



MEN OF FEAR

A Doc Savage Adventure by Kenneth Robeson

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CHAPTER I. THE REFORMER

TROUBLE had been the business of Doc Savage for a long time.

Like anyone else who was very good at his profession, the bronze man did not have to go hunting business. It came to Doc, usually. And the approach was not gradual, as a rule.

"It looks as if we never sneak up on anything. It explodes under us, instead," was the way big-fisted Renny Renwick, the engineer member of Doc's group of five associates, put it. "Holy cow!"

The affair that began on Wednesday afternoon was exactly the reverse. It began this way:

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Blodgett Monk Mayfair and his pet pig walked into Doc Savage's headquarters on the top floor of a skyscraper in midtown New York. Monk was another of the five associates, a chemist. He was the homeliest man of their group. There were not over two more homely men in New York. The pet pig, named Habeas Corpus, was no orchid, either.

"I don't think we'd better," Monk said.

"Better what?" asked Renny Renwick.

"Better not go exploring that South American jungle," Monk said. "I don't favor it."

"Why not?" asked Renny.

"Too dangerous," said Monk.

"What?"

Renny rumbled. "What did you say?"

"Too dangerous," repeated Monk patiently.

Renny's mouth fell open. He sat there and waited for the world to come to an end. He looked out the window to see if the Hudson River was running uphill. Ice must be freezing in hell.

This was impossible!

Monk Mayfair's likes and dislikes were well-known to Renny. Monk liked to eat. Better still, he liked a pretty girl, particularly if he could take her away from the lawyer, Ham Brooks. He liked to quarrel with Ham. But more than any of these things, he liked a fight. Excitement! Trouble! Danger! Mystery! These were the pork and beans in Monk's diet.

"Do you feel all right?" Renny asked anxiously.

"Sure! Feel fine," said Monk.

"No buzzing in your head? No fever?"

Monk scowled. "I just think Doc has been taking too many chances. He better stop it. Henry thinks so, too."

"Who thinks so, too?"

"Henry."

"Who's Henry?"

Monk assumed a pained expression. "You are just trying to pick an argument with me. I won't give you the satisfaction. I'm going to talk to Doc."

Talking with Doc was simple. Doc Savage was in the laboratory, which adjoined the library where they were standing. Monk ambled into the lab. His hog followed him.

"Doc," he said, "you got to call off the South American trip."

Doc Savage was packing equipment for the exploration venture he planned to the upper watershed of the Inirida River. He was taking complete apparatus for research in the various lines in which his men specialized. Archaeological and geological equipment for William Harper Johnny Littlejohn. Engineering and surveying equipment for Renny Renwick. A portable chemical-analysis laboratory for Monk Mayfair.

"Call it off?" the bronze man said quietly. "Why?"

"Too dangerous," Monk said. The homely chemist was utterly serious. "You take too many chances, Doc. You take too many chances. The world cannot afford to lose a man like you. You've got to turn conservative."

The bronze man was so astonished that he made a small trilling sound that was his unconscious habit when under mental stress. The sound was low and exotic, with a quality that made it seem to come from the very air in the room.

"Is this a joke of some kind?" he asked.

Monk frowned. "I see I'll have to get Ham and Johnny to talk to you, too," he said.

He walked out.

RENNY RENWICK caught Doc Savage's eye and shrugged. "Holy cow! Don't look at me," Renny said. "I don't know what is wrong with him."

"Too dangerous," Doc Savage said thoughtfully. "As a matter of truth, this is probably the safest venture we have undertaken in the course of our association. It is not a fever section we are going to. There are no fierce natives. It is safer than New York, because there are no taxicabs."

Doc was a man of far more than average size, and his physical development was amazing. His skin was a deep-bronze hue, his hair only a slightly darker bronze, and his eyes were strangely like pools of flake gold. He gave the impression—although he tried not to do so—of being exactly what he was: An individual who had received unusual scientific training from childhood, and as a result had an amazing combination of mental wizardry and muscular ability.

"Too dangerous!" Renny exclaimed. "Holy cow! And Monk is the guy we're always trying to keep from breaking his neck."

"He said something about getting Ham and Johnny," Doc remarked.

Renny nodded. "They love excitement as much as Monk does."

Johnny and Ham arrived soon afterward, towed by Monk.

"Doc, you have got to stop taking chances," Ham said.

Renny's eyes popped.

Ham was Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks, noted lawyer. He carried an innocent-looking black sword-cane, always. To hear him preaching caution was amazing.

Johnny Littlejohn, the archaeologist and geologist, was a very tall man who was thinner than seemed possible.

"An intransigent preoption, without rejectionious tergiversation," Johnny announced.

Renny looked at Doc. Johnny's big words always puzzled Renny.

Doc said, "He says they have made up their minds."

"That you've got to avoid danger, Doc?"

Monk said, "That's it exactly. Ham and Johnny and I have made up our minds. We're going to stop this risk taking."

Renny walked over and stood in front of them. Renny had fists that would not go into quart pails.

"Now look, you goons," he said. "I don't know what the game is, but we're busy packing. We're taking off in the plane tonight. You better quit pulling this stuff and get packed."

Ham said, "We are not going to allow Doc to go."

"Oh, you're not?"

"No."

Renny's neck began getting red. "What about me?"

"You, too. You can't go. You are also too valuable to the world. You're one of the best engineers of the age," Ham told him.

Renny blocked out his fists.

"What," he asked, "if we decide to go anyway?"

"We will stop you," Ham assured him.

Renny put one of his big fists under Ham's nose for the lawyer's examination.

"You see that box of knuckles?" Renny asked. "You cut this out, or *that* will do some stopping."

Ham backed away from the fist. "I do not see why you will not listen to reason," he said. "We have talked this over with Henry, and he agrees with us that Doc is taking too many risks. Henry thinks Doc should retire to the country somewhere, assume another name, and devote himself to surgical and other scientific research. We can all help him. We will all be safe."

"Who," asked Renny, "is Henry?"

Ham said, "You know very well it is the sensible thing to do."

Renny lost patience.

"Well, we're not going to do it!" he roared. "We're going right ahead."

"We shall see," Ham said coldly.

He wheeled and strode out. Monk and Johnny followed him. Their faces were determined.

It dawned on Renny that they were really in earnest. He could hardly believe it, much less understand it.

"I wonder who this Henry is," he rumbled.

THE remaining member of Doc Savage's group of five associates, Long Tom Roberts, arrived a few minutes later. Long Tom was a slight man who looked as if he had matured in a mushroom cellar. But he could whip wild cats.

Patricia Savage accompanied him. Pat was a young woman who liked excitement, and managed to get a bit of it now and then because she was Doc Savage's cousin. She invariably tried to horn into their adventures. They tried hard to prevent that, and sometimes they succeeded.

Long Tom said, "What the heck's got into Monk, Ham and Johnny? We met them downstairs. They were wearing long faces and would not speak to us."

Renny snorted.

"They've been talking to Henry," he said.

"And who is Henry?"

"A very cautious gentleman, evidently," Renny said. "You know what those three clucks just told us? They said we would have to call off the South American trip. Said it was too dangerous."

Patricia Savage peered at the big-fisted engineer.

"What is this—a little game?" she asked.

"So help me, that's what happened."

"I can't believe it!" Pat said.

Long Tom grunted. "Well, it didn't affect their appetite, whatever ails them. I saw them go into the restaurant downstairs."

"Restaurant, eh?" Renny said thoughtfully.

He sauntered into the reception room, which was furnished with comfortable chairs, an inlaid table and a huge safe. He got his hat and rode the private elevator downstairs. The elevator was equipped with alarms and gas to give undesired visitors a reception. Renny operated levers which switched off these.

He ambled into the restaurant, saw Monk and Ham and Johnny at a table and joined them.

"Look here, brothers," he said. "I want you to break down and tell me what goes on. This is confidential, and I won't tell anybody, so help me. Now, what has got into you? Why don't you want Doc to take this South American trip?"

Ham leaned forward.

"It's not the South American trip, Renny," he said earnestly. "It's everything."

"Everything?"

"All the risks Doc takes," Ham explained. "We have to stop that."

"Too dangerous, eh?" Renny said in a baffled voice.

"That is right."

Renny put his jaw out. He had a voice like a bear in a deep hole. Now, it sounded as if the bear was angry.

"You guys sound like three crazy men!" he said. "I know you and I know you never thought about danger before in your lives. Now, stop pulling this on me. Out with it!"

"Renny," said Monk, "it is simply that we have decided Doc lives too dangerous a life."

Renny glowered at them.

"That blasted Henry sure did a job on you," he said.

"We respect his opinions," Monk said stiffly.

"Damn Henry!" Renny yelled. "Who is he, anyhow?"

Ham stood up. He was blazing with emotion. "We will not have you cursing our friends, particularly one who is concerned over the safety of Doc Savage," he said icily.

Renny also got up. But he walked out. He could not trust himself to do anything else.

There was something else, too. He had gotten the impression—he could not explain how—of fear in the three men! He could hardly believe that. If it were fear he had sensed in them, it was such fear that he would not have thought it possible for them to have.

He could not understand why the three had gone into rebellion.

RENNY wore a thoughtful expression as he walked into the headquarters suite. He saw, from the expressionless glance which Doc Savage gave him, that the bronze man knew he had gone down to talk to Monk, Ham and Johnny.

Renny shook his head. "It's revolution," he said grimly. "But I don't get it. I sure don't."

"Did you get the feeling they were scared?" Doc asked.

Renny jumped. So Doc had seen that immediately.

"I thought I did," he admitted.

Pat, who had not seen the three rebels, shrugged. "You can't tell me this is anything but some kind of a gag. Those three like excitement the way a pickaninny likes watermelon."

Long Tom said, changing the subject back to their expedition preparations, "Doc, I am taking along a new device I have developed for locating minerals by fluorescent activity, combined with so-called radio-locator operations. I have found that certain minerals change their response to a radio locator when subjected to fluorescence under black light. If I can index the alterations, I can work out a reliable method of identification."

He went on in that vein. Renny stood at a window, frowning. He did not believe the rebellion was a joke. It seemed serious to him. Very serious! But he could not explain why.

One sure thing, the three had always been the first to plunge into such trouble as Doc managed to uncover. And the trouble had seldom been mild. Doc's profession was frequently called that of righting wrongs and punishing evildoers in the far corners of the earth. It was not a job for panty-waists. The courage of Monk, Ham and Johnny had never been questioned.

They finished packing.

Doc Savage said, "Well, we are ready to go." He consulted his watch. "I am going to pick up some chemicals. I will be back in an hour."

He walked out.

The bronze man had about time to reach the elevator, and there was a yell. Blows! Fight sounds! A shot! A scuffling and gasping. Clang of an elevator door closing.

Renny let out a startled gasp, and dived through the library and reception room. He hit the tiled corridor and skidded up against a closed elevator door.

The indicator showed him the elevator was descending.

"They grabbed Doc!" Renny howled.

He whirled, pitched back into the reception room. To the big inlaid desk. He jabbed at the inlays. They were cleverly disguised control buttons. He jabbed buttons which released gas, stopped the elevator, locked the elevator door—or should have. But indicators showed him that none of these things happened.

"It's somebody who knows how that elevator is rigged!" he yelled.

He dashed out, hit the stairs. Pat and Long Tom pounded after him. They reached a lower floor, where regular elevators were available.

One of the cages came. They piled in. "Down!" Long Tom Roberts shouted. Then he swore at the governor which regulated the downward pace of the elevator.

"They'll get away!" he groaned.

Which they did.

THOROUGHLY disgusted, not a little disturbed, Renny and Long Tom examined the private elevator, which was finally located, not on the lobby level, but at its last stop. This was in a private garage which Doc maintained in the basement.

The part of the elevator mechanism which had been intended to stop the cage and gas its occupants had been smashed.

None of the assortment of cars in the big basement garage had been bothered.

But the outer doors had been smashed open. No one could be found in the street outside who had seen anything.

Rumbling in his chest, Renny stalked to the restaurant. It was not occupied by Monk, Ham or Johnny. Renny was not surprised.

"You think they grabbed Doc?" Pat asked.

"Sure."

"Monk, Ham and Johnny got him?"

"Yeah."

"Why?"

"That damned Henry," Renny rumbled.

Apprehension that Doc Savage had been captured by enemies—the bronze man did not suffer for lack of these—had given them a few minutes of wild concern.

When they got back upstairs, they were more calm. But they were infinitely puzzled.

"That's the darnedest thing I ever ran into," Long Tom muttered. "I've seen some baffling mysteries in my

time, but this one seems to astound me more completely than any of the others."

Pat sank into a chair. "In a way, they're right," she said.

"You mean about Doc taking too many chances?" Renny said. "I guess so. Yes, there is no doubt about that if you want to take the completely sane viewpoint."

Long Tom looked thoughtfully at the cases of packed equipment.

"The trip seems to be off," he remarked. "There wasn't anything very important about this jaunt to South America, anyway. You know, on second thought, it might be a good thing."

Pat nodded.

"It might be. Doc needs a vacation," she said. "He has never taken one, has he? Never, actually, what you would call going away for a period of relaxation. I guess it would be good for him. No human being can keep up the pace he has maintained."

Renny snorted. "Theoretically, nobody could keep up the pace, but Doc has done it," he reminded them. "In fact, I think he gets better all around as he goes along. But you might be right at that. A vacation never hurt anybody. I could stand one myself."

Long Tom relaxed.

"Well, Monk and Ham and Johnny grabbed Doc to make him take a rest it seems," he said. "So I guess it is all right."

They were still resting when there was sound of the outer door opening, and heavy breathing.

Monk walked in. He was puffing. "What happened to the private elevator?" he asked. "The instrument box in the darned thing is all smashed up, and it stopped on me fifteen floors down. I couldn't get it started. I had to walk up."

Renny bolted upright. Long Tom's eyes protruded slightly. Pat pressed a hand tightly to her lips. All of them stared at Monk.

"Don't . . . didn't *you* smash that elevator?" Renny demanded.

"Me?" Monk stared.

Whipping to his feet, Renny gripped Monk's arm.

"Didn't you fellows seize Doc?" he demanded.

"What fellows?" Monk asked foolishly.

"You and Ham and Johnny—didn't you grab Doc?"

Monk shook his head blankly. "We did not!" he said.

CHAPTER II. TRAILING HENRY

RENNY RENWICK had a great fist doubled as if to slug Monk. "You lying to me?" he bellowed.

"I didn't touch Doc," Monk said. "Neither did Ham or Johnny. When did this happen? Is that what smashed the elevator insides?"

Renny wheeled. His first wild excitement subsided into a grim purpose.

"Pat, get police on the telephone," he said. "Tell them Doc has been seized, ask them to keep a lookout for him."

He wheeled to Long Tom, the electrical wizard. "Long Tom, contact Doc's organization of private detectives," he said. "Put the word out that Doc has been grabbed by someone. Ask them to do what they can."

The last order actually meant more than the first. Doc's detective organization was a peculiar one. It was composed of "graduates" of his criminal-curing college, the unique institution which he maintained in upstate New York. This "college" was an unknown quantity as far as officials, newspapers and the general citizenry were concerned. To it, Doc sent such crooks as he captured. In the place, they underwent delicate brain operations which wiped out all past knowledge. They were then trained to hate crime and wrongdoing and taught a profession or trade. As a matter of practical common sense, Doc had molded these graduates into a loose organization upon which he could call for aid when the necessity appeared.

Turning back to Monk, Renny demanded, "Where are Ham and Johnny?"

"They took a ride in the country," Monk said. "They were going to talk this over."

"Talk what over?"

"This thing of Doc taking too many risks," Monk explained. "They were going to decide what to do about it."

"Where can we get hold of them?"

"I don't know how," Monk replied. "They aren't using a car with a radio in it or we might contact them that way."

Renny frowned at the pig, Habeas Corpus. The animal was sitting on the floor not far from Monk, its large ears fanned out as if inquiring into the excitement. Renny snorted.

HE went into the laboratory. Long Tom joined him. "I got the word going around to Doc's friends," he said.

Renny nodded. Renny had a long face which habitually wore a sour expression. His mood now was particularly murky.

"What are we going to do?" he muttered. "We can take fingerprints in the elevator cage, but probably that will not help. We'll do it, anyway. But anyone smart enough to grab Doc out of that elevator will have sense enough not to leave fingerprints."

Long Tom glanced at Renny quickly.

Then the electrical wizard walked to a metal case and indicated several identical objects therein. The objects looked like typewriter cases, four of them.

"Didn't Doc tell you about these?" he asked.

Renny bent close and eyed the boxes. He read a label. They *were* typewriter cases.

"Huh?" he said.

"Didn't you know about these?"

"Typewriters?"

"Don't let the boxes fool you," Long Tom told him. "They are just to fool people. There are no typewriters inside."

Renny shook his head. "I don't get it."

"Doc and I have been working on these things, for some time," Long Tom said. "Doc had the original idea for it, and turned it over to me for development. I got stuck a few times, and he helped me out. But I think I've got rid of the bugs. I believe the gadget will work under actual conditions."

"Is this a Greek lesson?" Renny asked. "Or don't I get told what is in those boxes?"

Long Tom moved one of the boxes from the case to a table. "Do not open it," he warned. "The apparatus is rigged so it will destroy itself if the cases are unlocked or opened. Even if a hole is cut in them anywhere, they will destroy themselves. There is some thermite and a detonator—the new type of thermite that is being used in incendiary bombs. It will destroy one of those cases and the contents almost instantly."

Renny stared. "Say, you make it sound important."

"It may be," Long Tom said thoughtfully.

"How does it work? What does it do?"

Long Tom indicated a camera lying on a nearby table. "You know how light affects the silver coating on a camera film when it hits it."

"Yes, results in oxidation," Renny said.

"Remember what spontaneous combustion is?"

"You mean a fire starting without anybody lighting it?"

"Right."

"Spontaneous combustion is oxidation causing heat to develop to ignition point, when inflammation occurs. That it?"

Nodding, Long Tom said, "Right. Notice the oxidation in both examples. Well, I've worked out a combination of chemical elements which can be made to oxidize rapidly when exposed, not to light, but to ultra-short-wave radio emanations, combined with a magnetic field of extremely high frequency, but not necessarily great strength."

Renny frowned. "Eh?"

Long Tom put a hand on the case which looked like a typewriter box. "This," he said, "is the gadget

which makes the short waves and the high-frequency magnetic field."

"I don't get it," Renny said.

The electrical wizard pointed at the box.

"I turn this on," he said, "and any chemical that comes in range of the thing will burst into smoldering flame. The range is not great—about a block at the most. But it will work through the walls of buildings, just like radio."

Renny scratched his head with one of his big hands. "Which adds up to what?"

"The chemical is in a tube," Long Tom explained. "It is a paste. Doc was carrying some of it. My idea was to use it to smear on enemies in a fight, and use the gadget later to set it afire."

Renny stared at Long Tom.

"That sounds as silly as a hen laying square eggs," he said. "Did Doc hatch out that mental toad? Or did you?"

Long Tom looked somewhat indignant. "It does sound foolish, but you don't quite get it. A *very* small quantity of that chemical is all that is necessary. I worked out the thing, I tell you."

Renny, still skeptical, said, "I see it's all *your* idea. Doc digs up some unusual things at times, but they have the virtue of working."

"This'll work!" Long Tom yelled.

"Listen, simple-wit, what makes you think Doc could have smeared any of that chemical on anybody. You say it was in a tube? What will he do, feed somebody the tube?"

Long Tom sneered.

"It wasn't a tube like tooth paste comes in," he said. "It was in the shape of a fake wristwatch. You just bump anybody with your wrist, and you've put the stuff on them—enough of it to set their clothes afire."

Renny sobered. "Say, you *have* worked on that, haven't you?"

"It'll function, too," Long Tom snapped. "Listen, you double-fisted clown—I'll show you."

"Show me how?"

"I've got six of these transmitters," Long Tom said. "We'll plant them around over town. We'll put them at the bridges leading out of the city. Manhattan is an island, and when you leave, it's either on a bridge, a ferry, or through a tunnel. We can't cover all bridges and tunnels. But we can spot some of them and have the police watch the others. I'll put one at the Times Square subway station, another one at Grand Central. The one in Times Square will cover the Eighth Avenue and the Sixth Avenue subways. That way, anybody going uptown or downtown—"

"Come on," Renny interrupted. "I think it's crazy. But it's all we seem to have."

THEY were not expecting any good luck, so it took them by surprise.

Long Tom turned on his devices to test them. He demonstrated their action by smearing a bit of his chemical paste on a table to show how it smoldered, then began blazing. He was right about the quantity needed. Only a very tiny amount, hardly enough to be noticed with the naked eye, was sufficient.

Long Tom had worked out the gadget, and he was proud of it. Renny professed skepticism. Actually, he imagined the thing involved some very advanced electrical science. Long Tom was accredited with being one of the great electrical minds of the times.

Down on the street, they found a commotion. A crowd. One or two cops.

Renny collared one of the elevator boys from the building and asked, "What goes on?"

"Guy had an accident," the boy said. "It's all over, now."

They started on, but Renny turned back suddenly. "What kind of an accident?"

"Oh, a fellow got his clothes on fire with a cigarette," the elevator operator explained. "Must have been sitting in his car smoking, and dozed off. I did that one time and ruined a new suit."

Renny's long face looked extremely sad, the way it did when he was pleased.

"Clothes got on fire, eh?" he said.

"That's right."

Long Tom looked at Renny and moved one eyebrow significantly. "Thought you said it wouldn't work," he accused.

"Never claimed any such thing," Renny muttered.

Pat gripped Long Tom's arm. "You really think one of the men who grabbed Doc was hanging around and when you switched on your devices to test them, we had the good fortune to—"

"Sure!" said Long Tom.

"What a break for us!" Pat exclaimed.

They went to look at the man who had caught fire. He was sitting on the tailboard of an ambulance, protesting to two interns that he was all right; that he could go home by himself; that he didn't need any treatment.

"If he had a coonskin cap, and a muzzle-loading rifle," Renny muttered, "he'd look more in character."

That exactly described the man. He was not wearing buckskin trousers and moccasins, or anything like that. But Renny's statement seemed to exactly describe his character. He was long, lean, with a face which weather had worked upon. An outdoors man. There was something almost too cultured about the English he was using.

"Really," he was assuring a cop, "I am quite all right. Merely a cigarette which fell on my clothing."

Renny retreated a few yards, so as not to be conspicuous. He signaled Long Tom and Pat. They went into a drugstore which was handy.

"Where's Monk?" Renny asked.

"He was here a minute ago," Long Tom said. "Wait a minute."

The electrical wizard went away. He came back a few minutes later with Monk in tow.

"Monk was standing there in plain view of that fellow, gaping at him," Long Tom explained. "What's the matter with you, Monk? One of your strings come untied, or something?"

Monk muttered something disgustedly.

Renny said, "Look here, keep out of sight of that fellow, all of you. And get ready to follow him. Monk, Pat and Long Tom—each of you get a car. Pick cars with radio apparatus. We'll follow this bird. I think the ambulance men and the police are going to turn him loose soon."

The others nodded and departed quickly.

THE long fellow who looked like a backwoodsman, but who spoke English like a professor, took about five minutes to convince everyone that he was not badly burned. Then he climbed into his car.

Renny had been standing in a second-floor store window, an excellent vantage point. He made a dash, reached the street, and piled into Pat's car.

Pat had put on a blond wig and too much lipstick; a quid of chewing gum distorted her cheeks. She did not look like Pat.

"There he goes," Renny said.

"You get down," Pat suggested. "I brought along some stuff to make a disguise, but nothing could disguise those fists of yours, so you might as well give it up."

She pulled out into the traffic.

Their quarry was heading north.

Pat emitted an exasperated exclamation. "The dope!" she said.

"What's wrong?" Renny asked.

"I just passed Monk," Pat explained. "He's sitting in a car, and that pig, Habeas Corpus, is as big as life on the seat beside him. Anybody who saw Monk could identify him half a mile away, with that hog in plain view."

"He should have better judgment," Renny grunted.

"Monk isn't acting quite right," Pat said thoughtfully.

Renny unhooked the microphone of the car radio transmitter, switched the apparatus on, and said into the mike, "Monk."

"Yeah?" Monk answered shortly.

"You flop-earned dope," Renny said. "Get that pig out of sight."

"Oh!" Monk said nervously. "All right."

Renny, replacing the microphone, was further puzzled. "That isn't like Monk, being nervous. The real Monk would call me six or seven names and summarize my ancestry."

THE man they were tailing did not drive rapidly. They used their common method in following him—no one car staying directly behind his machine for more than a few minutes. Using the radio, they could cruise ahead, behind, and even on side streets, and keep the man under watch.

They left the city and went into the country.

The tall quarry—Renny had started calling him the hillbilly—turned his car into a side road, off a busy highway. Pat gave a small-scale road map an inspection, then turned to a large-scale one which almost showed the sidewalks in the nearby villages.

"Dead end," she said. "It goes up about a quarter of a mile and stops. There is one house."

So they parked their machines out of sight, and gathered afoot.

"Nice results, that gadget of yours got," Renny told Long Tom.

Long Tom grinned. "I hope this guy is leading us to Doc."

The rest of them hoped the same thing. They walked together, following the road. The car motor ahead of them had stopped making a noise.

Renny thought of something. "Who the devil do you suppose that fellow could be? I never saw him before. He doesn't look like an ordinary crook."

No one ventured an opinion. Because there was no reason to do otherwise, they kept together until they reached the house.

The house was an ancient hulk, partly of stone, partly of wood, entirely without paint. It had a certain ramshackle charm. And it was by no means abandoned. It stood on a knoll from which the river could be seen, and a peaceful vista of valleys beyond was wrapped in blue haze.

Tall trees, brush and undergrowth surrounded the house. The vegetation had been trimmed back thirty yards, so that the effect was that of a cup holding the building.

Their quarry was standing in the yard, stretching and relaxing.

Renny, Pat, Long Tom and Monk crept close. Then Monk astonished them.

Monk walked out of the brush boldly, without giving them any warning of what he intended to do.

Monk addressed the long, brown fellow they were calling the hillbilly.

"Good afternoon, Henry," Monk said to him.

Had a green dog with feathers and wings dashed out of the house, no one would have been more astonished. Renny was frantically clawing for a machine pistol—a terrific little weapon somewhat larger than the size of an automatic pistol, which could empty out bullets by the shovelful. He stopped that. He gaped.

Henry himself seemed to go up in the air about a foot, then come back to earth. But he did not lose

composure.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Mayfair," Henry said.

Monk turned and smilingly indicated the brush.

"I took the liberty of bringing along some of my friends," Monk announced.

Henry seemed to rise off the ground again, but he still kept his composure.

"How nice," he said.

Because there was no longer any sense of playing Indian-in-the-bush, Pat and Renny and Long Tom came out.

Monk told Henry, "These are my associates. Miss Patricia Savage, Colonel Renny Renwick, and Major Thomas J. Roberts."

Henry stared at them. "Are there any more of you?"

"Ham Brooks and Johnny Littlejohn did not come," Monk explained.

Renny eyed Henry.

"Henry," he said, "just who are you?"

Henry smiled. "Henry Brooks," he said. "Won't you come inside?"

Renny was a little suspicious. He did not know why.

He said, "Not yet. Who are you? What are you doing here?"

Henry Brooks frowned. "You sound a little harsh. Won't you please come inside?"

"No, I won't come inside," Renny growled. "Not until I learn—"

"In that case," interrupted Henry, "the reception party had better come out. Come out, party."

He sounded as if he were pulling a gag. But there was nothing that smacked of a gag about the men who began coming out of the house. The men came as if they had a definite purpose and not much time in which to accomplish it. There were tall men and short ones. They had long guns and short ones. Also, determined expressions.

Evidently, the attacking party had had little time in which to organize, because there was a ragged quality about their rush. And impatience.

At least one of them was nervous, too. Because without saying anything or waiting to argue, he lifted a gun and aimed at Renny's chest, the most extensive target around there, and let fly with a revolver! Three shots. *Bang, bang and bang!* All of them perfectly aimed. Renny seemed to walk backward a pace each time a bullet hit him.

Long Tom Roberts began taking things out of his pockets and throwing them on the ground.

CHAPTER III. HENRY STEPS OUT

LONG TOM ROBERTS had capacious pockets, and they were well filled. He emptied them fast. His method was simple. He tore the pockets bodily out of his coat and let grenades spill into his hands as fast as he could pull the firing pins from them.

There were smoke, gas, and explosive grenades. They made a considerable commotion. Black smoke sprouted suddenly, hid what was going on. Gas spewed out—tear gas and types designed to cause great discomfort.

Long Tom and the other associates had a language which they used for private emergencies such as this. It was Mayan, the ancient type. They were almost the only individuals in the so-called civilized world who spoke it.

Long Tom, in Mayan, bellowed, "Take the back of the house! The brush! Meet there!"

He began running. One of the explosive grenades went off and gave him a boost. He had his mouth open wide, so the concussion did not do much to his eardrums. He hoped the others were as foresighted.

He got out of the smoke, kept going, hit the brush. Pat came after him, and with her Renny, loping lopsidedly. There was noise of men in trouble back in the smoke.

Then Monk appeared. And a strange thing happened. Monk's face! Eyes wide, mouth agape, horror, unquestionably, in every groove of his homely countenance. And terror! Fear that was utter and abject. Blind fright!

They could not believe it.

Monk seemed blind with his terror. For he charged past them without seeming to see them and rushed on into the brush. They heard him smashing into shrubs and falling down and getting up and going on again, like a blind bull in a burning cane field.

Complete astonishment held them silent, motionless, for a moment.

"Holy cow!" Renny gasped.

Long Tom came out of his lethargy. "Let's get going. Those fellows may try to escape. I think there is a garage—"

There was, and it was on the other side of the house, as he had started to say. They heard a car. A big machine, judging from the motor.

Hearing the engine start, Long Tom leaped up and raced around the corner of the house. There were two cars, actually. An old one without a muffler, which they were hearing. And a smaller, newer machine, with a motor so quiet that they had not heard it start. Some men were already in the machines. Others were loading. The tear gas was giving them trouble. But it had not affected all of them.

Henry seemed to be in command. He was doing an excellent job of rounding up his men, aided by a voice with the qualities of a siren. Henry's voice was more shrill than any man's voice should be, and the more excited he became, the higher it went.

The cars got moving. Long Tom hurried them along with a burst from his machine pistol. Unfortunately, the machine pistol was loaded with a drum containing so-called "mercy" bullets—thin shells holding a chemical capable of producing swift unconsciousness—that were not effective against the windows and bodies of the cars. He did no good. He changed to a drum containing explosives. But by that time, the cars were out of sight.

Long Tom set out after the cars, running.

The road was extremely rough, crooked, and not very long. He was sure he could reach his own car before the other machines got too much of a head start.

He yelled in Mayan, "Renny, you and Pat get Monk. I'll contact you later."

RENNY'S idea was to chase the cars, also. But he heard Long Toms shout, saw the sense of it. He stopped.

"He wants us to get Monk," Pat said.

"Good idea," Renny agreed. "There's sure something wrong with that homely goon."

They did not immediately pursue Monk. Instead, they got under cover and watched the smoke from the grenades drift away. They kept clear of the gas.

There was no one in sight.

Renny said, "I'll go in the house by the back way, Pat. You get in front with a machine pistol loaded with mercy bullets and pick them off as I chase them out."

That was a good idea, too, but the house was unoccupied.

"Holy cow!" Renny said, and began searching the place more thoroughly. "Pat, you want to do this hunting?" he asked. "I'll go chase down that silly Monk."

Pat said, "Go ahead."

Renny went outside. The afternoon sunlight slanted through the trees, furnishing plenty of illumination. It was no trouble to follow Monk's trail. The homely chemist had left traces as prominent as a stampeding buffalo. Smashed bushes and gouged earth.

Eventually, he found Monk crouching behind a bush.

Renny stared at the homely chemist.

"You homely freak," he said. "What in the dickens is the matter?"

Then he saw that Monk was trembling, almost speechless with some emotion. Renny bent closer. The emotion, unless he was greatly mistaken, was fear.

"Hey!" Renny exploded. "You *scared*?"

Monk's shudder was complete answer. Renny put a hand on his shoulder. Monk was noticeably trembling.

Monk said, "I . . . I guess so."

"So what?"

"Skuk-skuk-scared," Monk said.

Renny sank to a knee beside him. "Look here, you can't be kidding me?"

"I . . . I'm not kidding," Monk muttered.

"This is the dangedest thing I ever heard of," Renny said quietly. "Monk, normally, you're a guy who would walk into a den of lions. What is wrong? What is in you?"

Monk shuddered again.

"It's just that things are so . . . dangerous!" he said.

"You mean that you're still worried about danger to Doc?" demanded Renny.

"It's d-danger to me," Monk said. "Danger to us all."

Renny's feelings escaped in a snort of exasperation. "What the devil ails you? What gave you such ideas?"

"We talked it over with Henry," Monk explained.

Renny jerked Monk to his feet. The mere fact that he could grab Monk by the collar and yank him erect without getting knocked on his ear was enough for astonishment. Ordinarily, such an act would be tantamount to committing suicide.

Something had certainly happened to Monk.

"Look here, Monk, have you learned something you haven't told the rest of us?" Renny demanded. "Some . . . er . . . danger?"

"No particular danger," Monk insisted nervously. "It's just that Henry—"

Renny gave Monk an angry shove.

"Get going back toward the house," he ordered. "And as you go, tell me about this Henry."

Monk obediently shuffled off through the underbrush. "What do you want to know?"

"About Henry? Who is he?"

"Just a fellow we met."

"We?"

"Ham and Johnny and I," Monk explained. "You see, we were at a party one night, and we met Henry. We had some drinks, and found out that Henry never touches liquor, like ourselves. Henry isn't a prude, and he doesn't try to force his ideas on anybody else. Anyway, Henry had a discussion with us. Several discussions, in fact. One that night and more later. We sort of agreed that Doc Savage was taking too many risks. We are grateful to Henry for making us see that."

"I suppose," said Renny, stumbling over a bush, "that you are grateful to Henry for trying to kill us."

The fact that Henry had attacked them seemed to dawn on Monk for the first time.

"You mean he actually did that?" the homely chemist demanded.

Renny Renwick was so exasperated that he stumbled along in silence for a while.

"What do you know about Henry, except that he is a gabby guy you took up with at a party?" he

demanded.

"I—" Monk seemed baffled. "Well, he is a fine fellow."

"What's his last name?"

"I . . . I don't know."

"What does he do for a living?"

"I don't know," Monk confessed miserably. "Say, did he really attack us back there? Couldn't there have been some mistake? Maybe we frightened him and—"

"The only guy who got frightened," Renny said disgustedly, "is not very far from me, right now."

THEY found Pat standing in front of the house in the woods.

"I got some glasses and things with fingerprints on them," Pat said. "The house is owned by a fellow named Henry Wallengite, who I presume is our Henry."

"Monk's Henry," Renny corrected. "He's no part of mine."

Pat glanced at Monk. "Has he explained what ails him?" she asked, indicating Monk.

"Nothing that makes sense," Renny told her. "Has Long Tom come back yet?"

"No."

"We better get down to the cars," Renny pointed out. "Long Tom may be on the trail of those fellows. We've got to get after them, on the chance they may lead us to Doc Savage."

It was Pat who saw the expression of Monk's face. It was a rather ghastly look. Pat jumped forward. "Monk!" she ejaculated. "Why are you looking like that?"

"I . . . like what? I wasn't looking any different," Monk said uneasily.

"Oh, yes you were—when we mentioned Doc," Pat snapped.

Monk lowered his eyes.

Pat gripped Monk's arm. "Monk, you fellows didn't seize Doc after all, did you?"

"I—"

"*Did you?*"

"Yes," Monk confessed miserably. "Ham and Johnny are holding him. He is safe enough. We grabbed him to keep him out of danger."

"You're *positive* Doc is safe?" Pat demanded.

Monk nodded emphatically. "Absolutely safe. Ham and Johnny are with him."

Renny glared at him and demanded, "Why did you lie to us and claim you and the others had nothing to

do with Doc's disappearance?"

Monk refused to meet their eyes.

"We wanted Doc to be safe," he insisted. "We took the thing into our own hands when we saw he was not going to listen to us."

LONG TOM ROBERTS pounded a fist against the car door.

"They're on their way to kill Doc Savage," he said. "I just found that out."

The electrical expert was panting, perspiring. A string of blood was creeping down one side of his face.

"What," asked Pat, "happened to your head?"

Long Tom climbed into the car. "Let's get going. I got one of our cars and followed them. But they shot the gas radiator full of holes."

Pat yanked the car into gear. "What direction?"

"Toward town," Long Tom said. "They're headed for where Doc is being held. Monk can tell us where that is."

Monk looked ill. "It's on Fergus Street," he said miserably. "That's in the Bronx. Keep going, and I'll direct you."

The machine gathered speed. "Big hurry?" Pat asked.

"If we don't get there first," Long Tom said grimly, "they'll knock off Doc, and also Ham and Johnny."

Monk shrank still more. "Henry wouldn't do that," he said weakly.

Long Tom looked at him bitterly.

Pat said again, "Long Tom, what happened to your face?"

The electrical genius was carefully blotting himself with a handkerchief and grimacing. "Pistol barrel, I think it was," he said. "You see, one of Henry's pals got shot through the leg in that fracas. They drove like the devil until they came to a doctor's office. The doctor had his office in his residence, and these guys just walked in. I saw they had guns in their hands as they went in. They no doubt made the doctor fix up the one who was hurt."

Long Tom watched buildings whip past.

He continued, "I parked my car, crawled through the brush in the yard to the doctor's house and got inside. Some of the guys were talking; this Henry was giving them orders. The orders were to get to Doc quick and knock him off."

Monk looked up sickeningly. "You sure about that? You sure Henry—"

"Positive!" Long Tom snapped. "After I heard what they were going to do, I tried to sneak back out of the darn house. But I had bad luck. A dog lit into me. They heard the uproar, rushed in, and I got a crack on the head. But I knocked out the fellow who hit me and escaped."

He leaned back and sighed. "That's all, except that I got my car and tried to chase them; but they were too fast for me there. They put it out of commission. So I got you on the radio, and you picked me up a minute ago."

Pat punched Monk.

"How soon we turn?" she demanded.

"Pretty soon," Monk muttered.

Patricia Savage glanced at Monk, then at Long Tom. "You didn't happen to overhear anything that would indicate what is going on?"

Long Tom was thoughtful.

"I sure got the drift that something *was* going on," he said.

"What?"

"No idea," the electrical expert admitted. "But I heard a reference or two that leads me to think we're bucking a competent, efficient organization, and that this Henry is just a cog in the thing. There was talk about things being so well oiled, until the little accident of our barging in on them."

"Some kind of a plot, eh?"

"Right."

Monk interrupted. "Fergus Street, yonder. Turn left."

Long Tom growled. "Let's have no more barging into things without making sure the coast is clear. Back there in the woods, it's a wonder we didn't get killed."

THEY got out of the car and waited for Renny, who was driving another machine. The big-fisted engineer pulled up beside them.

"Any sign of them?" he asked.

"No," Monk muttered. He pointed. "That house yonder. That is where they are holding Doc. Ham and Johnny are holding him, I mean."

The house was an ordinary one in a row of ordinary ones. The houses might all have been a part of one five-story building, the length of the block. There was no yards.

"The sixth from the other end of the block," Renny said. "All right, suppose I go around and come in from the back. The rest of you take the front. How would that be?"

He went silent. His eyes flew wide.

Five men were leading two other men out of the house. The pair being led were Ham and Johnny. They were placed in a car parked at the curb.

"That Henry's car?" Renny demanded.

Monk was white-faced. "Yes," he said.

Four of the five men who had placed Ham and Johnny in the car now went back into the house. They came out carrying a figure shrouded in a sheet. It was a human form obviously. They had rigged a kind of sling out of a blanket for the carrying.

"Doc!" Renny guessed in horror. "We're too late."

Long Tom's snarl was sudden and violent. "Come on! Let's take them!"

The car down the street pulled out from the curb. Long Tom put his machine in motion. Renny dashed to his own car, got it going.

"They see us!" Pat exclaimed.

That was perfectly evident. The car ahead was gathering speed. Its horn began blowing steadily.

Speedometer needles crawled around the dials. They could hear the bawling of the car horn ahead, like a frightened sheep in the distance.

"Gaining," Pat said grimly.

She sat back and unlimbered a machine pistol which she took from the pale, strangely frightened Monk. The gun was loaded with a small drum of explosives.

"Careful," warned Long Tom. "Doc is in that car."

They took a corner, tire wailing in agony. Monk made a bleating sound and hid his face.

Pat stared at Monk. Not with contempt, but with an incredulous amazement and a touch of cold horror. This was so unlike Monk, this terror. It was unbelievable. Not acting; she was sure of that. Something else; something was wrong with the homely chemist. Something that she did not yet understand. This was becoming more and more obvious.

Long Tom drove grimly, expertly. Renny roared up alongside them in his machine and slowly forged ahead. Renny was driving the more powerful car.

Renny's voice came out of the radio. It was not understandable, drowned in the roar of the motors, the noise of tires and speed. Pat turned up the volume, shouted into the microphone, "What did you say, Renny?"

"I'll get ahead of them," Renny bellowed, "and use a gas to stop their motor."

He did that within the next mile. The gas was colorless, and there was no indication of its use until the machine ahead suddenly slackened. Long Tom kicked his own car engine into neutral at once, coasted, came alongside the other car as it stopped. He halted his own machine.

The occupants of the other car put up their hands.

"Watch it, Pat," Long Tom warned out of the side of his mouth. "This is too easy."

He got out carefully, his machine pistol ready.

"Keep those hands up," he growled. "And step out here on the pavement!"

The men complied, all five of them. They had been very crowded in the car. They looked scared.

Ham and Johnny remained in the machine. Long Tom scowled at them. They looked utterly terrified. As scared as Monk was looking.

It came to him sickeningly that Ham and Johnny were, like Monk, not themselves.

Renny alighted from his car, came running up. "Holy cow!" he boomed. "What's going on?"

Ham answered—but in a voice that was not like Ham's ordinary tone. A terrified voice.

"These fellows," Ham said, "do not know anything. They are just hired men who were taking orders."

Renny stared at the men. "Where's Henry?" And then, when no one answered, Renny turned pale. "Doc," he called. "Doc, are you all right?"

No answer. He stiffened himself, moved to the car, and jerked open the door. It took moments of agony to steel himself to reach in and pluck the sheet off the form on the car floor.

It was not Doc Savage. The man was large and unconscious, one of the fellows who had taken part in the fracas back in the woods.

"Where—" Renny straightened. "Where's Doc?"

No one replied. Renny, suddenly losing control of his temper, lunged forward and slapped Ham. He slapped hard, and Ham fell.

"Damn you!" Renny screamed. "Where's Doc? What kind of a gag is this?"

Ham seemed to be frightened to the point of tears. He was speechless.

Johnny spoke out. He used small words, as if his own fear had driven multiple syllables out of his mind.

"This was a trick," he gasped. "Doc Savage was back there in the house. Henry and the others came, and they discovered you were following them, or had come there right behind them—they didn't know which."

"Trick?" Renny's big fists shook a little. "What kind of a trick?"

"They took us in the car," Johnny explained, "to decoy you away from the house, so Henry could make off with Doc."

They went back to the house then, but Doc Savage and Henry were gone!

CHAPTER IV. PERSUADING HENRY

HENRY BROOKS drove his coupé south on the parkway leading downtown. He was in a cheerful mood.

"My name is Brooks," he explained. "The same name as your associate, Ham Brooks. Actually, I would not be surprised if we are related. Distant cousins, or something like that."

Doc Savage made no comment. He occupied the other side of the seat, and his wrists and ankles were fastened with clothesline.

Henry touched a revolver resting on his lap. "Don't forget this little discourager," he warned. "Don't try

yelling for a cop, either. You might get the attention of one, but you'd be dead about that time. Cops can't help dead men, you know"

Henry sounded rather jovial about the whole thing. Pleased with himself. A bit earlier, he had been sweating icicles, however, fearing that Renny and the others were going to get hold of him.

The ramps which approached George Washington Bridge suddenly came into view. Henry took one of them, headed toward the bridge. A few moments later, the Hudson River was below.

They neared the toll gates on the Jersey side.

"Careful," Henry said. "Here, keep this robe over your hands as if you were cold." He chuckled and shoved a robe toward Doc.

They got past the toll gate without trouble. Doc kept his hands under the robe and maintained a meek air.

"Where are you going?" Doc Savage asked unexpectedly.

"Not sure," Henry admitted frankly. "But I'll know in a few minutes."

Shortly afterward, he stopped at a filling station. He did not drive into the station, but parked about fifty feet distant, on a gravel yard. He flourished his gun meaningfully, then put it in his pocket.

"I'm going to telephone," he said. "But I can watch you all the time. So don't try anything."

He went into the filling station, spent some time speaking over the instrument. He stood so that he could see Doc as he talked. And the bronze man was able to see Henry's lips. Doc had considerable skill at lip reading, enough that he could distinguish something of what was said, even at that distance.

Henry called Albermarle 9-6372. He asked someone for orders. Then he listened for a while, probably to the orders. Then he told whoever was giving the commands the story of what had happened in the Bronx. Henry told that part of the story so that he, Henry, appeared very clever, and the Doc Savage aids extremely dumb. But following that, he was evidently told something that took the wind out of his sails because he became meek.

Eventually, he rejoined Doc.

"Damn the luck!" Henry muttered. He was disgusted.

"Something wrong?" Doc asked him.

Henry drove out on the highway. "I'm to take you to a place up in the hills—a summer cabin—and keep you there. I'm not to see anybody or communicate with anybody. A damned dull job."

"Are you going to see your leader in person?" Doc asked.

"Leader?" Henry said. "I'm the leader!"

"Oh, obviously," Doc Savage said skeptically.

"Damn it!" yelled Henry peevishly. "What if I'm not! No, I'm not to see anybody. I'm to keep you absolutely under cover. The boss is scared of you. He overrates you. He thinks you're a combination of a lot of things you're not."

Henry was becoming more indignant. He put his face close to Doc Savage's and said, "You know what I

think? I think you're a phony! I been hearing what a tough guy you are, and here I walk all over you. I outsmart those supposedly high-powered assistants of yours without any trouble at all."

"Is that all?" Doc asked.

"That's all!" snapped Henry.

Doc Savage then removed his hands from beneath the robe and grasped Henry by the throat. The bronze man's legs also seemed to become magically free!

LATE that night, Renny Renwick stood over Henry and gave some advice. The advice-giving occurred in the skyscraper headquarters. The lights of the city spread beyond the windows.

"When you think you're getting the best of Doc Savage—watch out!" Renny said. "Right then is when you're doing your worst."

Henry swallowed. "You mean he could have gotten away any time?"

Renny nodded. "That's it. Furthermore, he deliberately let Monk, Ham, Johnny and you grab him. He knew something was wrong with Monk, Ham and Johnny, and he wanted to find out what it was. So he let them grab him. During the grabbing—in which you helped—Doc smeared some of that chemical on your clothes, so Long Tom's gadget could spot you."

Henry braced himself.

"Well, he didn't find out anything," he muttered.

"He's going to," Renny said confidently.

"How?"

"We captured your whole gang," Renny pointed out. "At any rate, we got all the guys you had helping you at that house in the woods, and later in the Bronx."

Henry had nerve. A glitter of rather bitter triumph showed in his eyes.

"From them, you won't learn much," he said. "They know nothing. They are just crooks I hired on orders. They thought I was the head of the thing. They did not know there was anyone above me. And they didn't know what it was about."

"Meaning they can't supply motives?"

"Meaning they can't supply anything."

Renny snorted. "Well, we'll get it out of you, then."

"I won't talk," Henry said grimly.

"No? Buddy, we'll see. Want to make a little bet on it?"

Pat Savage came to the door, and beckoned. "I'll watch Henry," she said. "Doc wants you in the lab."

THE bronze man was standing in the middle of the laboratory. His face did not have much expression, but there was something disgusted in his manner. Long Tom had been assisting him.

Monk, Ham and Johnny were sitting in chairs at the other side of the room, looking as if they might have been freshly spanked.

The captured prisoners were arrayed in chairs, to which they were manacled. They had obviously been through the grill.

Renny asked, "They talk?" He gave the captives a second look. "I can see they did."

Doc Savage nodded. "I think we know as much as they do."

"You don't sound like that was much."

Doc said, "No, it was not."

Long Tom took it on himself to explain, "It was just like this Henry said. They were hired thugs. Henry hired them to help him in case he ran into any trouble. They did not even know they were going up against Doc, here. All of them say they wouldn't have touched their jobs with a ten-foot pole if they had known that, which was probably why Henry neglected to tell them anything."

Renny jerked a blunt gesture at Monk, Ham and Johnny.

"Any clue to what is wrong with these three?" he demanded.

"No," Long Tom said.

Monk mumbled, "There is nothing wrong with us. I don't see what has gotten into you fellows. We have just realized that the life Doc is leading is—"

"Sure—too dangerous," Renny said. He watched Monk's pet pig, Habeas Corpus. The animal was not near Monk. Instead, he lay on the other side of the laboratory.

Ham's pet also was present—and not associating with his master. Ham's pet was a chimpanzee or runt ape—anthropologists were disagreed as to just what species it was—named Chemistry. The main peculiarity of Chemistry was that he bore a remarkable resemblance to Monk.

Renny pointed at the animals.

"Look, even your pets know you're strange," he said. "They won't have anything to do with you."

Ham lowered his eyes. Johnny squirmed. Monk looked at Habeas Corpus and mumbled, "Come here, Habeas." The pig ignored him.

"You see?" Renny said.

Monk lifted his eyes. He was frightened.

"If something is wrong with us," he asked, "when did it happen?"

After that, there was a gloomy silence.

PATRICIA SAVAGE listened to Henry Brooks say, "Young lady, I'll pay you fifteen thousand dollars

to let me go," and smiled.

"I ought to bust you one," she told Henry, "for being so cheap about it. Get the ante up to half a million, and I would start talking. I wouldn't let you go, but I would have more respect for you."

Henry was taken aback. "Where would I get that kind of money?"

"Off whomever you are working for," Pat told him. "People do not tie into Doc Savage unless there is a lot at stake. So plenty of money, or at least something important, must be involved in this."

"I won't tell you anything," Henry said.

Pat tapped a toe angrily.

"Ever hear of truth serum?" she asked.

Henry looked worried.

Pat added, "Don't think the stuff won't work, either. It does—the kind Doc uses. He has a special kind of truth serum for stubborn cases like yours. Sometimes, it leaves the patient's mind impaired."

This last was not exactly the truth. There was some danger of damage to the mental condition of anyone to whom the potent chemicals of the serum were administered. Many types of truth serum were more dangerous. Pat banked on Henry knowing something of this, and apparently he did. He began turning pale.

Pat arose and went to the laboratory door.

"Doc, we'll have to try truth serum on this fellow," she said, loudly, enough for Henry to hear. "He has made up his mind not to talk."

Doc answered just as loudly.

He said, "Give his shoulder and arm muscles an injection to render them useless, Pat."

"Then what?"

"We will take him down to Monk's laboratory and give him the truth serum."

Pat nodded and closed the door. She saw that Henry had overheard and that he was worried. She said grimly, "Monk's lab is close to the river. We can get rid of your body more easily."

Henry gaped at her as if she were a fire-breathing dragon.

Pat got a hypodermic needle, charged it with the proper drugs, and approached Henry. He did some struggling and yelling. But Pat administered the mixture to first one of his arms, and then the other.

It was a simple local anaesthetic that did not differ much from the type used by dentists in pulling teeth. It rendered Henry's arms useless.

Actually, the psychological effect was greater than the physical one. Henry found something desperate in not being able to move his arms. He was very white; he perspired.

Doc came to the door.

"Pat, you and Renny take him down to Monk's place," the bronze man directed. "We will follow later."

Renny came out. Pat said, "Get up, Henry." They went out and took the private elevator down to the lobby.

AT that late hour of the night, the lobby of the skyscraper was deserted. Such elevators as were in operation were moving somewhere in their shafts, and the cleaning women had completed their tasks. So the compact little Negro who walked up behind Renny, Pat and Henry did not have witnesses, and there was no one to witness the skill with which he laid a blackjack alongside Renny's ear.

It was not stupidity on Renny's part that enabled the man to approach so close. It was the Negro's cleverness. He had a mop and a bucket and wore white coveralls, bearing the insignia of the building cleaning department. There was suds and soap on the floor at the entrance, and he had pretended to hurry forward to clean this up so they could leave without soiling their feet. He was good with his blackjack.

Pat screamed. Not a frightened scream, but one of rage. She got hold of the man, and they began fighting.

"Help me, fool!" the Negro snarled at Henry.

Henry was in no condition to do much, but he did manage to trip Pat. She went down wildly. Before she could recover, the blackjack stroked her temple! She did not get up.

Renny was on the floor, twitching a little. The blackjack made a solid sound on top of his head. Renny moved no more.

"Come on," the man said to Henry.

THEY walked out of the building. Henry found his elbow gripped, discovered himself guided to the left. He could not feel the pressure on his arm, thanks to the chemical.

Henry was shoved into a taxicab.

"Drive up to Central Park, then through the park," the Negro told the cab driver.

The machine got into motion. Henry began, "Say, who are you and what—" But the black man reached over and slapped him. Henry went silent. The slap had not been hard. He realized he was supposed to be quiet.

Central Park was dark and lonesome.

"We will get out here and walk," the Negro told the taxi pilot. He paid off the meter.

Henry found himself pulled into some shrubbery, and down on the grass beneath a tree. "What—"

"Be still!" growled his rescuer.

They lay there in complete silence for at least five minutes. After that time, the Negro seemed satisfied that they were not followed; that they were alone.

"All right, Henry," he said. "I'm a new man. The boss hired me tonight as a trouble shooter. The first shooting was to get you away from Savage."

"Oh!" Henry said vacantly.

"I didn't have time to get the set-up. The boss said to get it from you. You are to tell me what it is all about."

Henry was silent.

"Well?" demanded the Negro.

"I can't do that," said Henry.

The Negro slapped Henry. It was not a gentle slap, and it was done with the back of the fellow's hand, which was very hard and did not make the popping noise that a palm would have made.

"Damn you!" he said. "I haven't time to fool with you."

Henry said, "It's a foreign thing. Foreign agents. Not spy stuff. Just agents, here to do a job. It ain't sabotage, and it ain't stealing military secrets. It ain't even doing anything against this government. I made sure of that before I took the job."

"I'm not interested in your excuses," the Negro said. "Shut up until that cop gets past."

The officer, a park patrolman, was some distance away. He sauntered along, twirling his club. Unexpectedly, he reached into his pocket and produced a flashlight. He planted the beam on the Negro and Henry.

"Hey, you!" he said. "You ain't supposed to hang around in the dark. If you want to lie on the grass, get out where it's moonlight or where there's light from a street lamp. You want to get held up?"

"Thank you, officer," said the Negro.

The patrolman came closer. "On second thought, I guess I'll give you fellows a looking over."

The Negro stood up. "Of course, officer," he said. He lifted his arm. The patrolman stepped in. The Negro's arm came down, the blackjack made its sound, and the officer fell on his face.

Calmly, the Negro sat down again.

"Go ahead with that story," he said. "Foreign agents over here. Then what?"

Henry swallowed. The cold-blooded presence of the Negro, and the fellow's evil efficiency, seemed to unnerve him.

"Ever heard of Professor Matthew Jellant, of Vienna?" Henry asked.

The man slapped Henry. Harder this time. "Damn you! I told you not to kill time," he said.

"Professor Matthew Jellant," said Henry hastily, "is a foreign scientist. He has fled Europe. He is to arrive in New York on a ship tonight—early in the morning, rather."

The man grunted.

"Jellant, scientist, fled Europe," he said. "Gets in this morning. So what?"

"He is to be killed," Henry said.

"When?"

"As soon as the ship docks."

"Name of this ship?"

"Lisbon Girl."

"What dock?"

"Hudson River. Atlantic-Mediterranean Shipping Co.'s dock. They've got only one."

"Your job?"

"My job," said Henry, "was to keep Doc Savage diverted until the foreign agents killed Professor Jellant."

"Why divert Savage?" asked the Negro.

"It seems Jellant and Savage are acquainted, and Jellant is coming to appeal to Savage for help. So Doc Savage had to be diverted."

The Negro considered. "What about three of Savage's men. Fellows named Monk, Ham and Johnny. Didn't something happen to them?"

"I don't know," said Henry.

The man slapped him again.

"Ouch!"

Quit that!" Henry gasped. "Damn it! I was ordered to approach those three. I was told they would be susceptible to any fear talk I might give them. It was suggested that I tell them Doc Savage had been taking too many risks, was too valuable for the world to lose, and should be protected, even if it had to be done against his will."

"And that's what you did?"

"I did."

"Whose orders?"

"The agents—the foreign agents."

"Where?"

"You mean—where are the agents?"

"What the hell," said the man, "do you think I mean?"

"They get in touch with me always," Henry explained. "I never contact them. I don't know where to do the job. I got a phone number, which I can call. But the phone belongs to a man I hired, and he sets there and takes orders, which he relays to me. That is, if any orders come in."

"Then you don't know where to get hold of the agents?"

"No."

The Negro grunted again. "That's good. I was to find that out. When is Jellant to be killed?"

"I told you," said Henry, "that the man is to be killed on the ship as soon as it docks."

"Where?"

"In his stateroom."

"Jellant sailing as Jellant?"

"As Nalle. Hermann Nalle. Part of his name turned around."

"What else do you know?"

"Nothing," Henry said promptly.

The other sneered. "Don't kid me. How did they happen to hire you? Surely you have some contacts."

A trifle proudly, Henry said, "Oh, I have some contacts as a fellow who knows his way around. I'm not exactly dumb. That's why they got hold of me. Someone must have told them I could be trusted to do a delicate job like this, and that I wasn't afraid of Doc Savage."

"You not being afraid of Savage just shows you are dumb," said the Negro.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that."

The man leaned forward confidently. "You want to know what *I* would say?"

"Huh?" Henry stared at him.

"This is what I would say." The black man stood up. He lifted his voice. "Doc, Renny," he called. "This is Long Tom. I think this bird has spilled all he knows."

Henry bleated, "You're Long Tom Roberts!"

Long Tom slapped him once more. "I like to do that," Long Tom told him.

CHAPTER V. PROFESSOR FROM EUROPE

IT was one of Doc Savage's strongest convictions that a day would come when society would take a realistic view and treat its criminals the way the "students" in the bronze man's unusual criminal-curing college in upstate New York were treated.

The bronze man was also canny enough to know that this time was not yet. The public was not yet ready for the idea of criminals being operated on so that all memory of past was removed from their brains, after which they received proper training. That was too strong for public consumption.

But neither his convictions nor his caution prevented Doc Savage consigning all criminals he captured to the upstate institution for treatment.

The usual system was for an ambulance to come down, in answer to a telephone summons, and remove the patients—the criminals were first put under the influence of a drug—to the upstate establishment.

Big-fisted Renny Renwick walked into the headquarters reception room and made the gesture of dusting

off his hands.

"On their way," he said. "We got all of them in one ambulance. It was a load, but they'll be all right."

Long Tom Roberts was working with a chemical remover, trying to get the make-up off his face.

"Monk, what the heck is this stuff, anyway?" he grumbled. "You were the guy who suggested my using it as a disguise. Me, I'd have used plain grease paint, and cold cream would have taken it off. The way it is—" He said several uncomplimentary things, staring at himself in a mirror.

Monk perspired with nervousness. "I . . . I'll try to fix you up another chemical remover," he muttered, and hurried into the laboratory.

Long Tom pointed after him. "Look at that. He's even scared of me. I criticize him, and he gets pale. There's sure something wrong with him."

"We're sure of that, now," Pat agreed.

Something occurred to Long Tom. "A guy as nervous as he is—I don't want him mixing up nothing. He might make a mistake." Long Tom bounded off the chair on which he was sitting and hurried after Monk.

Doc Savage glanced at Renny and asked quietly, "How is the park patrolman Long Tom had to slug?"

"He is all right," Renny said. "He acted right nice when it was explained to him. Said he was glad to contribute the lump on his head to the cause. I'm going to try to get him a promotion, or at least a couple of extra weeks' vacation with pay."

"And Henry?"

Renny chuckled. "Henry said a lot of words I didn't imagine he knew."

"He told nothing more than he told Long Tom?" Doc asked.

"He doesn't know anything else, I'm sure," Renny declared. "The situation seems to be that a Professor Jellant fled a foreign nation, and secret agents of that nation are trying to get rid of Jellant. Because Jellant was coming to see you for help, you were mixed up in it. That's all."

"Except," Doc Savage pointed out, "the strange case of Monk, Ham and Johnny."

"Yeah, nobody has been able to explain what *that* is," Renny admitted soberly.

Doc turned to Pat. "Jellant is arriving on the *Lisbon Girl*."

Pat nodded. "Doc, do you know this Jellant by sight?"

The bronze man shook his head. "I have never seen him. I have seen only his pictures."

Pat started. "You know him, don't you?"

"We have worked on experiments together, exchanging data and conjectures by mail," the bronze man said.

"Where was Professor Jellant when you were writing to him?"

"Vienna."

Pat glanced at her watch. "The *Lisbon Girl* docks in three hours," she said. "We better get going."

TRANSATLANTIC craft entering New York harbor are required by Federal regulations to take aboard a pilot, well outside the harbor. The pilot boards from a small motor craft. In rough weather, it is necessary for him to grasp a rope ladder and swing aboard, so that it is no job for a one-armed man.

The sea this morning was rough, and fog smeared the surface. Tendrils of the fog whipped along like ghosts which could not quite decide what shape they wished to form.

Doc Savage handled his speedboat carefully. The little craft was very fast; but in a sea as rough as this, it was inclined to take some of the waves like a torpedo. Doc and his aids wore oilskins. Canvas had been stretched over the cockpit.

Renny stretched out an arm. "There's the *Lisbon Girl*."

A hump of rust on the tortured sea, with a string of slate-gray smoke coming out of it. That was the *Lisbon Girl*. Probably, she had rusted in a salt-water graveyard somewhere until the need for ships resulting from the war had led to her resurrection.

Doc's Savage's voice suddenly became explosive.

"Hold on!" he said.

He meant, Renny, Monk and Pat discovered, grab the handiest object and cling to it for dear life, because he suddenly gave the motors all the fuel they would take. The speedboat began to bound from the top of one wave to another, now and then varying the performance by diving through one.

There was, Renny saw, a small boat at the landing stage of the steamer.

"Pilot boat," he shouted. "They're already picking up the pilot."

"Pilot does not come aboard this far out," Doc corrected.

Renny stiffened. He understood now what had disturbed Doc. If the occupants of the small boat that had reached the steamer ahead of them were not pilots, who were they? Renny had a rather grim idea.

The small boat saw them coming. Two men were in it, keeping it at the landing stage. The pair tossed off the lines, and one of them dived for the wheel. The little boat left the landing stage like a scared water bug.

The man who was not running the boat leaned forward with a rifle, and the rifle muzzle lipped red! They did not, over the roar of their boat engine, hear any bullets.

Doc said, "Put me on the landing stage. Then chase that boat."

The transfer was made more swiftly than seemed possible. The speedboat merely swung in under the stage, and without falling below ten knots in its speed. Doc leaped, got hold of the rope ladder. He climbed up. The speedboat went on. But it had lost time. Already, the other craft was out of sight in the fog.

AN officer got in Doc Savage's way as the bronze man reached the landing stage of the *Lisbon Girl*.

The man had a hand on his hip pocket, and suspicion was in his eyes.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "What does this mean?" He took his hand away from his hip, and the hand contained a gun!

Doc asked. "Did anyone come aboard from that motorboat?"

"I . . . two men."

"Who did they claim to be?"

"Government agents," said the officer. "Agents of the Federal government."

"Where did they go?"

"To talk to the captain. They said they could find the bridge, that we needn't go with—"

"Nalle!" Doc Savage said sharply. "What cabin? Hermann Nalle?"

The officer looked blank. "Nalle? In Stateroom C, main deck. But what—"

Doc gripped his arm. "Come on!" he said.

They pounded along passages, up companionways. The boat officer seemed to catch the feeling of imperative haste from Doc Savage, because his pace increased to a headlong run.

"H. Nalle," the officer gasped. "This cabin—"

Those were nearly his last words. They would have been, had Doc not shoved him hard. The man brought up against a wall, and a bullet went past him, on an upward slant, and cut a long line of paint loose from the ceiling, broke a light fixture and smashed a fire sprinkler! The sprinkler showered down water. The electrical alarm attached to the sprinkler shorted. Bells began to ring monotonously.

The man who had fired the shot was wide, chunky. He had a thin companion, also with a gun. He shot again! That one missed. Doc Savage kept coming forward. There was nothing else for him to do. There was no shelter. And he had a bullet proof undergarment that would protect his body.

The gunmen doubled back through a door. The door slammed.

Doc reached the closed door, dropped an explosive grenade beside it and kept going. The short-fused grenade exploded, filling the corridor with light the color of an electric arc and noise that ripped eardrums.

Doc reversed, went back. The door was down, turned into wreckage. He reached the door, saw that the cabin was an outside one with a deck door, which stood open.

A figure sprawled in the bunk in the cabin. It was twisting and struggling.

Doc went on, out onto the deck. He saw his quarry, two figures pounding down the deck.

"Stop those men," he shouted, and pursued them.

They did not gain on him. But already they had a head start. The steamer was small. It was no great distance to the stern, where there was a small raised superstructure holding the old-fashioned type of hand steering wheel for emergencies. They got into this shed and began shooting!

For the bronze man to continue his charge would be idiotic. His vest would turn bullets, but his head, hands, lower legs, were not lead-proof.

He took shelter behind a lifeboat, crouched there a moment, then tried a gas grenade. The gas loosed almost against the wheelhouse, but the cross-beam wind was strong enough, evidently, to carry it to one side. It got no results.

Then a motorboat came charging out of the fog. Out of the wheelhouse came a Very-pistol rocket. A signal. Obviously, they had everything arranged. Because, a moment later, both men went over the taff-rail, leaping far out to clear the propellers.

When Doc reached the stern, the pair were being hauled into the boat; and a man was ready with an automatic shotgun, which he fired the instant Doc's head appeared.

The boat departed and lost itself quickly in the fog.

NOT more than three or four minutes passed before the speedboat containing Pat, Monk and Renny came out of the fog, throwing a cloud of spray.

Doc signaled with his arms, indicating that they should come around to the landing stage and board. He met them there.

"They gave us the slip in that fog," Renny said disgustedly. "That boat they've got is faster than this one."

"They came back," Doc told him, "and picked up the two men they had put aboard."

Renny groaned. "Any chance of our overhauling them?"

"Very little. Not worth trying."

"What about Professor Jellant?"

Doc said, "We had better see about that."

In Stateroom C, main deck, they found the officer who had conducted Doc Savage to the place. The man was holding to the edge of the door and his face was pale.

"Those men would have shot me if you hadn't shoved me out of the way," he told Doc in a shaken voice.

The figure that had been in the bunk was still there. Not struggling, now. It was a girl, a young woman whose looks were something extra special. She had freed her wrists of a rope, and was untying her ankles.

"Hurt?" Doc asked.

She shook her head. "I don't understand this at all," she said.

"Who are you?"

"H. Nalle," said the girl

Doc Savage did not change expression. "Hermann Nalle?"

There was emotion, very slight, on the girl's face for a moment. "Hermanetta Nalle," she said. "Yes, that

is right."

Doc continued to keep expression off his metallic features, but he was puzzled.

"Your father aboard?" he asked.

The young woman freed her ankles. She swung out of the bunk, stood. She was pretty enough to make Renny's eyes grow wide. Renny was not susceptible to feminine charm, either.

She was not a blonde exactly. She ran more to honey and gold.

"My father," she said, "passed away ten years ago. So he would hardly be aboard."

"Professor Jellant?" Doc asked.

"No." She looked at the bronze man. Her face was as expressionless as his own. "You are Mr. Savage, are you not? Doc Savage? I believe I have seen your pictures. A movie. I am correct, am I not?"

Pat answered that. "Yes, this is Doc."

The girl smiled. "It was a movie showing an operation technique, and it was exhibited in the hospital in Vienna where I was studying surgery. It was a very delicate brain operation. One of a type never before done successfully."

She extended a hand. "I am very glad to meet you. You seem to have rescued me. I do not know what from, because I never saw those men before. But I am grateful."

THE steamer *Lisbon Girl* docked at the Atlantic-Mediterranean Shipping Co.'s wharf in the Hudson River without incident. Doc and his three aids moved to the dock at once. A word got them past immigration and customs without delay.

The dock was like all the other passenger wharves along the river—a great shed built on piling, thrust out like a stiff finger into the river.

A steward come past, stopped, said, "Have you a match, buddy?" to Doc Savage. He accepted the match—and slipped a folded bit of paper into the bronze man's hand.

The steward moved on, and Doc sauntered away. He got out his billfold, went through the motions of taking something from it, and unfolded the paper.

It read:

I did not talk to you because they must have a spy aboard. Can you see that I reach your headquarters safely? I have the address.

H. Nalle

Renny muttered, "I thought there was something queer about the way she was acting."

Pat sniffed. "I'm halfway not inclined to trust that young woman. She's too smooth to be pure gold."

Doc Savage sauntered back to the gangplank. The passengers were beginning to disembark and wander around, hunting their luggage under the big initials which marked sections of the dock.

"Scatter out," he said. "We will watch her. Keep close, so that if they try anything, we will have a chance to stop it."

"Are you going to kill time shadowing her to the office?" Pat demanded.

Doc answered that with action. The girl came down the gangplank. Doc stepped forward, took her by the arm.

"Unless there is something important in your luggage," he said, "we can get it later."

She stiffened for a moment. "I . . . well . . . all right," she said. "Didn't you get my note?"

"The precaution wasn't necessary," Doc said. "They know by now that I came to keep them from killing Professor Jellant."

She showed astonishment. "How did you know?"

"Some things that have happened."

"Oh!" She said nothing more. They walked to the stairs, descended, and got into a taxicab. Pat, Renny and Long Tom took other cabs. They moved out into traffic in a compact flotilla, everyone on the alert.

PAT walked into the headquarters suite, looked suspiciously into the laboratory and library, and came back. "Well, that was a false alarm," she said. "A lot of precautions for nothing."

The girl sank into a chair. She smiled wanly. "For the first time in months," she said, "I feel thoroughly safe."

Pat frowned at her. "What do you mean?"

The girl looked at them.

"I am Professor Jellant's sister," she said. "My name is actually Turkis. Turkis Jellant." She smiled again. "The name Turkis means turquoise in my language."

Pat said, rather unpleasantly, "I imagine Doc speaks your language better than you."

Turkis did not seem to take offense. "I have always understood that he was a remarkable man," she said. "My brother insists that he is rather incredible. Mentally, I mean." She met Doc's eyes. "I can see that he is right."

Doc Savage said nothing. Flattery always caused him to tighten uncomfortably.

Renny asked, "Is Professor Jellant still alive?"

"I think so."

"Where is he?"

"I can show you on a chart," the girl said, "but I am afraid I do not know the name of the place—of the island."

"Island?"

"A small one. In the Caribbean Sea. The eastern Caribbean. North of Watling island, which is the San Salvador island where Columbus landed when he found the New World."

Pat said pointedly, "It seems to me you are beating around the bush."

The girl gave Pat a sharp glance. "Look, darling—you may not like me, of which I seem to see signs. But this is a pretty terrible thing. I'm frightened. Those men were going to kill me. Do you expect me to sit down and tell it as if I had rehearsed it?"

Doc said patiently, "Proceed, Miss Jellant."

"Professor Jellant and I got on the *Lisbon Girl*, we supposed, without the secret agents being aware of it. We were wrong. We were not only wrong; we were walking straight into their hands."

"In what way?"

"They were all set for us," she said, "when the ship got off the island. The island is named Skull Cay. When the *Lisbon Girl* was steaming past it, a power launch armed with a torpedo appeared and intercepted the ship. The men on the launch were dressed in the uniforms of British sailors. Those are British waters. The launch flew the British flag."

She paused for a moment, grimly.

"They were not British sailors," she said. "I recognized two of them as foreign agents who had been molesting us. Men assigned to our case. I did not say anything. I hid. I could do nothing else."

Tears came to her eyes. "They took Professor Jellant off in the launch."

"They did not find you?" Doc asked.

"No. They hunted. But I hid well."

"How?"

"I blacked my face, put on men's clothing—a chef's apron and high white cap."

Doc said, "And afterward, you went to the captain of the *Lisbon Girl* with this story and asked him to get in touch with the real British authorities."

"No."

The bronze man leaned forward. "Why not?"

Professor Jellant asked me not to do so," she explained. "I promised him I would not. I was tempted to do so, anyway, but I had promised. He made me say I would get to New York and ask your help. He said you had worked with him by mail on some experiments, and that he could depend on you."

Renny Renwick put in thoughtfully, "I don't see his motive for not wanting the British informed. You say that fake British sailors took Jellant off the boat."

"Professor Jellant," said the girl, "said he had a good reason for not wanting *anyone*, except Doc Savage, to know where he was being taken."

"Why?"

The girl was tense for a moment.

"Professor Jellant has a secret," she said, "so horrible that he does not want any European nation to get hold of it."

The expression on her face added grim conviction to her words.

Pat's skepticism had not lost strength. She put her hands on her hips.

"How does it happen you are so sure Jellant was taken to this Skull Cay?" she demanded.

"Because his laboratory is there," the girl replied.

"Laboratory?"

"Professor Jellant has a home there. He has had it for years," the girl explained. "Part of the home is a completely equipped laboratory. The agents knew that. They took Jellant—my brother—to the place."

Pat said nothing.

"They're making him continue his experiments and give away the secret they want!" The girl clenched her hands. "Don't you believe me? Aren't you going to help me?"

Doc Savage said, "Renny, get marine charts of that part of the Caribbean. As large scale as you can get hold of. Long Tom, you better start getting our big seaplane ready."

The girl, very rigid in her chair, said, "You *are* going to help!" in a strange voice. Then she leaned back, her eyes closed, and her head seemed to become loose on her shoulders.

"She's fainted," Renny said.

AN alarm buzzer sounded somewhere, and Long Tom went to the inlaid table. He inspected two small red signal lights.

"Somebody in the elevator," he said, "who doesn't know how to operate it."

Renny grabbed a machine pistol and a gas grenade and headed for the hall. "When they get up here, we'll have a little reception party," he rumbled.

But the man who stumbled out of the elevator was the intern who drove the ambulance which took prisoners to Doc Savage's upstate college. From the battered condition of his face, it was plain he had, at the least, a broken nose. He staggered toward them and spoke with extreme difficulty.

"They highjacked us," he gasped. "Go get them all."

"Who?"

The man clung to a chair. "Masked—"

Renny boomed, "You mean Henry's pals got him away from us?"

"Henry," mumbled the ambulance driver, "and all the other prisoners."

He sat down in a chair and seemed to go suddenly so very tired that he had no strength to hold his eyes

open or his mouth closed. Renny examined him.

"And he has fainted," the engineer muttered.

Doc Savage examined the man for a while. "Shock and exhaustion," he said quietly. "I will get him to a hospital. Long Tom, start getting that plane ready."

The electrical expert jerked a thumb in the direction of the laboratory. "How about the trembling tulips, Monk and Ham and Johnny? We take them?"

"Take them by all means," Doc Savage said, and something in his tone made them realize that the condition of Monk and Ham and Johnny had vital significance.

CHAPTER VI. ISLAND TROUBLE

LATER, in the privacy of the laboratory, Doc Savage spoke to Pat.

"Pat," he said, "you and Miss Jellant are of about the same build. She will need sports clothes for this trip. Offer her some of yours."

"I like *that!*" Pat said. "Listen, I'm not so sure—"

"And tell her you are sending her clothes out to be cleaned, or use some other gag to get your hands on them," Doc continued. "But instead of sending them out, put them on, go out, and get run over by a taxicab."

Pat's eyes grew round. "Change clothes? Get run over by a cab?"

"Have Renny drive the cab."

Pat frowned. "Which neck do I get broken? Say, what is this, anyway?"

"Fake a brain concussion and continuous unconsciousness," Doc continued.

"I don't get it."

"Have something on you, writing on a paper possibly, to show that you are Miss Jellant and that you landed on the *Lisbon Girl* this morning."

"Oh!" Pat looked less puzzled.

"I will keep an eye on the hospital where they take you, and see that the item about you gets in the newspapers," Doc added.

Pat suddenly smiled, extended a hand.

"I take it back," she said. "You know, in the past, I've known a pretty girl to fool you. But this one didn't."

Doc said, "Long Tom is going to find that it takes time getting the plane ready for the trip south. He is going to have Miss Jellant help him. She will be at the secret hangar in the warehouse on the Hudson River; so she will not know what is going on."

"Nice," Pat agreed. "If that girl is a fake, and has confederates working with her, they will turn up at the

hospital to help her as soon as they find out she is in trouble."

Doc added, "And her enemies may try to finish the job, so that we can get our hands on them."

"Small chance of that," Pat said skeptically.

OUR MERCY HOSPITAL was not a large institution, and it was not actually a public one. At least, emergency cases were not normally taken there.

A newspaper story about a Miss Turkis Jellant—so identified from papers on her person—stated that she had been taken to Our Mercy Hospital, following an accident with a taxicab, because it was the hospital closest to the scene.

The newspaper story got headline play because it was indicated that there had been mysterious exciting incidents on the steamer *Lisbon Girl* immediately preceding its arrival. And Miss Jellant, according to papers on her person, had been a passenger on the *Lisbon Girl*.

This story appeared in the eight-o'clock, morning, editions.

At forty-eight minutes past nine, a man with wide shoulders and very light hair, a face touched with sunburn, walked into the hospital.

"Yes?" said the reception girl.

"*Sprechen sie Deutsch?*"

asked the man.

"I beg pardon," said the girl.

The man changed to English, and repeated his first question.

"May I ask you a question?" he inquired. His English was understandable, but not good.

"Sure," said the girl. "Shoot."

"I knew a girl in Vienna. She was a friend. Today, this morning, in the newspapers, I read she has accident with taxi," said the man. "She is Fraulein Jellant. Is here, *nein?*"

"Is here," the reception girl said.

Simultaneously, she put a foot down on a button which was attached to a wire that ran under the carpet and into another room and terminated at a buzzer near Doc Savage.

"Miss Jellant, could see, *nein?*" asked the man.

"Could," said the girl.

The man behaved calmly enough when he saw Pat. He said, "Ah, but I was in error. This is not the Fraulein Jellant whom I knew in Vienna. I am so sorry to have troubled you."

He bowed and clicked his heels, and gave the general impression of a man who was quite sorry for the trouble he had caused. And he got out of the hospital.

THE man left the vicinity in a directly purposeful fashion, walked north and west, and went into a café near Central Park and took a small table near the entrance. He ordered a soft drink. He bought a newspaper, read it briefly, as if puzzled, and threw it under the table.

Soon, three men came strolling past. The impression that they were acquaintances meeting entirely by accident was well carried out. They shook hands, spoke effusively. They sat down at the table together.

No one else was near.

The blond man who had visited the hospital said, "It is not the girl. It is that cousin of Doc Savage, the one named Patricia Savage."

"It is a trick, then?"

"It is, surely. They staged a fake accident, obviously, to distract our attention."

They were speaking in their native tongue.

"You think," said one of the men, "that they are on their way to the island, now?"

"Why else would they distract our attention?" asked the first. "Why else, if not to give us a feeling of false safety, while they got to the island, caught us unprepared for them, and did general destruction of which this bronze man is capable."

The first speaker drank his beer delicately. They were good actors.

"We will fly to the island at once. Do you not think that is wise?"

"Yes. And we will move Jellant, just to be on the safe side. It would not be good for our plans if Savage was to get down there and upset our arrangements."

"Come on."

Doc Savage watched them arise and pay their check. The telescope the bronze man was using was strong enough to bring out secondary craters on the moon. And he was not far from the men—only across the street, in an upstairs shop window. Moreover, he had, in the past, studied lip reading in the major languages, of which these men had used one.

He had a fairly comprehensive idea of what they had said.

His luck changed. He got downstairs fast—and the men were gone. He saw nothing of them, but was not greatly concerned; he supposed they had taken a side street. He stepped to the corner, looked down the side street and did not see them.

They had taken the subway. This shocked him. Not because it was anything unusual for the men to do, but because it was the natural thing and because he had not thought of it. In fact, he had completely forgotten there was a subway exit from the interior of the café. They had simply gone down and taken the subway, and it had never occurred to him.

He felt more self-disgust than he was showing when he got back to headquarters.

DOC gave Monk, Ham and Johnny descriptions of the blond man and the others who had met him at the café. Monk and the other two were more unnerved and more frightened than before, if that was possible.

But they were capable of accomplishing the simple task he set for them.

"Call all the airports within miles of the city, give those descriptions, and ask for a report should the men appear," he directed.

Monk, Ham and Johnny went to work on the task.

Doc called the hospital, talked to Pat. "The trick has accomplished all the good it is going to do," he said.

"How much was that?" Pat wanted to know.

"It proved that the island, Skull Cay, is the focal point of the mystery," Doc replied. "The blond man was one of the gang. He met his associates. They decided we were tricking them but made the error of presuming we were already on our way to the island. So they are heading for the island themselves."

Pat said, "That girl, Turkis, is a crook?"

"There was no indication of that."

Pat said something disbelieving and disgusted. "I'll come in."

Doc got in touch with Long Tom and instructed him to quit stalling with the plane, to get it ready immediately. Thirty minutes would do that job, the electrical expert assured him.

Pat arrived, and, almost immediately after that, Monk turned from the telephone to report nervously. Even talking over the telephone seemed to frighten the chemist, who normally would have walked into a cage with a lion, and it would have been tough on the lion. "Doc, here's something."

"Yes?"

"That blond fellow and his friends took off in a plane from Central Field on Long Island, half an hour ago."

"What kind of ship?"

"A two-motored one that can cruise at two hundred miles an hour."

"Seaplane?"

"No. Land ship."

"How many men?" Doc asked.

"Seven, altogether," Monk said.

DURING the past year, as the international situation became more crucial, Doc Savage had devoted a great deal of time to designing airplanes of high speed and maneuverability and long range. Bombers of his design were in production in a number of American factories.

The ship he flew south was one of the largest and fastest. Its design permitted it to operate from land with a retractable wheel gear or to take off and land on water with the landing gear drawn up into the fuselage. It was, in fact, a military model, equipped with two cannons, machine guns, bomb racks, photographic

apparatus, and all the other equipment of an air dreadnought.

They took off with full fuel load and flew at top speed, by night, on a compass course reading south-southeast, a quarter east. They flew for ten hours and a fraction, and Long Tom made a report.

It was then starting to become daylight.

"Something off the radio," he said. "The English authorities in Bermuda are excited about a mysterious plane which landed on a lonely beach some distance from Hamilton and refueled. Ship answers description of our friend."

Doc glanced over the radio message. "Granted that they landed in Bermuda to refuel, we are about to overtake them. Bermuda is somewhat out of their way; but by carrying a short gasoline load, they gathered speed. The plane must have been faster than Monk calculated."

Renny rumbled, "That Monk sure worries me. There is something so wrong with him that it scares me."

Long Tom moved back in the plane, distributed binoculars, and said, "Keep a lookout for a plane."

Turkis Jellant moved forward to the cockpit, and spoke to Doc Savage.

"I'm sorry I cannot tell you what to expect on Skull Cay," she said.

"You do know that Jellant has a laboratory there?" Doc inquired.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Unfortunately," said the girl, "I have never been on the island. Professor Jellant lived a rather strange, lonely life, devoted to his experiments. None of the rest of the family was ever with him much."

Suddenly Ham Brooks—he had been continuously sitting in a seat with his pet chimp, Chemistry, on his lap, during most of the flight—sprang to his feet. He rushed forward.

"Go back!" he urged frantically. "Please do!"

Renny stared at Ham. To Renny, it was sickening to see the usually courageous Ham in such a state of chronic fear.

"Sit down," Renny said, "and stop that."

Long Tom gripped Ham's arm. "You saw something just now that excited you. What was it?"

"A pl-plane," Ham gasped.

"Where?"

Ham's shaking finger was not a reliable indicator, but Long Tom managed to locate, far in the distance ahead, an airplane. Doc increased the speed of the motors.

They had altitude over the other craft. Doc put his ship in a slanting dive, so that gravity helped their speed.

A thin something that might have been a cobweb appeared in the clear blue sky. A gossamery thread that came into existence in the morning sunlight, then faded away.

"Tracer bullets," Long Tom said.

By now, an island was below. There had been other islands before. They were, from the height at which they flew, like bits of green scum spat out on the sea. Unpleasant islands—low, damp, fever-ridden, crowded with mangroves. Only here and there was one high enough for palms to grow.

Pat pointed at the island below, asked, "Skull Cay?"

"Probably," Doc said.

Because this was a military type of plane, there was plenty of window area for observation. She pressed against one of the non-shatter-glass panels. "Come here," she called to Turkis. Then she pointed. "Is that Skull Cay?"

"I have never been there," Turkis explained.

"Well, you should be able to recognize it. You've got some idea what it looks like. Is that the place?"

The island below was a little higher than the usual mangrove key that had been formed by coral during the past few million years. Some subterranean upheaval had lifted one end of it to a small cliff. It somewhat resembled a shoe, with the toe flat and low, the heel higher, where the coral cliff lay.

The sole building on the island was not on the coral cliff, where it logically should have been. It was on the low end of the island, the toe portion, where there was a small hill.

Reason for location of the house there was at once obvious from the air. Everywhere else, the water approaching the island was shallow, very shallow, no more than a foot or two deep for at least four miles. But near the low end, there was deeper water, a kind of channel that led in from the sea.

There was one other island, a small green wart which stood perhaps three miles out on the shoal and did not seem to be inhabited.

"Yes, that is Skull Cay," Turkis said.

ANOTHER thread of tracer appeared. Close, this time. Then there was the sudden guttering vibration. A combined sound and jarring which, once heard, is never forgotten. Machine-gun bullets cutting into one of the wings!

Doc called, "Take armored stations."

Not all the ship was armored, because of the weight problem. Earlier models had had completely armored cabins, but the advent of cannon in planes had made heavier armor necessary, so it was spotted around the pilot's cockpit, the bombardier's niche and the after gun turret.

Renny watched in disgust as Monk, Ham, and Johnny made a wild scramble, shoving Pat and Turkis out of the way to reach the protection of the bombardier's armor.

"Crowding in ahead of women," Renny muttered. "I sure don't understand this."

Doc Savage had held his slanting dive, kicking right and left rudder in irregular fashion, sawing the stick somewhat, to make the plane a target hard to follow with gun sights.

Now, he straightened out for a moment, aligned his sights, and touched the cannon trigger. Both cannons

slammed, jarring the plane. Both missed, exploded on a white beach far below.

Renny said, "Dam those shells. Went right through the wings without exploding."

Doc said, "Evidently the shells were not armed before they were placed in the cannon. Will you check?"

The shells they were using were of an experimental type which required, like torpedoes, mechanical arming before they would explode. Renny made an examination.

He yelled at Monk, "You dope, you messed up the loading of these cannon magazines!" He worked for a moment, came back. "All right, now," he muttered. "You know, Monk and Ham and Johnny can't do anything."

Doc was grimly silent. He wrenched back on the stick, came around abruptly, and for an instant was under the tail of the other plane. The cannons jarred the ship again. This time, results were different. The fuselage of the other ship opened up as if something large and invisible had jumped out from within.

The other ship upended slowly. It did not go into a spin. It was under control, fully. But heading downward.

The radio cubicle was immediately behind Doc. Long Tom crouched there. He yelled, "They're on the air! They're surrendering!"

Doc plugged his headset into the radio-output jack on the instrument panel. A voice was screaming, yelling for mercy, promising all kinds of co-operation if the other plane was spared.

Renny also plugged into the radio jack. He listened, and his long face became astonished.

"That's Henry," he declared. Then he grinned. "You know, Henry sounds almost as scared as Monk."

MORE than once in the past, one or another of Doc Savage's associates had predicted that some day the bronze man might lose his life as a result of one policy which he pursued. The policy was that of not taking lives of enemies, no matter what the provocation.

Not that any of the group were bloodthirsty. But they did claim that there was such a thing as justifiable self-defense. Doc, however, was adamant on the point of never taking human life, and the others acceded to his wishes, although it often made their tasks immeasurably more difficult.

The present moment was an example. The other plane was almost helpless. Another charge of cannon shells, explosive, would have wiped it out.

No one was surprised when Doc spared the ship.

But no one suspected that in doing so they were heading straight for death!

The other plane swung down in a series of spirals. One of its two motors stopped. The voice of Henry—the man did not lose any of his fright—kept up wild pleas to be spared.

There was a long stretch of beach, smooth and white. The other plane made a landing. It was a long, careful landing, and when the ship came to a stop, it was at the far end of the beach.

Long Tom ordered, "Henry—you fellows get out, wade into the surf up to your necks, and stand there holding your hands in the air."

The occupants of the other plane complied with this command. There were nine of them.

"They picked up some extras somewhere," Renny commented.

Doc circled the big ship once. His flake-gold eyes searched the jungle. It looked innocent. Nothing moved. There were tropical birds, bright splotches in the undergrowth. A few sea birds on the beach. Two or three large stingarees were flapping dark triangles over light sand bottom in the shoal water. The occupants of the other plane had not been able to wade out to their necks, as directed. The water was too shallow. They had sat down, and were holding their arms and heads above the surface.

It all looked very innocent.

Doc put his plane down on the beach. The landing was good, perfect three points. They rolled a hundred yards. The sand was smooth. The sun was bright. The plane lost much of its speed.

Then the first beach mine exploded under them. It was not large, and they were over it before it let go. But the concussion kicked the tail around, so that the big plane yawed sickeningly.

Simultaneously, a staggered procession of other land mines exploded down the beach ahead of them. Geysers of sand and coral which erupted. Not large mines. None of them threw sand clouds over twenty feet in the air. But they ruined, in a split second, the beach as a landing runway for planes.

Their plane landing gear hit a hole. Wheel and struts sheared off. The plane veered sharply. Doc fought the controls, worked a motor violently, endeavoring to avert disaster. It was hopeless.

Straight for the wall of jungle, they plunged. They took a palm tree almost head-on. The palm sloped down. The plane climbed up it, rode it partially to earth, and glanced off. It sheared a smaller tree off ten feet above the ground.

Tough lignum vitae trees, of wood nearly as tough as iron, began snagging skin fabric off the plane, as if scaling a gigantic fish. Doc cut the motors.

The plane shed both wings and left its metal belly hide hanging to bushes. A fuel tank ripped open, sent a shower of high-octane gasoline over the surroundings. Somewhere, metal against metal made a spark. After that, flame was hotter, more sudden, than the sunlight!

CHAPTER VII. RESCUE

FIVE minutes passed like five days.

The flame crawled up and up, like the flame of a candle. But it was blue like the fire from a blowtorch. Metal parts of the plane curled up, and some of it melted.

Cannon shells exploded and machine-gun drums rattled in the heat, so that it was like the Fourth of July, but not for very long. Two minutes, perhaps.

Out of the west a few rods, where the jungle died against the so-white beach that was now pocked with mine craters, a machine pistol turned loose. It sounded like a bull fiddle that was very big and deep, but sawed by a tired man.

Silence then, except for the blowtorch sound of the flame.

Renny, who had fired the machine pistol, came back.

He said, "I didn't hit any of them. They got out of the water and into the jungle. The range was too great." He scowled at his machine pistol. The weapons could pour out a lot of bullets which did not travel far. They were for close range, not even designed to kill.

Doc Savage did not answer. He had his hands full. He was holding Monk, tying the chemist's hands and feet. It was a job. Monk was in the grip of utter terror, fear that was like insanity, giving him inhuman strength.

Patricia was standing in front of Johnny, menacing the thin archaeologist and geologist with a machine pistol.

"There're mercy bullets in this," she told Johnny repeatedly. "You break and run, and so help me, I'll fill you full of them!"

Renny pointed at Ham. Ham was motionless on the soggy earth, eyes closed, very white.

"He hurt?" Renny asked.

"Fainted," Pat said grimly.

"He was injured, then?"

"Scared," Pat said. "So scared he just passed out. And look at Johnny and Monk. Doc had to tie Monk up. He went crazy with terror."

Renny lost color. This thing of unexplained terror in men so brave in the past scared him. He did not scare easily.

Turkis took a deep breath. Her honey-and-gold beauty was unruffled. It was even enhanced somewhat by the excitement.

"We fell into a trap," she said. "They decoyed us down with that other plane, on this beach, where they had the mines planted for us."

Renny nodded, rumbled, "It was a trap all right. But the mines had been planted for some time. A week or two, it looked to me. At least, it had rained since they buried the wires that led to the mines."

Doc Savage tied Ham. Then he walked to the plane, circled it, shading his eyes against the heat. He strode to the beach. Renny followed him. They walked in different directions, until clear of the flame noise, and listened. They then met again and compared notes.

"No sound of an immediate attack," Doc commented.

"I didn't hear anything, either," Renny admitted.

Doc Savage, after remaining silent for a while, did a thing which surprised Renny. He made a small trilling sound, the exotic sound which he habitually made in moments of mental stress. The note was tiny, weird, and could have been that of a tiny wind, or a freak of the flames behind them.

Renny waited, and Doc finally said, "Those land mines were not very large, were they?"

That was all he said. Which left Renny puzzled. He could see nothing in the size of the land mines that was amazing enough to shock Doc Savage into making that trilling.

THIS was not the first time they had been in danger, so they organized almost naturally. Long Tom took to a tall tree with a pair of binoculars. Renny began circling cautiously, scouting the surrounding jungle.

Doc accosted Turkis. "You have never been here before?"

"No," said the girl quickly. "But I have an idea of how the land lies. We are on the east side of the island, aren't we? If so, that is where the high ground is. That is, the ground is high on the east side of the north end of the island. High along the whole east side. The cliffs are on the south end, though. But the house is what you're interested in, isn't it? The house is on the north end. We are not far from it."

"Have you any idea of the layout of the house?"

"No. Except that it is large and made of concrete, so as to be safe in the hurricanes."

The bronze man said, "Wait here, all of you."

He left them, then, and moved into the jungle. The undergrowth was thicker on the high ground inland, where the tidal waves of past hurricanes had not damaged it. The heat was oppressive.

Stone came underfoot. Coral. He moved carefully, climbing. Off to the north, he saw the house. It was a gray thing, as gray as the grimy-looking coral stone underfoot. The only spot of color was its red roof tiling.

Two men were on the roof of the house, with binoculars. They were perfectly motionless except for the slow swing of their bodies as they searched the island with the glasses.

Doc turned his attention back to the coral. The impression from the air had been correct. The island was partially a result of some slight subterranean upheaval which had thrust the coral above the surface, several hundred feet high, at some points.

Such an upheaval meant coral caves. He searched, began finding them. Small ones for a while. Then a large one, floored with drifted sand.

He returned to the others. "There is a cave up here that can be defended," he said. "There are two entrances, one very small and overgrown by bushes, the other larger."

He picked up Monk. Renny carried Ham. Long Tom brought the gaunt Johnny, having as much trouble with the geologist's long legs as if he were carrying an armload of brush.

AT the cave, Doc said, "We got out of the plane fire with almost nothing in the shape of weapons. So be careful with what ammunition you have. Try to avoid being found and attacked."

He moved away then, and was almost immediately lost to sight in the jungle.

Turkis touched Renny's arm.

"Will he be safe?" she asked. "Shouldn't someone go with him?"

Anxiety was like a small animal in her voice. Renny glanced at her quickly.

"Doc will be all right," he said.

He had suspected that the honey-and-gold girl was becoming interested in Doc Savage, and now he was

quite sure.

THE jungle was more like the Central American mainland than an island. The birds were thrushes, banana birds, noddies and gulls. There were cork and gum trees, sea grapes. Doc Savage stopped working through the tangle of undergrowth and took to the higher lanes. A fork-tailed frigate bird followed him for a while, sailing against the slight wind.

He heard finally, off to the right, noises. His passage toward the sound was cautious.

It was the men from the plane. They were working down a jungle path in an uncertain fashion, following a chart. At least, one of them carried a sheet of paper which he consulted frequently.

Two of them were borne down by weight of parts which they had removed from their plane so that it could not be made to fly.

Deciding they were heading for the house, Doc Savage took himself in that direction, making all the speed that he could.

The house stood in a clearing that was vast, open, cropped as close as a lawn. The short-cut grass was strange here in the lush tropical jungle, and it meant that someone must have been going over it almost daily with a scythe.

Doc circled the place carefully, making sure there was no way of approaching unseen. The guards were still alert on the roof.

The bronze man withdrew quickly into the jungle, went to the path and followed it. He found a thick tangle of vines overhanging the path, took up a post in them, and waited.

Shortly the crew of the plane approached. The narrowness of the path at that point made it necessary for them to walk one behind the other.

The lead man was alert, but he did not expect danger overhead. Doc let him get below, then tossed a smoke grenade. He had only two of these. The grenade made a popping noise and bloomed an amazing quantity of smoke for such a small source.

The man under the branch whirled in astonishment. His attention was distracted by the smoke, so that Doc was able to drop, not on him, but beside him. The bronze man used a fist. One very quick blow. The fellow collapsed.

Simultaneously, Doc yelled, "Here's Savage! Watch out! Get off the trail!"

He carried the man he had knocked out, lifting him up among the trees. Actually, the higher lanes of the jungle were faster going to one of the bronze man's physical development. He traveled in simian fashion, swinging along through the interlacing boughs, at times covering long spaces with unearthly ability, considering that he was carrying at least a hundred and fifty pounds of unconscious man.

Back on the trail, they had taken cover. They were crouching there, nervously waiting for developments, supposing the bronze man would attack at any moment.

Doc took advantage of the delay. He reached the big clearing where the cabin lay and circled to a point where the wind blew from his position toward the cabin. He dropped to the earth.

He put back his head and screamed, making the sound as horrified and desperate as he could manage. It was a ghastly noise intended to attract attention, and it fully accomplished its purpose.

On the roof of the house, the two lookouts seemed to lift off their feet. Then they whirled and stared at the spot from which Doc's screech had come. The house door burst open, a window went up, and other heads appeared. Everyone looked toward the sound.

Doc tossed his unconscious man out into view, giving the fellow an upright running shove so that he seemed to go several paces on his feet before he fell.

The bronze man flipped his one remaining smoke grenade out so that it ripened beside the fallen man, so close that it could easily be thought that his fall had set off the smoke bomb.

The smoke crawled upward, spreading in a fat cauliflower bloom, which the wind carried across the clearing. Smoke did not continue to come from the grenade for long. It was a quick-acting one which expended itself very rapidly.

The smoke was like a large, black and shapeless animal which the wind carried along at a swift walking pace.

Doc walked with the smoke, inside it, until he reached the house.

DOC found the man, with a chain around his neck, in a small room near the front of the house. Finding the fellow was not hard, because the man rattled his chain and bellowed for help, and someone began cursing him furiously. The man doing the cursing was short and fat, and his jaw must have been structurally weak, because it broke under Doc's fist.

The man with the chained neck was himself sturdy and blond, but he was not a young man. Once, no doubt, he had been athletic and handsome, but time had given his face a yellowed-paper cast and made his blond hair as coarse as broom straw.

Doc said, "Jellant?"

"Yes," the man said.

That was all that was said. The other end of the chain was not padlocked to anything, although a padlock was in place in the last link. Doc gathered up the chain so that it would make no noise. He led the man toward the back of the house, moving rapidly. The place seemed to be empty; everyone was outside to see what had happened to the fellow who had, they supposed, screamed.

The smoke had drifted a little past the house. Doc and the man who had said he was Jellant had to run to catch it. They had luck, and were not seen until they had almost reached the pall of smoke. Then a guard on the roof glimpsed them, emitted a yell, and fired! But he shot hastily, missing.

Doc changed direction twice, kept going on through the smoke. The stuff was thinning out, far from the desirable concealment it had offered earlier. But it was enough to get them to the wall of jungle.

"Hang to my back," Doc said.

The man was puzzled. "Why?" he asked. "Why should I—"

"Hang to my back!" Doc repeated, putting sharpness into his tone.

The man obeyed. Then he cried out in terror as Doc swung up among the trees and began whipping through space between boughs. For minutes, the man seemed a frozen thing on Doc's back, completely terrorized. And his muscles remained as hard as wood, and his face white, until they reached the coral cave where Renny, Pat, and others were waiting.

The man then sank to the sandy floor and trembled from head to foot.

"*Bruder!*"

screamed Turkis. She rushed forward, arms outstretched. "*Frisch and gesund!*"

The man dropped his neck chain, and it rattled. His eyes got round.

"*Unglaublich!*"

he gasped.

The two stared at each other for a moment. They did not seem to know what to do. They then fell into each other's arms.

"Brother!" again exclaimed Turkis, this time, in English. "You are all right."

The man said something else that was astonishing in his native language, then muttered, "My darling sister!" several times. He looked over the girl's head at Doc Savage. "How did she get here?" he asked. "She was with me on the steamer *Lisbon Girl*. I thought they had killed her."

"I got away brother," Turkis told him. "I got to New York and got Doc Savage to help us."

The blond man started. He stared at Doc Savage.

"You are Savage?" he asked.

"Didn't you know that?" his sister asked him.

The man shook his head slowly. Then he disengaged the girl's arms, stepped forward, extending his hand. "You perhaps remember the correspondence we have had in the past," he said.

Doc Savage nodded.

"Concerning the experiments with vitamins, particularly those in the B-complex group, and their derivatives and opposites," the other man added.

The bronze man nodded again, said, "The vitamin experiments are the answer to this, are they not?"

The blond man showed surprise. "You guessed that? Or did someone tell you?"

Doc Savage indicated Monk, Ham and Johnny. "It was obvious," he said, "from the condition of my three associates here."

The significance of what they were saying soaked into Renny's brain.

"Vitamins!" he bellowed. "You mean to say Monk and Ham and Johnny are—what's wrong with them—because of vitamins?"

Excitement made him sound confused.

"Yes," Doc said.

With a completely blank face, Renny said, "I don't get it. There's no such vitamin." He shook his head. "There're vitamins A, B, C, and a lot of others. But there's nothing that would cause"—he jerked a thumb at Monk and the other two—"anything like *that!*"

"This vitamin," Doc Savage said, "is what you might call F E A R."

CHAPTER VIII. VITAMIN F E A R

THE blond man suddenly seized Doc Savage's hand and shook it again, saying, "I can't get over this—how fortunate I am to have you rescue me."

Doc said quietly, "The way we understand it, you were on your way to New York when you were taken off the steamer by agents of a foreign power. Is that right?"

The other nodded. "I was not using the name of Professor Jellant, and I had taken great pains to conceal the movements of myself and my sister. I thought I was safe."

"Your purpose in coming to New York?"

"Oh, didn't Turkis tell you that?" He seemed surprised. "It was concerning the matter of the vitamin reactive compound. We can use the name you just gave it, Vitamin F E A R, that name being as appropriate as any. You see, our written communications indicated to each other that we were both working on the substance. I am sorry to say that the censors of my country—the censors of the conquerors of my country, I should say—found out about my experiments; so I fled."

"You have been proceeding in your native land with your experiments on the vitamin?"

"Oh, yes. In Vienna."

"I see. How far have you progressed?" Doc Savage's face was expressionless.

The blond scientist drew himself up proudly. He seemed, for a moment, a much younger man.

"I have created it in small laboratory quantities," he said. "The only problem remaining is the development of apparatus to manufacture it upon a large scale."

His manner became intense. His eyes brightened, and he clenched his fists dramatically.

"Only when we can manufacture it on a large scale," he said, "can it be used to do the enormous good of which it is capable."

Renny snorted. "What good can a thing like that do?"

"You do not understand!" the other exclaimed.

"I've seen a sample of your stuff, Jellant," Renny said grimly. He pointed at Monk. "There's the sample. Ham and Johnny, too. I don't see any great good done to them."

The blond man looked at Monk. He could see the fear on Monk's face. Anyone could.

He smiled, said, "Just imagine the results of the material being administered to the leaders, the army leaders, of war-mad Europe."

Renny rubbed his jaw. The thought was impressive.

"That would be a heck of a big job," he said.

"It could be done," the other told him with a fanatical intensity.

Doc put in quietly, "Just what is the situation back at the house?"

After that, they listened to the blond scientist outline conditions at the house: About a dozen men on guard. With those who had arrived on the plane—nine—the total would be twenty-one. A sizable force. Moreover, there were additional men on a nearby island, where two fast speedboats and another plane were being kept. One of the speedboats was equipped with a torpedo, and was the craft which had stopped the steamer *Lisbon Girl*.

The house itself was, in a sense, a fortress. This was the case because of its heavy concrete construction, a defense against hurricanes. The windows were small, completely covered by steel shutters which were designed to stop a palm tree carried on a wind of a hundred and twenty miles an hour. They would keep out rifle bullets. Doors were equally heavy.

The blond scientist stopped speaking. He waited for a dramatic moment.

"And the lovely part," he finished, "is that we can get into the house any time we wish, without being discovered."

Renny frowned. "How?"

"There is a tunnel."

BECAUSE Monk, Ham and Johnny were very frightened men, Doc's party was forced to take slow going through the jungle. It was growing late in the afternoon; shadows were increasing. The three victims of the fear compound seemed to be afraid of the darkness. There were mosquitoes, too, and Ham remembered the possibility of fever. He went into a spell of terror so violent that they had to seize and hold him.

Long Tom and Pat brought up the rear. Close at their heels followed the chimp, Chemistry, and Habeas Corpus, Monk's pet pig.

Long Tom said, "That sure took me by surprise, that fear-vitamin stuff. I halfway don't believe it."

Pat said, "It could happen."

"Hm-m-m!"

Long Tom muttered. He plodded through the jungle in silence for a while. "This thing *could* be big," he admitted finally.

Pat swatted a mosquito. "Big!" she said. "It's terrific!"

Long Tom nodded. "Could be, I'll admit. If they had some way of administering that stuff to people without their knowing they'd gotten it."

"Do you think," Pat demanded, "that Monk and Ham and Johnny knew *they* were being dosed with it?"

Long Tom's face went suddenly fierce. "That reminds me of something." He left Pat, pushed ahead past the others, and grabbed Professor Jellant's shoulder. "Look here, let's hear you explain something."

The blond scientist's stare was surprised. "Yes?"

"How come these secret agents had some of your fear vitamin to use on Monk, Ham and Johnny?"

"Oh, that?" said the other. "I was just explaining to Dr. Savage that I smuggled a very small supply of the substance out of Vienna. But, in Portugal, where I had a narrow escape from these agents, they got my baggage *and* the vitamin. It was a very small quantity, a tiny amount developed experimentally in my laboratory, as I say."

Long Tom considered this. It sounded reasonable. "All right, how is it administered?" he asked.

The blond scientist smiled. "That is the beautiful part of it," he said.

"Eh?"

"It is administered by respiration."

"By which?"

"You breathe it in," said the other. "It is a gas form. You notice nothing except a rather sweetish odor. Or it can be condensed to an odorless and tasteless form and placed in the victim's beverage or food."

Renny overheard that.

"Holy cow!" he muttered.

THEY crawled for twenty minutes, and, at two points, they were able to stand upright in the tunnel. These points were where they came into caverns in the coral. The rest of the way, the tunnel was hand-hewn.

Entrance was through a ruined stone blockhouse that overlooked the deeper water close inshore—the harbor.

"This was built many generations ago," explained the blond scientist. "Pirates, probably. I imagine it was a pirate lair, more than a hundred years ago."

A few minutes later, steps led upward. Doc stopped at the foot of these. "Dr. Jellant, you say these lead into the laboratory?"

"Not directly into the lab," corrected the blond scientist. "Into an adjacent storeroom. The storeroom has three doors. Actually, it is a perfect spot from which to start a fight. Any part of the house can be reached from there in a hurry."

Doc then said, "We will untie Monk and Ham, then tie them and Johnny with these." He produced belts.

"They'll be able to work loose from those belts," Renny pointed out.

"It will take half an hour," Doc said meaningly. "In half an hour, if we are not back, it is best they be free."

Renny nodded.

But the attack proceeded without hitch, without any of the bad luck which had plagued them so far in the adventure. They climbed to the heavy wooden door which they found at the top of the steps. This was

high, but very narrow. Less than two feet wide.

The blond scientist operated the door. It proved to be a false beam—in the room beyond—which looked innocent. The beam simply slid downward on counterbalanced weights, leaving a gap through which they could squeeze.

The room into which they stepped was full of litter, packing cases for the most part, and shelves which held bottles and packages. The kind of stuff a scientist would have in his storeroom. Some of it had been there a long time.

"I first began using this years ago," said the blond man. "I came here during the winter. The climate is wonderful during December and up until March. After that, there is the rainy season, then the hurricanes."

"This happens to be the hurricane season," Renny remarked irrelevantly. "Which doors do we take?"

Doc indicated with gestures—Renny to the east, Long Tom and Jellant to the south. The bronze man would take the west. That took care of the three doors.

"Pat, you watch Turkis," Doc directed.

"You always underestimate me when a fight comes up," Pat complained. "This is once I'm going to take an active part."

Before anyone could stop her, she opened a door—and confronted an astonished man.

The man evidently had heard some small sound and had come to investigate. He had a gun strapped on his hip, cowboy fashion except that the weapon was a long-barreled automatic pistol. He tried a quick draw. But the holster strap was buckled. He clawed at the thing.

Pat calmly speared at his eyes with two fingers, after the fashion of rough-house comics in vaudeville. The man ducked. He met Pat's fist, which landed expertly against his windpipe. That brought his head back. Pat's other hand landed against a spot where nerve centers were most exposed. The man dropped as senseless as if he had been shot.

"Jujitsu," Pat said proudly. "I've been practicing."

Doc gestured, indicating to go ahead with the attack. They separated, moving rapidly.

Doc headed west—and had bad luck. There was one guard just inside the west door. He heard the bronze man coming, whirled, let out a yell, sprang outside and got the door partly closed before Doc hit it.

Doc shoved against the door hard enough to send the man sprawling. But the fellow had a gun, and shot wildly as he fell. One of the bullets cut into the bronze man's shoulder armor, hard enough—and close enough to his vulnerable throat—to discourage headlong attack. Also, someone leaned over the roof, and shot downward, also bellowing a demand as to what was wrong.

Doc shut the door, locked it. The heavy steel panel had a set of substantial bars inside.

He retreated. He had noticed an iron ladder leading upward, terminating at an open trapdoor. The roof was up there. He had a small packet of gas grenades, and he tossed two of these up onto the roof. They made the noise of dud firecrackers, small ones.

The men on the roof knew what that meant. And evidently they had no gas masks. The voice of the

seemingly ever-present Henry bellowed, "Gas! Get off the roof! They're in the house!"

There were sounds of men dropping over the roof edge, mixed in with the angry and aimless slamming of guns.

Not less than a minute later, when Doc Savage held his breath against the gas, and climbed the ladder to look out on the roof, it was unoccupied.

The gas was an anaesthetic type. Shortly after it mingled with the atmosphere, not over a minute and a half, it became ineffective. As soon as the gas had become impotent, he clambered out on the empty roof.

As he had suspected, the chimney was constructed of bricks. Chimneys never seem to be made of anything else. He got to the chimney, and it was like practically all chimneys in having loose mortar at the top. He loosened a few bricks in his hands, went to the edge of the roof, and began pegging them at running men.

He had bad luck and missed. Someone far out on the edge of the clearing cut loose with a machine gun, a small portable one, which was something he had not expected. He got down on all fours and considered himself fortunate to reach the trapdoor and lower himself, undamaged, into the house.

The fight sounds in the house had ended, by now. He went hunting, met Renny, and Renny said, "Taking them from behind like that must have scared the wits out of them. They cleared out of the house."

"All of them?"

"All, I think," Renny said. "We can't find anybody."

They listened to the shooting, to bullets hitting the cement. They sounded like hammer blows; now and then, there was a squeal as a slug ricocheted upward into the tropical sky.

Pat said, "I wonder what happened to the fellow I tried out my jujitsu on."

She went away and returned with a long face. "He woke up and beat it," she complained.

FIVE minutes gave them time for a more thorough search of the house, after which they were quite sure that they had captured the place.

"That," said Renny gleefully, "was the easiest raid I ever made. Holy cow!"

Turkis came in excitedly and said, "Look here! Their arsenal! We have enough guns and ammunition for an army!"

Not exactly an army, possibly. But enough guns and shells, they all reflected, to last them some time.

"What about food?" demanded Long Tom, who considered regular meals an important item.

Pat said, "Let's take a look."

Doc Savage caught the blond scientist's eye, signaled, and the two of them went back to the laboratory storeroom. "You are right," said Jellant eagerly. "We had better get your three friends who were left in the tunnel."

Monk and Ham and Johnny were where they had been left. Monk, however, had freed his wrists, and was working on his ankle bindings when they got there. Ten minutes more would have seen all three of them loose and, as subject to fear as they were, in full flight.

Doc herded them on to the house.

Pat appeared and reported, "Plenty of grub. Boy, oh, boy! They even have caviar and champagne."

The chain still dangled from the blond scientist's neck. He had rigged a kind of pouch with his shirt to hold it. But now he jangled the loose end impatiently.

"There are tools in the laboratory," he declared. "I want to get this thing off my neck."

Doc nodded, and they went to the laboratory.

The blond man picked up a portable electric grinder. "Use this," he suggested. "I imagine you can get the chain apart without damaging me much more than I'm already damaged."

Doc took the grinder, flipped the switch. It began whining, indicating the electric current supply was undamaged.

He noted evidence that the chain had been around the man's neck for some time. The collar to which it was attached was steel, apparently molded for that purpose. The metal had chafed the man's neck, broken the skin in places. Obviously, he was suffering pain.

Sparks sprang away from the spot where carborundum began eating into the metal. Once, the blond man groaned and slapped at the spot where hot sparks fell on his naked skin.

When the chain was loose, he gathered it up and threw it against the laboratory wall. "*Das freut mich!*" he snapped in his native tongue. Then he smiled sheepishly, said, "*Danke*. Thank you."

Doc swung to inspect the laboratory. The place, he saw, was most complete and modern. Almost all of the apparatus was of European manufacture, but that was not necessarily a liability, particularly in the case of fine microscopes.

Most of the equipment was covered, the metal parts which might corrode coated with preservative greases. Containers of chemicals were sealed.

The blond man pointed at some stuff which had been used recently.

"They were trying to force me to proceed with experiments aimed at finding a method of bulk manufacture for my Vitamin F E A R," he explained. "In order to avoid beatings and torture, I was going through the motions."

Doc made a closer inspection. He took paper and pencil and made notes of various chemicals and pieces of equipment.

"You have enough material here to conduct the experiments?" he remarked.

"Oh, yes. I did work on my fear vitamin here. Didn't I write you to that effect in my letters? I seem to recall doing so."

"Yes, you did."

RENNY came to the door and said, "Doc, have you got time to listen to a report?"

"Go ahead."

"Pat and Long Tom and I have taken a kind of inventory," Renny explained. "We can hold out in this place indefinitely, unless they've got a cannon. What about cannon, Jellant?"

"They have no cannon," said the blond man.

"How about bombs for that airplane? You said they had another plane on a nearby island, didn't you?"

"They have a plane, the scientist admitted. "But it is out of order. They have the motor dismantled, and cannot use the ship until they pick up a spare. I think they plan to get the spare parts off a raider which, of course, will have to bring it all the way from a European port. That will take several days at the very least."

"Holy cow!" said Renny gleefully. "Then we're all set here for a while."

Long Tom arrived. "I found a radio," he said.

"Good!" Renny rumbled. "You can summon help. We'll wind this thing up in a hurry."

"The radio," said Long Tom, "is busedicated."

"Don't be funny! What do you mean?"

"Smashed into pieces small enough to eat," Long Tom explained.

Professor Jellant turned to Doc Savage. "You know," he said, "I have an idea."

The bronze man looked interested. "Yes?"

"This fear vitamin," said Jellant. "If we can work out a method of producing it in bulk, we can get together enough to turn loose on these devils who have us besieged here."

Renny, Pat and Long Tom looked impressed.

"I think that's a fine idea," Pat declared. "But look here—is there any chance of doing it? These scientific discoveries aren't just dashed off on the spur of the moment."

Jellant looked at Doc Savage. "With the help of Dr. Savage, I would bet money we can accomplish it," he declared firmly. "We have all the materials we shall need. This laboratory is one of the most completely equipped in existence and perfect for the kind of work we want to do."

Renny's breathing quickened. "What about it, Doc?"

The bronze man was silent for a moment.

"Might be done," he admitted.

Jellant waved an arm excitedly. "Good! Oh, good! We will begin at once on—"

"On a treatment," Doc interposed.

"Eh? Treatment?" The blond man stared.

"A cure for the effects of this vitamin," Doc explained.

"What?" exclaimed Jellant. "I am not interested in a cure. It is the compound I wish, to overcome our enemies—"

"Three of my men are suffering from the stuff," Doc Savage said quietly, "and we want the cure."

There was a kind of finality about his words, as if a heavy weight had dropped. A weight so heavy that it could not be moved or even budged.

CHAPTER IX. CURE

IT was near midnight when Renny left the house. The night was intensely still, the moon too bright, with a metallic quality to its illumination. Furthermore, the heat was unnatural.

He took along a drug which he showed Doc Savage before starting out.

"They won't catch me," he said. "But if they do, I'll take this stuff."

Doc Savage glanced at the label on the bottle. It was a compound which would create unconsciousness from which a man could not be aroused for a period of at least twelve hours.

"Precaution," Renny explained.

"What are your plans?" asked the bronze man.

"Just to find out where these guys are hiding," Renny said. "Here, all the rest of the day has gone, and they haven't made a move to attack us. I'm just curious to know what is keeping them back. Surely, they know there's only one plane load of us and that they have us outnumbered."

Doc Savage made no comment. He went back to the laboratory to work among the filters and tubes.

Renny waited until moon shadow stood at one side of the house, then slid out of a window on that side. He lay in the grass, which was knee-high and, as long as he kept flat on his face, enough concealment for his purpose. After waiting for a while, he crawled forward and reached the jungle.

It was a creepy jungle. The utter stillness made it so. There was no breath of air, no stir of breeze, and even the sea was soundless on the nearby beach. On the other hand, the birds that populated the undergrowth were strangely uneasy. Out on a reef, water birds could be heard quarreling, which was something unusual for the night.

Renny crouched uneasily in the growth and wished he had one of Long Tom's electrical listeners, one of the devices which used a sensitive microphone and an amplifier to bring up small sounds. It would make the walking of a fly as prominent as the tramping of a big dog.

He had only his ears, and they detected nothing. He frowned, then moved over toward the higher side of the island. Where the ground was higher, the mangroves did not grow, and it was possible to at least push forward through the tangled growth.

Unexpectedly, he caught sight of a boat. The tide was in, and this was a small, flat-bottomed boat, a canvas-covered dinghy of very small draft.

The boat was coming in over the great expanse of shoal water, which was no more than two feet deep at

low tide and, in many places, more shallow than that. A man was poling it along. He was alone.

Deciding where the boat was going to land, Renny crawled toward the spot. He was very careful about noise—and was glad of the precaution.

Four men were crouching at the beach edge. They suddenly got up and waded out to the boat, climbed into it, and prepared to leave.

"That all of you?" asked the man who had poled the boat.

"Sure, that's all," said one of the passengers.

"Savage and his men still at the house?"

"Sure."

The man laughed. "That's fine," he said. "Just what we want. As long as they stay there."

Renny watched the boat move away across the strange flat shoal area, where the water looked as vast as the open sea, but where it was shallow enough to be waded by a child. He was extremely curious to know to what spot the boat might be ferrying the men.

RENNY walked back to the house boldly, striding across the clearing in the brilliant, utterly still moonlight, as big as life.

"You gave me such a start," Long Tom told him, "that I darned near cut loose on you with this machine pistol. And Pat was positive you were a decoy, so she dashed around to the other side of the house to watch for a surprise attack."

"Holy cow!" Renny rumbled. "Where's Doc?"

Seeing that the big-fisted engineer obviously had something on his mind, Long Tom hurriedly indicated the laboratory. "Still in there working on the antidote for that vitamin," he explained.

Renny found Doc Savage, and said, "Doc, something rotten goes on."

The bronze man carefully finished an operation with a device which gave a quick analysis by passing smoke or vapor from a burned substance through a spectroscopic viewer.

"Yes?" he asked.

"They've cleared out. Left the island."

"That was thoughtful of them."

"You don't get it," Renny said earnestly. "Something smells. Something's up. They want us to stay here."

"You sure of that?"

"I heard them say so. Our staying here is just what they want, or something like that. It's fine, they think. I don't like it."

Doc Savage did not seem concerned. "What is there in that to worry you?"

Renny snorted.

"Suppose," he said, "that they've got a time bomb planted under the house?"

"Meaning that if we stay here, we might get blown up?"

"Or blown into little pieces."

Doc Savage was sober, silent, a moment. Then he shook his head. "I would not worry about that," he said.

Renny stared at him. "Look, Doc. You know something about this that the rest of us don't?"

The bronze man seemed not to hear the question. Which gave Renny food for thought. Doc *did* know something. That was the reason he was not worried. Renny went off and stood at a window and scratched his head, literally and mentally. He did not see anything in the situation to give the feeling of safety which Doc seemed to have.

He wandered in and explained the situation to Long Tom and Pat. Neither of them had any kind of an explanation. They were as puzzled as Renny.

"For some reason or other," Pat remarked, "the barometer is dropping."

"I got the same feeling," Renny admitted.

Pat said, "Actually. I mean *actually*. The barometer going down. This is the hurricane season down in these islands, and I don't like the looks of it."

"Why not get on the radio," Renny suggested, "and see if there is a blow in this neck of the woods."

"They smashed the radio," Long Tom reminded him. "Receiver as well as transmitter."

That was at four o'clock in the morning.

At noon, Doc Savage summoned Renny. "Do not let Monk and Ham and Johnny have anything more to eat," he said.

"They didn't get any breakfast," Renny explained. "They've got the idea the food here might be poisoned. They're afraid to eat anything. You never saw such scared guys."

"The fear seems to be becoming worse?"

"It does."

"Is anyone watching them?"

"Turkis," Renny explained, "has been taking care of them. You know, that girl sure has been a lot of help. She's taken care of Monk and the other two right along. And believe me, that's no picnic. It must be pretty disgusting, with those three fellows in the condition they're in."

Doc went in to talk to Turkis. He found the girl talking soothingly to the long and bony Johnny Littlejohn, who was in the midst of a fit of terror and trembling like a scared child.

Turkis looked up at the bronze man. "I . . . I hope you find something that will help them," she said.

Doc said quietly, "We are working hard on it."

The girl showed signs of strain and a little nervousness. She touched the bronze man's arm impulsively. "I'm worried about this situation," she said.

"We appear to be in no particular danger," Doc said.

Turkis seemed distressed. Her hand tightened on Doc's arm. "I . . . I'm not sure—" She dropped her eyes. Finally, she blurted out. "Do be careful!"

Doc caught the expression on her face, and he was embarrassed. He backed out of the room.

Long Tom, who had witnessed the exchange of words, grinned slyly.

Later, when he saw Renny, he remarked casually, "You might as well save those sheep eyes you've been making at Turkis."

"Huh?" said Renny.

"She's taking a dive for Doc."

"Holy cow!" Renny said. "Yeah, I had been noticing."

That was at one o'clock.

AT three fifteen, Doc Savage said, "Bring Monk in the laboratory. Have Ham and Johnny ready to follow as soon as we send for them."

Renny's face showed the electric thrill he felt. "You've got the cure?"

"We have something that we might try."

"How'd you get it so fast?" Renny demanded. "Did Jellant have a pretty good idea of what would work?"

Doc nodded. "An excellent idea," he said. "In fact, it was largely his work which produced the antidote."

"We sure owe that guy a debt of gratitude then," Renny rumbled, and went to get Monk, Ham and Johnny.

They had to lash Monk to a long table and carry him into the laboratory bodily. The homely chemist was in what amounted to a state of nervous collapse.

Over the table, Doc Savage spread a canopy, fashioned of rubberized shower curtains. He worked for a while with rubber cement, making these airtight. A small hose ran from the curtain to a complicated gadget which he had rigged on the nearby lab table. One of Monk's wrists projected from the curtain, and Doc also placed a stethoscope so that he could keep track of Monk's heartbeats.

Beads of perspiration came out on Renny's forehead. He could see that the treatment was going to be dangerous.

He watched with growing uneasiness. His face became as pale as Monk's face, which showed beneath the transparent window Doc had rigged in the makeshift canopy. His big fists clenched.

Pat, working with the stethoscope, gasped finally, "Doc! Doc! His heart has almost stopped! He isn't

going to make it!"

The bronze man remained undisturbed.

It was then five o'clock.

AT eight o'clock that night, Monk beat his fists against his chest after the fashion of the ape he resembled.

"I'll tear 'em to pieces!" he bellowed. "I'll rend 'em leg from leg, and arm from arm, what I mean!"

Ham said, "For once, you missing link, I'll agree with you! We have to get even with those fellows!"

"I'll be superamalgamated," remarked the bony Johnny. "Immitigability is pragmatic."

Which must mean, decided the listening Renny, that Johnny agreed with the others. Renny was so delighted that his eyes were moist. He went and found Doc Savage.

"They're back to normal," he said. "Even Monk and Ham are quarreling again."

Doc Savage was back in the laboratory, working. "Let them take their part in the defense of the house from now on," he said.

"They're able to do that now?"

"Perfectly able."

Renny indicated the laboratory. "Look, Doc, hadn't you better get some rest? You've been hitting the ball more than thirty-six hours, now, without any letup."

"Do not worry about me," the bronze man said.

Doc Savage watched Renny leave the laboratory. "Jellant," he said, "the cure worked. Unfortunately, it is such a dangerous method that men of less physical ability than my three men could not stand it. The cure is not one that could be applied to—say, the population of a whole nation."

The blond scientist nodded. "We do not need cures," he said. "What we need is enough of the compound to induce fear in these men who have us besieged here on the island. For we *are* besieged, you know."

"We will continue work on that."

The other hesitated, then shook his head. "I agree with Mr. Renny that you should get some rest. We both should. We will gain nothing in the long run by working ourselves into a state of utter exhaustion. Exhausted men do not have clear minds."

Doc Savage seemed to consider the point. "You might be right," he said abruptly. "We will knock off for a few hours. Get some sleep if you can, Jellant."

The blond man said, "Sleep is the easiest thing I could do, right now. Wake me when you are ready to proceed. I am amazed by your facility in this matter. Your knowledge of the compound is far beyond my own, already."

Doc did not comment on that. He left the laboratory. But he made no effort to sleep.

Instead, he went to the roof, where he remained for some time, looking out over the jungle. He seemed depressed by the stillness, disturbed by the heaviness in the air.

Later, he went down and studied the barometer. It was a recording type of instrument, and his flake-gold eyes became bleak as he watched the descending line made by the stylus during the past few hours.

Pat said, "That doesn't look good, does it?"

"No, it does not," Doc admitted.

THE bronze man did something which would have puzzled his associates, but none of them witnessed his action. He found the writing room of the house, took pen, paper and ink. He wrote for some time. He made three copies of what he had written.

He folded the paper on which he had written, took it to the laboratory and made a waterproof covering for it. He used the rubberized shower-curtain stuff, out of which he had fashioned the canopies for administering the cure to Monk and the others. He sealed this carefully with cement. He made three identical packets.

Carrying the packets and a roll of adhesive tape, he found Monk and the others.

Monk, Ham and Johnny were talking in low voices when he came upon them. They looked a little guilty.

Doc said, "Sorry to disturb you fellows. I just want to give you a further treatment."

"Treatment?" Monk remembered what he had undergone, both from the fear vitamin and the treatment. There was some question in his mind which was the worse. "What kind? Will it hurt?"

"Not at all," Doc said.

He had them strip off their shirts. To the back of each man—Monk, Ham and Johnny—he affixed one of the packets he had fashioned. He fastened them in place with crisscrossed strips of adhesive tape.

"You say this will keep us safe?" Monk asked dubiously.

"It should."

Monk muttered, "What is it—some kind of chemical? Radioactive stuff of some kind?"

"Do not remove it," Doc said, "under any circumstance."

Ham nodded thoughtfully. Then, after making a show of inspecting the packet on Monk's back, he said, "It won't run and burn us or anything if it gets wet?" Then he added hastily, "It feels like a storm, this still air and the heat, and there might be some rain. How about that?"

"Water will not damage it," Doc said.

"Good."

CHAPTER X. THE OTHER CHEEK

AFTER Doc Savage had gone, Monk Mayfair took Ham Brooks by the throat and said harshly, "You

overdressed shyster! You mistake turned out by Harvard! You almost gave it away!"

"I didn't give anything away," Ham denied.

"You danged near. With that talk about water damaging those things he put on our backs."

"How?"

"You almost tipped Doc off on what we're planning."

Ham said, "Let go of my neck, you hairy freak! If you know what's good for you, *let go!*"

Monk showed no signs of releasing the lawyer until he got slugged in the midriff so hard that he had to sit down in a chair and recover his ability to breathe. Then he showed signs of wanting to get up and sail into Ham.

"Stop that!" Johnny said.

The gaunt geologist and archaeologist not only used small words, which was startling, but his tone had an intensity that commanded attention.

"We have no time to lose," Johnny added. "We have our plans made. Let's put them into operation."

Monk nodded reluctantly. He arose, sauntered around until he found Renny, who was keeping a lookout through the front door.

"Sure a hot night," Monk remarked.

"I do not like it," Renny admitted. "Smells like hurricane to me. Down here, those things are no joke."

"By the way," said Monk casually. "You say you saw our pals get in a boat and row off?"

"Pole off," corrected Renny. "They headed out across the shoals. You know the water around here is not much more than waist-deep for a couple or three miles offshore. Everywhere but opposite the house here, that is."

"Any idea where they went?" Monk added hastily. "That is, did they keep going? Or do you think they might have stopped somewhere close and might come back unexpectedly?"

Renny frowned.

"You remember that little cay about three miles out on the shoal?" he asked. "Or were you too scared to notice?"

Monk's feelings were hurt. "I wasn't scared," he disclaimed. "I was a victim of that vitamin."

Renny chuckled. "For my money, you were scared."

Monk was embarrassed. "I'm sure glad Ham had the same stuff I got," he said. "Otherwise, I would never be able to live it down. That shyster would ride me until the day of his death, then rise out of his grave to rib me." He groaned at the memory. "By the way, you say those fellows went to that little island?"

"I didn't say they did," Renny corrected. "But I think that is where they went. They wouldn't take out over the open sea in a small boat, particularly with these hurricane signs in the weather."

"Then they're probably holed up on that island."

"Probably."

Monk said elaborately, "I hope they stay there."

He rejoined Ham and Johnny. "Renny thinks it's the island," he said. "Let's go, brothers."

LATER they stood on the beach. They were grim, for their mission was a completely serious one. They were bent on revenge. They were launching a three-man blitzkrieg.

"I left a note where they'll find it in the morning," Ham volunteered.

"We'll be back by morning," Monk declared, "with belts full of scalps."

"Well, I feel a little uneasy about doing this," Ham said, defending his action.

Monk snorted. "If it hadn't been for us, Doc wouldn't have gotten into this mess. It was our fault. We were the three guys who let ourselves get dosed with that stuff. So it's up to us to clean it up."

Johnny declared, "That's right. Doc would not expect us to turn the other cheek."

Monk indicated the glass-smooth water. "We can't go directly to the island. A muskrat couldn't swim out there without being seen. What we will do is head straight north five or six miles, then make a big circle, and come up on that little cay from behind."

"In what?" Johnny demanded.

"In a boat."

"I do not see any boat."

"Let's hope," said Monk, "that they were carrying a rubber one in that plane. If not, we can detach the fuel tank of the ship, or something, and make a boat."

They reached the plane without incident. Hopefully, they made a preliminary inspection to see if the motors were capable of operation. They were not.

"They took some parts off, I remember Doc saying," Monk explained. "And they hid them somewhere, so that we haven't been able to find them. Maybe they took the parts over to the other island."

Ham said disgustedly, "Here's a raft."

The raft was all they found, and they were not pleased. The raft was a clumsy thing which inflated automatically from a cylinder of chemical. There were two paddles, collapsible things which were far from practical for a trip of a dozen miles, which was what they had been contemplating.

"We'll never make it," Ham complained. "No use kidding ourselves that we can. It will be noon tomorrow before we could reach that island."

Monk said, "All right, I've got another idea."

"What is it?"

"They think I'm scared."

"Well?"

"When we reach that island," Monk explained, "I'll be alone in the boat, and scared. A scared man who fled from this island to that one, not knowing what he was getting into."

Ham frowned, said, "that sounds like one of your goofy ideas. What will we be doing?"

"You'll be behind the boat out of sight," Monk told him. "When we get in close, you'll be under the boat. After we land, you'll be on shore helping me clean those guys' plows for them."

Ham stared. "That kind of an idea couldn't spring from anything but that vacuum you call a brain. But it might work."

Johnny Littlejohn eyed Habeas Corpus, the pig, and Chemistry, the chimp. He did not particularly approve of either animal. "You two nuts going to take these pests along?" he asked.

"You call Habeas a pest again," Monk said, "and I'll use you for a pole to push this raft over to that island."

They finally got launched and set out directly for the little cay which was faintly distinguishable in the distance, a dark patch in the brightly moonlit night. The trip was very long and tiring, but uneventful except for the profanity which Johnny Littlejohn used as he skinned his shins on the sharp coral. They were the longest cuss words Monk and Ham had heard.

DRAWING near the little cay, Monk became a man who was driven mad by fear, and worn to exhaustion. He made a great splashing commotion, poling the raft with the ineffective oars. Twice, he fell overboard in his pretended frenzy.

His blubbing sounds were the realistic noises of a man so scared he did not know where he was, or care. He poked frantically with the pole. It was typical of Monk that, even under the circumstances, he took pains to swat Ham now and then with the oar, pretending it was an accident. And the boat reached shore. Monk sprang out.

It was no surprise when three men with rifles and flashlights popped out of the bushes. They said things about getting hands up and not starting anything.

Monk then fell to his knees and prayed loudly to his ancestors for help, and for less danger.

A man laughed and said, "It's one of the three doped guys. He must have busted loose from Savage."

The other members of the trio turned to the jungle and called, "Hey, it's all right, guys. Just one scared ape."

The speaker was obviously a man who had lived a long time in the United States. But the men who came out of the jungle spoke English very poorly, and one of them said, "*Was nun?*" In English, that would have been a surprised, "What next?" Four men.

Monk did some elaborate wailing and pleading to make it look good. He decided after a few moments that all the men were out of the jungle, so he became incoherent, so that his English was not understandable, and he was able to switch over to Mayan without a noticeable break. Ham and Johnny

spoke the ancient tongue of Maya, and they used it to communicate on such occasions as this.

In Mayan, Monk said, "I think these are all. What are we waiting for?"

Then he stood up and hit a man in the stomach, hit another man in the eye, and did his best to jump up in the air and come down on the head and shoulders of a third. It was all Monk could do to keep from bellowing out in glee. He liked to howl during his fights.

There was a kind of explosion in the water behind the bulky raft, and Ham and Johnny came into the fight. They looked, rearing up unexpectedly like that from the water, as if they were giants.

Johnny spread his long arms, gathered two men to him as if he had the tentacles of an octopus, and went to work on them in turn. Ham ordinarily did his fighting with a sword cane tipped with a chemical that caused unconsciousness. But he did not have the cane, now. He had lost it somewhere during his fear nightmare.

So Ham tried to box. Ham was always a gentleman, even in his fights. But one of the foes was good with his fists, and lucky also, because he feinted a left into Ham's jaw, laid a right hook alongside his ear, and put the left into Ham's wind. Ham stopped being a gentleman. He got the man by an ear with his teeth and used both fists and his knees. They fell to the ground.

Thereafter, Ham had a lot of trouble with his opponent. It had been his misfortune, they found later, to pick the toughest foe of the lot.

The first two men Monk had mowed down got back into action, piling on Monk. They were enthusiastic about their job. They skinned knuckles on Monk with great fury.

Monk had three. Ham had one. Johnny had two. There had been seven foes, and so there was one left to free-lance. He got himself a rifle, and jacked a cartridge into the chamber! As he was getting ready to aim, Johnny freed a hand, scooped up a palmful of sand and threw it in the man's eyes. While the rifleman was blinded, Ham managed to tumble with his foe into the fellow, upsetting him.

There had been no shots and no loud yells. Just enough noise to scare up a few roosting tropical birds.

There was a loud bony noise, and Johnny's two foes dropped. He had managed to slam their heads together.

That really settled it, because Johnny picked up a piece of coral and went around laying it against skulls.

Ham and Monk sat on the ground and panted.

"Wonder . . . where . . . the rest are," Monk gasped. "This can't be all of them."

THEY tied the captives, using lengths of rope provided for such an emergency. Monk also produced a small container of pills. He had stolen this from Renny Renwick. They were the pills which Renny had intended to use to make himself unconscious in case he was captured. Monk fed all the prisoners but one pill apiece. He was not gentle.

They carried the prisoners, six unconscious and one wide awake, a few yards down the beach, and took up a new concealment in the jungle. They gagged the conscious captive for a while, and Monk began working on the fellow.

Monk used his big hands for the work, and the things he did caused terrible pain. There was something fierce, malevolent about Monk's actions. He did not seem quite rational. A spear of moonlight came through a break in the trees and disclosed the utter ferocity on his face. Monk's face was nothing to inspire angelic feelings under any condition.

Ham became concerned.

"Look, here, Monk, I hate to see you kill a man like that," Ham said.

"I'm going to take five hours to kill him," Monk said fiercely, "and then I'm going to kill all the others the same way."

Ham caught Monk's shoulder. "Monk, after all, the poor fellow may have been doing what he thought was right—"

"Get away!" Monk snarled. "I'm going to pull one of his eyeballs out and see how it will snap back into his head."

"Look, Monk," Ham protested. "Why do you have to do this?"

Monk sneered. "I've got plenty of reason, haven't I?"

Ham said anxiously, "But you don't need to kill the poor fellow."

"He was one of them that fed me that fear stuff, wasn't he?"

"Yes, but maybe he could do something to repay you."

"I'll be repaid," Monk said, "when I start pulling his eyes out and letting them snap back."

Ham said, "Maybe he could tell you where the others are."

"Huh? He wouldn't do that."

"If he would, would you let him go on living?"

Monk scowled. "Ah, I don't know," he said.

Ham hastily shoved Monk aside, and removed the gag from the jaws of the man whom Monk had been working upon.

"Look fellow, I'm trying to save you," Ham told the man. "You tell us where your pals are, and we won't kill you. I think I can persuade this big ape not to touch you."

"Jawohl!"

gasped the prisoner.

He had been fooled. The blood-thirsty byplay had been acting, but it had taken him in. Monk carefully kept a grin off his face.

"Talk English," he snarled, "and tell us where your party is camped."

The prisoner said, "They are inshore, at the end of the path. High ground. A coral cave. You—I am ashamed to tell you this, but I do not want to die—you can walk right up and surprise them. We were the lookouts. They will not be suspecting danger."

"Those," Monk said gleefully, "are sweet words."

THEY were sweeter words than Monk spoke when he reached the end of the path and found what awaited. Monk had practically no words then. He was too astounded.

The path was easy to follow in the moonlight, and the cave mouth was no problem to locate. It was an arched cavern opening, from which came sounds of men snoring.

The snoring intrigued Monk, Ham and Johnny, and they got down on all fours and crept into the cavern. Scalp-hunting redskins could not have done a better job.

But suddenly there was blinding light, men standing all around them, and the men had machine guns! Not the gangster type of submachine gun, but businesslike military weapons.

Not a word was said. None was needed. Monk, Ham and Johnny did not bother to lift their arms. No one would be fool enough to try to resist under the circumstances.

They were disarmed, kicked a few times, slapped, and shoved into a corner.

The leader, in an angry voice, said, "Go find those fool guards! Have them explain how these men got on the island without being intercepted."

The man used his native language, but Monk understood it, and he was astounded.

He had supposed that the fight on the beach had been overheard, and these men placed on the alert. But apparently that was not the way of it.

He was further flabbergasted when the leader snapped, "Get on the radio! Make sure only these three came to this island!"

One of the men saluted and moved away.

Monk stared after him, thoroughly convinced that someone at the house was contacting these men by radio! The idea was an icy one. Doc was being slipped up on, in some fashion!

CHAPTER XI. CONFESSION

SHORTLY after dawn, Renny Renwick came in out of the jungle with a particularly long face.

"They got the life raft off the plane," he said, "and set out from shore, heading straight for that little island out on the bank, where our friends, the foreign agents, probably are barricaded."

Long Tom asked anxiously, "You sure?"

"That's the way their tracks show," Renny said. "Judging from the tracks in the sand under the water, Monk rode in the boat, and Johnny and Ham followed along behind. Probably they got down behind the boat when it came into the island, and hid themselves, then sprang a surprise. Or tried to." He scowled.

Long Tom rubbed his jaw. "Renny, something's funny here."

"What? There's nothing funny about Monk, Ham and Johnny lighting out on a three-man raid. It's just like them."

"I don't mean that."

"What *do* you mean?"

"Radio," explained Long Tom. "Last night I was fooling around trying to rig up an outfit, and I got the detector stage of a receiver fixed up. And I heard a radio operating! The thing must have been mighty strong, coming right from around the house here, I thought."

"Who was it?"

"I don't know."

"Man or woman?"

"Couldn't tell. It wasn't voice. It was code. You can't tell a man's fist from a woman's for sure."

"Could it have been imagination?"

Long Tom hesitated. "Could have. I'm not sure, of course."

Renny said, "Holy cow! We know one thing—Monk, Ham and Johnny went gallivanting off and haven't come back."

Pretty Turkis Jellant appeared. "I have breakfast ready," she said.

The breakfast was as good as they would have expected in a city hotel. Grapefruit, melon, eggs—there were chickens in a pen in the nearby jungle—and fresh ham, coffee, plenty of guava jelly and biscuits. Long Tom approved greatly.

There was little conversation, however. The absence of Monk and the other two was depressing.

The morning dragged past unendingly. Long Tom ceased tinkering with his radio attempt, and conducted a personal search of the island. He found nothing.

He examined the useless plane, noting that the radio apparatus had been removed. Then he spent some time hunting for the radio, but did not find it.

Back at the house, he noticed that Turkis was hollow-eyed, as if she had not slept and was worried. At first, he credited this to the depressingly hot weather and the utter stillness, which still continued.

Later, however, he began to wonder if the young woman had something on her mind. Something that bothered her.

The accuracy of this last guess astounded him when the truth came out.

It happened after Doc Savage gave the barometer an examination, and the bronze man's metallic features, usually without expression, showed intense concern.

"A blow, probably of hurricane force, is almost here," he said. "That means we have to go after Monk, Ham and Johnny. We cannot leave them on that small island."

He made this remark in the hearing of Long Tom and Turkis. Long Tom noted Turkis looked strange.

Doc added, "Professor Jellant and I will make the raid on the other island. Professor Jellant assures me he knows the lay of the ground."

The bronze man then departed for another room.

Turkis pressed both hands to her face and seemed to hold her breath for a long time. Finally she stared at Long Tom. She asked a question which surprised Long Tom.

"Should one do what one wants to do?" she asked. "Or should one do one's duty?"

Long Tom, considering that he was surprised, and did not take long to consider the point, gave a good answer. "That would depend on who told you the duty *was* your duty," he said. "Duty is usually a job somebody assigns you, so it would depend on who did the assigning."

Without a word, but with the queerest expression, Turkis ran, seeking Doc Savage.

TURKIS told Doc Savage, "My name is not Turkis Jellant, and I am not what you think I am. Not at all."

Doc Savage seemed more disturbed than surprised.

"So you have decided to come out with the truth," he said.

Her lips parted, "You knew!"

He indicated the laboratory. "Does he—the man who is pretending to be your brother—know you are telling me this?"

She was completely speechless.

"Does he?" Doc repeated.

She shook her head.

"Then," said Doc, "why are you telling me?"

She colored painfully. He was not blind enough that he did not see the answer. He saw. And he was uncomfortable, for two or three reasons. This girl was in love with him, and she was very attractive, with courage, but there was no room in his scheme for affairs of the heart. Not that he did not have the inclination frequently. But it was too dangerous, too easy for enemies to strike at him through loved ones.

Doc, fully as uncomfortable as the girl, said, "I will get Renny and Long Tom. They should hear this, Pat also."

He found Pat and the others. They made sure the blond scientist who had said he was Professor Jellant was busy in the laboratory.

Pat, Renny and Long Tom did not know for what purpose they had been assembled, and they had no suspicions. So Doc's first words knocked off their hats.

He said, "Turkis Jellant is a fake. Professor Jellant, as we know him, is also a fake. Almost everything that has happened up to date is part of as smooth a scheme as we have encountered in a long time."

Renny rumbled. "Holy cow!" and pointed at Turkis. "You mean she—But I don't get it. What *is* this?"

Turkis in turn stared at Doc with eyes very wide and said, "How did you know about the scheme? How long have you known? And why did you go along with it as you have?"

Doc went to the door, listened to make sure the false Professor Jellant was still in the laboratory, then returned.

"Professor Jellant started experimenting with this fear vitamin two years ago," he said. "We communicated with each other about it, because we were conducting joint experiments along the same line."

Doc was silent a moment, then continued. "Presumably, Professor Jellant was approached by representatives of the government which had captured and overrun his country. No doubt, they demanded the fear vitamin.

"Professor Jellant probably refused and fled. Agents of the country overtook him on the steamer *Lisbon Girl*. They removed Professor Jellant from the ship, and brought him to this island, where they knew Jellant had a laboratory."

Renny frowned, said, "That's the way the story was told to us. I don't see how you guessed anything was wrong."

DOC seemed not to hear the interruption. He said, "Two things happened after Professor Jellant was seized. First, they were unable to make Professor Jellant continue with his experiments on the vitamin and develop a method of producing it in large quantities. Second, they discovered from notes and from letters that Professor Jellant and I had worked together, although we were thousands of miles apart, on the experiments.

"That," the bronze man continued, "gave them the idea of fooling me into doing their dirty work for them. So they got a very skilled young scientist over from their country, dyed his hair blond so that he resembled Professor Jellant's pictures, and set him up here on the island as Professor Jellant, their prisoner."

Doc glanced at the honey-and-gold girl. "Professor Jellant had a sister," he added.

Turkis turned white.

Doc added, "So they brought in a fake sister, who is Turkis, here. Turkis, what happened to the real Miss Jellant?"

Turkis dropped her eyes. Her lips trembled. "She died in a concentration camp six months ago," she said.

"You took her place?"

"Yes." Turkis nodded slowly. "This was all planned when Professor Jellant fled on the *Lisbon Girl*; that is, I was on the steamer to play the part I played, in case Professor Jellant was injured, or refused to do as he was told."

Renny began to bloat with indignation. "Where'd they get the stuff they doped Monk, Ham and Johnny with?"

Turkis said, "It was a supply which Professor Jellant was carrying."

"How'd they get it to New York so fast?"

"Plane."

"And then," Renny rumbled irately, "they gave it to Monk, Ham and Johnny. But why?"

Doc Savage answered that. He said, "That was their method of forcing me to work on the compound. They believed that I would have to develop the method of manufacturing it in order to save Monk and the other two. Create the compound first, then work out an antidote."

"Holy cow!" Renny said. "They even had it fixed here so you would have to make a lot of the stuff in order to get us out of this trap."

"Something like that."

Pat swallowed her astonishment and entered the conversation. "How did you get wise to all this? Did Turkis tell you?"

"I was going to tell him," Turkis said, "but he already knew."

"How did you get wise, Doc?" Pat asked.

"An understanding which the real Professor Jellant and myself had reached and which these men did not know about. The agreement was not reached in a letter, but in long-distance telephone conversation between New York and Vienna."

"What kind of understanding?"

"That experimenting on the fear vitamin was to be dropped," Doc Savage said. "Both Professor Jellant and myself agreed that the world had enough of fear as it is. Courage, the earth can stand. But of more fear, there is no need."

Turkis pressed her hands to her lips. "They did not know that."

Pat said, "Wait a minute, Doc. You say the real Professor Jellant is still alive?"

"Yes."

"How do you know that?"

The bronze man produced a bulky notebook from a pocket. "This contains Professor Jellant's notes," he said. "Now watch."

He rubbed his forearm briskly, causing his skin to become heated. He placed his arm against a page of the book, let it remain there for a while, then removed it. Writing which had not been there before was now visible on the page.

Savage, if you read this, they have pulled a trick on you. I am alive. They are not going to kill me. I do not know where I will be held. Try to find me.

Renny snapped his fingers, said, "Secret writing. Heat and saline content of the perspiration in your arm brings it out. It will fade in a minute, but can be brought out again and again."

Doc nodded. "Professor Jellant and myself exchanged secret notes on formulae by this method."

Renny grunted, blocked out his big fists.

"There won't be anything secret," he said, "about the methods I use on this phony Professor Jellant."

The bronze man shook his head.

"No, we will continue to let the man think he has us fooled," he said.

Pat frowned at Turkis. "What about this girl?"

"You watch her, Pat."

Pat looked as if she would relish the job.

"You know, right from the first, I didn't trust her," she said.

Long Tom grinned wryly. "You never trust another woman."

"Sure," Pat admitted. "And you'd be surprised how often I'm right."

Renny was concerned. "Doc, what about Monk and Ham and Johnny? And Professor Jellant? What do we do about them?"

The bronze man moved toward the door.

"As soon as it becomes dark," he said, "we watch for a skyrocket."

CHAPTER XII. THE ROCKETS

THE rocket came from the small island to which Monk and Ham and Johnny had gone, and it lifted into the darkness just after sunset, as soon as the night was intense enough to insure its being visible.

By that time, the wind had started to come.

There had been some preliminaries before that rocket went into the air. As a point of truth, it was not a rocket but a rifle barrel, stuffed with powder and bits of oil-soaked cloth. It was the nearest thing to a rocket available, and it had been suggested by the unexpected notes.

The unexpected notes had been just as unexpected to Monk, Ham and Johnny as to anyone.

The notes came to light when Monk and the others got a to-the-skin search. The notes were in the packets attached to their backs with adhesive tape.

"Sonderbarerweise!"

muttered one of the men. "How strange! Three notes, and each exactly like the others."

The big foreign word the man had used to express his feelings exactly described how Monk felt about it. Three identical messages fastened to their backs. Doc had given them to believe it was a chemical of some kind. Or had he? Come to think of it, the bronze man had merely stated that the packets would insure their safety, or something like that.

Monk looked at Ham, and Ham said, "Don't look at me, you ape. I didn't know what was in them."

The spokesman of their captors sprang upon them. "You lie!"

"Lie about what?" asked Ham.

"About not knowing what was in these packages!" snapped the man.

Ham shrugged. "Friend, if you want to have spasms over it, it's all right with us. We don't know anything about it."

The men held a conference over the three messages. They read them repeatedly, but not aloud. They scratched their heads and rubbed their jaws. Finally, they surrounded Monk and looked as if they meant business.

The man on whom Monk had pulled the bluff—the stuff about pulling his eyeballs out and letting them snap back—had been begging to be given a solid club and be left to work on Monk. So Monk was worried.

"Why did you have these fastened to your backs?" a man demanded.

He thrust one of the messages under Monk's nose. Monk read it.

He read it aloud, so Ham and Johnny would hear.

If your raid is successful, set off a rocket where it can be seen from the house. In case you have lost your rockets, take the lead out of a rifle cartridge, put it in a rifle, put powder and bits of rag in the rifle barrel, and use this instead of a rocket.

As soon as the signal is seen, we will answer it, then go to the spot where they are holding Professor Jellant—the genuine one.

Because this was the first Monk had known about there being a real Professor Jellant and a fake one, his eyes popped and he was temporarily speechless.

He got kicked in the ribs.

"What does that message mean?" asked the kicker.

Monk said, "Can't you read?" and got kicked again, the reply evidently not being satisfactory.

"We want to know," explained one of the captors, "why you three had the messages where you were carrying them."

Monk was still baffled on that very point himself.

"Because there was where we figured nobody would find them," he said.

"But why all three of you?" the man demanded.

Ham answered that, putting in, "They were our orders. Because of our recent difficulty with the fear vitamin. Doc Savage was afraid our minds might be affected, on our memories, so that we might forget our orders. So he gave us written instructions, and we carried them there so nobody would find them."

Ham gave this explanation so very sincerely that Monk was disgusted for not thinking of it himself.

Monk pretended indignation, and yelled, "Ham, keep your mouth shut!"

This pleased their captors, who straightened their backs with a kind of military pleasure.

"It is obvious," one of them told the others, "that the homely one is angry at the other. So that means the other told us the truth. The orders must be genuine."

That was what Monk hoped they would think.

A man said, "It is incredible that Savage knew there was a real and a fake Jellant. That is very bad. It will make a great difference in our plans."

"Ja,"

agreed the leader. "*Es ist nicht gut.*"

"You bet it's not good," Monk assured him. "Doc Savage has got you fellows right where he wants you."

The other sneered. "We have *you*, my friend. You understand the meaning of the word hostage, I hope."

Monk snorted, was silent.

The man straightened, wheeled, said, "Get a rifle. Remove powder from a dozen of its cartridges. One of you cut a handkerchief into small pieces."

WHILE these orders were being carried out, Monk and Ham and Johnny did some deep thinking about the fake Jellant matter. They reached the same conclusion, Monk discovered when he said in Mayan, "This thing seems to have been one big plot from the very first."

Ham, in Mayan, said, "If it is what I think it is, they rigged up a fake Professor Jellant to decoy Doc into working on the formula."

Johnny said, "I'll be superamalgamated! And gave us the stuff in the beginning, so Doc would have to become interested in the affair."

"Turkis," Ham said, "must be a fake, too."

Monk looked gloomy at that. "She sure seemed like a nice girl. Maybe we're wrong about her."

Ham said, "You're always hoping you're wrong about pretty girls who get you into trouble."

They were kicked and told to shut up. Then they were hoisted to their feet and booted down to the beach.

A man fired the prepared rifle into the air. There was considerable report and burning rag fragments sailing around overhead.

But no other results.

At intervals of half an hour, they fired the rifle again. They did this four times.

After the fourth time, they saw an answer from the other island. A rocket of some kind.

Monk wondered nervously if this was what was supposed to happen.

PATRICIA SAVAGE had somewhat the same thought as she fired the gun, the flash of which Monk saw. Pat was on edge. She turned on Turkis ominously.

"You try to pull anything on me," Pat warned, "and so help me, you'll never do it again. You're not dealing with a man now. You're dealing with another woman."

Turkis had explained that her name actually was Turkis. That, she had told them, was why they had happened to think of her to play the part of the sister of Professor Jellant.

Turkis knotted her hands nervously. "Do you think Mr. Savage is in danger?"

Pat stared at her. Pat knew as well as anyone that Turkis was in love with Doc. Secretly, Pat felt a little sorry for her.

"Listen, kid," Pat said gently. "You better forget this case you've developed."

Turkis lifted her eyes. "You mean it's no good?"

"It's fine," Pat said, "if it would work, which it won't. I'm telling you from observation. I've seen them fall for him before, and it does no good."

Turkis nodded miserably. "I know it," she said. "But I can still worry, can't it?"

DOC SAVAGE walked out of the sea. The wind was blowing, now. Already waves five feet high were coming in over the shoals and charging far up on the beach like phalanxes of dark soldiers. The wind had not been blowing more than half an hour. It had started so slowly as not to be noticeable. There was no gusting to the wind. It came in a steady sweep, as if the earth had started to go through space.

Renny and Long Tom followed the bronze man.

The point where they had landed was the south end of the island from which Monk, Ham and Johnny had failed to return.

Two hundred yards below the spot where the signal had been given.

Doc drew Renny and Long Tom close. "As soon as you can see my trail, follow it."

"Right," Renny breathed.

Since it was pitch-dark, and would be for a number of hours, the admonition to follow the trail as soon as they could see it seemed strange. But Renny and Long Tom understood what was meant. They crouched down in the mangroves.

Doc Savage headed for the spot from which the signal had come.

As he moved along, he left a sparing trail of the contents of a bottle which he had brought along. The bottle had a wide mouth covered with a tin cap; the cap was perforated, and it was as simple to scatter the contents as to use a pepper shaker. Doc sprinkled the powder in prominent spots.

Jungle on this island was almost entirely swamp mangrove, naked of leaves, as tough as hawser, like standing skeletons of many-legged animals. Despite the force of the wind, the mosquitoes were out. In the thicker tangles of shrubbery, they lurked in bloodthirsty hordes.

It was hands slapping at mosquitoes which gave away the presence of the men.

Doc used greater caution. The party, having set off the flare and received an answer, was heading back toward the center of the island. He followed them.

He had hardly taken up the trail when a man stepped out of the darkness with total unexpectedness and

put a gun against his face!

PAT SAVAGE closed and fastened the last shutter of the house, with the aid of Turkis. Panting, for the wind was now of a force that wrestled the shutters around, they entered the house.

Turkis said tensely, "I'm scared. How will they get away from that island?"

"Doc knows what he is doing," Pat told her patiently. She hoped her tone was patient, anyway, instead of registering her own concern. "Just stop worrying."

"What about my—about the fake Jellant?"

Pat said, "He's working in the laboratory. Let him keep at it."

"You do not think he suspects anything?"

"Of course not," Pat said.

Pat made this as a flat statement, and it was embarrassing, not to say shocking, to have the fake Professor Jellant walk in on the echo of her words and show her the noisy end of a rifle!

"Unfortunately," said the fake Jellant, "the fact that you are a woman cannot be allowed to interfere with my plans."

Pat said nothing. There did not seem to be anything to be said.

The fake Jellant advised her, "I am also sorry to say that the bitter necessity of the situation demands that I shoot both you young women without delay!"

CHAPTER XIII. THE EGGS

RENNY RENWICK, threading his way through the dark mangroves that were full of whistling wind, stumbled over an object on the ground. He picked himself up and stood motionless, panting.

"Holy cow!" he said.

It was tough going. At times, they doubted that anyone could possibly have gone that way ahead of them, but there was always the physical evidence before their eyes.

The powder which Doc Savage had sprinkled in various prominent spots had, now that some time had been given it to absorb moisture, started phosphorescing. The phosphorescent activity was not intense, but the glow was sufficient for them to follow. It had been no problem, they knew, for Doc to concoct the powder in the thoroughly equipped laboratory on the other island.

Renny was very tired. They had been forced to wade the long distance from the other island and it had not been easy against the pounding waves that frequently swept over their heads.

"Blast this mangrove tangle," he mumbled.

He got to his feet and clumsily stumbled over the object underfoot again.

"Holy cow!" he gasped.

It was the body of a man.

"Doc!" Long Tom exploded.

He was wrong. It was a long and lean man who gave the general impression of being a stage hillbilly. He was familiar.

"Henry!" Renny said. "Holy cow! Let me have one poke at him!"

"He's unconscious," Long Tom warned.

Renny sank to a knee and examined the unconscious Henry. He ran fingers over a spot behind and below Henry's ears and found bruises. He cautiously thumbed on a flashlight to be sure. There was no doubt that pressure against spinal nerve centers had reduced Henry to senselessness.

"Doc's work," Renny said gleefully. "Henry must have discovered Doc and was too slow on the draw."

"What will we do with him?"

Renny opened his mouth and the wind filled it, seeming to bloat his lungs. He turned his face away. "As this hurricane increases," he said, "water is sure to come over this part of the island. We better not leave him here. We couldn't come back in the darkness and find him. If we leave him he will drown sure."

"You carry him then," Long Tom said. "You're the guy in favor of not leaving him."

Renny grumbled at that but finally doubled over to pick up the senseless man. He straightened with his burden, lunged forward. And almost immediately he was struck a blow which knocked him backward, stunning him. His head hit something; he had a hazy idea that this must have been what happened because it got very black and still around him!

MONK MAYFAIR endeavored to kick a man in the jaw and failed. Monk had been working up patiently to the kick, carefully shifting himself around, pretending to have a cramp or two, so that there was a logical reason for him to double up in readiness for the kick.

The kick had enthusiasm behind it, because the intended receptor was a stocky, bad-tempered man who had announced his intention of having fresh breakfast bacon the following morning. The man had offered the idea after catching Habeas Corpus and tying the runt hog to a bunk post.

It was an excellent kick in every respect except one—it failed to land.

The man who should have received the kick drew a gun. It was a gun with a long barrel—a pistol. Monk was familiar with the model. You could take one of the things and shoot at a man a mile away with some expectation of hitting him.

"Nein, nein!"

said another man hurriedly.

And somebody at the door said, "Here comes someone."

Two men entered the cave with a captive.

Professor Matthew Jellant. It could be no one else. Jellant was a blond man with a wrinkled face that showed weariness and agony, combined with a great deal of determination.

When the two men took their hands away from Professor Jellant, he fell to the floor like a rope. His eyes remained open, and he showed interest in Monk, Ham and Johnny, but otherwise he seemed incapable of speech or movement.

So it was no secret that they had been torturing him continuously.

Monk reflected that the organization of foreign agents must have had some doubt that their fantastic scheme, for getting Doc Savage to develop the fear vitamin, would not work. Personally, Monk was astonished that it had come as near to working as it had.

There was silence in the cave.

The cave was dark and smoke-odored, full of cooking smells. It was of coral, in the one high part of the little island. Not an inviting place. Not, Monk suspected, even safe from the tidal wave which the gathering hurricane was likely to sweep over the island.

The foreign agents were pleased with themselves.

"You are sure the trap is set?" one asked.

The pair who had brought Jellant nodded emphatically. "They are ready for Savage. They have machine guns and land mines, and even poison gas. He will approach the spot where we held Jellant, and never get away."

Monk chewed his lips uneasily. Those notes! They had set a trap for Doc Savage. If the bronze man was not expecting something of the kind, it would be very bad.

Monk began to have the feeling that Doc had put all their eggs in one basket. Just who was carrying the basket, he couldn't quite tell. Whoever it was, Monk hoped he wouldn't stumble.

Suddenly, he became unpleasantly interested in a man who was pulling excelsior out of a packing case. This man produced a small vial which, for further protection, was incased in a steel tube, a piece of gas pipe with caps screwed over each end.

The man approached Monk with the vial.

"Wait a minute!" Monk exploded. "What's the idea?"

The man indicated the vial. "You have had some of this before," he said, "so you know its effects will not be fatal."

"You mean—"

"The fear vitamin," the man explained. "We are rather impressed by the physical and mental ability of you and your two friends. You are dangerous. So, to make it easier to hold you, we are going to use the vitamin on you again. Later, of course, if Doc Savage is killed, we shall have to eliminate you completely!"

Monk was speechless.

The man sank beside him, added, "Administration is simple. We merely pour it down your throat. It is odorless and tasteless. You took it in your coffee before, without knowing it."

Monk looked at the vial in horror. "Who gave it to me the first time?"

The other grinned faintly. "The man you know as Henry," he said. "Henry Brooks."

Monk began fighting. There was not much he could do, for he was tied hand and foot, but he fought, anyway, lashing out with his legs in an effort to upset someone, or to break the vial. He did not break the vial. The man holding it jumped back. But Monk did manage to trap a man who dashed in, very fortunately grabbing the man's head between his knees. It was a perfect scissors hold, because his ankles were lashed. Monk put on pressure, and the man started screaming.

RENNY RENWICK had not recovered entirely from the blow that had landed on him from the darkness. The blow had not done as much damage as the tree which he had accidentally struck with his head in stumbling backward.

By now he realized that the blow had been necessary. He had been about to walk into a wire, a wire attached to a capacity burglar-alarm system.

Doc had hit him. It was a shove, rather. There had been no time for the bronze man to call a warning, for words probably would not have stopped Renny.

Doc said, "The alarm system has a switch over there at the cave, probably. At least, it appears they are hiding out in a cave."

"How do we get past it?" Renny asked.

"Over it," Doc explained.

It developed that the bronze man had found a tall tree with spreading branches which would serve their purpose. The functioning of the capacity alarm depended on an object as large as a human being coming near—within two or three feet of—a wire. By climbing over the wire via the tree, they thwarted the gadget.

While they were still in the tree, Doc said, "Hurry! There is some kind of a fight in progress in the cave."

Long Tom, straining his ears, heard the fight sounds. He knew a moment later that Doc had gone on ahead. He quickened his pace. They made some sound. But lack of noise speedily became a small matter.

A guard stood outside the cave door. Doc Savage hit him, bore him back against the panel, and the fastenings tore loose. They piled into the cave.

Three men had hold of Monk, and two more were beating the homely chemist with their fists. Monk still retained his hold on the man's head with his knees. Still another man was waving a revolver and shouting for the others to stand clear and let him have a shot at Monk.

Doc went on and hit the man with the gun. The fellow dropped. Doc then got a chair, and slapped it at the gasoline lantern, sole source of light, which was suspended from the ceiling. The lantern jumped across the room, went out, seemingly, for an instant. Then flame ran down the wall, following the spilled gasoline, with a sluffing sound.

Renny and Long Tom came in and joined the fight. The cave filled with reddish light, violence, smoke! A man drew a knife, lunged for Renny, and Doc got in his way. The blade slashed, missed the bronze man through what looked like impossibility, and Doc got hold of the wrist above it. They wrestled, fell to the floor. The fine sand, that was not clean, made a hard cushion. The man finally became limp.

Doc recovered the knife and slashed the bindings of Monk, Ham and Johnny. The three joined the fight.

Two minutes later, the one survivor made a break for the door.

Doc chased the fellow.

OUTDOORS, there was a boiling layer of sand, waist-deep, that was hurled along by the wind. Palm fronds were going past, and leaves, and occasional sheets of spray that were carried all the way from the sea.

Doc caught the man. He said, "Where are your companions? Where is the ambush that was laid for me?"

The man cursed him.

Doc said, "The hurricane is going to cover this island with water. They can not stay here, if they are planning to do that."

The man said something. Wind drove the words back down his throat. He said it again, louder. "They are on this island. The north end."

Doc said, "Go get them. We will come past in one of the boats. There are two."

That there were two boats was a fact the bronze man had learned in his preliminary inspection of the island. One was a dory, rather large; the other was a small speedboat.

The man gasped, "You mean you will pick us up?"

"If you come unarmed, yes," Doc said. "Signal with flashlights."

He gave the man a shove and the fellow went away into the howling darkness.

CHAPTER XIV. JUST THE WHISKERS

MONK was not enthusiastic about the rescue. He never was. And the state of the water they had to cross to reach the larger island did not improve his feelings.

The wind blew with straight whistling violence, and it was all they could do to hang to the mangroves and keep their boats moving slowly. The fact that they could hang to the mangroves was ominous in itself. It meant the sea was rising; that the hurricane wind was pushing up the great mound of water characteristic of the Caribbean storms.

A flashlight beam appeared ahead, waving vaguely, like a frightened gray whisker in the hell of wind and water.

"There they are!" Renny bellowed.

Doc turned, shouted, "All of you get in the powerboat. I will take the dory and pick them up."

"Alone?" Renny shouted doubtfully.

"Of course. They will need all the room."

This was true, because the powerboat was already crowded, what with Professor Jellant and the captives. Renny got into the other craft, not enthusiastically.

Doc worked forward with the dory. It was a herculean job, even for his trained strength. He had finally to spring overboard, fasten the boat painter about his midriff, and fight from one mangrove to another.

He located the party of agents. They were crouched among the mangroves, cursing. When Doc shouted, two of them sprang to their feet, and one was immediately upset by the wind.

The second agent squared around until he faced Doc Savage. He leaned far forward with his flashlight until he was sure that it was Doc. Then he drew a pistol and shot the bronze man in the chest.

Force of the bullet against the bulletproof vest Doc wore knocked him backward into the boat. He hit hard, helplessly, and the crashing impact against the motor housing and floor boards stunned him.

He did not become quite unconscious, but some moments passed before he could move. And after that, he could not get the motor started. It was wet.

Monk and the others found him with the dory while he was struggling over the engine.

They had heard the shot.

"What happened?" Monk bellowed. When Doc Savage did not answer, the homely chemist surmised what had occurred. He said, "I figured they were that kind of guys."

Big-fisted Renny sat for a moment in thought. Then he gave his oar a hard pull. The oar broke, spilling him back on the floor boards.

"Holy cow!" he said. "Without that oar, we can't row back and rescue those birds."

He did not sound quite as sorry as he hoped he would.

THERE was no storm in the morning.

The air had a kind of crystal clarity, and a fresh breeze brought waves in from the sea and creamed them on the beach.

Ham Brooks looked around at the shambles made by the hurricane and said, "That's enough. I don't want another one of those things in my life."

Long Tom told him, "It didn't touch us. We were perfectly safe inside that house. Whoever cast those concrete walls knew what they were doing."

Ham shuddered. "I kept thinking about those fellows on the other island."

Long Tom glanced out across the shoals. Almost a third of the small island in the distance had vanished, and the remainder of it bore an altered appearance. For hours, a welter of waves had poured completely over the little cay.

"You think there's a chance of any of them being alive?" he asked.

"Not a chance."

Suddenly, not wanting to look at the little cay, they wheeled around and walked to the other side of the house.

They found Pat seated in a chair, Turkis was carefully applying a turtle steak to Pat's left eye.

"How's the eye, Pat?" Long Tom asked.

"It's some shiner," Pat told him. "Monk says a turtle steak is just as good as beefsteak for a black eye. We found a turtle blown right up in front of the door by the storm. So I'm trying Monk's idea."

Long Tom eyed her thoughtfully.

"You say the fake Jellant tried to kill you?" he asked.

"He had some such idea," Pat said. "But he didn't know I had unloaded all the rifles he could get his hands on."

"He hit you after he found out the rifle was not loaded? That what happened?"

Pat smiled grimly. "Just once. I was a little slow on my jujitsu. By the way, is his arm actually broken?"

"Doc says so."

Pat clucked disapprovingly. "I better take some lessons. You are not supposed to break their arms, the way I did it."

Monk joined them. Monk looked strangely self-satisfied.

"How'd you like the whiskers?" he asked

"Whiskers?" Ham stared at him. "What are you talking about, you homely freak?"

"That storm," said Monk, "just brushed us with its whiskers. You didn't think that was a full-grown hurricane, did you?"

"It'll do for my money until something better comes along," Long Tom put in grimly. "By the way, where is Doc?"

"Oh, he and the real Professor Jellant are busy destroying every evidence of that fear vitamin," Monk explained. "They're getting rid of all the notes and stuff, so that nobody will find out how it's made." The homely chemist frowned. "I'm not so sure they're right. They claim there's enough fear in the world, now, and we can get along without more. But I don't know. If we could scare the right guys—some of those birds in Europe—" Monk brightened even more. "You know, I think that's a swell idea."

Ham's eyes narrowed.

"Monk," he said, "what have you been into?"

"Huh?"

"You've been up to something," Ham said grimly. "I can tell by that look on your face."

The explanation of Monk's look arrived in the shape of an excited, bellowing Renny Renwick. He was almost inarticulate.

"Henry and the fake Jellant!" bellowed Renny. "They've escaped."

Escaped?" Ham shouted. "Where to?"

Renny waved toward the west. "They're in the dory. Almost out of sight over the horizon."

Ham started toward the motorboat, which they had hauled to the lee of the house for protection against the hurricane. He stopped. "Not enough gasoline to chase them," he said in a defeated tone. "And by the time we bring fuel from the plane tanks, from way back there in the jungle where it blew, they'll be gone."

Monk chuckled.

"Keep your shirts on," he suggested.

Ham wheeled. He took a step toward Monk. "I knew you were up to something!"

"Me?" Monk was innocent.

"That look of yours had something to do with this," Ham accused.

Monk admitted it frankly.

"Matter of fact," he said, "I turned loose Henry and the fake Jellant."

Ham looked as if he were about to drop. "Crazy!" he said. "I always knew it."

Monk grinned. "You remember that vial of that stuff—that vitamin scare-'em-to-death stuff—they were going to give me last night when Doc showed up? Well, I got that vial."

"You got it?" Ham exclaimed.

"Only I haven't got it, now," Monk said, and leered. "I gave it to Henry and his friend, the fake."

"You *are* crazy!" Ham gasped.

Monk's grin spread from ear to ear.

"Matter of fact, I gave them only *half* the vial," he said. "I made a little speech. I told them Doc was going to make a special trip to Europe and feed that dictator leader of theirs some of the fear vitamin." Monk began laughing, doubling over in his glee. "I showed them another vial, which I said contained a serum that would protect anybody against the effects of the vitamin fear. I told them it was too bad their dictator didn't have some of the serum, only nobody but Doc knew how to make it."

"What happened?" Renny demanded.

"They grabbed the vial of serum and got away," Monk said. "I bet they'll rush home to Europe and give the stuff to their dictator."

Monk roared in glee.

"What's so funny about it?" Ham asked peevishly.

"It wasn't serum," yelled Monk joyfully. "It was the rest of the stuff that was in the original vial!"

THE END