'd left at once, really, after whispering something about "I'm glad you're all right."

Ham had pretended not even to believe Monk's story. "You dreamed it," he announced flatly. "All you've got on your mind is girls, anyway."

That charge had led to many heated word battles. There was no chance of any other kind of conflict.

Both of them found they were manacled hand and foot to stony, clammy walls.

They had spent their time since then trying to escape. They talked as much as possible, just on the chance someone might be hiding nearby. Sound of their conversation would drown any other sound they might make.

It had been apparent from the first that they were captives in an ancient dungeon. There was the smell of age about the place, the musty, dampish odor that comes only with the centuries.

"Reminds me of that dungeon we were in when we were hunting the 'Crimson Serpent'," Ham had remarked. (Crimson Serpent, Aug. 1939)

Monk agreed. But if the dungeon was old, there was nothing ancient about the chains that held them. They were new. And the rings that held the chains into the old stone walls had been embedded in fresh, hard cement.

The hairy chemist suddenly began to sing. He didn't have a musical voice.

"I'm only an ape in a gilded cage," he quavered.

"Pipe down," Ham roared wrathfully. "Isn't it enough I'm helpless, without having to listen to that?"

Monk spouted a few words in Mayan. Surprisingly, Ham stopped grumbling. He joined in the singing. His voice wasn't much better than Monk's.

Seated comfortably a hundred yards away, an armed guard put his hands over his ears. Almost he was tempted to go back and lay the two of them cold. But that involved too much effort. He got up, walked the other way, stood where he could get some sun and fresh air.

"At least they're harmless," the guard grunted.

That was his mistake.

MONK had at last succeeded in something he'd been trying to do for days.

Ham had often accused the homely chemist of being related to apes. He wasn't correct, but Monk could do some things that Ham couldn't. He could use the toes of his feet with remarkable dexterity for example.

The occasion for Monk's sudden outburst in song was simple. He had finally worked the heel off one shoe.

It hadn't been hard to rub one foot against the other until he had untied the laces so that he could get the shoe off when he wanted. It had been much more difficult to get the heel off one of those shoes.

But constant prying with the toe of one shoe against the heel of the other had finally worked.

Three small pellets fell to the floor.

Monk skinned the sock off one foot, reached around with his toes, got hold of a pellet. His foot flicked back the full six inches the chain allowed. The pellet shot toward one fettered hand.

The hairy chemist missed the first time. But not the second. The pellet landed squarely in one hairy paw.

Monk handled the pellet carefully. He had to. It was filled with one of the strongest corrosive acids known.

Carefully he placed one end against the chain that connected with the manacles about his wrists. As Ham's voice rose in an unmusical tenor, he crushed one end of the pellet, let the acid pour down on the chain.

The chain had been bright and shiny. It wasn't for long. Even as the acid hit, a remarkable reaction occurred. The chain seemed to rust. At the same time it swelled as the cohesive molecules of the steel swelled.

Monk gave a determined yank. He was bellowing at the top of his voice at the time. His yowls covered the sound as the chain parted.

After that it was only a question of time. With his hands where he could use them, he soon had freed his feet, then he got the manacles off his wrists.

He rose, stretched lazily and yawned. Ham howled. "Hey, what about me?"

Monk spoke. He spoke at length. He repeated all the insults Ham had handed him during the full length of their stay in the dungeon. "An' now, daggonit, you think I'll help you!" he concluded.

Ham sighed deeply. It was going to hurt, but there was only one thing to do. "I apologize," he conceded humbly.

When the once-dapper lawyer was free, the two went to work swiftly. They kept up a continuous chatter, but they didn't talk about what they were doing or intended to do.

They had agreed upon their course of action long before.

Without hesitation, they took off all their clothes. Then they took straw from the mats that had been provided for them and stuffed the clothes until they had dummies that at least should be good enough for their purpose.

The manacles and chains were draped realistically about the dummies' "wrists" and "ankles."

Then there was nothing to do but wait.

THEIR plan was quite simple. Twice a day a guard brought them food and water. It was almost time for the evening visit.

They had no idea where they were, but that didn't bother them. If they could only get to a radio, could get a message to Doc, they were confident he would do the rest.

Minutes ticked by. It was cold standing naked in the dark against moist stone walls. Ham suffered more than Monk did. The chemist's hairy body was protection for him.

Then a sound came, the faint sound of a shoe scuffing against stone. The two became quiet.

The scuffing sound came again, louder this time. They could see the faint glow of a flashlight.

Neither noticed that the guard apparently was approaching from a different direction than usual. They drew back, cowered against the wall on either side of the huge door that led into their cell.

A key grated in the lock outside. Slowly the door to the cell opened. Light flashed in briefly on the two "figures" chained to the side walls.

A dark figure entered.

Monk and Ham leaped at the same time. They both landed on top of the newcomer. The figure went to the ground.

One of Monk's hairy fists sought the throat, tightened to prevent any outcry. Ham started a hard swing.

A startled cry, one almost of anguish came from Monk. The homely chemist's arm shot up, parried Ham's blow.

"W-we ain't fightin' a man. We're fightin' a girl," Monk moaned frantically.

Sobbing, gasping cries came from their victim. The girl tried to get up as Monk and Ham both turned loose.

A wail of terror came from the chemist. He leaped forward, caught the flashlight the girl had dropped. The flashlight had rolled to one side, but its beams gave a dim illumination. Monk snapped the light off.

"Dang it, girl, close your eyes!" Monk pleaded desperately. "W-we ain't got no clothes on."

The girl's gasping cries stopped. It seemed to Monk she gave a strangled burst of laughter, but he couldn't be sure.

There was no question about Ham's mirth. The dapper lawyer was just as modest as Monk, but he could hide that fact better.

"Guard the door, Ham, don't let her get away and spread the alarm," Monk pleaded.

The hairy chemist was tearing his clothes off the dummy, was dressing with frantic haste.

The girl recovered her voice. "Both of you dress-and quickly," she urged. And now there was something akin to panic in her voice.

"I am your friend. I do not intend to spread an alarm. But Doc Savage is in danger, terrible danger. We must save him."

"WHO are you?" Ham snapped.

"Alice Dawn."

"Oh!" Ham's features changed slightly. "Secretary to that guy Gadberry who got murdered. How do you happen to be in this? Who is behind it? Where are we?"

"We're on an island-"

The girl broke off. Heavy feet sounded running down the corridor.

Monk and Ham had forgotten they had been singing for some time and that their sudden change from song to a tone of anger might be noticed.

The guard who had been placed a hundred yards down the corridor came on the double-quick.

Ham gave a gasp and leaped for his clothes. Monk popped toward the door. The hairy chemist was dressed now. A pleased grin spread over his homely features as he heard the oncoming guard.

The guard really had himself to blame. He didn't even have his gun out when he skidded to a stop at the cell door.

Monk never gave him a chance to get it.

His tiny eyes twinkling, Monk lifted one from the floor. It connected with the oncoming chin. The chin reversed direction, went backward even more rapidly than it had been advancing.

The girl grabbed up her flashlight, darted out the door.

"Come on. We've only seconds," she said breathlessly.

Neither Monk nor Ham questioned her. She seemed to know her way around, and that was all that counted. Ham was still pulling on clothes and he leaped to follow her.

Where the girl came into it, why she was showing this sudden interest in Doc Savage's safety, was something they didn't stop to figure out. That could wait until there was more time.

The girl was small, but she could run. She set a fast pace.

She led them what seemed to them to be miles through dark tunnels. Actually, they knew the distance probably wasn't more than a few hundred yards, but the many twists and turns made it appear longer.

"W-what is this joint, anyway?" Monk panted.

"An old castle, or was once," Alice Dawn answered impatiently. "No one knows who built it. Now-"

She stopped talking, increased her pace. Dimly, far ahead, daylight could be seen.

"If we can reach there, I know where we can find a speedboat," she said swiftly. "There is a radio on the boat-"

She broke off with a startled scream.

A half dozen men appeared. It seemed they came from the very walls of the corridor. Actually, it almost was that way. The men had been hidden in small niches that lined the passageway, had been invisible until the girl and her two companions were almost upon them.

Monk howled fearfully. Ham wished he had the comforting feel of his sword-cane in his hand. This was one fight that was going to be important.

The girl had said Doc Savage was in danger. They couldn't warn him unless they themselves were free.

The homely chemist and the once-dapper lawyer threw themselves into the fray with unaccustomed ferocity.

## **Chapter XVI. A BAITED TRAP**

ALICE DAWN had been right. Doc Savage was in danger. He had been speeding toward that danger for some hours.

There was only one point Alice Dawn hadn't known.

The bronze man was fully aware of the peril he was in, of the risk he was taking that he and Renny and Johnny might soon die.

None of them had the least desire to avoid that risk.

There had been more to the message from the "boss" to the little man with the evil face and wizened features than Doc had caught the first time he had played the record.

A second playing revealed the rest.

"You undoubtedly will be questioned thoroughly by Savage," the "boss" had said. "When you are, exhibit great reluctance to talk, but finally permit yourself to be beaten down. When he demands my location, tell him this-"

A latitude and longitude followed.

"This 'boss,' whoever he is, is playing a smart game," Renny said. The big engineer's huge fists opened and closed. "He knows we won't get out of the game just because he threatens to kill Monk and Ham. He figures we'll try to go to their rescue after pumping midget here."

"So he is trying ingannation," Johnny finished.

"Yeah, he's set a trap," Renny agreed.

Doc said nothing. The "midget" was looking at them with startled eyes.

Before he could move, Doc's arms snapped out. One hand caught the little man about the neck, pressed a nerve at the base of the skull.

The little man went limp. He was conscious, but the nerve Doc had pressed had rendered him incapable of falsehood. The bronze man's gold-flecked eyes stared hard into the eyes of the other. They created a weird, hypnotic effect.

"Who is the 'boss'?" Doc asked.

"I do not know," the little man replied. His voice was curiously flat and lifeless. "No one has ever seen

him. Orders are given through others."

"Where is he now?" the bronze man asked.

"An . . . an island, that is all I know."

Renny snorted. "This bird isn't telling us anything."

Johnny pointed to a map. He pointed to the longitude and latitude that had been given by the "boss."

"But may I point out," he said, his use of small words showing his seriousness, "that there is no island at this location."

"The pirate sub?" Renny speculated.

"That-or the sea serpent," Doc said quietly.

PETE MILLS' scarred features wore as near a pleasant expression as his perpetual leer would permit.

The captain of the pirate sub was well pleased with himself. His crew of gunmen and thugs was pleased also. Their last trip was nearly through.

And it had been a successful trip. Mills' grin grew broader as he thought of the ships they had sunk, the crews they had murdered, almost under the guns of warships from a dozen nations.

"I may have been only an enlisted man in the navy, but boy, I've done a job those Annapolis babies couldn't have done!" Mills exulted.

Mills chose to overlook the fact that his hitch in the navy had come at a time when he'd been on the lam from a murder charge.

He'd deserted abruptly when civil authorities had got on his trail.

The cargo-carrying submarine was loaded to capacity. And Mills believed he had shown good judgment. He'd taken only stuff that could be recreated and sold with little danger of its source ever being traced.

Only one job remained, and that shouldn't be too tough.

Doc Savage had to be disposed of.

Mills forgot that he had been afraid of the bronze man not long before. But there was a reason for that.

The "boss" had figured out a perfect trap, one that not even Doc Savage could get out of.

"Then back to home port, and after that-

A cold gleam came to Pete Mills' killer eyes. The "boss" was smart, but not too smart, Pete decided. The "boss" intended to kill him when his usefulness was through. He knew that.

What the "boss" didn't know was that Pete intended to do the killing first, and he hadn't picked himself as the victim.

The pirate sub swung slightly in an ocean current. Pete wondered if he should put her down on the bottom for a time, then decided against it.

The trap was all set. All he had to do was wait.

The scarred-faced man picked up headphones that connected with the listening devices, strained his ears. Faintly, still far away, he picked up the sound of an approaching boat.

From the beat of the propeller he could tell that it was a submarine approaching under the surface.

Doc Savage was on his way. Soon he would die.

AND the death of Doc Savage was being demanded throughout the world with redoubled fury.

The captain of the British submarine had made his report.

There was no longer any doubt, even in the minds of Doc's strongest admirers. The bronze man was connected with the terror that menaced the entire Atlantic coast.

"He had the effrontery to try and bargain with me," the British captain told newspapermen. The captain drew himself up haughtily. "I refused to bargain, of course.

"If . . . if something unforeseen hadn't gone wrong with our propeller and diving planes just then, we'd have caught the blighter. But we will get him."

The story created a sensation. Newspapers throughout the United States started a reward fund. The government itself posted a million dollars for the capture of the bronze man.

A tall man with ramrod back heard of the reward over the radio. His square features broke into an unaccustomed smile.

This was a break he hadn't expected.

"I'll get that reward," he decided.

He glanced at his watch. Unless his calculations were wrong, Doc Savage would die within the next few minutes-or at least would be in a position from which escape would be impossible.

The tall man chuckled mirthlessly. It really was ironic, he thought, but he-the man responsible for the terror-was going to be idolized, was going to be paid a million dollars.

He would be hailed as a public hero because he destroyed Doc Savage.

"And I'll show them his body, too," he promised.

The bronze man and his aids were the only ones who had different ideas.

The faint sound Pete Mills had heard through the listening device faded. A worried expression crossed Mills' leering features. He barked sharp orders.

The pirate sub got under way.

A mile away, Doc's undersea craft had halted on orders from the bronze man. It remained motionless exactly twenty minutes.

Then Long Tom started the motors again. He followed the course charted by the bronze man. They forged ahead slowly.

Renny came in from the engine room. A thin sheath of perspiration covered his big face. Johnny kept putting his monocle in his eye, dropping it, then replacing it.



Long Tom glanced anxiously at the chart, then at the instruments on the panel before him. His features grew more and more strained.

"Find Doc. Tell him to come here," he urged.

It was ten minutes more before the mystifying truth became apparent.

Doc Savage had disappeared. It was impossible. It was something that couldn't happen.

But it had happened.

LONG TOM'S features were chalky. What it was all about he didn't know. But one thing was positive. The bronze man no longer was aboard the submarine.

The electrical expert tried to remember whether the stern had felt logy during their twenty-minute pause. It might have been that Doc had left the sub through the big escape hatch for some exploration of his own.

But if that were so, he hadn't returned. And since the bronze man wasn't in the sub, he must have been left behind.

Johnny had been thinking along the same lines. The lean archaeologist tried to speak. He couldn't even find any little words.

Perspiration poured from Renny's big body. If Doc had slipped from the side of their sub when it had stopped, then he was gone. There wasn't any chance-not even one chance in a million-of returning and finding him.

The sea was deep there. Very deep. The bronze man would have gone down, down until water pressure broke the diving suit he wore. He would have been crushed to pulp.

The same thought was in the mind of each. Renny spoke the words.

"There's nothing to do but go ahead," he said brokenly.

The others nodded dumbly. That is what Doc would want them to do.

Long Tom looked at the chart and the instruments again. He had difficulty in seeing them, but it was apparent they were almost at their rendezvous.

It was then the voice came. It was a low, compelling voice. It came from a loud-speaker over their heads. It was the voice of Doc Savage.

"Dive! Crash for the bottom! A torpedo is on the way!"

## **Chapter XVII. TRAPPED**

DOC SAVAGE had left the submarine. But he'd returned again. The only thing was, he was completely cut off from his companions.

The bronze man had not told the others what he intended to do. If he had done so, one of them would have pleaded for the task. And when danger threatened, Doc preferred to take the point of greatest peril himself.

And he was in a dangerous spot. He was crammed into a small, glass-inclosed chamber. The glass

chamber was hooked onto the bow of the submarine. It had been attached there by Doc shortly before they had left New York.

There was no way to reach the glass chamber through the submarine. The bronze man had reached it during the sub's brief halt, crossing the top of the undersea craft without even the protection of a diving suit.

No room had been provided for a diving suit in the narrow chamber. But there was a microphone connected with the loud-speaker in the control room.

Doc saw the torpedo just in time. Evidently it had been fired at the sound of their propellers. And the aim had been excellent.

The small glass chamber was almost torn from the nose of the sub as it made a crash dive.

The torpedo missed by inches.

Doc had seen the approaching engine of destruction through use of a special underwater light.

Even in tropical water it is difficult to see any distance beneath the surface. The light Doc used was an adaptation of the klystron rays, the new development of focusing invisible electrons into a steady beam.

Discoverers of klystron are adapting it for use in television. Doc made use of its invisible-light features in a new way. He had perfected it so that it caused illumination when it struck a metal object.

The pirate submarine had come into view first. Only seconds later had come the flash of the torpedo, speeding from one of the two tubes in the huge craft.

A moment more and the pirate sub appeared to stand almost on its bow as its stern ballast tanks were blown.

Pete Mills' ears, glued to the listening device, had heard and interpreted the move ordered by Doc. A second torpedo flashed downward.

"BLOW the forward tanks," Doc ordered calmly.

His craft acted like a toe dancer as the bow shot upward. The torpedo roared by.

"Blow the stern tanks," came the command.

The sub shot upward. The pirate craft was only a few hundred feet away.

Doc's craft had no torpedo tubes. It could not continue a hide-and-see game of this type indefinitely. Sooner or later it would be caught.

The bronze man did not appear concerned. He gave curt directions. The bow of his undersea ship swung slightly.

There was a hissing roar, then a flat crack like that of two boards slapped together.

The pirate craft staggered, half turned in the water.

For a second time came the hissing roar. A white streak flashed through the water, caught the pirate broadside, rolled it violently.

Pete Mills swore fiercely. His scarred features were livid. Frantically, he reached for control signals. His ship dived, raced ahead.

There was no chance to get set for another torpedo attack. Each time he would try to stop, try to get into position to fire, another shock would hit, keeping the submarine rolling and weaving.

Pete Mills could not understand it. His leering features became hard.

"O. K., wise guy," he snarled. "You win the first trick. But you won't the second."

Grimly he seized the controls, sent the submarine on a new tack.

Behind him, Doc Savage watched grimly. Each time the pirate craft offered a target, another of those strange, white flashing streaks roared toward it.

Doc could not sink the other ship with the weapon he was using. But he could make it uncomfortable for it, and was doing it.

The weapon was not one he had expected to use. He had rigged it up after it became apparent a trap was being set for them.

It was simple, but it was effective as far as it went. What he was using actually was a modified "lightning" bolt, a terrific discharge of controlled electricity, which tore through the water and slapped against the side of the other ship, staggering it.

Amusement-park owners had experimented with similar weapons. Doc had merely pepped up the voltage and amperage.

Ahead of them the pirate sub appeared in full flight. It weaved back and forth at full speed.

Doc's gold-flecked eyes narrowed slightly. He spoke swiftly into the microphone before him.

In the control room, Long Tom's sallow complexion now brightened. Renny and Johnny looked at him inquiringly.

"Don't worry," Long Tom said reassuringly.

It was then that a dense cloud appeared behind the pirate submarine, a thick, dark haze similar to that released by an octopus when it is attacked.

At almost the same moment it seemed that "tentacles" of a huge octopus came into view, weaving and waving beneath the water.

The pirate submarine dived directly between two of these "tentacles," sped past on the other side.

"Full speed astern!" Doc Savage shouted.

It was too late. The bronze man's underseas craft already was within reach of those swaying arms.

There was a tremendous thrashing. So fast the eye could scarcely follow, the "tentacles" lashed out.

They wrapped themselves about Doc's sub, held it powerless.

THE bronze man spoke again into his microphone. Then he left the small glass room from which he had directed the underseas battle.

There was no time to waste. Doc wasted none. He opened a small door, allowed water to rush in. When the pressure was equalized, he dived out, started toward the stern of the sub.

What happened then, not even Doc Savage could have counted on.

The bronze man was creeping along the deck of the submarine, moving steady toward the hatch aft where he could get back inside his craft. And then it happened.

Another tentacle lashed out. It came with startling swiftness. It wrapped directly about the bronze man's middle. And the "tentacle" was not the vacuum-cupped arm of the true underwater octopus. It was an inch-thick steel cable.

Doc was without a diving suit. He had an oxygen tablet in his pocket-one of those he had invented long before that would permit him to remain for several minutes under water. But not even a big supply of oxygen tablets could save him eventually.

The pirate sub had stopped. Cautiously it went to the surface.

A diver went overboard.

After a time, the diver returned. The diver's hard face was gloating when his helmet was removed.

"You got 'em, guy! You got 'em!" he reported jubilantly.

Pete Mills' shoulders rose and fell. He looked relieved. "No chance of them getting away?"

The diver shook his head. "I'll say not!" He paused, then grinned. "But I've been saving the best of it for the last."

Pete Mills looked his question.

"That bronze guy, the one everybody's been afraid of-Doc Savage-he's down there, too."

"Of course," Pete Mills snapped. "I knew that."

"Yeah, maybe you did," the diver grinned, "but you didn't know he was outside his sub. How it happened I don't know; maybe it was because he had metal in that equipment belt I've always understood he wears. But anyway-it happened.

"The 'octopus' got him. Doc Savage is drowned. His submarine is trapped."

MONK and Ham thought they were trapped, also. It seemed as though they never would run out of opponents.

Quarters were too cramped to permit the others to use guns. That probably is the only thing that saved the hairy chemist and the dapper lawyer.

Even so, their outlook was far from pleasant.

Monk was fighting as he'd never fought before. His huge arms swinging tirelessly, his bulletlike head stuck forward, eyes gleaming, he battled as he'd never battled for his own life.

Monk was fighting for more than himself. He was fighting for a chance to aid Doc Savage. Time after time he roared forward, clearing a path before him, only to retreat again as more opponents jumped into the fray.

Ham didn't like hand-to-hand combat so well. He preferred to use his sword-cane. But since he didn't have the cane, he was using his fists. Diving in and out, weaving and swaying, he was a difficult target to hit, a tougher one to make stay down.

Alice Dawn had dodged out of the way of the first onslaught. But she didn't remain idle. She grabbed a blackjack from the hand of one of those Monk had knocked down.

After that, she stood on the sidelines. When one of the attackers would go down, she would step forward and make sure that he stayed down.

Monk and Ham had no worry about being attacked from behind. Alice Dawn took care of that.

Slowly, a foot at a time, the three moved forward. Their opponents were losing their enthusiasm.

None knew how long they had been fighting. It seemed hours.

Monk looked more nearly like a throwback to the jungle than ever before. No one would have recognized in Ham the once best-dressed man in New York.

A groan came from Alice Dawn. Monk risked a quick glance behind him. Then he felt like groaning also.

A moment before it had looked as though they might win out. But not now. A new opponent was charging into the battle.

The man weighed well over three hundred pounds. His triple chins jumped up and down like a shimmy dancer.

Fresh, Monk had no doubt of his own ability to take Roland Stevens any time, any place. But he no longer was fresh. None of them was. And if he turned back to meet the new menace, those ahead of them would gain courage. They would be overwhelmed.

But there was nothing else to do. Somebody had to stop the fat man.

Monk turned, started to swing. Then he stopped, mouth agape.

Roland Stevens went past him like a steam roller. The fat man hit the bunched gangsters in front with an impact like that of a tank-and with about the same result.

The few remaining fighters still on their feet went down. Stevens fell on one of them. That one was out for good. Alice Dawn wielded the blackjack steadily.

The fight was over.

THERE was no time to ask or answer questions. The girl didn't even pause. She jumped in the lead again, with a quick command to follow her.

Monk and Ham helped the fat man to his feet.

Stevens was blubbing, but it was from the excitement that grips some people when they suddenly find they still can fight physically.

"I thought you were on the other side," Ham panted.

"I . . . I was tricked," Roland Stevens moaned. He lumbered after them as they started for the streak of daylight not far away.

"I should have told you all of the story in New Jersey, instead of just part of it. Then I was taken prisoner. I was brought here on the same plane you were. Only a few minutes ago I got away. I started out to free you, heard this fight and came on."

Then all of them stopped talking. They had emerged onto a sheltered path. They raced down it until they came to the concealed waterway.

Before them lay a small wharf. Case after case of stolen goods was stacked at one side. Near the edge of the wharf was modern hoisting equipment.

And on the other side lay several speedboats.

"Give us five minutes, and we're gone," Ham snapped.

Monk paused, looked behind him shrewdly. There was a door from the wharf to the path beyond.

The hairy chemist returned, fastened it.

A howl of disappointment came from Ham. The lawyer leaped from one to another of the speedboats swiftly. At each one he made a rapid inspection of the motor. His face was long.

"Tough," he said quietly. "But I guess we don't go, after all."

Alice Dawn slumped wearily. Fear returned to the fat features of Roland Stevens.

"The distributors," Ham explained simply. "Every distributor has been taken. Not a motor will run."

Monk's piglike eyes swept the scene swiftly. Then he howled. He leaped into one of the boats, tore back canvas lashings. Ham jumped to his side. The lawyer's face lifted.

An efficient ship-to-shore radio was revealed. Monk flipped switches rapidly.

Shouts came from behind them as the radio tubes began to hum. Others had discovered their escape. They had only minutes to work.

Ham seized the microphone, spoke rapidly.

"Doc Savage's men calling," he said. "We have discovered the hideout of the pirate submarine. It is on an island located at-" He glanced quickly at Alice Dawn. She and Roland Stevens supplied the information with one voice. "Please come quickly," Ham went on.

Fists battered on the door leading to the wharf. A gun spoke angrily. Hot lead smashed into the side of the boat.

"This is Brigadier General Brooks, signing off," Ham concluded. "With Andrew Mayfair, Miss Alice Dawn and Roland Stevens, I am standing by-hoping to see you. But if not-good hunting."

Ham stopped. "Come on," he said swiftly. "Let's get out of here some way. Maybe we can hide out on this island until help gets here."

Monk grabbed the girl's arm, started to lift her to her feet.

Then he stopped, shrugged resignedly. A minute before there might have been some chance of doing as Ham had suggested. There wasn't now.

Silently, a submarine had slipped up behind them. The conning-tower hatch opened. Pete Mills popped into view, a submachine gun in his hands.

## **Chapter XVIII. A SENTENCE OF DEATH**

THERE was no hope of escape. Monk and Ham didn't even try. All life seemed to have gone out of Alice Dawn. Roland Stevens looked as if he already were dead.

They scarcely looked up as the door to the wharf burst open and other armed men appeared.

By now, warships of a dozen nations undoubtedly were getting up steam, some probably already were racing toward this spot. Planes would be dispatched as well-bombing and pursuit planes.

But no matter how swiftly they arrived, there could be no hope for the four under the menace of the killers' guns.

A tall man with ramrod back raced into view. Most of the man's face was concealed by a handkerchief, but his eyes were deadly, his voice raging.

"Mills! These fools have spoiled everything. We've got to get out!"

Mills' scarred features hardened, his finger tightened on the trigger of the tommy gun. Monk braced himself for the shock of bullets.

The tall man threw up one hand. "Wait!" he ordered harshly. Then his voice dropped. "Shooting is too easy a death for them. I know a better way."

Pete Mills grinned. "For the girl, too?" he asked softly.

The tall man jerked even more erect. He hesitated, but then only for a moment. Then, "For the girl, too," he rasped.

One of Alice Dawn's hands slipped out, caught Monk's hairy fist. "I . . . I'm sorry," she whispered. "It really was my fault. I got you into this."

Monk closed his fingers. Dying wasn't going to be so bad, he decided, when he could go in company like this. "Daggonit, don't think about it," he reassured. "Me and Ham would have gotten into this, anyway."

The girl was silent for a moment. Then she spoke softly, more as if she were speaking to herself.

"I thought I was being patriotic, that I was risking my life for my country. I found I was being double-crossed. I was being used by an arch-criminal."

Monk tightened his grip on her hand comfortingly. "Don't worry," he said quietly. "Everything will be all right. And we still have a chance. Doc Savage will save us."

"Doc always shows up," Ham added. "No one can stop him. And then-"

Ham stopped. The tall, ramrod-backed man had spun on Pete Mills. "You were successful?" he snapped.

Pete Mills' grin grew broader. "Doc Savage is dead," he announced gleefully. "He was last seen, drowned and wrapped up in cable, a hundred feet down in water."

A gasp came from Ham's tight lips. Monk's head jerked as if he had been struck with a club.

"That's all I wanted to know," the masked man snapped. A big gun appeared in his hand. It roared once.

Pete Mills' scarred face vanished as an explosive bullet struck it squarely in the center.

The tall man whirled on others of the gunmen, his weapon steady. "Mills had ideas of taking over," he snarled. "That was his error. I am still boss."

The swing of his head had loosened the handkerchief he'd used to conceal his features. The handkerchief slipped down.

Monk and Ham looked startled. They turned to the girl for confirmation. She nodded her head slightly.

"Yes," she said bitterly. "You're right. There is your master mind, a man you thought dead.

"That is Jerome Gadberry!"

MONK and Ham with their two companions were herded to a corner on the wharf. They were kept under the constant menace of ready guns.

Gadberry rapped sharp orders. Men from the submarine and those who had been on the island worked swiftly. Some cargo was taken from the sub, other was put in.

"We've got to run for it," Gadberry snapped. "We'll take only the most valuable stuff."

Neither Monk nor Ham paid much attention. They were still dazed at news of Doc's death. Roland Stevens appeared in a stupor. His triple chins rested on his chest; his eyes were dull.

Ham roused himself with an effort, turned to the girl.

Alice Dawn's large eyes looked at Ham with understanding. Talk would divert his mind from tragedy.

"Gadberry, as I know now, once was connected with criminals," she said slowly. "He was the chemist for a group of rumrunners and bootleggers. Then he became respectable, and won fame as a scientist.

"Several months ago he became connected with Mr. Stevens here, and with Turner Vineland. Stevens, the actual inventor, had asked Gadberry's and Vineland's aid with a device he thought would end the submarine menace forever."

Stevens looked up at the sound of his name, then nodded.

"The device was taken into the Gulf of Mexico for testing," the girl went on. "Gadberry told the others to let it stay there for a time, then they would get the government interested, would obtain the use of a submarine. Actually, he had other things in mind."

"Ah," Ham said. "I'm beginning to see some light."

The girl's head lowered. "You are right. Gadberry got word to another man, a man known as Hahln, about this device. Hahln, a spy, passed the information along to his government, as Gadberry had known he would.

"That government was going to send a submarine to the United States, anyhow. It decided to investigate the new antisub device as well."



"And got caught. That was the sea serpent," Monk put in.

"Right," Alice Dawn agreed. "Gadberry had expected that from the start. He even had a crew ready to operate the sub, headed by Pete Mills. He had this hide-away located-he knew of it from rum-smuggling days-and he deliberately waited until the men on the submarine were dead before he took Vineland and Stevens to the spot."

"But Hahln," Ham objected. "Couldn't he do anything?"

"How?" asked the girl. "He didn't dare go to the authorities. He tried to get Doc Savage at once. When he knew the crew on the submarine was dead, he came to Gadberry's office, tried to kill him."

The girl paused. She looked tired and sad.

"And then-" Ham prompted.

"Gadberry did the killing. He had known Hahln was coming. He had even instructed me how to help protect him. I was a fool. Gadberry made me believe Hahln was a spy trying to steal a valuable secret for a foreign power, convinced me I should lie for him, help him in every way."

"But I still don't see one thing," Monk objected. "How could Gadberry pass himself off as someone else? Why would the police think Hahln's body that of Gadberry?"

"That is something I just found out," Alice Dawn said slowly. "Gadberry did more than murder a spy. He murdered a man who once trusted him-his own half-brother."

THERE was a flurry of activity on the submarine. The cargo hatch was lowered. The sub was ready to put to sea.

"Weren't you suspicious when Vineland was killed? When Stevens here was kidnapped?" Ham rasped.

The girl shook her head slowly. "I did not know about Vineland. And Gadberry told me to get Stevens away so that he could not talk, that even Doc Savage might be an enemy. I am sorry to say I believed him."

There was no chance for further conversation. Rough hands seized them, bound their arms behind them. Gadberry came forward.

The tall man stood stiffly erect, the gun loaded with explosive bullets in his hand.

"This is going to give me pleasure," he announced softly. "Even though I regret that Miss Dawn must be among the victims."

"You still can't get away with it," Ham put in harshly.

Gadberry shook his head. "I think I can, my friend," he snapped. "When warships and planes arrive, they will find little on this island to help them. You will all be gone. There will be none left to tell the tale.

"And a submarine is hard to find. There is a certain South American country I know where the millions in supplies I have, will win me an honored place."

"What happens to us?" Monk asked harshly. The homely chemist looked as belligerent as usual. Only Roland Stevens appeared to have no hope.

Jerome Gadberry rasped swift orders.

The answer to Monk's question was swift in coming.

The four were hauled forward, onto the deck of the pirate submarine. They were stretched full length upon that deck and tied there.

Gadberry had not been exaggerating when he said there would be little left on the island to tell what had happened, and that there would be none alive to talk.

The submarine would move out, would submerge slowly. The helpless captives on the deck would drown, slowly and agonizingly.

A strange grin crossed Gadberry's features. His gunman clambered aboard the submarine, vanished beneath. Gadberry was the last to enter the conning tower.

"Good-by, my friends," he jeered softly.

The conning-tower hatch came down. The submarine got under way, moving toward the open sea. Slowly it started to submerge.

It was then that Doc Savage appeared.

## **Chapter XIX. TRAITORS DIE**

THE diver who had descended from the pirate sub on Pete Mills' orders had made several errors.

His chief one had been in believing he saw the bronze man's drowned body. Doc was there all right, but he was far from dead. He had merely wished to create that impression.

It had been apparent to Doc and Long Tom from the first that the "octopus" or "sea-serpent" device operated on the principle of magnet mines.

The "tentacles" were the long feelers of the device. Long, steel cables, held a short distance beneath the surface by floats, they were attracted by the steel of any submarine that came near, would lash out, wrap themselves about the unlucky sub.

And when the "tentacles" went into operation, they set in motion machinery contained in the "octopus" part of the body. This machinery, held to the bottom of the sea by heavy weights, pulled the submarine down, held it fast.

At the end of three days the machinery would demagnetize the cables automatically, would release the captured sub, but by that time the crew would be dead. It also was possible, as Doc figured out, to get a copper wire to the machinery, and demagnetize it earlier.

But there was a perfect defense against this type of attack. If a submarine itself was demagnetized, it was safe. And it could be so demagnetized by running a cable about it, and running current through that cable so that it would repel, rather than attract the "tentacles."

The pirate submarine had been so equipped. This had enabled it to slip through the "tentacles." So had Doc's sub, but he had wanted it to look as if he had been caught.

And he had succeeded.

Actually, Long Tom had turned on current for a moment, had released Doc, then had let the "tentacles" grab hold of the submarine again.

When the diver came down, Doc already had been in his sub, had donned a special diving suit. The suit was one he himself had perfected.

That suit, of special, transparent composition, enabled the bronze man to move freely. And inside, it contained sufficient supply of oxygen tablets to last for hours.

As the diver had returned to the pirate submarine, Doc Savage had followed on the ropes behind him. He had held onto the deck, had ridden the pirate into its stronghold, then had slipped from view.

MONK howled with glee-then almost strangled as he took aboard a full mouthful of water. Ham's features split in a wide grin.

Roland Stevens looked as if he were seeing a ghost. But Alice Dawn managed a wan smile.

The bronze man worked swiftly. A knife came to his hand. He slashed loose the ropes that held the four to the deck of the submarine.

And barely in time. The sub's deck vanished beneath the surface.

Jerome Gadberry really wasn't suspicious. He was merely cautious. He lifted the conning-tower hatch for one last look before fully submerging.

He saw Doc Savage.

A howl of rage came from the tall man with ramrod back. His big gun appeared, spun toward Doc.

Doc leaped forward. Without question he could have reached Gadberry in time.

Roland Stevens spoiled that. The big man slipped on the wet deck of the submarine, crashed into Doc, knocking him aside.

An instant later the gun spoke. Its explosive bullet caught Stevens in the middle of his huge paunch. That paunch seemed to disintegrate.

Doc had been knocked in the water. Monk, Ham and Alice Dawn already were swimming for shore. They were keeping their heads beneath the surface.

Jerome Gadberry hesitated. For a moment he seemed undecided whether to stay and try to kill Doc, or to leave.

Then he made his decision. There was no time left to return and hunt down the bronze man's aids as well as Doc.

The conning-tower hatch slammed shut. The submarine vanished beneath the surface.

An instant later, Doc appeared on the other side of the sub. There was a small glass bulb in his hand. Had that bulb been thrown inside the conning tower, Gadberry and those with him would have been overcome, could have been taken captive.

Now it was too late.

Doc's gold-flecked eyes flashed strangely. He cast a quick glance toward the sea, toward the spot where the island channel entered the Atlantic.

Monk and Ham pounded the bronze man on the back, telling him over and over how glad they were to

see him. Alice Dawn, her flaming crimson hair returned to its original darkness by sea water, smiled shyly.

"I'm only sorry those killers are getting away, daggonit!" Monk bellowed finally. "I'd like to have gotten in one good smack at that guy myself."

Doc Savage said nothing for the moment. Instead, he turned, looked again toward the spot where the island channel entered the sea.

The bronze man's gold-flecked eyes appeared slightly puzzled.

"It was too bad, though," Ham put in, "that Stevens had to get his right at the last. He helped us a lot."

Doc nodded, but did not speak. The bronze man knew, what the others did not, that Stevens had stood by while seamen, still alive on the captured submarine, had been shot to death by the pirates.

Undoubtedly Stevens had been afraid. He had not been a criminal at heart. But he could have spoken up, could have told the authorities what had happened, might have saved the lives of scores of others.

"You know what it is all about, 'sea serpent' and all?" Monk demanded.

Doc nodded.

"You two took underwater pictures near where the 'sea serpent' was seized," he explained, "but you found nothing because you were not at the right spot. I found a map in Gadberry's office which helped me, and discovered huge anchors beneath the surface. From that, it was simple to deduce the rest."

Neither Monk nor Ham thought it was simple, but they said nothing.

"But why were the government men watching you in New York?" Ham asked curiously.

Doc turned toward Alice Dawn. "I think this young lady can explain," he said quietly.

The girl blushed. "I . . . I am afraid I can," she admitted. "You see, I took what Mr. Gadberry said seriously. I thought you really might be an enemy, and that I was fighting for my country. I must have made my story convincing."

"You've explained how the 'sea serpent' worked," Monk puzzled, "but remember Stevens said if a sub had it, it was a protection. How about that?"

"It could stop any depth bomb," Doc said briefly. "One of the 'tentacles' would grab the bomb, and by regulating the machinery in the device, the bomb would be held too high to explode until such time as was safe."

The bronze man glanced again toward the mouth of the island channel. This time there was no question about his look. It was frankly puzzled.

A seaplane roared by overhead. Seconds later two more flashed by. They circled the island, looking for signs of life before landing.

A long white line appeared in the water of the channel. A conning tower broke the surface. A minute later and Renny, Long Tom and Johnny, whooping joyfully, joined the group on the shore.

WARSHIPS soon joined the seaplanes. By nightfall the water around the island resembled a navy base. There were fighting craft from many nations.

Doc, his aids and Alice Dawn were guests aboard the American flagship.

Already explanations had been made, but they were forced to tell their story many times for admiring officers.

And already their story had been radioed to the newspapers. Doc Savage no longer was a hunted criminal. Once again he was the world's hero.

Doc's popularity increased when it became known that he would not accept the million offered for capture of the pirate craft that had terrorized the entire seaboard.

That million, the newspapers announced, would go to the families of seamen who had been killed by the terror.

The admiral took Doc Savage to his private quarters.

"You say that you and Major Roberts improved upon Stevens' original invention?" he asked.

The bronze man nodded. "The plans will be given the navy department," he promised. "You see, protection from a magnetic device of that kind is effective only if it succeeds in repelling either a positive or a negative attraction.

"The tentacles Long Tom devised offset that point. One tentacle would be pulled to a negative pole, the other to a positive. So no matter what type of current was used in the protective device, one tentacle or the other would catch hold."

The admiral nodded. "And there is no chance of recovering the body of this man Gadberry?"

The bronze man shook his head. "None," he said. "I confirmed the story told me by Renny and Johnny.

"The sub-catching device that Long Tom perfected was set just outside the island channel. Johnny and Renny then retired to watch. The tentacles caught the pirate submarine successfully, and one fouled an open ballast vent. The submarine filled and went to the bottom.

"That had been expected. But there is a deep shoulder just off this island. The water goes down for thousands of feet. No submarine can stand that. The submarine burst open. All aboard were killed."

"And by their own device," the admiral said thoughtfully.

THE END