

Resurrection Day

A Doc Savage Adventure
#36

Kenneth Robeson
[Lester Dent]
1936

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Title: Resurrection Day

Date of first publication: 1936

Author: Lester Dent (as Kenneth Robeson) (1904-1959)

Date first posted: Apr. 11, 2020

Date last updated: May 6, 2020

Faded Page eBook #20200416

This eBook was produced by: Al Haines, Cindy Beyer & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

DOC SAVAGE'S AMAZING CREW

William Harper Littlejohn, the bespectacled scientist who was the world's greatest living expert on geology and archæology.

Colonel John Renwick, "Renny," his favorite sport was pounding his massive fists through heavy, paneled doors.

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Blodgett Mayfair, "Monk," only a few inches over five feet tall, and yet over 260 pounds. His brutish exterior concealed the mind of a great scientist.

Major Thomas J. Roberts, "Long Tom," was the physical weakling of the crowd, but a genius at electricity.

Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks, slender and waspy, he was never without his ominous, black sword cane.

WITH THEIR LEADER, THEY WOULD GO ANYWHERE,
FIGHT ANYONE, DARE EVERYTHING—SEEKING
EXCITEMENT AND PERILOUS ADVENTURE!

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RESURRECTION DAY

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A DOC SAVAGE ADVENTURE

BY KENNETH ROBESON

RESURRECTION DAY

Originally published in DOC SAVAGE Magazine November 1936

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RESURRECTION DAY

Chapter 1

THE COMING MIRACLE

It just happened that General Ino was the first man who saw a truckload of policemen stop in front of the skyscraper which housed Doc Savage's New York headquarters. The general would have read about it in his newspaper, along with the rest of the world, a bit later, no doubt. But by seeing the truckload of policemen arrive, he got in on the ground floor, in a manner of speaking.

The general stopped to watch. He was interested in what the policemen had on their truck. Heavy lumber posts, barbed-wire, and a keg of staples.

The general had a vocational interest in policemen, anyway, having spent many of his waking hours, as well as many hours taken from his sleeping time, in figuring out ways of keeping out of their clutches.

The policemen began unloading their posts, timbers and barbed-wire. The officer in charge gestured and called orders. General Ino's jaw dropped in astonishment. The cops were going to build a barbed-wire barricade across one of the busiest streets in New York City!

General Ino crowded around with some other curious people who had stopped. The general was not afraid of cops. Not for nothing had he stayed awake nights, for he could walk New York streets undisguised and—practically—unafraid.

There was a commotion at the other end of the block, and another truckload of policemen and the makings of a barbed-wire barricade came to a stop near the giant skyscrapers.

It was true that General Ino had thus far operated in Egypt, Italy, Japan and elsewhere. Places far from New York, but places where they have rich men. Particularly rich are the new merchant princes of Japan. One of them had paid a quarter of a million yen ransom for his son, his only man-child.

More trucks were arriving. It seemed that the entire block was going to be barricaded. That meant the building, really. The building was a block square and taller than the length of the longest ocean liner in the world.

General Ino had killed the Japanese merchant prince's man-child, but the merchant prince didn't know that before the ransom was paid. Didn't know it yet, in fact. Years later, the general had thought he might work off some phony brat as the man-child. He had kept the baby clothes of the man-child and the bit of jewelry it had worn.

There was quite a hullabaloo now, with the policemen stopping traffic and beginning to build their barbed-wire fences across the most teeming streets in a city noted for its traffic.

General Ino had played the races. That took money. He had practically kept himself a harem. That took more money. Moreover, he had kept his old organization of crooks

and killers intact. That took the most money of all. In that organization he believed he had some of the coldest, slickest crooks alive.

The general had once added up the rewards hanging over the heads of his organization members. The total had stunned him. But it was an asset which he hadn't yet been able to think out a method of cashing in on.

For General Ino was about broke. All ripe for one of the fabulously big, cleverly planned, cunningly executed hauls which was the only kind he touched.

General Ino walked over to the nearest policeman.

"*M'sieu' Gendarme,*" he said, "could you tell me why all thees ees happen?"

The general could fake almost any accent. He loved to.

THE cop had come from a long line of brick-throwing ancestors, and his grin was big.

"Your guess is as good as mine, Frenchy." The officer jerked a thumb upward. "The powers that be say fence in the streets around here; so fence 'em in we will."

"But, m'sieu', some reason you 'ave give thees people why you not let zem pas', no?"

"This is the only reason we have to give 'em." The cop tapped his badge.

"Velly stlange," said the general, singsonging. "Velly stlange."

The cop watched him walk off, then scratched his head.

"Dang me," he grunted. "First he's a frog, then he's a laundryman!"

The general was at that moment also much the master of evil—and profitable—schemes. He went directly to the offices of Proudman Shaster.

Proudman Shaster gave his visitor a dry smile and a dried-up hand, then went back behind his huge desk and sat down. The result was that Proudman Shaster about disappeared. Only his bulging melon of a head showed over the formidable desk.

Proudman Shaster's head was all that counted, anyway. It was full of brains, and all the ideas they hatched were bad.

"It's really a wonderful day," he said. "Really wonderful."

Proudman Shaster was a well-known attorney, and everything was usually "really wonderful" with him. It was a small habit of speech he had.

"*Si, si, señor,*" said the general, imitating a Spaniard. "Look, I have an idea. A *mucho bueno* idea! I want it looked into."

Proudman Shaster folded his dry hands and looked as if he hadn't heard a word of it.

"I want all of my men assembled here in New York at once," said General Ino. "All of my *hombres*, understand!"

"Can do," Proudman Shaster admitted, lighting a cigarette.

He should have been able to do it. He was Ino's mouth, his eyes, his ears, even a wee bit of his brains, when the occasion demanded. He had furnished the acid that had disposed of the last bit of epidermis of the Japanese merchant prince's man-child.

GENERAL INO shook hands with himself, Chinese fashion, and murmured, “This humble one is most proud of such a worthy servant.”

Proudman Shaster looked at his finger nails, found grime under one and began to clean it with a small, sharp tooth.

“Who are we going to take to the cleaners now?” he asked.

“Doc Savage,” General Ino said.

Proudman Shaster gave a violent leap, closed his eyes, and seemed to stop breathing. He dropped his cigarette.

GENERAL INO was plainly quite amused by the actions of his lieutenant—not his most valuable one, incidentally. Ino smiled, picked up the cigarette stub and extinguished it in a bronze tray.

“Oh, don’t worry, I knew you’d be quite surprised,” he said.

Proudman Shaster went through some convulsive facial expressions.

“Water!” he gasped faintly. “And one of the pills out of the box on the water cooler!”

General Ino seemed about to laugh, as if it were a good bit of acting; then he peered closely at his follower. He ran to the cooler, got the water and pill, then administered both to Proudman Shaster.

“Don’t you know I have a weak heart?” were Shaster’s first words.

“I never expected merely mentioning a name would kill you off,” Ino told him.

Shaster got up shakily, helped himself to more water and another pill, and topped it off with a drink from a brown bottle with a black label. He looked closely at his chief.

“Look here!” he said grimly. “Don’t you know about this Doc Savage?”

General Ino said, “It is not my habit to go into things half baked.”

“You’ll come out of this one with your goose cooked,” said Proudman Shaster. “Doc Savage is one of the most dangerous men in the world to meddle with.”

“A reputation,” murmured General Ino, “is like a snowball.”

“Doc Savage is a man who was taken by his parents at birth and trained intensively and scientifically to become a catcher of crooks and a righter of wrongs,” explained Shaster.

“The snowball,” continued General Ino, “starts off as a little ball, but grows until it becomes as big as hell.”

“Doc Savage is a scientific genius, a mental wizard, and as strong as the Bull of Bashan!” snapped Shaster.

“The snowball gets big because it rolls down the hill,” Ino reminded.

“Doc Savage is not entirely human. Everybody, almost, has heard about him. His business is righting wrongs, aiding the oppressed, and sort of putting the kibosh on crooked schemes.”

“Nature put the hill there,” General Ino pointed out.

“Every crook alive, when he hears about Doc Savage, crosses his fingers and hopes the Man of Bronze—they call Savage that sometimes—will not get on his trail.”

“A little shove starts the snowball. After that it grows by itself.”

“Doc Savage alone is bad enough,” groaned Proudman Shaster. “But he also has five assistants. One of them I have personally seen in action. He is a lawyer named Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks, and those who are not afraid call him Ham. Not many people call him Ham.”

“As I have been saying,” said General Ino, “it does not take much to make a big snowball.”

“HAM almost got me disbarred once,” moaned Shaster. “He is the cleverest lawyer I ever saw. Doc Savage’s other aids are equally clever in their lines. One is said to be an engineer, another a chemist, a third an archaeologist, and the fourth an electrical wizard.”

“Reputations are like snowballs,” declared Ino.

“Doc Savage is the master of any of his aids in his respective line, incredible as it seems, according to reports.”

“A big reputation can grow out of a little of nothing,” Ino reminded.

Shaster snapped, “I would rather commit suicide than tackle Doc Savage!”

General Ino calmly drew a revolver out of his coat pocket and laid it on the desk.

“Then you’d better shoot yourself,” he said. He pressed a small catch on one of his cuff links and it flew open; a whitish-looking powder fell out on the desk top. “Or touch your tongue to that. It’s potassium cyanide of a newer and more lethal type.”

Proudman Shaster gulped, “But I don’t understand!”

“Well, we are going to tackle Doc Savage,” General Ino told him. “Doc Savage is a man after my style. He goes after big things.”

“And little ones, too, I’ve heard,” Shaster put in. “They say he helps an infinitely greater number of people in small ways, but only his big deeds find their way into the newspapers——”

“Then we’ll wait for one of his big ones,” said General Ino.

“I still don’t understand what you’re driving at,” Shaster told him nervously.

“Did you ever see a seagull wait until a pelican had dived, gotten a fish and come up breathless, then the seagull would pounce in and grab the fish?”

“My acquaintance with seagulls is limited.”

“Well, we are going to play seagull.”

“One will get you five,” said Proudman Shaster, “that we all wind up inside looking out.”

General Ino chuckled. He spoke like an Irishman.

“Sure, an’ thot reminds me of what brought all this to me mind,” he said. “They’re buildin’ a barbed-wire fence around Doc Savage’s headquarters, no less!”

The afternoon newspapers had pictures of the barbed-wire fence. Fences, rather. They were four in number, one at each street corner, and they completely blocked off, for anything less than a tank, ingress or egress from the cloud-piercing giant of a building.

One headline said:

MYSTERY MAN MAKES
MYSTERY MOVE!

A second read:

POLICE PREPARE FOR
STARTLING EVENT!

Another:

MORE DOC SAVAGE
GRANDSTANDING!

The stories were about the same. The police were telling nothing. Passes were being issued to persons employed in the skyscraper which was being fenced off. Newspapermen and cameramen were not getting passes.

There was a lot of talk about it over dinner cocktails that evening. Some people went down to look at the barricade, and the cops had traffic-jam trouble.

A little more of it developed the next morning. The newspapers all had a paid advertisement, one full page. It was alike in every paper, and in such plain type that some readers passed over it until they heard about it; then they went back and read it.

Most of them got the feeling that something was coming, and that they'd better hold onto their hats.

The ad read:

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

We wish to give the public some facts about Doc Savage, although the public may already know them.

Doc Savage is Clark Savage, Jr., a man who has been developed scientifically, exactly as a great scientific laboratory would develop a product. This scientific development has been carried on for many years, and the results are amazing.

We personally know Doc Savage to possess one of the most amazing scientific minds in existence. He is a wizard.

To-morrow, Doc Savage will print an announcement. It is an announcement that will stir the world.

We believe it will change the entire course of civilization.

(SIGNED)

Lieutenant Colonel

Andrew Blodgett Mayfair.

Brigadier General

Theodore Marley Brooks.

Major Thomas J. Roberts.

William Harper Littlejohn.

Colonel John Renwick.

Almost every one knew the identity of the five men who had signed the advertisement.

“They’re Doc Savage’s five aids,” those who didn’t know were informed.

Of course, it was now generally realized that something was coming, and that was why the barbed-wire barricade was being erected around Doc Savage’s skyscraper headquarters.

The police around the barricade had more traffic troubles.

Chapter 2

THE MIRACLE WAS REAL!

GENERAL INO absorbed the morning papers and his coffee-and-spot-of-brandy simultaneously. Then he descended to Proudman Shaster's offices.

Proudman Shaster was just signing on the dotted line for a bustling young man who looked General Ino over hopefully before he was shooed out.

"What have you been doing?" General Ino wanted to know.

"Taking out more insurance," groaned Proudman Shaster. "Insurance is a really wonderful thing. Really wonderful."

"There's a lot of really wonderful things in this world," said General Ino. "Uncle Sam makes a lot of them and calls them dollars. By the way, what of the worthy gentlemen I call my colleagues?"

Proudman Shaster sighed and put away his new insurance policy.

"I have been in touch with them."

"All?"

"Yes. And they are assembling. They will be together in three different hotels at four o'clock this afternoon, awaiting your visit."

General Ino had long ago stopped assembling his mob all in one body, where, if things went wrong, every one would be nabbed at once by the police. Good, skilled, unscrupulous followers were too difficult to obtain to take such chances of losing them.

"Good," said General Ino. "I'll tell them we are going to tackle this Doc Savage. I believe I have picked an excellent time. Have you seen the late newspapers?"

"I have," Shaster admitted, nervously.

"Doc Savage is getting ready to break something big."

"He has never done a thing like this before," Shaster said, gloomily. "Always, he has shunned publicity. Any one wanting his help goes to him. But now, he seems to be coming out to the public for some reason or other."

"It's big, I'll agree," chuckled General Ino. "And we need something big to line our pocketbooks."

"It's so big we'll choke on it, I'll bet," groaned Shaster.

General Ino eyed him narrowly. "Shaky, eh? I believe I'll give my men the choice of going up against this Doc Savage with me, or of not going. That'll insure me of having men who are not afraid."

"It'll insure you of having no men at all," Proudman Shaster predicted, gloomily.

General Ino considered.

"On second thought, I won't give them their choice," he decided.

Proudman Shaster wailed, "I wish I knew what this Doc Savage is up to!"

A LOT of others had Proudman Shaster's idea. Nobody seemed to really have a gnat's notion of what it was all about.

The newspapers—afternoon editions—didn't help any with their second paid ad:

A SECOND PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

We, having faith in Doc Savage's scientific genius, and knowing him as few—we really believe none—others know him, wish to pave the way for what is coming with some more facts.

For years, Doc Savage has been experimenting along a certain scientific line.

Doc Savage, in fact, has been trying to accomplish something that magicians and fakirs and charlatans have from time immemorial been trying to make people think they could do.

This thing *can* be done! Some day, some one will do it. That day has come.

Doc Savage *can* now do it!

But he can do it only once! Just once! And he wants that once to do the world as much good as possible, so he is going to ask the aid of the United States public.

But we will let the details remain for Doc Savage himself to explain.

DOC SAVAGE WILL SPEAK OVER THE RADIO AT 7 O'CLOCK TO-NIGHT!

It was signed by the same five men who had signed the previous advertisement.

Quite a few radios which were out of order were hurriedly repaired that afternoon.

Statistically minded persons who figured it up decided Doc Savage had spent all of a quarter of a million dollars in advertising. Every newspaper—daily—in the country had carried the announcements. The radio proclamation, study of any radio column revealed, was to be a really nation-wide network. Every single radio station broadcasting in the United States was on the hook-up. And those who knew radio knew it had taken plenty of money to swing that.

But every one knew that Doc Savage had, and had had for years, some secret source of fabulous wealth.

A pin dropping would have sounded like a gunshot on the ether waves of the nation at seven o'clock that night.

DOC SAVAGE came on the air without any trace of a preliminary announcement.

Nobody was confused. Nobody thought for an instant that any one except Doc Savage was speaking. And yet Doc Savage had never before spoken over the radio on a

national hook-up.

There was something about the voice. It was controlled, modulated, deep, and it somehow conveyed the impression that it was a voice which could do some amazing things, and that its owner was an individual who could do even more amazing things.

Anyway, Doc Savage's first thirteen words knocked the breath out of his listeners.

"It is in my power to bring a dead man back to life," he said.

Then he waited for that to soak in.

"Only one man can be brought back to life," he went on. "That is because the process requires the use of a new element in a combination which takes at least ten years to develop. You all know how the juice of an apple must be allowed to ferment before it becomes vinegar. It is the same with this element combination, except that the time process covers years."

Another pause for it to be absorbed.

"It does not matter how long the dead man has been dead," the remarkable voice of Doc Savage continued. "The body must be intact, or the mummy of it intact."

Again, a pause.

"Now, so much for the statement of what can be done. Here is the real reason for all of the display behind this. Here is why we have gone to so much trouble to get the public attention of the country.

"We want help. We want suggestions. In short, we want to know who the people of the United States want brought back to life."

The ether was remarkably quiet all over the nation. Strangely, it happened that there was practically no static, so almost every listener got a perfect reception from his set.

"Who will do the world the most good, if brought back to life? These are the names of the committee of men and women who have been appointed to make the final decision. They will want your instructions. Mail, telephone, or telegraph them to the committee members."

There followed a list of names and addresses, given slowly, and strangely enough, given in some uncanny fashion so that even the listeners with poor memories had no trouble remembering at least one or two of the names.

The newspapers commented on this the next day, but none of them hit on the truth—Doc Savage had developed a teaching technique, the ability to tell a thing so that it was not forgotten. It was simply in the manner in which the words were delivered, the dramatic emphasis put on them.

An announcer came on the air and said, "That was Doc Savage speaking."

He nearly scared his listeners out of their skins. The announcer had always been credited with a pleasant, excellent voice; but now, after that remarkable voice which had just finished speaking, he sounded like a crow dying.

OF course, there was excitement. Talk, at least. Every one had probably at some time or other dreamed what a great thing it would be to bring a dead person back to life; so the thing caught the popular fancy.

The following day was a holiday—Sunday—so every one had plenty of time to talk about it. A number of hastily arranged sermons were preached on the subject. They were, remarkably enough, favorable. Let Doc Savage go ahead, if he could, was their consensus. There was not much talk about mere man keeping his hands off the celestial arrangement of things.

Telephone operators, telegraphers and mailmen had no time to think or talk, though. The suggestions were already pouring in. The judges had a phalanx of secretaries classifying the suggestions, and numbering them.

The following day, Monday, newspapers printed everything they could find about Doc Savage. For the first time in his history, Doc Savage permitted some facts about himself to get out. Mainly, they had to do with his scientific training, and there was enough data to convince even the most skeptical that Doc Savage was little short of an inventive wizard.

He had perfected, it seemed, innumerable scientific and surgical discoveries about which the public had no idea of the inventor. The skeptics, and there were a number, dug up plenty of proof that all this was the truth.

The suggestions from the public continued to pour in. There were all kinds. As to the man to be brought back to life, they wanted the sublime and the ridiculous. Names advanced ranged from Napoleon to Lincoln to a grieving neighbor woman's dead little daughter.

Innumerable parents wanted departed children resurrected, and living children wanted parents back. These latter pleas were sincere, moving, and often came in on tear-stained stationery. On a number of occasions the secretaries doing the classifying were found sobbing as the result of some particularly heart-stirring appeal.

The general effect was to bring home the undeniable fact that death is one of the profound things of life, and that the power of resurrection, by science or by a miracle, was a thing of fabulous possibilities in the bringing of joy to a bereaved one, to say nothing of the feelings of the deceased who might or might not be snatched out of a place where he or she didn't care to be.

One anonymous suggestor wanted Lucrezia Borgia brought back so she could administer poison to the current crop of politicians.

THE thing grew every day, and it was not, to use an old Dutch expression, all beer and skittles for Doc Savage and his idea and plan. There is probably no such thing as getting the press of the United States all in accord about one thing, and this was no exception.

While one newspaper would sing Doc Savage's praises in print, another would demand that he be drawn, quartered and hung out for inspection so the public could see just what kind of a mechanism he was that he should get the country so stirred up over something he couldn't, obviously, accomplish. He was a fakir, that's what. A humbug, an overrated publicity snatcher.

The name and the fame, as it were, of Doc Savage were growing, of course. His picture was in all the newspapers, and commentators on the radio discussed him, some

reverently, some with the sharp scalpels of ridiculing disbelief. The comedians on the stage began to crack their bum jokes, and those on the radio, worse ones.

Naturally, it all took a few days. The barbed-wire fences around Doc Savage's skyscraper offices proved a wise precaution, because most of New York City took turns at trying to pay the place a visit. Newspapermen, writers, photographers and cranks and quacks and wise guys of every description were turned away. Doc Savage was in seclusion on the eighty-sixth floor of the skyscraper.

Communication with the public was handled by two of Doc Savage's aids commonly called "Monk" and "Ham."

Monk was practically as broad as he was tall; he had no forehead to speak of, enough mouth for several men, and with only a little more stubby, red hair his skin would have made a fair ape-skin rug. His full name was Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Blodgett Mayfair, and he had a pet pig named Habeas Corpus which was as funny a hog as Monk was a human. Monk was also one of the world's leading chemists.

Ham was Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks, and Harvard acclaimed him as its greatest law-school graduate, and the rest of the world admitted that might be right.

That part of the world interested in snappy clothes admitted also that Ham was the best dressed man in New York, if not in the United States.

Ham not only admitted the distinction. He claimed it, and was practically willing to use his innocent-looking black cane, in reality a sword cane with the tip chemically treated so that a prick produced quick unconsciousness, on any one willing to argue the point.

Ham also had a pet. Chemistry. Chemistry had been named after Monk's profession. That was to aggravate Monk. Chemistry by himself also aggravated Monk, because Chemistry was a runt edition of some kind of an ape, and he was what they call in the Missouri hills, "just about a spittin' image" of Monk.

These four—Monk, Ham, Habeas Corpus, Chemistry—got along, as far as the outside world could see, in an alarming way. It seemed only a question of time until they ate each other up.

A NEWSPAPER reporter asked questions through the barbed-wire fence.

"Tell me one thing, you two. Doc Savage has always dodged publicity. Now he's handing it out by the barrel. Why?"

Monk said, "It's this way. Doc can bring a guy to life, and——"

"A guy?" said the newsman dryly. "The women of the country will like that! Why not bring a woman to life?"

"Doc ain't never gone for the fems," Monk grinned. "That end is my specialty."

Ham put in crisply, "Whoever the committee selects will be brought back to life. It will be necessary for the country to have faith in Doc Savage and his scientific wizardry, or some people will think the thing is a fake.

“The person brought back to life is to be one who will do, it is hoped, infinite good for mankind. That person will have to have the confidence of the public. The public will have to believe the individual is the real, genuine, original article who has been brought back to life; otherwise it will be impossible to accomplish what we hope for.

“In other words, we are bringing a great person back to this trouble-ridden world to aid humanity, and humanity must believe in him to be aided.”

Monk put in, “About half the suggestions coming to the judges are to bring Jesus of Nazareth back to life. That illustrates the point. If we tried to make the public think we were going to produce Christ, they’d know we were fakes, because even Doc Savage’s assistance would hardly be necessary there.

“This thing is dead on the level, and one man, *and only one*, can be brought back to life. It might be a woman. The judges will tell. We’re trying to make the American public understand that Doc Savage *can* do this thing, incredible as we’ll admit it sounds.”

“Doc Savage has spent a period of years perfecting the method,” Ham said.

“The judges,” Monk repeated, “will select the subject to be resurrected by modern science.”

Chapter 3

SCHEMES

SENATOR GUSTALL MOAB FUNSTON was one of the judges.

The judges met in Washington, in the senate office building, using the suite of Senator Funston. It was a night session. It was supposed to be secret, but the corridors outside crawled with newspapermen. The janitors next morning were to cart out barrels of used photographic flashlight bulbs.

The door opened about two o'clock in the morning, and the judges filed out.

"Sorry, gentlemen," Senator Funston told the besieging newshawks. "The announcement of the individual to be brought back to life will be made one week from to-day."

"But why not now?"

"That date was the one decided upon to make the announcement."

"But why?"

Senator Funston didn't reply to that because he couldn't think of a really good answer. They had just done it that way for no good reason except that announcements generally had a date.

"Is the one to be brought back to life an inventor?"

"I'm sorry. I will not answer that."

"There's a report you selected Thomas A. Edison."

Senator Funston kept his silence.

"Is it a woman?"

"I'm sorry, gentlemen."

"Is it George Washington?"

Silence.

"Abraham Lincoln?"

More silence.

"Rudolph Valentino?"

Even more silence.

"How about the Sphinx?" a newspaper writer asked, dryly.

Senator Funston gave them the big, hearty laugh he had perfected for use on his constituents, permitted himself to be photographed both with and without his five-gallon hat—he was a senator from Wyoming—and then excused himself and went home.

Instead of staying at a hotel, Senator Funston occupied, all alone, an apartment on southwest Delaware Avenue. A Negro woman came in, did the cooking and went home

in the evenings, usually about nine. Named “Orchid” Jones, she had been recently hired.

Senator Funston came in, took his key out of the lock, put it into his pocket, then looked in surprise at the dark mound of shadow in the chair by the window.

“Why, Orchid!” he said. “Why haven’t you gone home yet?”

“It ain’t Orchid,” said the shadowy form. “But it’s liable to be *lilies* if you don’t coöperate.”

THE voice sounded like a bulldog with a bone when another bulldog comes close, so Senator Funston put his hands up beside his big hat and stood where he was.

“For the moment, my nocturnal fellow, you are lucky,” he said, heavily. “I carry, as a habit, a goodly bit of money with me always. You are not welcome to it, but it is in a chamois money belt around my waist.”

“How much?” asked the shadowy other.

“Twelve hundred dollars.”

“Poultry provender,” said the other. “Keep it.”

Senator Funston tried to wet his lips, but his tongue was as dry as a rope, for this was not so good. Moreover, he had caught sight of the weapon his murky visitor was holding, and he didn’t like the looks of it. To all appearances, it was some kind of a water pistol.

“The liquid in this thing”—the visitor moved the water pistol slightly—“will kill you instantly. It throws a liquid gas sometimes used in warfare. The muzzle aperture is closed by a tiny bit of wax, but when I press the discharge slide, or trigger——”

He left it unfinished.

“What do you want?”

“The answer to a question,” said the other.

Senator Funston, an observing solon, had perceived by now that the unwelcome person wore a dark-blue suit little different from thousands of others being worn in Washington that night. The face was completely encased in a remarkably black and enveloping mask, while black gloves were on the hands.

“Ahem,” coughed Senator Funston. “Let’s have it.”

“The name of the man or woman Doc Savage is going to bring back to life.”

“Nothing doing!”

“I’m not fooling!”

“Neither am I!”

“Then we’re wasting our time talking!”

The masked man stood up, calmly extended his water pistol, and it was instantly evident he was going to shoot—or squirt.

“Wait!” croaked Senator Funston. “I’m a fool to resist you!”

“Of course.”

“There’s a slip in my pocket, a slip of paper bearing a name.”

The masked man came over and got it. He was not as tall nor as burly as Senator Funston, and at close range he smelled a little like a flower shop. He looked at the paper.

“I’ll be damned!” he said. “Turn around and let me tie your hands behind you.”

Senator Funston turned around. The other man hit him on the head with a blackjack, stepped over his senseless body, and walked out into the kitchen. The Negro woman, Orchid, was there, bound and gagged. The masked man walked on out.

He met lawyer Proudman Shaster on a near-by street, and got into the limousine with him. He had by now removed his mask, revealing his face.

It was General Ino.

“Do any good?” Proudman Shaster asked him.

“We’re all set,” said Ino.

“You’re not overlooking any bets?” the shyster lawyer asked uneasily.

“Not a bet.”

“What was the name?”

General Ino produced the slip he had taken from Senator Funston and let Proudman Shaster read the name on it.

“Thomas Jefferson, the great democrat!” exclaimed Proudman Shaster.

SENATOR FUNSTON revived with a series of lusty groans, rolled over several times, got up, stumbled to his suitcase, and got a big single-action six-shooter, after which he went looking for his visitor.

A policeman found him wandering up and down Delaware Avenue with the gun and almost threw him into jail, after which Senator Funston stamped back to his apartment, into the kitchen for a drink, and found the poor Negro maid, Orchid.

When she was untied, Orchid said things that convinced Senator Funston that the lady of complexion had either been a truck driver or married to some one who was.

The masked man, it seemed, had simply walked in early in the evening, tied Orchid up, then waited.

Senator Funston went to a telephone and called Doc Savage, long-distance, in New York City. When the remarkable voice of the bronze man answered, the senator explained what had happened.

“But I was too slick for them,” he said. Then he turned his head and directed, “Quit that cussing, Orchid!”

Orchid was draped on a couch near the telephone, saying blistering things in a low tone. The Negro maid became quiet under the wintry eye of the senator.

Senator Funston told Doc Savage, “There was a slip of paper in my pocket bearing the name of the individual whom I, as a good and loyal party democrat, consider the greatest man, mortal man, who ever lived. That, of course, was Thomas Jefferson, founder of the democratic party.”

“I gather,” said Doc Savage, “that he was not the one chosen?”

“Correct. The chosen name will not be announced until the date named. The resurrected man will not be Thomas Jefferson. I was outvoted.”

“Thank you for this information,” Doc Savage said, quietly.

“That’s all right,” said Senator Funston. “I guess you know more about what it might mean and what to do about it than I do.”

That ended the conversation.

WHEN SENATOR FUNSTON had hung up, Orchid Jones got up off the couch, pulled a revolver out of a voluminous dress bosom, and started to point it at the solon. Only started. For Senator Funston was still mad, and the instant he saw the gun, he gave a wrathful leap, and the next instant, there was a fight.

Funston started a haymaker. It missed. A fist hit him in the eye. Another mashed his nose. Another, or the same one, loosened teeth. The senator snorted blood, teeth and cow-country profanity. He got hold of Orchid. Cloth tore, garments gave, came away; they proved to be padding.

“Hell!” roared Funston. “You ain’t a female!”

Chairs upset. Fists smacked. The men groaned, hissed, cursed. Clawing, Funston got more of Orchid’s clothing.

“A white man!” Funston gritted. “Damn my soul! I’ve been took in!”

He was going to be taken again, too. The white foe was too much for him. Younger, more skill, more strength. The old senator, who had dieted too long on cigars, beer and speeches, went down.

Orchid’s gun got in his eye.

“Whom has the committee selected for the resurrection?” Orchid asked, ugly-voiced.

Senator Funston was student enough of human nature to know when he saw threatened death, and he saw it now.

He gave a name—a one-word name.

Orchid seemed surprised.

“Who suggested that name?” Orchid demanded.

“Well, it was submitted by Doc Savage’s aid, the eminent archæologist and geologist, William Harper Littlejohn.”

“Yeah,” said Orchid, thoughtfully. “I don’t know. For a minute, I thought Doc Savage might have a smell of our plan.”

“I wish,” said Senator Funston, “that I had never heard of this thing.”

“You would have been better off,” Orchid agreed.

Orchid then used all six bullets from his revolver to splash the brains of Senator Funston thoroughly over the rug.

Chapter 4

CARSON ALEXANDER OLMAN

ORCHID JONES now did something that cost a great many persons their lives in the course of time. The thing was done in an effort to save his own neck.

He simply attempted to cover up all clues by going over the place thoroughly for finger prints, using a towel and a bottle of rubbing alcohol out of the senatorial bathroom.

The finger prints were not many, for Orchid had worn rubber gloves while washing dishes and cooking, and cotton ones while dusting and making the bed—a circumstance to which Senator Funston had failed to attach enough importance.

Orchid listened from time to time, but no sounds indicated any one coming. He was not worrying too much about being discovered. He had a henchman outside to keep a lookout.

The murderer, satisfied that any clues were removed to the last degree, left the apartment, joined his confederate in the street, and they drove away.

It was then that Orchid Jones observed his hands, but he did not realize he was looking at what was the equivalent of a death warrant for many people. He merely noted that the alcohol he had used to remove the finger prints had dissolved some of the unusually good black stain with which he had given himself a Negro's complexion.

TWENTY minutes later, Orchid Jones walked into a hotel room where General Ino sat giving Proudman Shaster a gem of Oriental philosophy which he had composed himself on the spur of the moment.

"The success of a careful planner looks like the success of a damn fool to an outsider who doesn't know——" Ino stopped and eyed Orchid Jones. "Well, dark flower, what is wrong?"

"I had to kill the damn senator," said Orchid.

"Knowing you, I'll bet you did—not," said General Ino. "But what were the circumstances?"

"The windbag tricked us."

"You don't say! Who ever heard of a senator being tricky!"

"They ain't bringing Thomas Jefferson back to life," growled Orchid Jones.

"No?" General Ino made the one-word sound like an inquiry. And he had become suddenly serious.

"I thought it'd be Thomas A. Edison," said Orchid. "Edison was my guess, see. But I was wrong."

"Not an impossible circumstance," General Ino reminded, dryly. "But you can spare us the drama."

Ino frowned and waited.

Orchid whispered the name which had been yielded by poor Senator Funston.

The name gave General Ino a shock. He was silent for moments.

“I’ve heard,” Proudman Shaster put in uneasily, “that Savage does not miss many bets.”

HAM, the other lawyer who was one of Doc Savage’s aids, held about the same ideas—of Doc Savage’s habit of passing up no bets.

A big plane slammed over Washington with a volleying sound, coming from the direction of New York, and Ham sat in a comfortable seat in the plane and carefully daubed the tip of his sword cane with a fresh supply of the sticky chemical which produced harmless unconsciousness a very few moments after it got into an open wound.

“Listen, pitiful and stupid,” Ham said. “We’re here in Washington in such a hurry because that attempt to get the name from Senator Funston means somebody is up to something, and Doc wants to look into it.”

“You’re so bright you can’t see nothin’ but your own glitter!” Monk complained in his small, childlike voice. “Don’tcha think I know why we’re here?”

Major Thomas J. Roberts, better known as “Long Tom,” sat opposite Monk. He was a thin, pale man who would have been eyed speculatively by any undertaker. Despite his unhealthy appearance, no one could recall his ever having been ill. He was an electrical wizard, and one of Doc Savage’s aids. The name Long Tom had been earned long ago, after he had staged a hectic experience with one of those old-fashioned cannons known as a “long tom.”

“You two have become pickled in your own bile,” Long Tom told Monk and Ham.

Doc Savage was flying the plane. He slanted it down upon the airport just across the Potomac. Two airport attendants sauntered out, one finishing off a sandwich, the other picking his teeth. They looked at who was getting out of the plane and the one nearly choked on what was left of the sandwich.

“Doc Savage!”

“Yeah,” agreed the other. “I’d recognize him anywhere!”

The taxi driver recognized him. So did two policemen, one of whom was standing on the traffic circle below the Capitol building which you pass before you turn to get on Delaware Avenue.

They went into Senator Funston’s apartment house, and got no answer to their ring. The door lock delayed Doc Savage about half a minute, which was long for him, and they went in and looked at the Senator’s corpse.

They had hardly glanced at the body the first time when a strange and fantastic sound came into existence—a trilling with a quality that defied description. So low that at times its existence seemed more imagination than actuality. It rose and fell, definitely musical without having a tune. It was exotic. It might have been the result of a small wind in a naked, sleet-laden forest.

This fantastic sound was made, without conscious effort, by the giant bronze man who was the fourth of the plane's party.

THE physical development of this bronze man was striking. Not alone because he was a giant with Herculean muscles, but because his development was so symmetrical that his true size was apparent only when he stood close to others to whom his proportions might be compared.

His skin had a fine texture and a bronze hue that must have come from countless tropical suns. His features were regular, but not what could be called finely chiseled, and the result was a striking handsomeness.

But the bronze giant's eyes were the most unusual thing about him. Like pools of flake gold stirred away by tiny, invisible winds, the eyes had something almost weird about them. They seemed to have a power to compel, to do super-natural things.

There were many unusual qualities in this bronze giant who was Doc Savage.

Monk, the chemist, said. "Well, here's my chance to try out my new finger print stuff."

He was carrying it with him—a small case containing what looked like a flat perfume atomizer. He pressed the bulb of this, and threw an almost invisible spray over the telephone, the backs of wooden chairs, the table and anywhere else that hands might have touched. Wherever the vapor settled, finger prints came out instantly.

The prints were as plain as if they had been painstakingly printed there.

Monk looked at Doc Savage. "By George, you were right about me mixing this junk up wrong, Doc! The suggestion you gave me made an improvement!"

They began to go over the prints, Doc Savage employing a small pocket magnifier.

"Senator Funston apparently had no visitors at all at his apartment," the bronze man said quietly at last. "There are no prints around except the senator's."

Eventually, the bronze giant picked up the towel and the bottle of rubbing alcohol with which Orchid Jones had wiped off his finger prints.

"There was some one here when the senator telephoned me," Doc said. "He spoke to the person, his exact words being, 'Quit that cussing, Orchid!' Ham, you see the apartment superintendent, and ask about Orchid."

The dapper lawyer did not take long to report back. "Orchid was Orchid Jones, the cook," Ham stated.

Doc Savage's flake gold eyes seemed occupied by the towel he was holding. "Negro?"

"Black as Monk's conscience," Ham admitted.

Doc glanced at Monk, and the homely chemist at once declared, "Ham's a liar, as usual! My conscience is as pure and white as—as——"

Doc said, "Have you got your pocket laboratory with you?"

"I've got some key chemicals," Monk said. "I always carry 'em. Stuff you can make a lot of basic tests and combinations, and——"

“Let me have them a moment.”

Monk passed them over.

Doc made several simple chemical tests on dark areas of the towel. These were hardly smears. More like sections where the linen had darkened.

“All right,” he said. “We will leave now.”

“But the killer!” Ham demanded. “There’s no clue, and we can hardly pass this killing up!”

“On the contrary,” Doc corrected. “There is a very definite clue. It should lead us directly to Orchid Jones.”

ORCHID JONES was not afraid. He leaned back, lolling a cigar around with his tongue. He dearly loved cigars, and playing the part of Orchid Jones had not permitted him to smoke them. He angrily threw down a washrag with which he had endeavored to make some imprint on the dye on his face and hands. The rag smelled of alcohol.

“No dice!” he complained. “I thought alcohol would take the stuff off, but it only gets a little of it at first; then it don’t do any more good.”

General Ino looked vaguely interested. “What made you think alcohol would help?”

“Some of it came off on the towel when I was wiping off my finger prints in the senator’s apartment,” Orchid explained.

“I see. Where’s the towel?”

“Left it. It wasn’t stained enough that anybody’ll notice.”

“I see.”

General Ino got up and went into another room. When he came back, he was holding a small packet in his hands, and a slip of paper.

“Listen,” he said. “I told you the only thing that will take that stain off is a certain combination of three rather unusual chemicals. You can purchase them at a chemical supply house. There is surely one in Washington.”

He handed over the slip of paper.

“The names of the chemicals are written on that,” he said.

Orchid Jones looked at them, frowned while his lips made futile twistings trying to pronounce the chemical terms; then he said, “You mix one part of each, and add enough water to make a paste, eh?”

“Right.” General Ino leaned forward. “Now, here’s something else I want to talk about.”

Orchid put away the paper with the chemical names. “Let fly.”

General Ino unwrapped his package. “You see this?”

He held up a tiny jar of something that might have been a salve. The jar had no label.

“What is it?” Orchid asked.

“You take it and put some under your finger nails,” said General Ino, not answering the question directly. “When they catch you, if they do, you do something that looks

perfectly natural. You gnaw your finger nails.”

Orchid wet his lips and looked as if he didn't like the idea much. “I gnaw my finger nails, eh?”

“The stuff under them will make you unconscious for about a week,” explained General Ino. “They can't question you, and by that time, we'll have things straightened out.”

“I see,” Orchid said uneasily.

General Ino stood erect.

“Ever'thing bane sat,” he observed, sounding something like a Scandinavian. “Aye tank Aye ban' go home.”

He did.

ORCHID JONES slept well the rest of the night. He had been one of General Ino's men for years, and he knew the general was about as smooth an article as lived; or, at least, as followed criminal ways.

Came nine o'clock and Orchid Jones turned up at the town's leading drug house, to ask for the chemicals on his list. There was a delay of perhaps ten minutes while the order was filled because, it was explained, these chemicals were a bit rare and would have to be gotten out of stock.

Orchid Jones was dressed as a Negro.

He got his chemicals, paid for them, walked out of the door, and two men came alongside of him and grasped him by the elbows.

Orchid looked at the men and nearly had heart failure. One of the men was squat and hairy, the other slender and very dapperly clad. Orchid knew they were Doc Savage's two aids, Monk and Ham.

He tried to get out his gun. They hit him on the head, and while he was stunned, took his gun away from him. They got Orchid into a curtained car.

“Pretty soft,” Monk said. “Orchid Jones has changed his sex, but that didn't make no difference.”

Orchid swallowed several times and managed to get his heart back somewhere near where it belonged. He had not been so scared since he was a small kid and had been caught stealing a revolver.

“H—how'd you find me?” he gulped.

“Doc analyzed the stuff on the towel and learned the dye on your skin was a type which had to be removed by a certain mixture of chemicals,” Monk informed him. “All we did was check on all the drug concerns around here to see who had bought that combination of chemicals. Nobody had. So we waited for somebody to buy 'em. All the drug concerns were to notify us. When they telephoned about you, we zipped right over.”

ORCHID JONES was silent and looked at his hands. The stuff under his finger nails looked as innocent as traces of grime.

“What you gonna do with me?” he asked.

“Nothing,” Monk said, “but ask you some questions. I mean, maybe we won’t do nothing to you, if you answer the questions.”

Orchid Jones glanced furtively at his captors and read that they meant what they said and that he was in a very bad jam. He looked at his finger nails again.

He began gnawing his finger nails.

He took only a couple of gnaws and he began to shake, a vile-looking foam came to his lips. He shook more violently. His eyes popped. He made some gargling noises.

A horrible look got into his eyes and showed that Orchid Jones understood what was happening to him.

“*Arg-aw-r-gr!*” he said, and it was no more understandable than that.

“What the heck?” exploded Monk.

Orchid Jones continued to make noises that he hoped were words, but among the words, only a name was understandable.

“Carson Alexander Olman,” was the name.

Orchid Jones stopped shaking and frothing after a time.

Monk examined him.

When the homely chemist looked up from his examination, he wore an expression both startled and disgusted.

“Orchid Jones,” said Monk, “is as dead as he can be.”

Chapter 5

MASTER PLOTTER

It took Doc Savage less than two minutes to find the cause of Orchid Jones's death—the poison under the finger nails.

"There is no hope of reviving him," the bronze man said.

Monk muttered, "I don't believe the fellow knew he was takin' poison."

"I'm sure of it," dapper Ham snapped. "He did a lot of muttering, a dying statement, as he passed out."

"Any words understandable?"

Ham said three of them had been, and gave the name.

"Carson Alexander Olman," Doc Savage repeated, quietly. "Well, our best bet——"

"I'll be superamalgamated!" put in a new voice.

The speaker was very tall and so thin that it made a person ache to look at him. He had a high forehead, the æsthetic face of a thinker, and it was a bet whether or not, when he started to walk, his clothing would fall off. From his lapel dangled a ribbon, and to the end of this was attached a monocle with a thick lens.

"I'll be superamalgamated," said this person. "My acquaintanceship congenerates a consimilarity of nomenclature."

The user of the words was William Harper Littlejohn, oftener known as "Johnny," a world-famed archæologist and geologist, and a man who never used a small word where he could think of a big one. Johnny was another of Doc's aids.

Monk looked dizzy and said, "Will somebody please translate that for me?"

"Johnny means," Doc suggested, "that the only Carson Alexander Olman he knows is a rather well-known archæologist by that name."

"A supereminent——"

"Whoa!" Monk said. "Them words is too much for me before breakfast. Try little ones, please!"

"Carson Alexander Olman is well known in his field," said Johnny, reluctantly.

Pale, feeble-looking Long Tom, the electrical wizard, who had been in the background, saying little, now spoke up.

"What I'd like to know is why all this trouble!" he growled. "Can't we try to bring a person back to life, somebody who will really do this lopsided world some good, without a lot of trouble coming to camp on our ears?"

Monk snorted, "You'd waste away if you didn't have any excitement!"

Ham eyed Long Tom's pale thinness speculatively. "I'd like to know how he could waste away any more."

Long Tom sniffed. "Are we going to look up this Carson Alexander Olman?"

“We are,” Doc Savage said. “We will telephone him, long-distance, now. Then, if we cannot get any satisfaction, we will have Renny, the member of our organization who is still in New York, look into the matter.”

Doc Savage went to the telephone and asked the long-distance operator for the home of archaeologist Carson Alexander Olman in New York City.

IN the home of Carson Alexander Olman, the telephone rang in regularly spaced jangles for a long time, and was not answered, although there was one man in the house who could have answered it.

This man was bending over Olman’s filing cabinet, where all the archæologist’s personal correspondence was kept. The room was gloomy, and the man wore a raincoat, collar turned up, and a hat with the brim yanked down all around. Big, horn-rimmed spectacles otherwise made the real lines of the man’s face hard to distinguish.

Carson Alexander Olman had inherited great wealth from an old pirate of an industrialist father; but he had always been a man of very systematic methods. It was this trait which had made him a leader in his field, with one of the greatest private museums in existence. He carried system into his personal life. For instance, every scrap of his correspondence for years past was carefully filed in the cabinets beside his desk.

The furtive man was going through that correspondence.

He was concentrating on the file marked, “FOREIGN.” Time after time, he removed a paper and stowed it into an inside coat pocket.

Outside, it rained steadily. Water stood on the walks, streamed off roofs and ran furiously in gutters.

Inside, the telephone rang on.

Carson Alexander Olman did not answer it because his body lay on the floor beside the desk; his head was over cooking against a hot radiator. The head had left quite a crimson trail rolling across the carpet, and the sword which had parted it from the body lay beside the body. It was a big, two-handed sword of the sixteenth century, English.

The searcher seemed to be about done. He went back over the file once more, rapidly, checking to see that there had been no mistake. Then he went to the door, pulled his collar higher, and went out.

His trouser legs, from the knees down, got wet in the rain before he reached the sedan parked near by, and got into the rear, where General Ino sat.

The car moved away, making sounds somewhat like a dog swimming hard.

“Well, mine fran’?” queried General Ino, imitating an East Side New Yorker.

The prowler turned his coat collar down from his face—the very pale face—of Lawyer Proudman Shaster.

“I got everything.” He shuddered. “It was horrible! His head—against the radiator—and I couldn’t bear to move it—the smell——”

He shook as if he were out in the cold rain.

“Vy don’t you try for to be calm,” suggested General Ino.

Proudman Shaster shook harder, gulped, “I’m a hell of a crook to get so scared, but I can’t help it!”

“It’s the crooks who don’t get scared who get caught,” Ino assured him. “Let’s see what you’ve got.”

Proudman Shaster passed the papers over, and General Ino, when he had read them, seemed satisfied. “This was all?”

“All. I’m sure of that. Not a trace of this matter remains in Carson Alexander Olman’s correspondence files.”

“No one, by searching the effects of the dead man, will be able to learn that a gentleman named Sir Rodney Dillsworth is selling a certain article to Olman?” the general mused.

“Exactly.”

“Verry, verry goot,” murmured General Ino. “In vun hour, no less, you find yourself mit some other gentlemens on a lot of vater.”

“A LOT of vater” proved to be the Atlantic Ocean, and the “other gentlemen” proved to be a group of six lads who were as choice a lot of throat cutters as General Ino had in his organization.

Proudman Shaster, somewhat the gentleman, although he had lopped off one head with a sword that night, had been a bit uneasy about the social status of the six who were to aid him, and whom he had never before seen.

He realized immediately when they introduced themselves—this did not take place until the liner was two days out—that the six were, figuratively speaking, wolves in sheep’s clothing. Gentlemen, yes indeed—outwardly.

The liner docked in Southampton on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, the dignified British Isle had a murder. Sir Rodney Dillsworth’s butler was walking past his master’s study when he noted the cat licking at something red that was crawling out from under the door.

Sir Rodney was in his study with his head cut off.

An old-time battle-ax had done the work. Sir Rodney had been rather a bit of an archaeologist, and most of his manse was a museum containing innumerable relics, including the battle-ax. Scotland Yard was called in, and there was a hubbub.

Proudman Shaster sat at ease in a London hotel and advised his associates, “It’s not the first job we’ve pulled in England in our time, so don’t get worried. General Ino planned all this out, and we’re operating exactly according to plan. Nothing will go wrong.”

The other men sat around and looked bilious and uneasy, and it was not alone because the heavy local food had given them indigestion.

Proudman Shaster fingered a pile of papers. They were receipts, invoices—such papers as a man might have after he had bought something in a foreign country and had it shipped to his home, then sold it to a man named Carson Alexander Olman in the United States, city of New York.

“Sir Rodney had already shipped the darn thing to Olman,” grumbled Proudman Shaster. “We’ll have to take the same steamer and grab it. One consolation: There’s nothing whatever to show that Sir Rodney ever owned this thing, or who he sold it to.”

“Them two killings might not have been necessary to cover our tracks,” one of the mob suggested.

“General Ino never takes a chance,” advised Shaster. “Our next move is to get hold of this thing before it is delivered in New York.”

“You’re sure it’s the right one?”

“Yes, positive.” Proudman Shaster tapped the papers. “The name is given here. Pey-deh-eh-ghan.”

“Pey-deh-eh-ghan?”

“That’s the name.”

The man shuddered. “What’ll it be in?”

“An iron-bound box,” Proudman Shaster said.

THE iron-bound box was about four feet high, the same width, and twice as long. It left England on the freighter *Boisterous*, and somewhere between there and New York City, it apparently vanished.

But no one noticed the vanishing. The name disappeared from the freight lists as completely as the box did from the hold. There was nothing on paper to show it had ever been aboard.

Anyway, everybody aboard was excited over something else. The third mate—he was in charge of the cargo holds—was found dead. He was a tough guy, had a lot of enemies, so his demise surprised nobody; but the manner of it did. The third mate was found with his head cut off, and a fire-ax sticking in the stump.

Proudman Shaster told General Ino, “It’s horrible! I think I’m going to have a nervous breakdown!”

“*Quién sabe?*” murmured the general, speaking Spanish, “They cannot talk with their heads off. The mate discovered you moving Pey-deh-eh-ghan, eh?”

Proudman Shaster wrung his hands. “I wish I could control myself! When I get in a tight place, it seems all I can think of is cutting their heads off!”

They were in a small warehouse in a discreet part of Jersey. General Ino walked back and looked at the big, iron-strapped box which his truck had just unloaded. Rather, the truck was hired, and the driver was one of his men.

“How did you get it off the freighter?” he asked.

“Lowered it into the launch alongside after night,” Proudman Shaster explained. “We talked to the look-out, and one man was on the bridge to hold his attention while the box was hoisted overside.”

“You didn’t drop it in the water?” the general demanded, anxiously.

“Oh, no! We were very careful!”

“And we will continue being careful.” General Ino eyed the big box which contained Pey-deh-eh-ghan, and sighed rapturously. “We are all set to cash in on one of the biggest things in history—Doc Savage’s resurrection stunt.”

Chapter 6

WISDOM

REGARDLESS of whether or not it was one of the biggest things in history, the United States was going for it in a big way. Skeptics had about disappeared as the day of the final announcement drew close, and this was probably due in large to the astute publicity campaign which Doc Savage and his aids had conducted.

As the bronze man had explained, in order for the person they were going to bring back to life to do real good in the world, the world would have to believe him genuine, and that meant believing that Doc Savage could actually bring one man back to life. If the selection was George Washington, every one would naturally have to believe it was George. People would not be likely to take orders from a fellow they considered a fake George. More than likely, they would have him thrown in jail.

The day before the announcement, the newspapers carried in paid advertising:

DOC SAVAGE TO ANNOUNCE
OVER RADIO AT 7 O'CLOCK!

At seven o'clock, they stopped the street cars so people could get off and listen to the radios in the corner drug stores.

Every one knew Doc Savage's remarkable, trained voice by now.

Doc Savage said:

"Many are going to be disappointed and more surprised by the name selected by the committee. Here are some of the reasons why certain names were passed over.

"Napoleon Bonaparte, suggested by many, was not selected because he was primarily a warrior, and this poor world has enough of those now. William Shakespeare was passed over because it will take more than a writer and dramatist to do this world lasting good. George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Thomas A. Edison were prominently discussed. Of these three, the field was narrowed down to Edison, the great inventor, whose value to mankind perhaps will not be fully recognized for another hundred years."

There was a rather long pause, and any number of persons reached over hastily and tested to see if they could still hear a station hiss, thinking their radios had gone haywire.

"Edison is a man of inventions. He stands for material progress, for the introduction of new machinery."

Another pause.

"But it is doubtful if more scientific progress will help the world," Doc Savage continued. "What we want is a great thinker. Not a man of profound mathematical propoundings such as Einstein, but a man who can keep his head and *think* out the right and wrong way of doing things."

The pauses came just often enough to permit what was being said to soak into the minds of the listening public.

“The judges went back into history for their man,” Doc Savage said. “The name which they finally decided upon is that of an ancient whose mortal remains were recently found and positively identified. There is absolutely no doubt but that the body of this individual, or his mummy, is available. So that man will be brought back to life.”

Once more, a pause.

“The world does not need inventions.”

Another moment of silence.

“It needs profound wisdom.”

The final pause, and:

“Solomon is the man to be resurrected,” said Doc Savage, and went off the air.

FOR the next hour or so, the nation sat around with a doubtful look and talked. Solomon! Almost no one knew whether Solomon’s body was available. And even if it was, it would have to be intact, and that, after the passing of many centuries, was not exactly reasonable to believe.

But the extra editions of the papers enlightened everybody. It seemed that Solomon’s mummy had been found not many weeks before!

The find had been made by an eminent group of archaeologists, included among whom was Doc Savage’s aid, William Harper Littlejohn. There had been no fanfare in print over the discovery, and nobody had been invited in to make news reels. The gentlemen who had found Solomon’s mummy did not need money or publicity; hence the affair had been quiet.

Solomon’s mummy was available. There was not the slightest doubt about it. The archaeologists had identified it positively, and they were too eminent for their words to be doubted.

Solomon, it seemed, was lying in state in the private museum of William Harper Littlejohn.

General Ino read this and smiled a thin smile.

“We are now ready to function further,” he said. “The mummy of Solomon is to be taken to Doc Savage’s laboratory at ten o’clock to-morrow morning. We shall be on hand.”

“You have a really wonderful mind—of its kind,” Proudman Shaster said, nervously. “Really wonderful. But it strikes me you have waited too long. We have known for days, thanks to your spies, where Solomon’s mummy was lying. Why haven’t we acted before?”

“He who eats his fish hastily is most apt to choke on a bone,” General Ino murmured, singsonging in Chinese fashion.

“Yeah,” said Proudman Shaster. “And it’s a fact that the kind of fish who play with the bait and take it slowly usually got hooked in the stomach.”

“Velly tluce,” agreed Ino. “That’s one thing I like about you, Proudman, my sweet. You always think of the worst things that could happen. It’s a very good trait.”

Shaster sighed nervously. “So we put on your next act at William Harper Littlejohn’s private museum?”

“*Si, si,*” said General Ino. “We do.”

WILLIAM HARPER LITTLEJOHN’S private museum had been practically unknown, but there were at least ten thousand people in the block in front of it before daylight the next morning. The police took one look and decided the hearse that would come for Solomon’s remains would need a police escort.

A motor-cycle squad was ordered to be on hand and to wait for the hearse.

At eight o’clock, a hearse drove up to the waiting motor-cycle squad.

“Well, we’re ready to go get him,” said the driver.

“I wonder if Solomon isn’t going to miss his thousand wives?” a cop called out.

“If I was him,” chuckled the hearse driver, “I would.”

The police motor-cycle squad roared into formation, and acted as a convoy for the hearse, guiding it through the mob toward the building which held Johnny’s museum. The building matched William Harper Littlejohn in architecture. It was taller and thinner than it seemed any building could be and still not upset. The museum was near the figurative waistline of the thin building, and the hearse driver and his assistant—both nice-looking men—staggered in under the weight of a wicker basket holding the mummy. The elevators were barely large enough to accommodate the length of the basket.

On the way up, half a dozen other nice-looking men got into the cage. They all got out on the museum floor and walked to a door.

Johnny looked tall and thin enough to fit into the crack of the door which he opened a few inches at their knock.

“We’ve come for Solomon,” one of the men said.

Johnny said, “I’ll be superamalgamated!”

He made a half gesture at bringing the monocle to his eye, an empty move because he hadn’t needed it for years, and nowadays it was a high-powered magnifier.

“You’re not the men who were to come!” he snapped, forgetting himself and using small words: “Monk and Ham were to come! You’re a bunch of fakes!”

“This ain’t a fake!” the spokesman said, and showed Johnny the business end of the biggest six-shooter he remembered having seen recently. “Open up, long and lean!”

Johnny tried to slam the door in the face of the leader. The gunman lunged at it. Johnny, who was not weighty, was bowled across the room. The door flew open. The men dived inside—and into a human tornado.

Another man had been in the room. He was a very big fellow, distinguished by a long, gloomy face and fists of stunning size. The big fists were swinging and he fell upon the men as if the gun the leader carried meant nothing at all.

This was “Renny,” or Colonel John Renwick. His arms were enormous, in keeping with the rest of his huge body, which tipped the scales close to two hundred and fifty pounds. His features had a most puritanical look, one that convinced people that his head consisted of nothing more than a spoonful of brains. Which was wrong, for Renny was known throughout the world for his engineering accomplishments.

“That’s Renwick!” barked the man with the gun. “Watch ’im! He’s supposed to be tough!”

Renny’s toughness was more than supposition, as the men soon found out. He moved like greased lightning. His incredible fists whistled through the air, pummeled mobsters’ heads with blows that echoed throughout the room.

One big fist took a man under the chin. The fellow rose straight up into the air, squirming like a fish that had come out of the water, caught on a hook, and who was trying to shake himself loose. Falling, he seemed to melt against the floor.

The fellow had hardly touched the floor when Renny’s other monster fist had another mobster in the same position.

“I gotta shoot ’im!” yelled the leader of the attacking group.

His gun leveled at Renny’s heart, roared, spouted flame.

RENNY said, “*Oof!*” very loudly, grabbed the gunman by the throat and whirled him off the floor bodily. It was a breathless feat of strength. Renny seemed actually going to wring the fellow’s neck.

Bony Johnny was dancing around, whirling a chair over his head. He hit a thug with it, and changed the shape of the man’s shoulder. The bony archaeologist didn’t look it, but he packed a big wallop. The man screamed, fell on the floor, screamed louder and got up again.

The fellow jumped around like a jumping jack, as if he didn’t know what he wanted to do, his shoulder pained him so much.

Johnny looked at the fellow as if he enjoyed the antics.

A telephone hit Johnny on the back of the head. He dropped as if poled.

The man who had torn the phone loose and thrown it, ran to it, picked it up and took aim at Renny. His arm whipped forward. Renny saw the motion, ducked, dived, and got clear. But not the second time.

The telephone made *clunk!* of a noise against Renny’s skull. Renny weaved. Three men pounced on him. Feet, fists, finally a clubbed chair, got Renny down.

Gasping and cursing, the raiders fell on Johnny and Renny and tied them up, all out of breath from their exertions.

“It’s lucky you guys had a baseball player along, like me!” gasped the man who had thrown the telephone.

The one who had fired the shot tore Renny’s vest open and looked.

“Bulletproof vest!” he snarled. “I oughta shoot you in the eye, big fists!”

There was a loud knock on the door.

The raiders dragged the two prisoners out of sight; then the leader went to the door.

It was an elevator operator.

“What’s the trouble?” he asked. “There’s been enough noise up here to darn near shake the building down!”

Without batting an eye, the other said, “William Harper Littlejohn and his friend were throwing some smart-Aleck newspaper reporters and cameramen out. They wanted to get a picture of Solomon before he was resurrected.”

“Where did the newspapermen go?”

“Down the stairs, probably, if you didn’t see them.”

The elevator operator said, “I thought I heard a shot.”

“That was a photographic flashlight bulb breaking,” grunted the other. “You tell everybody everything’s all right.”

“Yes, sir,” said the elevator operator, and went away.

The leader went back to his men and said, “Let’s get on with the rest of this!”

THEY carried the wicker basket in, opened the lid, and carefully dumped out something about as long as a man. It was wrapped in a sheet. The care they used with it was extreme.

“Where’s Solomon?” they asked.

“Holy cow!” rumbled big-fisted Renny. “What’s all this about?”

There was another knock at the door.

The leader went to the door, kept his gun in his pocket with a hand on it, and peered out.

“Hell!” he said. “This is a fine time to show up!”

Lawyer Proudman Shaster smiled cheerily at the other.

“I was waiting downstairs to see how you came out,” he said frankly. “If you had failed to take the fort, I would simply have failed to come up. There was no need of us all taking a chance of getting caught.”

“I call that a hell of a note!” snarled the other.

“It’s my privilege as one of your leaders,” said Proudman Shaster. “I see everything is in hand. That is really wonderful, really wonderful.”

He whipped out a large purple handkerchief, tied it over his face, and walked into the room, faking a shuffling limp.

“We’re trying to make ’em tell which is Solomon,” said the gunman. “There’s a lot of mummies here.”

“Solomon? Yes, of course,” murmured Proudman Shaster.

Shaster glanced about, observed a wallpiece consisting of two crossed swords, a battle-ax and a shield. He went over and got the battle-ax down, then stood above Renny. The ax glistened as he swung it.

“All right,” he said. “Which is Solomon?”

A shocking change had come over Proudman Shaster. His eyes were too bright, and he had started breathing in short spurts. His gaze was fixed hungrily on Renny's muscular-looking neck.

Suddenly, without another word, he lifted the ax. It was a big thing. Probably it had chopped off many heads in its day. At least it had been made for that.

It would not have taken a psychologist to realize that some queer, hideous quirk in Proudman Shaster's nature made him a madman when he was in a tense situation with a big sword or an ax in his hand. He had a mania for chopping off heads.

He was going to chop off one now, without more fuss about it.

"Wait!" Renny yelled. "That one is Solomon!"

Renny pointed.

Renny had a sense of values. He was not going to lie there and have his head chopped off simply because he did not want to tell this purple-masked maniac which of the mummies was Solomon.

But it was not going to save him! Proudman Shaster bunched his muscles, and the ax whistled downward for Renny's neck!

Renny was tied so he could not dodge. He shut his eyes.

Slug!

"Damn you!" yelled Proudman Shaster. "Why'd you do that?"

The leader of the mob snarled shakily, "The guy told you what you wanted to know, didn't he?"

Renny opened his eyes and saw that the ax was sticking in the floor beside his neck. He gathered that the gunman had leaped and deflected the would-be killer's arm at the last instant. The two were now glaring at each other, and it looked as if there would be trouble.

Proudman Shaster finally shrugged. With the ax out of his hands, sanity had returned.

"All right," he snapped. "Take the two prisoners into the other room. All of you go in there and watch them."

"What're you gonna do?" asked the gunman.

"I'm gonna switch mummies," said Proudman Shaster. "I'm gonna—I'm going to exchange the mummy we brought with us for that of Solomon."

THE gentlemanly looking thugs carried Renny and Johnny into the outer room, then stood over them watchfully, guns in their hands.

Fully fifteen minutes elapsed. It was such a long interval that the men became impatient.

"What's keeping you?" one called.

"Shut up," directed Proudman Shaster from the other room. "I am changing the wrappings of the mummies. Taking the wrappings off Solomon and putting them on our mummy."

“Why?”

“Doc Savage must think our mummy, the one we are going to leave here, is the mummy of Solomon, so that he will go ahead and resurrect it.”

Renny and Johnny exchanged stunned glances.

“Holy cow!” said Renny. “These lugs are trying to get some guy of their own brought back to life!”

Renny had a remarkable voice. It sounded like a very big animal in a big cave, highly enraged.

Proudman Shaster came out dragging the wicker basket.

“Take this,” he directed. “It’s got Solomon in it.”

“What’ll we do with it?” the gunman wanted to know.

“Take it over to the river and dump it with a weight tied to it,” said Shaster.

“But what about the cops—the motor-cycle escort?”

“Easy. Tell them you were a dummy expedition to get the remains of Solomon. Tell the cops you were sent so the crowd would see you, think Solomon was gone, and then clear out. Doc Savage would logically do that. He don’t like crowds.”

THE men picked up the wicker basket. They all seemed about to leave.

“Wait a minute!” barked Proudman Shaster. “You’re forgetting! Only the two who came with the hearse will leave. They can dispose of Solomon. The rest of you stick here?”

“And do what?”

“Point guns at Renny and Johnny here, when Doc Savage sends for the mummy of Solomon,” Shaster directed. “Renny and Johnny will see that Doc takes the mummy and don’t suspect a thing. Shoot them if they don’t act their part.”

“Righto,” agreed the gunman, reluctantly.

Proudman Shaster smiled while the two who had arrived in the hearse struggled out with the wicker basket.

“Everything is going to be really wonderful,” Shaster assured them. “Just do your jobs and don’t worry. Remember, you have something to fall back upon as a last resort.”

He went out.

Chapter 7

THE MUMMY SWAPPERS

THE door made a metallic *click* behind Proudman Shaster's departing back, and the leader went to it, tried it to make sure it was locked, then whirled on his aids.

"Get the fellows who are hurt out of sight," he directed. "Stick 'em in a closet or something. If any of you have got narcotics on you, give 'em a little to sort of ease their pain."

They bustled around.

The private museum, instead of being the dark place that such establishments usually are, was modernistic, with a lot of windows. However, it carried out a one-color scheme of decoration. The purpose of this was the same as the reason for some museums being dark. The exhibits seemed more effective, stood out better, by contrast.

"Be sure everything is cleaned up," directed the leader. He came over toward Johnny and Renny. "I'm gonna untie you mugs, after I take your bulletproof union suits off. And if you make funny moves, you're going to find yourselves bucking a storm of lead.

"What is behind this?" Renny asked.

"That's our own business," the other told him. "We want a certain fellow resurrected in place of Solomon. We've gone to a lot of trouble to get that fellow, and we're going to a lot more to get what he——"

"There's such a thing as talking too much," a man reminded the leader, dryly.

"Thanks," said the leader, and shut up.

Johnny and Renny were relieved of their unusually light alloy chain-mail undergarments; then they were untied and stood on their feet.

"You live here," the leader told Johnny. "Where's the bathroom? You've got some blood on your puss that needs washing off."

Johnny grumbled, "I'll show you, you thug!" and led the way to a plain door.

"Perhaps I had better go in first," said the leader of the mob.

He opened the door and backed in, covering his prisoners with his gun.

That was a bad move. He never saw his fate in the shape of two bronze hands that suddenly took hold of his neck. The tendons on the backs of the bronze hands somewhat resembled large round files. The fingers sank deep into the man's neck flesh as if they were steel in reality, and the leader of the mob was lifted off the floor.

He flailed his arms. One of the bronze hands detached and clamped his arms. The other fist released his neck and hit his jaw in a combination move that took a good eye to follow.

Renny and Johnny stood perfectly still. They knew those hands. Doc Savage! Neither gave a sign to betray the presence of the bronze man to the other members of

the mob, who were in a position where they could cover Renny and Johnny, but could not see what had happened to their chief.

Doc drew the victim out of sight, deposited him in the bathtub, and straightened. The bronze man's throat tendons tensed, and he held his mouth in a peculiar position.

From his lips came a perfect imitation of the mobleader's voice.

"Come in here a minute, a couple of you guys!" Doc invited.

ONE of the raiders had been put out of commission in the first fight with Johnny and Renny. Doc had just disposed of a second. There had been six to start with, excluding Shaster and the two carrying the wicker basket.

The four in the room behind Johnny and Renny were now unsuspecting. Two stepped through the bathroom door. They saw Doc—about the time he took hold of them.

"What the——" one managed to gasp.

"We'll have to move this thing," Doc Savage said, loudly. "It'll be quite a struggle!"

He had hold of them both in such a way that they couldn't yell.

"We'll have to kick the darn thing loose," the bronze man added.

The two victims kicked and flailed madly. Time after time, they hit the bronze man with their fists. Their blows seemed to have no effect.

"Kick it again," Doc said.

The bronze man was imitating the voice of the leader he had overpowered.

The two men he held managed to flail him with their legs. He worked to get their heads in a position for cracking together.

"We're just about to make it," Doc said. "Once more! Hit it!"

The two heads went *thump!* and the men stopped struggling. Silence followed.

The talking Doc had done had been pitched in a loud, encouraging voice. It had led the two in the other room to think their companions were merely doing a bit of heavy work.

Doc took advantage of the silence, which would sound like a rest interval.

"We'll have to have more help," Doc called. "Bring the two prisoners in here and make them help us."

The rest of it was simple. The two survivors of the mob walked in unsuspectingly, and Doc, hidden behind the door, hit them in turn, one sharp blow for each, and they fell to the floor.

After he had made sure the prisoners were all unconscious, Doc Savage's flake gold eyes rested on bony Johnny.

"It might be advisable," he said, quietly, "to move your living quarters and museum down a little closer to headquarters. It took me almost twenty-five minutes after the alarm rang to get here. Of course, there is a terrific traffic jam below, but even without

that, it takes too long. We are always in danger. We should be in a position to help each other quickly.”

“Alarm!” Renny boomed. “What kind of an alarm brought you here, Doc?”

Johnny answered that. “I had my place wired some time ago. For instance, there are certain spots under the rug over which tables ordinarily sit, or chairs. When the chairs or tables are moved, and the certain spots pressed, it rings a bell in Doc’s headquarters. I saw to the pressing.”

Doc Savage added, quietly, “It just happens that Johnny’s fire escape goes past his bathroom window. Now, what happened here?”

They told him what had happened.

THE police, when Doc Savage got them on the telephone, were not too happy about being duped by the fake hearse. For five minutes, things crackled. Five minutes, no longer, for that was the interval required to catch the fake hearse.

The hearse was driving near the river when two radio-patrol cars crowded it to the curb. The driver and his assistant pulled out their guns, then took another look at the cops, and changed their minds.

A sergeant telephoned Doc Savage about the capture.

“Bring them to William Harper Littlejohn’s place,” Doc requested. “We will question them, as well as some friends of theirs who are already here.”

“Yes, sir.”

The sergeant had considered the request an order, because Doc Savage held a high honorary commission on the New York police force. It had been given him in recognition of work done in the past.

Doc glanced out of the window and saw that the crowd was still jamming the street—held there because word that the bronze man was present in person had gone around, no doubt.

Doc said, “Renny, you watch the prisoners.”

Renny blocked out his big fists and rumbled, “It’ll be a pleasure!”

Doc took Johnny, the archæologist, into the room where the mummy lay.

“They swapped on us?” Doc questioned.

“Yes,” Johnny said, so puzzled he used small words. “I cannot understand it!”

Doc said, “Let’s examine the mummy they left for us to resurrect.”

The mummy was in a plain black case, a modern one.

THE cadaver would probably have given an ordinary person the creeps. It hardly looked lifelike. It was taller than an average man, and had a good breadth of shoulders. An aged man, the mummy had been quite a physical specimen, even at the time of his death.

Mummies are usually seen done up in ancient wrappings, but this one was naked, except for a plain white gown such as patients wear before they are taken into operating rooms. It was split up the back after the fashion of such gowns.

Johnny scratched his head and looked amazed.

"I'll be superamalgamated!" he murmured. "This mummy is of almost exactly the same period as that of Solomon! I can say, positively, that there is no more than a hundred years difference in their age!"

He fingered his monocle, miraculously unbroken throughout the excitement.

"Solomon's physical build and that of this man are practically identical," he said. "The deception might very well have succeeded."

He sighed deeply.

"I hope they have not damaged Solomon," he finished. "They were going to throw him into the river."

A policeman knocked on the door.

"The hearse is downstairs with Solomon," he reported.

"What about the two prisoners?" Doc queried.

The cop shook his head. "Dead."

"What?"

"Begorra, it was the queerest thing," the officer muttered. "Them two fellers sat there in the squad car bitin' their finger nails; then all of a sudden they both had fits and died."

That seemed to remind Doc Savage. He spun and leaped into the room where Renny was guarding the prisoners. It was a bedroom.

Renny waved one big fist. "I spread 'em out on the bed. They're behavin'."

Doc ran to the prisoners, examined them, then glanced at Renny.

"Did they chew their finger nails any?" he asked.

"Sure," Renny admitted. "They were worried. Why not?"

Doc Savage said, quietly, "And now they're dead."

THE story of the dead men got into the newspapers. It couldn't very well have been kept out.

Lawyer Proudman Shaster put a paper bearing the story in front of General Ino at the small hotel where the latter had his headquarters for the moment.

"*Quién sabe?*" murmured General Ino. "Haven't you ever heard of the Oriental custom which spies have of committing suicide?"

"These men didn't commit suicide!"

"A mere technicality," stated Ino. "They thought the poison was a drug that would make them unconscious so they could not be questioned."

"You told them that!"

“Some one must have,” grinned General Ino. He leaned forward suddenly. “Don’t be a sap, mine fran’! Those men would have told all they knew! Doc Savage would have made them! This Savage is as clever a man as there is alive to-day! Don’t get any other idea. I have been outfoxing people for many years. It is my trade. I am merely trying to beat Doc Savage at my own game. And believe me, if I succeed, I am going to retire, because it will be the crowning achievement of my career. There will be no more worlds to conquer.”

“This one will pay well enough that you can afford to retire,” Proudman Shaster pointed out.

“That’s an angle, too,” the general admitted.

There was a small portable radio in the room, and it began to give forth a news broadcast as General Ino adjusted the knobs. The announcer was saying that Doc Savage and his aids were on the way to the bronze man’s laboratory with the mummy of Solomon, which had nearly been stolen.

General Ino, listening, began to chuckle. His chuckle was queer. It sounded like a hen cackling.

“Velly good,” he chortled.

“You are absolutely satisfied with the way things are going?” demanded Proudman Shaster.

“Perfectly!” exclaimed General Ino. “It is going exactly as I have planned it. As you might say, my dear Shaster, it is all really wonderful!”

THERE was such a crowd around Doc Savage’s skyscraper that the hearse could not get close. They transferred the mummy to a subway train, had the subway stop near Doc’s building, and entered the structure by an underground passage which Doc used for leaving and coming when he did not want to be seen on the street.

They put the mummy on a white slab in the laboratory.

“The public seems to think this resurrection will be a short affair, merely a matter of turning on a machine, and presto—Solomon is alive,” Doc said, addressing homely Monk. “You had better announce differently.”

“O. K.,” Monk said. “How long will it take, Doc?”

“Hours. Maybe days.”

Monk went out to make this announcement.

Doc Savage’s laboratory was probably exceeded for completeness only by one other, the existence of which the world knew nothing about. Even Doc’s five assistants did not know where it was situated, except that it was at some remote spot on the globe which the bronze man called his “fortress of solitude,” and to which Doc visited at intervals to spend weeks and sometimes months, shut off completely from the world, studying and working out scientific experiments.

It was really at this “fortress of solitude” that Doc had perfected his resurrection process. It was there that he had gotten together the extremely rare chemicals, so rare that even now he only had enough to revive one patient.

Monk came back, said, "I told 'em. They didn't believe me, of course."

Monk, whose skill as a chemist was amazing, understood enough of Doc's process to be of some assistance. The others, experts at other lines, could only stand back and watch. But they were anxious to help.

"Anything we can do?" pale Long Tom asked.

Doc Savage considered. "There is something sinister underfoot. You two might make some investigations."

The pallid electrical wizard grunted, "But we've got nothing to go on!"

"Renny," Doc said, "you say one of these men to-day, the one with the mask, showed an insane desire to cut your head off?"

"Holy cow, did he!" Renny boomed. "*I'll say!*"

"There have been three beheading murders since this affair of the resurrection started," Doc told him. "One was Carson Alexander Olman of New York, the other Sir Rodney Dillsworth of England, and the third a mate on a freight steamer. Investigate them. See what you can turn up that connects the three killings, and connects us."

Renny, Ham, Johnny and Long Tom immediately went to telephones and got to work.

They spent money on long-distance calls as if it were water to be dipped up out of an ocean.

Doc Savage and Monk filled a large glass tank with a chemical mixture. The tank was about the size and shape of a bathtub, and the chemical mixture had a reddish tinge.

"This is the first step at softening and revitalizing the mummified tissue," Doc said. "Electric currents passed through the bath will quicken the process."

Monk eyed the mummy critically. "He looks like he's gonna take a lot of revitalizing. If it was anybody but you, Doc, trying this, I'd go out and make myself some money by betting fifty to one that it couldn't be done."

"How about the vital organs being missing?" Renny called from the library. "Didn't they take the entrails out when they embalmed the old mummies?"

"Not in this process," Doc told him. "Preservation was accomplished by immersion in a bath, the exact nature of which has been lost to knowledge."

"Reckon the bath was poison?" Monk queried.

"Probably," Doc admitted. "We will have to eradicate the poison. That may take time."

Monk stood back and scratched his nubbin of a head.

"It's been easy to talk about resurrecting somebody," he squeaked. "But it begins to look like quite a job all of a sudden."

IN the library—a huge room containing thousands of scientific tomes—Renny, Long Tom and Johnny worked on three telephones. In the reception room, Ham kept

another line busy. There were occasions when Doc Savage needed many telephone hook-ups in a hurry, so he had the facilities.

The bronze man also frequently needed information abruptly. His five aids were experts at getting it. Not only did they do the work themselves, but they had a number of good detective agencies who would go to work at the drop of a hat.

Detective agencies being tools to fight the criminals, Doc Savage had long ago subsidized a number, and on occasion, took a hand in training their operatives. Since the bronze man paid a part of the expenses, these private detective agencies were able to work cheaply enough to help many an ordinary fellow take care of some personal difficulty.

The private agencies, as a matter of fact, was Doc Savage's method of taking care of the innumerable calls which he received from persons who were in trivial jams. Little troubles which did not require the bronze man's developed skill were taken care of by the agencies which Doc had established.

Within two hours, Doc Savage's information-gathering machine had dug up some interesting facts.

"There's a connection between the beheadings," Renny reported. "This Englishman, Sir Rodney, sold something to the American, Carson Alexander Olman. The article sold was shipped on the freighter of which the third beheading victim was mate."

DOC had the mummy out of the bath now. It looked less like a mummy, and the bronze man was going over it with an X-ray machine.

"How did you get your information?" he asked.

"From the New York offices of the line which owned the freighter," Renny explained. "They had this one article, which they had received a bill of lading or whatever they called it for, but the article never got here. It disappeared somewhere in the process of shipment."

Monk said, "It looks as if this article was stolen and every one who would know anything about it was killed."

"Any clue as to what the thing was?" Doc queried.

"Nope," said Renny. "Except that it was marked down on the steamship company bill as Pey-deh-eh-ghan."

Doc was silent a moment. An almost weird livelihood seemed to come into his flake gold eyes. "Repeat that name!"

"Pey-deh-eh-ghan," said Renny.

Doc was silent.

"Pay day again," Renny grunted. "I guess that's the way you'd pronounce it. Name mean anything to you, Doc?"

The name obviously did, for there came into being the small, fantastic trilling sound which was the peculiar property of Doc Savage, the strange thing which he did in

moments of mental excitement. It was not loud but every one in the skyscraper headquarters heard it. The trilling seemed to have a startled quality.

“Call the Paris National Museum in France and see if a mummy was recently sold to Sir Rodney, the Englishman who was beheaded,” the bronze man directed.

Transatlantic telephone being efficient, Renny was back in fifteen minutes.

“Yep,” he said. “Four months ago, the Paris National Museum sold a mummy named Pey-deh-eh-ghan to Sir Rodney.”

“That explains it,” Doc said, quietly.

“Explains what?”

“Later,” Doc told him. “Just now, this resurrecting is taking my attention.”

Chapter 8

RESURRECTION!

THE resurrection was taking the attention of the rest of the world, too.

Almost every one was making a gala day of it. Nothing for years had so caught public attention. The fact that several men had died mysteriously that morning did not cool the excitement. The circumstances of the deaths were so fantastic that they merely added to the general fever.

Hawkers in the throngs on the street were already selling Solomon balloons, Solomon noisemakers, and handkerchiefs with Solomon's picture on them.

"Solomon ice cream!" they yelled. "As cold as Solomon's thousandth wife! Five cents!"

An enterprising burlesque press agent came out with the announcements that his entire troupe of beautiful girls was going to offer to marry Solomon.

"There's not a thousand of 'em," he stated, modestly, "but they're so pretty they make up for it!"

Bookstores had their windows full of books about Solomon.

Signs on the backs of sandwich men parading the streets read, "Be as wise as Solomon and eat at Jobowski's Steak Emporium!"

Besides all this cheap display, there was serious talk, and level-headed editorials.

Some ambitious soul got a finger in the publicity by being the first to organize a "Solomon for President" club. He advocated an amendment to the constitution so that the president would not have to be native born, just this once.

The crowd got thicker around Doc Savage's skyscraper. For blocks, a peanut could hardly have been dropped out of a tall building without hitting a spectator.

Not that there was anything to see, except, after night came, the brilliantly lighted top floor of the enormous building, which was Doc's aerie. Two dirigibles and umpteen airplanes buzzed around the building, keeping three police aircraft busy chasing them away.

DOC SAVAGE had put the mummy through six complicated stages of the resurrecting process. He was in the seventh now, which consisted in treating the body—it looked like a body now—with ultra-violet and other rays.

He had explained that this was to replace in it the necessary vitamins which had deteriorated through the centuries. The lights by no means supplied all the vitamins. Other processes had helped.

The bronze giant was completely encased in a germproof white garment. So was Monk.

The others waited in the library. They could see through a glass door into the laboratory.

They stood with their noses flattened against the glass throughout the night.

“It’s a miracle!” Johnny stated, watching the mummy become more and more lifelike.

“It’s the longest darn miracle I ever had anything to do with!” complained pale Long Tom. “I wish Doc would take a short-cut or something!”

Johnny, the archæologist, was as excited as a hen whose chickens are hatching. Johnny believed that Solomon, once he was alive, could solve many great archæological puzzles. Johnny, as the first man to interview him—he intended to write a book, too—saw his name going down in history. It would probably go down in history anyway, but he was too modest to believe that.

“How can you be impatient!” he snapped at Long Tom. “This is the greatest thing of all time!”

“Fooley!” said Long Tom. “I’m tired!”

Johnny said, scathingly, “You look something like a mummy yourself, and it might be a good idea if Doc did some resurrecting on you!”

“So, you bonepile!” Long Tom sniffed. “For two bits, I’d hang you out in the wind and listen to you rattle!”

Big-fisted Renny put in, “Now, don’t you two start Monk-and-Hamming it!”

They grinned at each other.

“We’re tired,” Ham said, dryly. “But look at Doc. He’s been working steadily.”

“And poor Monk,” said Renny.

“Monk!” Ham jeered. “Solomon will take one look at Monk, and think the human race has gone backward since his day!”

Monk came to the door.

“Doc says you fellows had better get some sleep,” he said. “This may go on and on.”

MONK called them at four o’clock that evening.

“The crowd downstairs is raising Cain,” he said. “They think the resurrection has turned out a dud or a fake or something, and they’re throwing bricks at the cops. Ain’t people funny?”

“You are, anyway!” snapped Ham, eyeing Monk’s apish physique. “Why did you awaken us?”

Ham had awakened about every third minute throughout the day. His nerves were raw.

“Solomon is in the last process,” Monk said. “Come on in if you want to see it.”

They entered the laboratory and stood around, after pulling on white germproof garments. What they saw was so spellbinding that they at times forgot to breathe.

A number of movies, usually the horror type of pictures, had been made in which people or monsters have been brought to life, and Doc's aids had seen them—even erudite Johnny, who publicly declared movies below his dignity, but occasionally slipped out to see one.

The motion picture resurrections usually consisted of putting a corpse under a bunch of big electrodes, showy glass vacuum tubes, and a bearded scientist pushed a switch, after which there was a blinding, deafening display of electrical sparks. The favorite gag was to tap the heavens for a lightning bolt. There was always enough electricity in evidence to execute a penitentiary full of convicts.

Doc, for his final stage used no electricity at all. He used no tubes, bulbs nor elaborate apparatus.

The only device employed was a long hypodermic needle which he inserted into the heart, emptied it.

Next, he turned the resurrection patient over his knee and spanked him violently.

“The idea!” Monk exploded. “Spanking Solomon!”

“Shut up, you baby scarer!” Ham advised. “They spank new-born children like that. It starts them to breathing, or the pain revives them, or something.” He eyed Monk nastily. “They must have forgotten that in your case!”

It was characteristic of Monk and Ham that they carried their quarrel into the most critical situation, so it did not surprise the others that they would still fight while Solomon was being revived.

“He’s breathing!” Johnny gasped, and pointed. “Solomon is breathing!”

Johnny was jumping up and down in his excitement.

The former mummy was undoubtedly breathing. He began to stir. The stirrings became movement. Finally, the patient sat up. His eyes, which had been tightly closed, opened. He looked around.

The first individual he saw chanced to be the homely Monk.

The mummy stared intently at Monk. His eyes shut. He lay down again.

“I knew it!” Ham told Monk. “He saw you, and thought evolution had backfired! It was too much for him!”

HAM was kidding, because they could all see that the mummy was still breathing. The chap had merely lain back to rest.

“I will administer some energy in a chemical form which can be assimilated instantly by his body,” Doc said.

He did this—with a hypodermic needle. Then he massaged various parts of the patient’s body. He used small electrical therapy devices in this.

“Stirring up the circulation,” Doc explained.

The mummy man on the table had his eyes open, and was looking at them. He had not moved perceptibly, nor spoken.

The man was a rather handsome fellow, being tall, robust, with an aquiline nose and a fine upstanding shock of white hair, as well as an impressive white beard. Doc's revitalizing process had extended with effect, even to the hair, returning its life and luster.

Doc said at last, "He should be able to talk now."

"But what language will he speak?" Long Tom asked.

"The tongue native to his country in his day, of course," put in bony Johnny. "I happen to know that Doc knows enough of that ancient tongue to converse after a fashion. And I, myself, may be able to do the same."

Unconsciously, they all had spoken in a low voice. The power of the moment was having its effect on them.

Doc Savage stepped back and motioned Johnny forward.

"To William Harper Littlejohn will go the honor of first addressing the patient."

Johnny was overcome. It was unexpected. No archaeologist could wish for a greater moment.

Johnny stepped forward. His lips worked, but no sound came. He tried again. Still no noise.

"Holy cow!" rumbled big-fisted Renny. "For once, Johnny can't think of a big word!"

Johnny, fully realizing he had flubbed his great opportunity, stepped back.

Doc Savage spoke to the mummy. The bronze man's voice was encouraging, inspiring confidence, and the words he spoke were, while slow, well articulated. Johnny realized they were words of the language of Solomon's day, well spoken.

The mummy understood. That was obvious, because he looked startled.

But the fellow did not answer.

Doc tried again and again. After fifteen minutes, he had no answer.

"WE'VE got a speechless Solomon on our hands," complained Monk. "Imagine that!"

Johnny, who was gloomy over his tongue-tied interval, snapped, "Don't joke about it! This is serious!"

Doc Savage had apparently been thinking.

"Perhaps association with familiar objects would move him to speak," he said. "After all, this must be an utterly strange environment."

"But what'll we do about it?" Monk asked.

"Take him to the Metropolitan Museum," Doc said. "Let him look around the ancient exhibits."

They took their guest who had lately been a mummy to the museum, and several interesting things happened en route. First, the fellow screamed out in terror when the elevator started downward.

The abject fright in the cry moved Monk to mutter in an aside to Ham, “Solomon ain’t a very nervy cuss.”

Ham said, scathingly, “If the same thing happened to you that’s happened to him, you’d be jittery, too!”

They left the skyscraper by the underground route. They had trouble getting the late mummy into a taxicab when they reached the street.

Doc blindfolded the fellow.

“To spare him a lot of surprise,” the bronze man explained.

The Mummy peered about vacantly when they first entered the museum. Although the institution was open to the public, there were no visitors to-day, probably due to the excitement downtown.

Doc led the way to exhibits of Biblical times and ancient Egypt. Immediately, their guest perked up. Doc stopped in front of an exhibit of extremely antique tablets, and watched the strange man he had resurrected.

The fellow became more excited. He shuffled forward and thoughtfully touched a number of articles. He showed great interest in an ancient picture done in colors so fine that they had withstood the ravages of centuries, deep within the tomb walls on whose stone corridor they had been painted.

Johnny, the archæologist, said, “Unquestionably, he is genuine!”

“Eh?” Monk grunted.

“That is his own picture he is studying,” Johnny explained. “It is a hieroglyphic representation of King Solomon.”

The mummy man glanced from the painting to Doc Savage. He seemed to be trying to read the bronze man’s features, but they told him nothing. This seemed to disturb him.

He said something guttural in a strange tongue.

Tall, bony Johnny looked as if he had been hit by a lightning bolt.

Doc Savage was startled, too. For the first time his face revealed surprise. His trilling, ethereal and almost without reality, was audible for an instant—an eerie note.

Monk blinked, gulped, “What’n blazes?”

Johnny waved the long bones that were his arms. He made explosive gargling trying to get words out, then succeeded.

“Pey-deh-eh-ghan!” he squawked. “This—this—fake! He’s not Solomon! He’s Pey-deh-eh-ghan!”

Chapter 9

THE STRANGE MUMMY MAN

MONK made fists, a fierce face, and leaped forward. “The crook! I’ll hit ’im so hard he’ll turn back into a mummy!”

Doc got in front of Monk. “Wait. It is not his fault.”

“Then whose fault is it?” Monk yelled.

Doc was silent a moment.

“We have one consolation,” the bronze man said, dryly. “We are not taken in often.”

“You mean we’ve been foxed?”

“Thoroughly,” Doc agreed.

Understanding apparently exploded like firecrackers in the heads of Johnny and Renny simultaneously.

“Holy cow!” Renny rumbled. “In Johnny’s museum! That swap of mummies! It was a trick! They weren’t swapped!”

Johnny groaned, “Those raiders really hauled off this—this fake! They made Renny and myself think it was Solomon! We told you they got Solomon, Doc!”

“It was our fault,” Renny rumbled, gloomily.

“This is a heck of a note!” contributed Long Tom.

“The American public!” Ham groaned. “They’ll mob us!”

“That’s O. K.,” Renny muttered. “Me and Johnny, here, deserve mobbing for being taken in like that!”

DOC SAVAGE had a quality that his aids thoroughly appreciated. He never raked anybody over the coals for a mistake. They did their best. He gave them credit for that, and did not criticize.

“It seems like a strange thing to say,” Doc now informed them calmly, “but this Pey-deh-eh-ghan may prove more interesting than Solomon, and almost as valuable.”

Monk looked startled. He jabbed a finger at the mummy man.

“You mean this—this—Pay Day Again, or whatever his name is, may be worth something?”

Doc said, “That probably explains why he was switched for Solomon.”

“Pay Day,” Renny said, scowling at the mummy man, “just what the heck is this about? Johnny, you ask him that in his lingo.”

Johnny did so.

He got silence for an answer.

Doc tried. His results were also negative, but he did not seem surprised.

Johnny said frankly, "I do not get this!"

"We will go back to headquarters," Doc decided. "In the library there are some unpublished notes made by a little-known archæologist who spent most of his life exploring Egypt and the Holy Land. This archæologist really deserved considerable notice, but did not get it because he made no big discoveries. Nothing spectacular, that is."

They managed to get out of the museum without attracting too much public notice. The cab driver they hailed—the driver of the first cab, for they had to take two—seemed to have something else on his mind and did not pay them particular attention—until Doc gave him the address of his headquarters.

"Huh! You're goin' down to see this guy Solomon——" The driver turned his head and saw Doc, the mummy man, Monk and Ham.

The hackey's eyes popped. He jerked a thumb at the mummy man. "Gleeps! Is that Solomon?"

Monk, not lying and not telling the whole truth as an answer, said, "This is the man we just resurrected, yes."

"So that's the guy who had a thousand wives!" He sighed. "What a man!"

Doc had not directed the taxi directly to the skyscraper, but to a spot abreast of it, on the Hudson River. Here stood a huge, deserted-looking warehouse, the Hidalgo Trading Co., according to the legend on it, which was really a hangar and boathouse housing the bronze man's armada of conveyances.

Not many persons knew the real purpose of the great structure, for it looked innocent enough, and the cab driver certainly did not, for he shook his head in a puzzled fashion when he let them out, then peered curiously at another cab which drew up behind him, carrying Renny, Johnny and Long Tom, who now alighted and hurried forward.

A truck came snorting down the street and stopped almost opposite. Its horn began to blow loudly.

There were several lines of queer-looking marks—pictures and yet not pictures—on the sides of the truck.

Doc's voice crashed unexpectedly.

"Get under cover!" he rapped. "Quick!"

Then guns began to fill the street with a great banging.

It must have been Doc Savage's reputation for trouble that had the two taxi drivers on edge. The one to the rear slammed his hack into reverse, raced his engine, and went up the street backward at a speed somewhere near thirty miles an hour.

It was too fast. He went over a curb and glass crashed. In the next instant, driver and car were out of sight in an abandoned store.

Monk and the rest of Doc's aids dived for cover.

The mummy man stood where he was, as if bewildered.

Doc's taxi driver popped out of his machine, tried to crawl under it. He was a fat man and his hack was low. He got caught.

"Owww!" he squawked. "They'll kill me!"

Monk and the others were in an entryway.

Doc seized the fat taxi driver, yanked him out. The fellow was too plump to run fast. Doc rushed him to the entryway.

En route, the bronze man stumbled once, almost fell. It was as if he had been hit by something. He did stumble when he reached the entry. The others then saw a rip in the back of the bronze man's coat. A bullet had made it. Only the bulletproof undergarments, which Doc always wore when action was possible, had saved him.

The entry was closed at the back by a gate which had upright iron bars as thick as Ham's cane. One bar was missing, making a hole wide enough for a man to squeeze through.

The mummy man still stood in the street. He didn't know what bullets were. That was obvious.

"Run!" Monk howled at him. "You'll get killed, Pay Day!"

Renny roared, "He may be a fake, but he's a human—now!"

Renny lunged for the street. Renny was not shy on courage. He intended to seize the mummy man, "Pay Day," as Monk called him, and drag him to shelter.

Doc grabbed Renny, and without apparent effort, stopped the big-fisted engineer.

"You'll get shot!"

"So will Pay Day!"

Doc called sharply to Pay Day in the ancient tongue which was native to the mummy man.

The words might have set off a percussion cap in Pey-deh-eh-ghan. He put his head down and ran up the street as fast as he could.

THE taxi driver was trying to get through the hole in the iron gate. He had his head in, and his body down to his third vest button. He was stopped there.

Doc rapped, "Monk! Your supermachine pistol!"

The homely chemist whipped out one of the weapons. They had been developed by Doc, resembled an overgrown automatic, and could pour out bullets faster than a military machine gun.

"Mercy bullets?" Doc asked.

"Yep!"

The mercy bullets produced unconsciousness only. It was the policy of Doc and his aids not to take human life if it could be avoided.

"But I got some demolition cartridges!" Monk added.

Monk was inclined to be bloodthirsty. One demolition slug would tear down a good-sized house.

The taxi driver made strangled sounds, caught in the hole in the iron gate.

Gunfire was now a deafening roar. It was coming from windows, from the big truck in the street—from everywhere, it seemed.

Doc, superfirer latched to shoot bullets one by one, took careful aim at the running mummy man's legs. The weapon made a clean report.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan skipped like a man who had stepped on a thorn. He ran on a little farther. Then he stopped, made vague gestures of a man too tired and sleepy to do anything about a pressing situation, and laid down, loosely, in the street.

“Ow!” wailed the taxi driver. “Oh, golly!”

Renny yelled, “These bushwhackers are movin’ in on us!”

It sounded like it. Bullets were hitting all around the little, compact group. A few got into the niche where they had taken shelter. Ricochets; they were not too deadly.

The taxi driver continued his yelling, kicked and writhed.

Up the street there was a mushy sort of an explosion, and smoke gushed out into the street. The gas tank of the taxi that had run backward into the store had exploded.

Following that explosion, there was another. Close, too! It knocked the hats off the little group, showered them with brick dust. To say nothing of what it did to their hearing and nerves.

“GRENADE!” LONG TOM squawled. “We gotta get out of here! The next one may _____”

Who-o-o-m! The next one took up a section of pavement and broke off a fire plug. Water came out of the fire plug with a guzzling roar.

“Oh, my!” moaned the stuck taxi driver. “To think I’ve been readin’ dime novels for excitement!”

Monk yelled at the hackey, “Before you get blowed in there so tight you’ll never get out, I better do somethin’!”

Monk grabbed the cabby and pulled him out of the hole in the iron bars like a cork out of a bottle.

“Oh, oh!” wailed the hackman.

Guns and bullets and shouts just about drowned out what he had to say.

Monk, keeping his hold on the fat driver, aimed him for the hole in the bars and rushed him.

“Nix!” squawled the driver. “That hole is too little!”

It wasn’t. He went through, but it would probably be days before he would be the same again.

Renny, Long Tom, Ham, Johnny went through in quick succession. Monk looked as if he didn’t believe Doc would make it. But Doc did.

“Oh!” complained the fat taximan.

Monk advised, “You better take my advice and run like heck!”

“I can’t!”

The taximan was mistaken. He did.

There was a stairway. Doc and his men went up that.

Another grenade, a bigger one, took out most of the front of the building and demolished the areaway behind them.

THE noise had fixed their ears so they had to scream to be heard.

“The Battle of the Marne again!” Renny howled.

Renny looked as sad as a dog whose pups had died. That meant he was very happy. Action affected him that way.

“Windows!” Doc Savage rapped. “Your machine pistols!”

The bronze man did not waste many words giving orders. He did not need to.

Some of the windows still had glass. They knocked that out. The enemy shot into the breaking windows, making removal of the glass a quick job.

Monk got into a room where there were two windows, one with glass, one without. He broke the one with glass. Bullets stormed in.

Monk let his superfirer roar at the glassless windows. The weapon sounded like a stick on a picket fence at sixty an hour.

“Yeow!” Monk squawled. “I got two of ’em!”

“Crazy as a hoot owl!” Ham told the fat taxi driver. “He always gets that way when somebody shoots at him!”

“I d-don’t blame h-him!” stuttered the hackey.

Down in the street, men appeared. They ran toward the mangled areaway. They had grenade sacks on their belts and gas-mask sacks around their necks. They wore tin hats and carried automatic rifles.

“Nine—eleven—thirteen,” Renny said, counting. “And one more so far behind that I won’t count him.”

Renny’s superfirer—all of Doc’s men carried them—let out a moan. The charging men did not go down at once. But in a moment they fell. Some took a few jumps more than others.

Doc Savage had Long Tom’s superfirer now. He had been to one side, shooting single shots, not making enough noise to take much attention.

Each of his shots was getting a man.

“Quick!” the bronze man rapped suddenly. “Demolition shells!”

The others—except the taxi driver—lunged to his side to see what was happening.

“Holy cow!” Renny rumbled.

A car was coming down the street. It had a quiet motor, or the uproar had kept them from hearing it. The machine was black.

It headed for the prone form of Pey-deh-eh-ghan.

“Gonna run over ’im!” Monk howled.

THE car did not run over the mummy man. It stopped beside him, almost on him, and in such a position that the car was between where Doc and his men stood and the mummy man. The car door opened and men got out to pick up Pey-deh-eh-ghan.

“Demolition cartridges!” Doc rapped again.

Monk nearly tore his clothing off in a search.

“Lost them!” he croaked at last.

Renny said, “Here—I’ve got—mine!” He got the small drum of them out, passed them to Doc, and the bronze man clipped them into the superfirer which he held, then leaned out of the window to take a deliberate aim at the street back of the car. The machine was backing up now. The mummy was inside.

Doc fired once. There was a roar. Bricks fell off cornices; windows which had withstood the grenade concussions broke. The street back of the car opened up a hole and a cloud of dust, fire and smoke. Concrete pavement chunks stacked as if they were broken ice.

The car had been blown backward, but not over. It was against the curb, water from the broken main scooting around it.

Monk howled, “Boy, we’ve got ’em stopped!”

He added a lot more, most of it just whooping and hollering and squawling. He stopped every once in a while to punctuate it with a moan from his superfirer.

But the car had not been disabled. It began to travel, fast, and straight ahead.

Doc Savage aimed the superfirer to put another demolition shell ahead of the car and stop it.

One lone gun banged up the street.

Doc Savage flopped back into the room and onto the floor.

The car ran away with Pey-deh-eh-ghan.

Chapter 10

THE PIRATE PHARAOH

MONK squawled, “Doc! You’re shot!” He sprang for the bronze man.

Doc Savage rolled to get away from the window.

A grenade went off outside. Obviously, Doc had seen it coming, and that was why he had ducked, or why he had rolled. Perhaps the bullet was the reason for his ducking.

The concussion of the grenade caused the shape of the wall to change. It bulged somewhat.

“Oh, oh!” groaned the cab driver. “I’m sure gonna get killed!”

Ham, sword cane tucked under one arm, began shooting from a window.

Doc ran out of the room, up more stairs, and gained the roof. The roof next door was higher by two stories. Doc got on top of it by using a silk cord with a collapsible grapple. He took this from his clothing.

There was a man creeping across the other roof, a sack of grenades in his hands. He did not see or hear Doc—until the bronze man was on the roof. Then he made a mistake. He tried to get a grenade out of his bag, but couldn’t do it before Doc whipped forward and upon him.

He was not big enough to give even an ordinarily strong man much trouble. Doc knocked him senseless and took away his grenades.

Doc had come to this roof in hopes of sighting the fleeing car which had taken Pey-deh-eh-ghan. He had no luck. If it was near enough to be seen, buildings hid it.

Using his silken cord and grapple again, the bronze man slid down to a fire escape. He discharged two mercy bullets on the way down. Both times he dropped men who were about to shoot at him.

He went to a telephone, called the police, described the Pey-deh-eh-ghan car, then went back to the war front.

There was not much war left. Monk was stamping up and down the street, offering a big, hairy target, and squawling for somebody to come out and fight. He had all the noise to himself.

“They vamosed,” Renny told Doc.

“Not all of them, though,” Long Tom put in. “I judge we laid out at least fifteen of ’em.”

The fat taxi driver ventured into the street while they were gathering unconscious enemies—the mercies had killed no one—and piling the forms in a bunch. The hackey peered about, as nervous as a rabbit that had crawled into a dog kennel by mistake.

“Much obliged,” he mumbled.

“For what?” Monk wanted to know.

“Well, I didn’t get killed,” gulped the driver.

“Stick around. It ain’t over.”

“That’s just what I’m afraid of,” said the taximan. “So long!”

He lit out running and never looked back.

DOC SAVAGE explained to the police. They helped carry all the senseless prisoners into the big Hidalgo Trading Co. warehouse, where Doc put the captives in a bullet-shaped car which traveled through an underground tube to his skyscraper headquarters. He had constructed the tube for quick service between the two places.

On the headquarters hallway they found some lines of strange characters that were half picture and half symbol.

“I am going to read this one,” bony Johnny declared. “I did not have time to translate the other one, which was on the side of that truck which stopped in the street and started the fight.”

Doc Savage said, “Both inscriptions were the same.”

“Huh!” Monk put in. “What is this, anyway?”

“It is a hieroglyphic warning,” Doc Savage said. “It is addressed to Pey-deh-eh-ghan, and tells him that we are his enemies and he should escape from us at the first opportunity.”

“So that’s why Pay Day ran for it!” Monk barked.

“Yes.”

Monk snorted doubtfully. “They must have had warnings to Pay Day written all around, so he would be sure to see at least one.”

This was true. Later, when they checked, Monk and the others found identical hieroglyphic warnings painted on the doors of their private apartments. Inquiring around, they also learned that the ambush at the warehouse was only one of many traps that had been set. They could hardly have missed barging in upon the enemy.

Big-fisted Renny rumbled, “This bozo who pulled a fast one on us sure didn’t overlook any bets. But, at least, we’ve got some prisoners now, and that means we can get some information.”

“If they don’t chew their finger nails,” Monk said grimly.

“We will take care of that,” Doc declared.

They stripped each prisoner and submerged him in a chemical bath which would render the under-the-finger-nail poison harmless.

“Now,” Doc Savage announced, “while they are regaining consciousness, we will check up on the known history of Pey-deh-eh-ghan.”

Doc spent some time in the great library. It was noticed that he did not peruse books, but rather pamphlets containing speeches and scientific records made available to archæological societies.

Finally he put the records away and made, very briefly, his small trilling. “There can be no other explanation.”

“If there’s any explanation,” Monk groaned, “I don’t know what it is.”

“Pey-deh-eh-ghan was a Pharaoh in Egypt about the time of King Solomon’s reign,” Doc Savage explained.

“A king in Egypt, eh?”

“He was known as the ‘Pirate Pharaoh,’ ” Doc continued. “He got that name from his insatiable thirst for sacking cities and gathering wealth.”

Johnny had been listening, fumbling absently with his monocle. Now he dropped the monocle.

“My memory is jogged now!” he exploded. “Pharaoh Pey-deh-eh-ghan was so greedy he insisted on taking the loot from his conquests with him, and he caused a great tomb to be built and filled with his valuables. Then he put a curse on the tomb, which was far out in the desert somewhere—the Nubian Desert, it is believed. The tomb has never been found.”

“The light,” Monk said, “is dawning.”

HAM, who liked to pick discrepancies in any story he heard—a relic of his law training—said, “This story doesn’t hang together!”

“How you figure?” Monk bristled.

“If they’ve never found Pey-deh-eh-ghan’s tomb, how come they found his mummy?”

Johnny explained that promptly.

“Pey-deh-eh-ghan attacked King Solomon and died in the campaign,” he said. “He was entombed away from home, and the body was embalmed by his foes, namely, King Solomon’s experts. That accounts for the similarity in embalming which did a lot to fool us.”

Monk took two or three stamping turns around the office, then stopped and glared dramatically at Ham.

“It’s plain!” Monk squeaked. “We were tricked into reviving Pay Day! This mysterious master mind who’s fighting us snatched Pay Day and is gonna make ’im tell where the tomb is!”

Ham snarled, “Don’t scowl at me, you ape!”

Johnny groaned, “If we only knew who we’re fighting!”

They got that information from their captives. Doc got the fellows talking very easily. The bronze man simply explained about the poison-under-the-finger-nails trick.

Doc further explained that the present prisoners had also carried the same poison, not under their nails, but in their hair. A quick analysis of the chemical nullifier bath, made by Monk, had indeed divulged this information.

The prisoners realized they had a chief who would have sacrificed their lives to keep them from talking. They drowned each other out with their angry shouting of information.

Their chief had stolen the mummy of Pey-deh-eh-ghan, killing every one who might give information. A trick had been worked to get the mummy man back so that he could be persuaded to reveal the whereabouts of the treasure tomb.

Doc had guessed as much.

General Ino, international crook, was the leader.

He had an assistant named Proudman Shaster, a lawyer.

That was all the prisoners knew, except a lot of minor details of no great value.

“General Ino,” Doc Savage said, and although his voice was low, it had a grim quality—“an almost legendary figure, so clever that he has managed to remain almost unknown. Several times I have made efforts to get on his trail, knowing that at some time or other we would tangle.”

Monk scratched his nubbin of a head. “General Ino, if you ask me, is the slickest article we’ve hit in some time.”

“Where d’you suppose he is now?” Renny pondered.

“On his way to Egypt, doubtless,” Doc said. “We’ll do some checking.”

ABOUT that time, General Ino was saying, “Ever’ting, she ees go too dam’ smooth, *oui!* We mus’ be more careful, monsieurs.”

He sounded like a Frenchman who had learned English that year.

“Seems to me it is all really wonderful,” murmured Proudman Shaster.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan said something which, if translated, would hardly have been printable. He glowered at the shiny steel handcuffs on his wrists.

The rest of General Ino’s men said nothing.

The dirigible engines made a great deal of noise. It was supposed to be a very modern airship—a dirigible, not an airplane—with silenced motors. But there was a racket, lots of it. A whopping drone.

The Atlantic Ocean was below, so far down that it looked strange and smooth.

“Doc Savage will, of course, learn that we have taken passage for Germany on this dirigible,” said General Ino, reverting to good English. “He will have the entire German police force on hand when the airship is due.”

Proudman Shaster gaped in horror. He didn’t think that was so really wonderful.

“But,” murmured General Ino, “we shall take measures.”

They took measures. They took over the dirigible at the point of a gun. They made the radio operator radio that the ship was down, burning, in the middle of the Atlantic. After that they kept the radio silent.

The airship’s legitimate passengers—there were not many, for General Ino had booked most of the seats, or cabins, for his aids—were lined up and shot, and the bodies dropped into the sea from three miles up. Some of the crew were shot for a demonstration.

All of the crew were shot once the ship had landed in the Nubian Desert, days later. Then the airship was sent into the air, without a soul aboard, and its “iron mike” or automatic pilot—a device with which the airship, like modern passenger planes, was equipped—was set to the east and south.

“*Bueno!*” exclaimed General Ino, as the great cigar craft took the air. “I hope it will fall into the Red Sea and never be seen again.”

Proudman Shaster—he looked like an explorer in his pith helmet and shorts—grumbled, “I think we should have burned it here.”

General Ino shook his head. “*Nein!* Doc Savage, dot feller will guess vot happen, an’ he come hunting. *Ja*. If he find dot burned ship here, it woot put him too near our trail.”

The dirigible droned away to the southeast, just as if its crew was aboard.

General Ino and his cavalcade took out across the desert sands. They carried full equipment for their surroundings.

A line of almost black, snaggle-toothed mountains to the west was their destination.

Chapter 11

AIR FANGS

THE great transatlantic service dirigible came down at two hundred miles an hour and stuck her nose in the sand near Jiddah, which was in Arabia, just across the Red Sea. The first hundred feet of her got mashed back into the rest, but there was no fire, thanks to some of the things man has learned about building big airships. Learned at the expense of quite a few lives.

The equivalent of the chief of police of Jiddah ran out, took one look at the airship, drew his pistol, had his men do likewise, and kept all spectators and thieves away from the wreck.

Twelve hours later, Doc Savage, his five aids, the pig Habeas, the apelike what-is-it, Chemistry, and much equipment in metal cases arrived. Their big metal plane was streaked with grimy oil, and Doc's aids, if not Doc himself, looked like men who had just flown the Atlantic, as they had.

In the dirigible control cabin, Doc found the iron mike intact. He saw the course on which it was set.

Doc sent several small, ordinary weather-observation balloons aloft and watched them with a strong telescope. He got together, by radio, what dope there was on the air currents over the Red Sea and the Nubian Desert part of Africa.

"We will make a stab at backtracking the airship," he said.

It was a good stab. Perhaps it would not have been good if Doc, using very strong binoculars, had not observed many black specks on a rocky stretch of ground.

They—or Doc—put the big plane down on sand that was so hot that it dried instantly when they spat upon it. They went over to look at what the buzzards were interested in.

It was the crew of the dirigible. The bodies had been hidden.

It took a lot to horrify Monk. But he was grim and silent on the way back to the plane, and didn't even burst out when the what-is-it, Chemistry, sprang upon his pet pig, Habeas, to forcibly hunt for fleas, something that Monk usually considered a personal insult to himself.

"From now on," he mumbled, "the word devil is spelled G-e-n-e-r-a-l I-n-o."

Doc Savage did not take the controls to lift the plane into the air, as they had expected. Instead, he got out a small radio transmitter receiver no larger than a cine camera of fair size. He took concentrated food tablets which he had developed to give quick nourishment to patients in hospitals, but which was also good ration for a man traveling hard.

Doc added to the pack a flask containing, not water, but the chemical parts of water, minus the unneeded ingredients. He added some of his gadgets and remarkable chemicals which he might use in his unusual method of fighting.

“Look here!” Renny protested. “You’re not going to leave us here while you go off trying to trail those fellows?”

“Stick close to the plane,” Doc directed. “And keep your radio in tune with my set.”

The bronze man walked away, circling at first, then apparently finding a trail which led westward. The heat waves took sight of him away from them shortly.

The waves looked eerie, like a hideous sea separating them from a line of ominous, black, toothy mountains in the west.

THE bronze man’s five aids got inside the plane and turned on the air conditioner which soon cooled them off. The outside thermometer on the control panel registered a temperature of over a hundred and thirty, part of it probably due to the radiation of the sand. But they had iced drinks and a cold meal which they did not eat very heartily.

The radio informed them that Doc had found a trail.

“But stay where you are,” the bronze man said. “Sighting the plane in the air would warn the enemy, wherever they have gone to.”

Static bothered them a bit on the radio. They watched the buzzards until Johnny, a bit of a psychologist, suggested that it wasn’t raising their spirits any.

“Blasted murderers!” Ham gritted, and began putting fresh dope on the tip of his sword cane.

“One of them is a lawyer in good standing,” Monk suggested pointedly.

Ham glared. “And you don’t seem to be the only one who hasn’t advanced much beyond the animal stage!”

Monk yelled, “That’s a danged insult, you clothes rack!”

Ham studied Monk’s homely, wrathful visage.

“If I had that puss,” he said, “I would certainly visit a good false-face maker.”

Pale Long Tom groaned, “I guess we’re in for hours of you two guys!”

They were. Five hours, to be exact. By that time, Monk was outside in the heat, whither Ham had chased him at the point of the doped sword cane. What Monk was saying about Ham’s ancestors, pig-eaters all of them, according to Monk, was interesting if not true, and so enraging to Ham that the dapper lawyer was holding a chunk of ice—secured from the plane’s galley refrigerator—to his head.

Monk stopped reciting suddenly and pointed.

“Look!” he yelled. “A lot of guys in their nightshirts on horseback!”

They were Arabs, nearly two dozen in number. They rode picturesquely, not sparing their horses, which looked like good animals from a distance.

Renny took the plane’s controls and readied the ship for a take-off. Long Tom and Johnny manned their superfirers. Ham did nothing but stand at the plane door with his sword cane and keep Monk from getting in.

Another group of Arabs appeared behind the first group. All of these rode camels instead of horses, and some led other camels bearing packs.

The Arabs on horses stopped a good three hundred yards away. One man rode out ahead. With a considerable show, he stuck his rifle stock in the sand and left the weapon there.

“He means peace, I reckon,” Monk said, still outside the plane and sounding relieved.

The Arab rode up and asked them in pretty terrible English if they would buy some nice fresh dates, very excellent dates, most pleasing to eye and palate.

Ham began, “We do not need any food of——”

“We’ll take a few!” Monk interrupted, addressing the Arab. “Have *one* of your men bring them.”

The transaction was completed. The Arabs stood around at a distance, eying the plane. Then they all strung out over a near-by sand dune.

“Dates!” Ham sneered at Monk. “What we need is a member of this expedition to take your place! One with ten cents’ worth of gumption!”

Monk pretended not to hear and got out his chemical analysis kit.

MONK’S kit contained a device, spectrascopic in principle, for analyzing that was a whiz. He worked with some of the dates and his contrivance for perhaps two minutes.

“I thought so,” he exploded.

“You never think!” Ham opined.

“These fruity titbits are poisoned,” Monk announced. “The poison is the same that friend General Ino used to kill off his men in New York to keep them from talking.”

Ham gulped, yelled, “Those Arabs are——”

“*Sh-h-h!*” hairy Monk admonished. “They’re doubtlessly waiting over on yon sand dune to see us die!”

They went into a conference about what to do.

“It’s a shame to disappoint them fellers,” Monk declared. “I figured ’em for phonies, an’ bought some of them dates just to see.”

“Suppose you continue your brilliant deductioning and tell us what to do about this?” Ham suggested.

“Play dead,” Monk said promptly. “They will then charge over the sand dune, get close; then we’ll let ’em have it!”

“Not a bad idea,” big-fisted Renny agreed. “We’re going to have to fight ’em, so we might as well give ’em a kick in the slats they ain’t expecting.”

They got out under the plane’s wings, where it was very hot, and made a fuss about sampling the dates, but actually eating only some which they took from their own stores.

The dates had been in two big baskets, and they stood about these for a while, as if talking.

Monk doubled over, grabbed his stomach, and put on a realistic show of dying. They had seen the poison’s effects in New York, so their acting was very good. In the

course of the next five minutes, they all “died.” With their supermachine pistols under them.

The hot sand began to drum with the beat of hoofs.

“The charge of the surprised brigade!” Monk chuckled, grimly. “I mean, they ain’t surprised now, but they’re gonna be!”

There was a terrific report. Sand blinded them—sand and something else that was awful on their eyes and in their lungs.

“Date basket—blew up!” Renny squawled.

“False bottom in it!” Monk croaked, dazed. “Gas—of some—kind!”

A dozen seconds later, they were all completely blinded.

SURPRISE had turned out to be a surprise, and their one hope was the plane. They might get off without cracking.

Long Tom found the plane’s door first. He couldn’t see a thing, but he could feel.

“Over here!” he yelled, and kept yelling.

The other lunged to him. They got through the plane’s door. Monk was last. Then he heard an excited squealing behind him.

“Habeas!” he howled. “Habeas! We gotta wait for Habeas!”

“Nix!” Ham barked. “Habeas is an Arabian hog anyhow, isn’t he?”

He was. Monk had got him in Arabia, long ago. But he had no ideas about leaving him. This was Africa, anyway. Monk leaned out of the door, calling.

Renny got the motors turning and fed them the gun.

He might as well have waited for Monk to get his pet hog. It made no difference. They weren’t going to escape.

An attacker rode a dumb camel in front of the plane, then dived off, so that the plane hit the camel but not the man. The ship skewered around, and a propeller dashed part of the camel through one wing. The plane ran on a short distance before it turned a somersault.

Habeas Corpus, the pig, took one look at the Arabs. He showed judgment, spun, and traveled, only somewhat slower than a rusty bullet, over the sand until he was out of sight.

The men in the plane were unconscious. The gas had done that. But it did not last long. Half an hour, and they could see, hear, and suffer.

There were Arabs all around them, and one white man—Proudman Shaster.

“This is really wonderful,” Proudman Shaster murmured. “To think that we bagged all five minnows in one net!”

Monk scowled at him, then at the buzzards circling above. He spoke with his eyes on the buzzards, but addressing Shaster. “I bet they get you, yet.”

Shaster, unworried, asked, “Where is the big fish, Doc Savage?”

“You’re wasting your time askin’ us that,” Monk growled.

“Yes, I expect I am,” Shaster agreed. “So I won’t ask. I’ll just take you along, and proceed with plans.”

Monk wet his lips uneasily. “Yeah?”

“Of course,” chuckled Shaster. “Didn’t you ever hear? They use live bait to catch the biggest game fish. It’s really wonderful how live bait works.”

The Arabs seemed to be some robber band whom General Ino and Shaster had hired. This desert was full of roving groups who had no law except the bloody impulses of their own greed. They did not burn the plane.

“The smoke might be seen by Doc Savage,” said Shaster.

They knocked the essential parts of the craft to pieces.

Just as they got under way, one Arab raised his rifle and aimed deliberately at the pig, Habeas Corpus, who stood on a sand dune at some distance. The rifle banged.

Habeas went up straight and over-backward, head-over-hoofed down the sloping sand, and was lost to sight.

They knocked Monk in the head just as he got his hairy hands on the throat of the rifleman.

Chapter 12

BLACK MOUNTAINS

THE pig, Habeas, found Doc Savage near midnight.

Desert nights are supposed to be clear. This one was cloudy, so black the bats weren't even out. Desert nights are also popularly supposed to be cool, and this one was almost as hot as the day had been. In the east, the sky was red with sheet lightning and bolt lightning, and there was a steady rumble like Niagara Falls.

Doc had stopped. He might have gone on trailing with his flashlight. It was spring-generator operated, hence no battery to exhaust. But the light might be seen. He had stopped.

The pig was breathing loudly. Pigs are not built for running a long distance, although this one did have dog legs and plane-wing ears that might help some.

Doc Savage said nothing. He did not even make his trilling. He simply gathered Habeas under an elbow and began running back the way he had come.

The glare, the roar of the lightning came closer like the charge of astral Titans. Its roar grew and grew, with a mushy quality. It was as if a lot of exploding cannons and big tin cans were smashing around in an ocean in the sky. It got overhead, and the wind hit.

It was quite a wind. It took big sand dunes apart in clouds. Sand moved in whistling strings, in volleys. The clouds seemed thick enough to walk on.

Doc kept going. His coat was tied around his face, over his eyes, ears, nose, mouth. He had Habeas's head jammed into a pocket.

When the rain hit, it was as if they had fallen into an ocean. Warm rain, mixed at first with sand.

It left as quickly as it had hit, and went thumping and mumbling and sucking across the desert. Satan in retreat, dragging his environment with him.

The plane, when Doc found it, looked as if it had been there many a year. The sand had half buried it, had blown into the open cabin doors. The water had packed it.

Doc Savage made a big circle of the vicinity before he went close. He saw nothing alarming. Then he went over the plane.

Habeas, the pig, ran in sniffing, squealing circles. He was baffled.

There was only one interesting thing. A bottle. Tied to the control wheel. A paper was inside.

SAVAGE:

YOU HAVE SMOKE BOMBS ABOARD, I SEE. SET ONE OF THEM OFF BEFORE FOUR O'CLOCK TO-MORROW AFTERNOON TO SHOW YOU ARE WILLING TO DICKER. NO BOMB, AND FIVE MEN, FRIENDS OF YOURS, WILL HAVE THEIR EYES PULLED OUT.

A signature was hardly necessary.

Not much of their equipment had been taken. It had been stacked neatly, perhaps so that it could be secured later.

Doc Savage went immediately and got one of the smoke bombs. But he also got an alarm clock, some wire, some string, and the mechanics from a hand grenade which made it explode. He used also a little powder from the grenade.

He rigged up a contraption which would set off one of the smoke bombs at three forty-five the next afternoon.

Then he set out across the desert, leaving, bomb and plane, with Habeas at his heels. Doc carried a heavy equipment pack.

THE black mountains looked as if they stuck up straight out of the sandy desert, and they did. In the bright moonlight, the sand around them was almost white, and any moving dark object easily seen.

Doc wore one of the white, sheetlike robes of the desert natives, which he had brought from the plane. Their supplies included these. Habeas, tied up in white cloth, had sense enough not to tear the covering off—after it was coated with a bitter chemical which he didn't like.

They went into a canyon that was like something a great knife had cut deeply. Warm stillness was everywhere. Sounds they had made out in the desert had carried, but in here they didn't.

Doc had located the nearest high peak from the desert. He was on top of it when the sun came up.

It had been cold before the dawn. This height was much cooler. But the rising sun seemed to throw off as much heat as light. Thirty minutes after the first spurting glare topped the horizon, Habeas was panting.

Doc Savage had a monocular that was as long, almost, as the old sea captain's spyglasses, and as powerful as some telescopes. Even his nerveless hands could hardly hold it steady enough. It had a small tripod, a mechanical swivel with microscopic screws.

He kept his eye to the monocular, and studied all of the mountains within reach. He recessed only when it was long past the hour when even the laziest man would have arose.

A single metal case comprised most of Doc's pack. It was packed tight. He took out a tiny balloon—the same kind he had used to get wind direction back at the town where the dirigible had crashed—and a spool containing two thousand yards or so of fine silk thread.

He fastened a tiny camera to the balloon. The camera had been developed for this work. It took pictures at one-minute intervals, or whatever intervals the tiny watchwork was set for. It could take over a hundred. They were very tiny.

Doc did a little doctoring on the balloon. He blacked some strips of his white silk shirt with ink, and fastened them, one on each side, and one at the back of the balloon.

When he sent the balloon up, it looked just a bit like a buzzard. One of any number of buzzards over the black, grim mountains.

The developed pictures showed one thing only. There were canyons which could not be photographed unless one was directly over them. It was something like the Grand Canyon country of the United States, only this rock was black.

Doc had the balloon and camera up again, and was using the monocular.

Out on the desert, a string of black smoke crawled upward. The clockwork had set off the smoke bomb at the plane.

Doc, with the monocular, saw a dozen white-robed men on fast horses gallop out from the mountains. They were to the west. Three more groups appeared. Others appeared from sand dunes far out on the desert. All rode madly for the plane.

It was a big trap that was not going to catch anything. Doc hauled down the camera, put the film through the tiny instant-developer tank, and viewed it under a glass with microscopic power.

There were several pictures showing a group of men in a canyon mouth near the desert. Doc got into motion, heading, for that point, but almost directly opposite.

THE bronze man had made a plain trail thus far. They could track him from the plane across the desert. They could tell they had been tricked. And they were almost certain to follow the bronze man's tracks.

Doc had figured on that. And he carefully made plain tracks.

He traveled an almost straight line, as if he had a definite destination, but his trail followed the high places, and the edges of cliffs. And finally he found that for which he searched.

It was a cliff, straight up and down for almost a thousand feet, except for a ledge about halfway down. The ledge was covered with jagged rocks.

Doc used his silken cord and grapple—he always carried it—to get down the face of the cliff. That, and his fabulous strength.

He made a dummy on the ledge. It was more than his clothing stuffed with sand and a few tough, dried bushes. In the legs, the torso, the head, he put bottles containing a fluid that was made red with chemicals. He arranged the body so that it could be seen in part from the cliff's top. Then he climbed back up.

He broke loose a bit of rock on the cliff rim, so that it would look as if he had fallen.

They would trail him here, see the form below, think it was Doc's body, and shoot into it. They would be almost certain to do that last. And the red fluid would run, leading them to think they had finished a wounded man.

There was about as much chance of them climbing down the cliff to the ledge as there was of them going to the good place when they died.

"Stay here," Doc told Habeas.

Habeas remained. That would make it more realistic, as if the pig had stood by the spot where the bronze man had died.

Habeas could take care of himself.

THE group of men which the aërial camera had showed in the canyon near the desert were not there when Doc Savage arrived. But their tracks were, and they led back into the mountains.

Doc followed the trail. Rather, he paralleled it, keeping well to the right or left, crossing the trail at times to make sure it was still where he thought. A precaution, that, in case they had left watchers. Doc left no noticeable footprints himself.

There was a watcher. A white man in a pith helmet and shorts. He sat on a ledge at the far end of a narrow, high-walled crack in the stone. He had rigged a sort of umbrella out of four stakes and some cloth that looked like a blanket.

A military machine gun was set up on a tripod mount in front of him. It must have been a machine gun the Arab allies had captured, for it was of British manufacture.

The gunner was stationed just a bit too prominently.

Doc Savage studied the surrounding stone. The stuff looked as hard as agate. There were a few cracks, and they ran in fairly straight lines. This stone seemed to crack that way.

Doc did not approach the gunner. Instead, he withdrew, changed his course, and scaled, with infinite difficulty, the side of the canyon, and got around the gunman.

There was no trail. Even Doc's skill, cultivated for years, was defeated. The men had wrapped their shoes, or gone barefoot, although the latter was unlikely, considering how hot the rocks were. And nothing much less than a pickax blow would mark the flinty stone.

General Ino's men had made a plain trail to the gunner. There had to be a reason for that. The gunner wasn't the reason. He was too prominent.

Doc went back, now showing himself, and fell to using his monocular on the route a man would logically follow in creeping upon the gunner. There was only one route.

One particular spot in that route, under an overhanging mass of stone, was interesting when seen from a distance and through the monocular.

DOC hunted, found a loose stone, then began a deliberate campaign of deceit. He made his voice ventriloquial in quality, sounding far away. Then he imitated a hyena's cackle.

The gunner looked only vaguely interested. The sound belonged to these desert mountains.

Doc brought his hyena a bit closer.

The gunner scowled, shrugged, and began to fish for a cigarette.

Doc waited. Then he put his hyena laugh among the rocks so that the gunner could not tell where it was, exactly. The man lighted his cigarette, ignoring the noise. For a moment, he had his hands up before his face.

Doc flung his rock. It hit the suspicious-looking spot which the monocular had showed.

The bronze man was not surprised when there was a roar and the whole side fell out of the canyon. The gunner, startled, turned loose his machine gun. It gobbled and bullets clattered and whizzed in the falling rock.

Doc imitated a scared hyena running away as fast as he could.

The gunner, after he had time to think, got up and cursed all hyenas at the top of his voice. He had a nice fit on. He kicked his machine gun over.

Fifteen minutes later, he had the gun folded and staggered off under its weight. He cursed the British for making such heavy machine guns.

Chapter 13

THE DEVIL OF THE DESERT

GENERAL INO said, much too calmly, "Men of our kind suffer from one disease which does not afflict others so seriously. In our case, it often proves fatal. The disease is known as mistakes."

The sweat-soaked machine gunner stopped looking mad and registered hurt unease.

"But it was a hyena!" he protested. "The cussed hound must've walked over the sand that covered the trigger of the trap we had fixed up for Doc Savage. He laughed around for a while before the explosive went off, then I heard him leave in a hell of a hurry."

"Did you *see* this hyena?" Ino asked.

The gunner thought for a moment, and decided he had better have seen the hyena.

"Sure," he lied. "I threw a rock at 'im. But who the devil would've thought he'd run toward me instead of away? He jumped toward me an' hit the trigger!"

"*Si, si,*" murmured General Ino. "I see."

The gunner didn't like the tone. He squirmed.

They stood in impressive surroundings. There were rocks around them, boulders the size of houses, of skyscrapers. Some were as long as small ocean liners. There were almost twenty armed men with General Ino, three out of four of them burnoused Arabs.

"We heard the trap go off, and were coming," advised General Ino. "We will take a look at the trap."

"I looked around good," said the gunner, lying a little. "There ain't nothing. I tell you, it was a hyena."

But they went back and looked, prying up the rocks, and scraping out sand and fragments.

"It must have been a hyena, all right," General Ino admitted at last.

The gunner wiped off sweat. He was relieved.

General Ino paced about in the sand for a time. He seemed uneasy. His lieutenant, Proudman Shaster, was not with the group.

"There is nothing to do but wait!" General Ino snapped finally. "We might as well go back and join the others."

As they went back, it was noticeable that the white men kept close together, and were unusually alert. The black wall of rock shoved up about them, and probably induced that feeling of inferiority, that speck-in-creation twinge which is one of the big kicks of the Grand Canyon to most visitors. But these men were not the kind to be made uneasy on that account.

A psychologist would have realized they were a bit afraid of the Arabs, their associates.

General Ino's men were watching the Arabs. They would probably have wasted their time had they watched their surroundings, their back trail.

It would have taken sharper eyes than they possessed to discover Doc Savage following them.

PROUDMAN SHASTER—TWO pistols in two holsters around his middle did not even make him look vicious—was waiting at the foot of an inclined stone rampway that sloped upward and passed through a stone ridge.

This rampway, nothing but a steep path, had unquestionably been made by human hands, and that a long time ago.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan was with Shaster. "Pay Day," as Monk called him, was handcuffed, wrist and ankle. He looked quietly unhappy.

Half a dozen whites were with Shaster, but no Arabs.

"This is not what I would call a really wonderful situation," he greeted General Ino.

"*Ach, himmel!*" complained the general. "Are you going to add to my troubles?"

"These Arab rascals," said Shaster, after making sure no Arabs were close enough to hear. "Hiring them to help us was a good idea, as far as it went. But this Pey-deh-eh-ghan has put a bug in their ears. I did not learn until too late that he can speak some kind of an ancient tongue that is similar to Arabic."

General Ino peered closely into Shaster's face. "You mean to tell me these Arabs have learned what we are after?"

"I—I'm afraid so."

General Ino said several things about Arabs of which Mohammed would not have approved.

Proudman Shaster added, sorrowfully, "That is not all they know, either. Their sheik has a portable radio broadcast receiver, and likes to tune in on Cairo and Jerusalem stations. He heard a news broadcast telling about us, and how we have switched Pey-deh-eh-ghan's mummy for Solomon's."

"Damn these modern Arabs!" General Ino complained.

"I'm keeping Pey-deh-eh-ghan with me so that he cannot cause more trouble," explained Shaster. "I caught him talking to William Harper Littlejohn, too."

General Ino frowned reproachfully at the mummy man.

"If you didn't know where your own tomb was, I'd mummify you again," he said, calmly. Then to Shaster, "Come on. We'll ask Littlejohn what this back-from-the-dead lad told him."

"Littlejohn won't tell."

"Then we'll shoot him," decided General Ino. "In fact, we'll probably shoot him anyway. *Oui, monsieur*. It's a good idea."

Pey-deh-eh-ghan did not follow them when they beckoned. When they went back and grabbed him, he kicked their shins, threw sand in their faces, and otherwise started putting up a fight.

But when General Ino threatened calmly to slit his throat if he didn't come willingly, Pey-deh-eh-ghan quieted. Halfway to Johnny's tent, Ino halted his group.

General Ino frowned as he surveyed the faces of some Arabs who were watching their movements. They were forming in small groups.

"I think," he said, quietly, "that we are in for some trouble."

The Arab allies had withdrawn up the canyon. Grouped tightly, they had been talking in low voices. About what, it was impossible to say. But they glanced furtively and often at General Ino, Shaster and the other whites.

Now a harsh voice cried out in Arabic.

"Kill the white men!" it yelled.

Then a grenade went off. It made a great roar, lifted a cloud of sand and smoke between General Ino and the Arabs.

"Seize Pey-deh-eh-ghan and make him tell us where the tomb is!" shrieked the Arabic voice.

A second grenade made a *whup!* noise. This one was a smoker. It spouted a mass of sepia vapor that hid General Ino and the Arabs completely from each other.

"Charge them!" screamed the Arabic voice.

General Ino whipped out an automatic pistol and let fly into the smoke pall in the general direction of his burnoused allies. Naturally, bullets came back. More smoke bombs went *whup! whup!* A demolition grenade shook rocks off near-by walls.

Black smoke wadded the canyon, and in it a fierce fight waged.

GENERAL INO never got mixed up in personal violence if he could help it; but he knew how to handle himself when he did. He emptied his gun, changed position while reloading, emptied it again. Meantime, he felt about for a sheltering rock.

Proudman Shaster screeched wrathfully, and out of his clothing hauled a machete such as jungle travelers use to hack a trail. He howled again. Then he charged straight for the Arabs. His mad pants drove spray through his teeth, and he was not panting from exertion.

His cut-off-a-head madness had seized him again.

He fell over something, went down. In the black smoke, it was impossible to see. But he knew he had fallen over a human. He struck furiously with his machete.

"Here, you fool!" barked General Ino's voice.

Then General Ino located Shaster's head and gave it a tap with the automatic. Shaster sat down, sober, realizing he had almost killed—by beheading—his boss.

"You bane too quick on trigger!" General Ino admonished. Then, when Shaster had revived enough to hear, "Where's Pey-deh-eh-ghan?"

"Hell!" said Shaster. "I thought you had hold of him!"

The Arabs were shouting, and judging from the scattered shots, running about a good deal.

“They’re acting like Indians!” Shaster mumbled, and his eyes began to look wild again, while his hands got hard on the machete’s handle.

General Ino gave Shaster a gentle shove in the direction of the Arabs and said, “Go get ’em!”

Proudman Shaster went, with that horrible look on his face, and his machete held ready for cutting off a head.

General Ino heaved a sigh. Sometimes, when Shaster had his head madness, he forgot to distinguish friend from foe.

“He’ll be the death of me yet,” the general muttered. He listened to battle sounds. “And of a lot of Arabs, too.”

But the shooting stopped suddenly.

“We have been tricked!” shouted the head of this squad of desert riders.

“You mean you’ve bit off more than you can swallow!” General Ino called cautiously.

The Arab cursed everything and everybody, including his own father for raising such a stupid son.

“None of us started that fight!” he yelled. “It was some one else!”

“Velly solly, no can believe!” snorted Ino.

“We did not throw the grenade,” declared the Arab. “We have no grenades!”

General Ino rose from behind his rock like a bird.

“We’ve been tricked!” he squawled.

THERE was a wind up the canyon, but it took several minutes to blow the smoke cloud away. In the meantime, General Ino and the others could do nothing but dash around and emit swear words.

The dispersing sepia showed two Arabs lying headless on the sand.

General Ino eased over alongside Proudman Shaster, “Any of these allies of ours—question mark—know about that cleaver you carry under your coat?”

“No,” said Shaster. His mania had subsided.

“Better not tell ’em,” advised the general.

“You think——”

Whatever he thought, the general changed his mind when he counted the burnoosed Arabs and discovered three were missing. The bodies were not behind any near-by rocks.

“Deceivers!” he accused.

It became obvious that Pey-deh-eh-ghan had also vanished.

“Thieves!” shrieked General Ino.

“Three of you stole Pey-deh-eh-ghan!”

It was a rare occasion when General Ino, the debonair master mind who liked to play with simple phrases of foreign languages, shrieked.

It looked for a moment as if the fight was ready to break out again. But the burnoosed brown villains kept shaking their heads and swearing by the beard, even the whole head, of Allah that there had been no plot of their knowledge.

Then they all pitched in and hunted Pey-deh-eh-ghan and the three missing Bedouins. They found tracks. Looking these over, they decided the three children of the desert had made off with the mummy man. They tried to follow the tracks. They managed all of a hundred yards, before they sat down on the sand, baffled, and tried to outmatch profanity.

General Ino, head in hands, murmured, "Never in my life was I through a fight in which I really knew less about what happened."

PROUDMAN SHASTER had been standing to one side, wearing the attitude of a man in deep thought. The general had presumed Shaster was thinking about what would happen to him if the Arabs learned he was the man who had cut off the heads of their two fellows. The pair had been the only casualties in the fight. The fact that the fight had all been a mistake might not make the Bedouins see it right.

But Shaster now came over.

"A horrible suspicion has occurred to me!" he whispered in a horrified voice. "Could that all have been the work of Doc Savage!"

General Ino nearly fell over flat on the sand. He gurgled, "You think——"

"Only a guess. Those smoke bombs. The grenades. These Arabs seem genuinely puzzled."

General Ino was a man too startled to speak.

Came a rattling of hoofbeats down the canyon, then many voices raised in song. One chorus was sung in English, and the next by the Arabs.

"Bronzey marched to Arabia,

Oh, aye, oh!

Bronzey marched to Arabia,

Poor Bronzey!"

The Arabs filled in with about the same thing in their own language. Then the whites:

"Arabia all a-hell,

Oh, aye, oh!

Off a rock he fell,

Poor Bronzey!"

General Ino did everything but have a fit in front of them.

"This is a fine time to make up doggerel!" he shrieked.

Then they told him Doc Savage was dead. They had seen the bronze man's body where it had fallen down the cliff. They had shot many bullets into it, and red blood had run.

General Ino looked much more cheerful. Proudman Shaster said it was really wonderful.

“Now we can catch your three friends and Pey-deh-eh-ghan,” General Ino told the Bedouins.

They set out to do that. But first the Arabs got off their horses, got down with their foreheads on the sand, and asked Allah to be with them, at least this once. General Ino decided they were really in earnest about it.

Chapter 14

CROOKED TWO

THE three missing Arabs lay, side by side, in the shade under a rock shelf. Not one of the three could move his legs or his left arm. Each could move his right arm almost as well as usual. None of them could move their throat muscles, nor would their vocal cords function, so they could not make a sound.

Doc Savage carefully put away the tiny hypo needle which he had used to inject the local anæsthetic which had paralyzed the certain parts of the prisoners. He had used the local in concentrated form, and it would be a day at least before the prisoners could do any moving around or yelling.

It would have been simpler to have made them entirely unconscious and left them hidden here, for this spot was one that the closest search was not likely to find. But there were the jackals and other roving desert beasts which would eat a helpless man.

Doc had left each prisoner his knife. They could defend themselves with the blades.

The three Bedouins stared at the bronze giant, goggle-eyed. They had been amazed since the bronze giant had seized them and whisked them away, along with Pey-deh-eh-ghan, during the fight which, they realized with astonishment, Doc had started.

At times, this amazing man who looked so like solid metal had carried all three of them and the mummy man simultaneously, and that without apparent great effort, and at a pace that not many unburdened men could match.

DOC SAVAGE spoke in the ancient tongue of Pey-deh-eh-ghan.

“We had best take ourselves from this spot,” he said.

He did not manage the dead language too well, but it was far better than anything Pey-deh-eh-ghan had been hearing.

Pay Day, as Monk had dubbed him, showed even yellow teeth in a tight smile. He was not an unhandsome rascal.

“Tell me,” he requested abruptly. “Are you a mortal?”

Doc had to puzzle over the words briefly before he got them.

“I am,” he admitted.

Pay Day said something too rapidly to be understood, but it was evidently something to the effect that he had seen some miracles which had led him to doubt the bronze giant’s earthly qualities.

“Tell me,” Pay Day requested more slowly. “Why have you seized me?”

“You know the location of a treasure,” Doc said.

Pay Day had been the prize pirate Pharaoh of his day. This was something he understood.

“It is my treasure,” he reminded.

“But you are my captive,” Doc countered. “You cannot escape, and you might have some unpleasant things done to you.”

Pay Day ran his eyes over some of Doc’s remarkable muscles.

“It may be,” he admitted, reluctantly. “It is also true that I did not trust those other men from whom you took me.”

Doc said, “Children do not trust strangers. And it is only fools who grow up.”

Pay Day smiled again, a bit more freely. “You wish to become my partner?”

“Since when have bee hunters taken to sharing the honey with the bees?” Doc countered.

Pay Day understood this kind of talk.

“A wolf with two eyes may watch another wolf, but not forty wolves,” he said.

“Exactly. And two men can watch each other.”

Pay Day had something else on his mind. “Those men who had me prisoner feared you greatly. They said you were a very great devil.”

“A matter of opinion,” Doc suggested.

“We could share halves,” offered Pay Day. “There is enough for many, more for two.”

Doc shrugged, said, “Let us go.”

Pay Day grinned. Evidently he had taken General Ino’s statement that Doc was a very great devil literally, and was willing to consider a great devil as a partner.

DOC SAVAGE and Pay Day moved cautiously, that they might not be seen.

Pay Day said, “They have five of your men who are going to lose their heads.”

Doc countered, “Does a fly help other flies which have gotten into the web of the spider?”

Pay Day approved of that. He cackled once, a queer sound of mirth, which would have moved a listener to reflect that laughs must have changed a lot in the last few thousand years.

“They tortured me,” Pay Day said after a bit. “It is not a wise man who permits his right hand to be cut off when the golden shekel is in his left. I gave them a general idea of where the tomb lies.”

Doc Savage stopped. He let Pay Day see a critical and somewhat contemptuous frown on his features.

“Jackals always howl loudly in a trap!” he snapped.

Pay Day evidently felt he had to resent that. He did it by glaring. They imitated two hostile dogs for a while.

“But it is a wise jackal who howls as if he were dying, then bites when he has the chance,” the bronze man conceded finally.

That satisfied Pay Day’s dignity, it appeared. “Wisdom can recognize wisdom.”

“These men must be delayed,” Doc said.

“They are many.”

Doc nodded, then said, meaningly, “But many a man has drunk bad water and thought it tasted good.”

Pay Day quit beating around the bush. “Poison?”

“The friend of the worms which feed on the bodies of men,” Doc said.

“You have poison?”

“He is a fool who does not travel prepared.”

Pay Day gobbled out his usual laugh.

“I will show you where our enemies are encamped,” he said.

That was what Doc had been angling for. He wanted to rescue his five aids, if possible. Had he come out with that, Pay Day would probably have mentioned “too many cooks spoiling a soup,” or the equivalent of his day, and refused. But guile and a little talk had led him on.

Doc had not exactly lied.

They worked rapidly through the mountains.

MONK lay on his back and complained, “This is what I call being a great help to Doc!”

He was tied. So were the other four. Most securely.

Ham snarled, “You hairy gossoon! It was you who bought that basket of dates!”

“Don’t mention dates to me!” Monk yelled.

“Dates!” Ham said. “Dates! Dates! Dates! Dates——”

A sun helmet and a face came into the tent. It was the kind of a face that would have frightened its owner’s mother to death.

“Bullets!” snarled the face. “Bullets! Bullets! A load of ’em if you don’t quit talking all the time!”

“The magpies raised ’em,” big-fisted Renny offered, sourly.

“Bullets for you, too!” said the face, and withdrew.

“Who’s that guy?” Monk wanted to know—in a whisper.

“A renegade white was running with the Arabs,” Long Tom advised. “I heard enough to know it was he who did the dickering that got the Arabs lined up with General Ino.”

“Name’s Sandy,” gaunt Johnny supplied.

Because they rather suspected the man “Sandy” meant what he had said about the bullets, they all fell silent. It was very hot. The tent seemed like white flame over them. Their captors had neglected to put a fly over the tent, which would have helped with the heat.

Hours passed. Their eyes filled with salty perspiration, and when they turned over, the hot sand stifled them. Too, certain small, crawling things had come out of the sand,

taken sample bites, then gone back to bring millions of their brothers.

“For two cents,” Monk groaned, “I’d start yelling and let that guy Sandy shoot me!”

“They robbed me,” Ham snapped, “or I’d pay your bill!”

Finally, there came a great deal of noise of horses and men and camels arriving. There was some shouting in Arabic.

“General Ino and all the rest of them are back,” Johnny decided. “Now, maybe we’ll get some relief.”

Johnny had not used a long word for hours. And it was not exactly relief they were going to be offered.

General Ino whipped the tent flap open.

“Take them out,” he directed. “Strip them. Remove all their clothing.”

“Hey!” Monk yelled. “What’s the idea of that?”

“So you can run faster,” General Ino told him.

“In that case, you’d better be shucking your duds!” Monk glowered.

General Ino laughed. “Braggadocio is the resort of cowards, not of brave men.”

Ham told Monk, “I always told you!”

Robed Bedouins entered the tent, and disrobed the captives simply and effectively by ripping off the garments with their knives. They were not too careful and inflicted small cuts.

Outside, swarthy men on camels and horses were lined up. Rifles were slung over backs and pistols were holstered, but each man held a knife or sword, whatever cutting weapon he carried.

BIG-FISTED RENNY peered about and was not encouraged by the expressions he saw.

“Holy cow!” he boomed. “Just what’s the idea?”

“You are going to be turned loose,” said General Ino.

“Turned loose?”

“And given a chance to outrun the horses,” murmured the general. “Haven’t you ever heard the old game of ‘hound and hare,’ the good Arabian desert warrior’s version?”

Renny’s long face became set. “You mean they’re going to ride us down and use those knives and swords?”

“A most accurate guess.”

Renny yelled, “Nothing doing!”

“Suit yourself. You’ll probably change your mind after the first sword slash and run. They usually do, my sheet-clad friends here tell me.”

The prisoners were carried a short distance from the camp. They were still tied wrist and ankle, but now knives severed their wrists. Their ankles were left tied while the horses and camels were lined up. Apparently this had to be done just so.

Long Tom, his face perceptibly paler than usual, muttered, "These fellows can't be human!"

"They've got the shape only," Monk agreed, dryly.

Ham suggested, "Which is more than you can say."

It was almost grisly, this wisecracking between the two, the exchanging of insults. But it had become a habit, and those who knew them often swore they would rise out of their coffins, just before they were buried, to have a final word about how little each thought of the other.

An Arab came running with Ham's pet, Chemistry.

"The animal is to be given his chance with you," advised General Ino. "He has bitten every one who came near him."

Ham grated, "The world has something to be proud of in you lads!"

Everything seemed to be about ready.

General Ino drew his pistol and explained, "To make everything right, I'll fire a starting gun!"

He raised his gun.

On a rocky peak two hundred yards away, a man screamed. He was a tall man with a swarthy face, and even at that distance, he was so distinctive that he could not be mistaken.

It was Pey-deh-eh-ghan!

GENERAL INO'S gun did not explode on that occasion. But the general's lungs did.

"Get him!" he howled. "Quick!"

In his excitement, he used English, which not many of the Bedouins understood. They hardly needed to understand, for they were already riding madly for the exotic mummy man on the rocky spire.

The charge seemed to scare Pey-deh-eh-ghan. He whirled and vanished.

"Quick!" roared General Ino. "You can trail him!"

All the horses and all the camels were in the pursuit. The men who were afoot charged also.

"Here!" General Ino called some in Arabic. "Help me!"

They did, and tied the prisoners again. Then everybody rushed off after the mummy man. Within three minutes, not a man was left around the tents. Pey-deh-eh-ghan was the prize, the key to the treasure vaults of a looting Pharaoh. They all wanted him.

Doc Savage appeared in the camp. He seemed to rise from the sand. Obviously, he had crept close ahead of time. And he had his knife ready for the ropes binding the prisoners.

"Run!" he directed, cutting the cord that bound the prisoners.

"But our clothes!" Monk grated. "And them scouts may have left some extra guns
_____"

"Run!" Doc said.

They ran. Heads down, sand so hot on their feet that they had to grimace all the time. But they got out of the camp and into the black rock canyons and spires without a shot or a shout to show they had been observed.

“From now on, I believe in miracles!” big-fisted Renny rumbled, softly.

“It’ll be a miracle if this sand don’t cook my feet!” Ham complained.

“You can’t expect to be manly goin’ round cased up in them clothes like you wear,” Monk assured him.

But they did not talk much, for this was literally a time when they might easily talk themselves to death. Doc Savage seemed to have picked out the course for their flight. It soon led onto solid rock, where they would leave no footprints.

The bronze man tore off parts of his clothing and gave the fragments to them, to use in wiping off the sweat so the leakage would not leave betraying wet blotches on the sand.

Every one but Doc was startled when Pey-deh-eh-ghan appeared unexpectedly before them.

“GOOD old Pay Day!” Monk chortled. “You sure saved our skins!”

Pay Day was not wearing the expression of a man who had done a good deed. He looked mad. He cackled at Doc Savage, waving his arms.

Doc rattled back. Pay Day broke in. They barked at each other.

“I’ll be superamalgamated!” gasped Johnny, who was archæologist and linguist enough to understand much of the ancient tongue. “Pey-deh-eh-ghan is enraged because Doc rescued us!”

“Huh?” Monk blinked.

“Pey-deh-eh-ghan says Doc gave him to understand that the men were to be decoyed out of the camp so Doc could poison their drinking water,” elaborated Johnny. “But Doc rescued us. Pay Day—I mean Pey-deh-eh-ghan—says Doc double-crossed him!”

Monk closed one eye and looked balefully at Pay Day with the other orb. “You mean this something-out-of-a-sarcophagus wants us dead?”

“A meticulous avouchment,” said Johnny, who was relieved enough to slide back toward big words.

“I’m gonna kick his slats in!” Monk declared.

Monk delayed his rib damaging to watch Doc and Pay Day argue heatedly. The word exchange was furious.

“First time I ever saw Doc bandy a lot of words with anybody,” Long Tom grunted.

“This Pey-deh-eh-ghan is some thousands of years old,” Johnny reminded with dignity. “He should be treated with consideration.”

Monk worked the toes of his kicking foot. “I’ve got the consideration treatment right down here.”

But the argument ended with a shrug of resignation from Pay Day.

Doc Savage said, "He finally said everything was all right, providing you fellows did not get any of his share of the tomb's contents. But he will bear watching from now on. As a matter of fact, he already bore watching. He is as much a rascal, perhaps, as General Ino and the others."

They got under way, it being desirable to put as much ground between their enemies and themselves as possible.

As they plodded, Renny asked Doc Savage, "How did Pay Day get away from the Arabs and Ino so slick?"

"We fixed that up in advance," Doc explained. "Pay Day made a plain trail of a man running through the sand before he ever showed himself. Then, after General Ino's crowd saw him, he simply ducked away, walked over stone, and joined us. General Ino and the others saw the false trail, of course, and presumed it was a fresh one."

Renny reminded, "They're bound to discover their mistake."

"It will soon be dark," Doc pointed out.

Chapter 15

TOMB TRAP

It got more than dark. It got as black as it had the night before, and there were the same clouds, the same gobbling of thunder and snapping of lightning bolts.

“It rarely rains two nights in a row in this region,” confided gaunt Johnny, who as a geologist knew a bit about the world’s surface. “This, however, is the rainy season.”

“So that’s it!” Monk snorted. “The rainy season! Say, last night, we were standing on a hill, right on the top, and the water got neck deep before it could run off!”

Pey-deh-eh-ghan was having a bit of difficulty with his direction. He knew nothing about a compass. They gave up trying to explain it to him. Neither did the aerial photographs which Doc had taken mean anything to him.

Johnny went over the photographs with great interest. He seemed disappointed. He began:

“From my prolegomenon it is indubitable that there is no manifestation of any photographic——”

“Listen!” groaned Monk. “There’s one guy here I can’t understand—Pay Day. Why not let ’im have the field to himself?”

Johnny looked pained, said, “What I started to say was that I can see no sign of any tomb in these pictures.”

That this whole bloody affair might have been over nothing was not a cheerful thought. None of them commented.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan finally got disgusted over his own inability to tell where he wanted to go. He put on a demonstration, throwing his hat down, leaping upon it and generally acting up.

“An angry child breaks his toys,” Doc suggested, dryly, in the mummy man’s tongue.

“And a lake which has no outlet soon becomes stagnant,” countered the one-time Pharaoh.

In his day he must have been something of a repartee artist.

Five minutes later, Pey-deh-eh-ghan peered at a tall, oddly shaped rock ridge, pointed, and made pleased clucking noises.

“Sounds like he’d laid an egg,” Monk said. “What’s eatin’ him?”

“He says that is the Ridge of the Galloping Lions,” Doc translated. “A landmark he recognizes.”

Monk squinted at the contours of the ridge. “Yeah, it has got a distinctive shape. But as for galloping lions, it could be almost anything running, walking or——”

“Riding a bicycle,” said Ham. “You talk too much.”

Pey-deh-eh-ghan headed for the ridge and they had to trot to keep up. The mummy man found a narrow canyon and trotted into it. Light was immediately shut off by half, making fast walking dangerous.

“Ouch!” Renny complained, falling over a rock.

“We will chance a flashlight beam now and then,” Doc decided.

Brief dribbles of light showed the sides of the canyon like corridor walls. It was not a black color, but reddish. And it was perforated everywhere with perfectly square holes about large enough for a man to walk through.

Big-fisted Renny stopped.

“Holy cow!” he rumbled. “For a minute, I thought we were in a street, and them holes were windows in the walls of buildings!”

Doc went over and splashed light into an opening. They all saw a room in the solid rock, about the size of a railway box car. Along the walls were rock shelves about seven feet long.

Three other stone rooms which they looked into were exactly the same.

Bony Johnny peered upward and said, “The canyon walls overhang so as to keep off the rain and sun. That explains why these things are so well preserved, because this rock is not very hard.”

“If you can keep on using little words, you might tell me what we’ve been lookin’ at,” Monk told him.

“Barracks,” Johnny replied. “No doubt excavated for the slaves who built the tomb.”

MONK scratched the bristles atop his head and said, “If they went to that trouble, buildin’ this tomb must have taken some time. Maybe a year.”

Johnny tried his ancient Egyptian on Pey-deh-eh-ghan. He got an answer.

“It took slaves, one and one third *anghs* in number, about nine years to construct the tomb,” Johnny explained, translating.

“What’s an *angh*?”

“About ten thousand.”

“Whew! Thirteen thousand slaves nine years!”

Pey-deh-eh-ghan was anxious to go on, and had walked off from them. They ran ahead and caught him.

From time to time, as he walked along, the mummy man looked at them. He seemed to have something on his mind. But he kept it to himself.

“Ten—I mean thirteen—thousand slaves for nine years,” Monk ruminated as he waddled along in the rear. “Listen, does anybody want to bet me Pay Day’s treasury, or whatever he called his private loot pile, is empty?”

“I wish,” Johnny said, caustically, “that you would stop calling this man Pay Day. He was a Pharaoh, a great ruler in his day, a man worthy of respect. Call him by his name, Pey-deh-eh-ghan.”

“All right,” Monk said. “Want to bet?”

“Why? What makes you think the wealth is gone?”

“With thirteen thousand slaves, and there must’ve been some guards, knowing where this place was,” Monk said. “I bet somebody came back and cleaned it out.”

Johnny thought that over and began to look worried. Johnny rarely got excited over money or treasure, being like most genuine scholars. But this was more than a treasure. It might be one of the archæological finds of the century.

“I think I shall ask Pey-deh-eh-ghan about that,” he said, and did.

He came back looking as if he had just found a tarantula in his vest pocket.

He walked along without offering a word of explanation about what he had learned.

“Well?” Monk prompted. “Cat got your tongue?”

“Pey-deh-eh-ghan said all of the slaves were executed when their work was done, so that the location would remain a secret,” Johnny said, reluctantly.

“Jehoshaphat!” exclaimed Monk. “We’re hobnobbing with one of the champion murderers of history!”

Pey-deh-eh-ghan stopped abruptly.

“He has reached the mouth of the tomb,” Doc called.

THE mummy man had stopped beside a block of stone nearly fifty feet wide and about the same in height, or so it looked when they threw their flashlight beams upward. Monk walked around the block.

“It’s as square as Ham’s head,” he said, sarcastically.

He poked the stone thoughtfully with his finger nails. Then he felt around with his feet, found a small rock and tapped the stone cube. The rock was so hard it rang almost like steel.

“Sounds like Monk’s brain overworking itself,” Ham said, biting.

“What kind of rock is this?” Monk asked, paying no attention to the dapper lawyer.

Johnny said, “A kind used in a number of ancient tombs. It was brought from great distances. Some archæologists believe the particular rock had a religious significance, while others claim it was merely used because of its hardness.”

Probably searching for some sign of a door, Doc passed the flashlight beam along the stone cube. The light passed over Monk, who, like the others, did not have a stitch of clothes.

Ham burst out laughing. “You’re sure a vision, Monk!”

Before Monk thought up a reply, Pey-deh-eh-ghan spoke. The mummy man sounded determined. Doc listened intently.

“He says the tomb has not been touched,” Doc Savage translated for the others. “And he wants to know just where we stand on the dividing.”

“Why, everything will be sold to museums, of course!” Johnny said. “Proceeds of sale to the museums will go to charity, just as we usually do.”

Doc said quietly, “It will hardly do to tell him that.”

“Let me bust ’im one,” Monk suggested. “I’ll knock the argument out of ’im!”

Pey-deh-eh-ghan spoke again. His tone told the listeners that he had a proposition.

“He says,” Doc translated, “that half is his and half mine, and if the rest of you get any split, it will be out of my share.”

“Humor him,” Ham suggested. “After we get our hands on the stuff, we can let him keep as little as we want.”

“Typical lawyer honesty in that suggestion!” Monk jeered.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan solved the dilemma by giving up. He waved his arms, shrugged, turned and shoved against the side of the big stone block.

“A secret door!” Monk exploded.

THEY crowded around the mummy man. When he signaled that they should help him shove, they did so. Nothing, as far as they could see, happened. There was no secret door.

But Pey-deh-eh-ghan seemed satisfied.

He walked away from the block purposefully.

“I don’t savvy this,” Monk complained.

The mummy man covered fully a hundred yards, then climbed a sloping path and entered one of the stone barracks rooms. He began stamping upon the floor of this.

A big slab of stone tilted up a few inches.

They grasped the panel of rock, finished lifting it, and revealed a shaftway just about as steep as a man could walk down without sliding.

Doc could use his flashlight in here without danger of being seen. Pey-deh-eh-ghan grinned in the glow and said something.

“He says the big block is just a blind, although shoving on a certain part of it very hard works a long series of levers that unlock this slab,” Johnny explained.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan walked into the aperture. Doc and the others followed, stringing out in single file. The passage had a width of four feet, twice that height. It sloped enough to keep them from wanting to walk fast.

The mummy man stopped and gave a rock wedge a shove. This caused a rumble, and the rock slab behind them closed.

“I was wonderin’ about that,” Monk said. “If General Ino came and found that open, he could walk right in.”

The tunnel sloped downward interminably at the same angle. It had no branches, and there was a monotonous sameness about the walls. When it finally turned sharply, they were all relieved.

The first of the carvings appeared in the tunnel. It was cut into the wall, was no more than a foot high, and depicted a boy and an animal. The animal resembled a sheep more than anything else.

The next carving was bigger. The boy looked older, and there were more sheep.

The art work was excellent for its period.

In the next, the boy was a young man and he had donkeys and sheep.

“Let me have the flashlight!” bony Johnny exclaimed, eagerly. “I would like to study those a moment. They are remarkable samples.”

Doc gave him the flashlight. It was extremely dark in the passage.

The carvings grew in size, and had the proportions of life. The young man in them had put on arms. In the next one, he had a soldier or two behind him. The numbers of the soldiers increased and became a legion.

The boy, now a man, did not have sheep any more. He had cities, pyramids, tombs, ships, soldiers and women.

JOHNNY asked Pey-deh-eh-ghan something, got an answer, and translated it.

“These carvings depict the rise of Pey-deh-eh-ghan from a herdsman’s son,” he explained.

The sculptored likeness of Pey-deh-eh-ghan got more huge. His great, muscled arms encircled the passage completely. Then he grew so huge—in stone—that there was room for nothing but his head.

Finally, the passage ran up against the face alone, and went through the huge mouth. It was an effective depiction of a fellow who had ideas about gobbling the world.

“Human nature ain’t changed much,” Monk muttered.

They had to bend over to get through the mouth.

Johnny, with the flashlight, was treading Pey-deh-eh-ghan’s heels, as excited as a brood hen in a hawk raid. The others followed and were in almost complete darkness.

There were hundreds of statutes of men and women kneeling and facing a door at the other end of the great room. The figures were life size, well done, and made a creepy spectacle.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan said something.

“He says they are the nobles of his empire praying for him in the beyond,” Johnny translated. “They are praying that, when he becomes King of Heaven, he will not be too rough on the gods whom he took the job away from.”

Monk snorted, “Wasn’t he an optimist, though!”

Pey-deh-eh-ghan walked across the room. Johnny kept at his heels, lighting the way with the flashlight.

The mummy man was almost in the door when he whirled suddenly and pointed at the side of the room. Johnny looked in that direction. Pey-deh-eh-ghan kicked him in the stomach.

Chapter 16

THE SLY MUMMY MAN

PEY-DEH-EH-GHAN leaped backward through the door. Instantly, when his weight hit, sliding rock rasped and thumped. The mummy man cackled his shrill laughter. It had a grisly quality.

He felt carefully and assured himself that the door was closed by a huge panel of stone.

The mummy man knew his surroundings. He had no trouble without light. He worked to the left, crowded into a narrow shaft that had footholds cut into the rock. He climbed.

A niche at the top held a number of weapons. He seized these, and tested them. Time had made the spears useless. The heads came off the shafts when he tried them. But a huge sword, all of bronze, satisfied him.

He carried it and crept along a passage until he found a rock in the floor which was fitted with handholds and held down by clever stone wedges. He loosened the wedges, grasped the handholds, and lifted the stone.

He called to Doc Savage in his native tongue.

“I tried to knock your follower away from the trap-door before he accidentally tripped it,” the mummy man lied. “If you will come under this hole, it may be that I can lower my arm and you can jump and grab it.”

Then Pey-deh-eh-ghan got his bronze sword ready for the man of bronze.

Then Doc’s voice—it was low and held a ventriloquial quality so that it was impossible to tell where the bronze man was,—spoke.

“Keep away from the hole,” Doc said. “It is probably another trick.”

Monk shouted, “Doc! The way we came in is closed!”

Doc did not answer.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan remained with the sword poised until his optimism gave out. Then he replaced the stone slab, made sure the wedges were fast, and crawled on, and examined the other door.

The centuries had not interfered with the efficiency of that end of the trap. It could be opened from this side, but not from within, and it was as thick as Pey-deh-eh-ghan was tall.

The mummy man sat down to rest and to think. He was not the man he had once been, and the night had been brisk.

Finally, he arose and left the underground tunnels.

It was raining outside. Thunder and lightning made the black mountains as noisy as a battlefield.

Considering the amount of water that was falling, remarkably little was running along the floor of the canyon. The mummy man waded in, and it came barely to his ankles.

He chuckled to himself, and once he glanced upward, at the mountain over the tomb tunnels, in a curious way. He went on. The rain would wipe out tracks that might show that the mummy man had brought Doc Savage and his aids here.

The one-time Pharaoh headed for General Ino's camp.

PROUDMAN SHASTER, the barrister, had been with General Ino a long time, and he had learned that when the general was calm when he should reasonably be tearing his hair, it was a good time for keeping an eye open. The general seemed to work backward. He was maddest when he looked the calmest, and he was calm now.

The Arabs did not know their new chief. They came in sheepishly, reported no trace of Doc Savage's men or Pey-deh-eh-ghan, and went off smiling when the general did not explode.

General Ino looked at Proudman Shaster and said, "Really, I am so mad I could poison everybody here, including myself!"

Shaster knotted his skinny hands together and looked miserable. He did not look as if anything would ever be "really wonderful again."

The storm gobbled and whooped in the distance. Every one was soaked, and it was chilly.

General Ino sat back and hummed. He might have been happy. He hummed a verse about a happy maiden in the tulips, and repeated it in half a dozen languages. Finally, he hummed it in the ancient Egyptian which Pey-deh-eh-ghan spoke.

General Ino had gone to trouble to learn the language, and, although he had not mastered it, he had been able to make the mummy man understand, and to comprehend what the former Pharaoh said. The general had a mind which could concentrate and learn almost anything in a short time.

When Pey-deh-eh-ghan walked out of the desert night, a burnoosed member of the Arabian allies—it was the white man named Sandy—yelled and nearly shot the mummy man.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan gave them all a big, happy smile, then did some lying. He told them that it was Doc Savage in a disguise who had stood on the hill and yelled, not himself. He said that he had been carried off unwillingly by Doc Savage.

General Ino showed that he was shocked to learn Doc Savage was alive.

The mummy man finished by saying he had escaped and come back to them, and that if they would protect him from Doc Savage, he would show them the tomb.

Everybody then set off for the tomb in great good humor.

UPON reaching the canyon of the barracks caves, Pey-deh-eh-ghan walked to the big block of stone, as he had done with Doc Savage. It was almost dawn. The mummy

man pressed against the stone key, after which they went to the barracks chamber, and all filed into the sloping stone passage.

They did not have any flashlights, and it was very dark.

“Give me some of the little sticks which when rubbed become hot and burn,” requested Pey-deh-eh-ghan.

General Ino willingly passed over a small box of matches. The mummy man tried them out.

“Come,” he said in his tongue.

He took them to the room of the kneeling stone statues. He was well ahead, and halfway across the room, he stopped the others.

“There is a trap here for thieves,” he said. “I shall go ahead and stop it from operating. You others remain here for a moment.”

He was almost at the other end of the room when General Ino decided, “I’ll go with you!”

General Ino was too late. Pey-deh-eh-ghan gave a leap, reached a narrow door the others had not seen, lunged through it, jerked out stone wedges, and a rock slab closed the opening noisily.

Then the mummy man raced down a passage and got the exit—the stone mouth—shut also.

A few minutes later, he was at a small opening which gave into the room where the prisoners were. General Ino and the rest were doing so much shouting that the mummy man had to squawl several times before they stopped and listened to him.

Then somebody shot at the spot from which Pey-deh-eh-ghan’s voice came. The bullet missed. The mummy man showed no concern; but that was ignorance, not bravery. He did not yet understand what a gun was or how a bullet could kill.

“Listen to me,” he requested.

“We are listening,” General Ino told him, having much trouble with the ancient words.

“It is a foolish fox who thinks he alone is sly,” said Pey-deh-eh-ghan.

General Ino snarled, “Are you goin’ to gloat or say something?”

“Say something,” the pirate Pharaoh said, and proceeded to do so.

He told them that Doc Savage and his aids were imprisoned in the next room, and that he was going to operate a device that would open the door between the rooms.

They could fight it out.

GENERAL INO yelled frantic orders. His men still had their weapons. Guns were cocked in the darkness.

When they heard the grinding of the stone slab opening, they all charged forward. Only four got through the narrow hole at once. General Ino and Shaster were prudently not among the four.

The four fired a volley of shots and nearly deafened themselves. There was no answer, no sound to show that they had hit any one, or that any one was going to attack them. They began prowling in search of the enemy, doing it as quietly as possible.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan heard the silence and knew something was wrong. He scuttled to the hole in the ceiling of the room in which he had trapped Doc Savage's party. It was too dark to see much, and his ears told him disgustingly little.

He got out his matches, tore off a sleeve of his burnoose, and set it afire. When it blazed, he dropped it through the hole, then glanced down cautiously.

Doc Savage and his aids were not in the trap.

Directly behind Pey-deh-eh-ghan, Monk's small boylike voice said, gleefully, "Brothers, have I been waiting for this moment!"

Then Monk got hold of the mummy man's throat.

PEY-DEH-EH-GHAN had lived in an age when a fight was a fight and they did not stand off and shoot bullets at each other. He reached up, got Monk's by-no-means-small ears and did his best to pull them off.

Monk squawled and hit the mummy man over a kidney. Pey-deh-eh-ghan bit off a mouthful of Monk's left arm. They fell to hitting each other so fast that they both lost count.

Ham, Johnny and Renny grabbed Monk and hauled him off while Doc Savage held the mummy man.

Ham yelled angrily, "Monk was only to grab him!"

Monk snarled, "I hadda defend myself!"

Pey-deh-eh-ghan tried numerous rough-and-tumble tricks, trying to escape from Doc, and had no luck. He gave up. He panted noisily in the darkness, until he had regained his breath.

General Ino's crowd had heard the mêlée and the words. They howled like wolves and shot through the ceiling hole. General Ino swore in several languages.

"That's sure music," big-fisted Renny rumbled, listening to the exasperated profanity.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan growled curiously, "You must indeed be men of magic that you can pass through stone walls."

Johnny understood that, and asked the others, "Shall we tell him that Doc was suspicious when we came in here, and after he gave me the flashlight, he dropped way back, so that he was not even in the room when we were trapped?"

Long Tom snapped, "Sure, tell him! It'll puncture some of his conceit! Tell him how Doc used ventriloquism to make him think he was in the room, when as a matter of fact, Doc was right beside Pay Day. Tell him Doc got us out, and that we all were right on his trail and watching him when he went to get General Ino's mob and trapped them, too."

"My suggestion is that if he thinks we are magicians, let him go on thinking it," Doc put in quietly.

They stood there, not sure what they would do next.

Monk, examining his bitten arm, grumbled, "I hope that ex-mummy ain't poison!"

"He fanged you?" Ham asked, anxiously.

Monk said, "I guess I'll live."

"I was worried about Pay Day!" Ham said.

General Ino and his men stopped swearing and shooting. The general began whispering, but they could not hear what he was saying.

"They're hatchin' something," Renny decided.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan squirmed. Doc had not turned him loose again.

"We will see how this fellow bluffs," Doc said.

The bronze man changed his grip to the mummy man's throat. He squeezed enough to give the fellow an idea of what dying by that method would be like.

"We have no further use for you," he told Pey-deh-eh-ghan. "No wise man burdens himself with ashes of the firewood he has already burned."

The mummy man gobbled air into his lungs. He was rascal enough himself to think Doc meant it.

"Wait!" he exclaimed in his strange, hard-to-understand tongue. "It is very hard to get into the tomb. It will take you much time. I will show you, in exchange for my life."

Doc waited long enough for it to seem he was considering the offer.

"Very well," he agreed.

They made a compact group around the mummy man as he moved forward. Renny carried Doc's flashlight.

THE parts of the tomb which they had already seen had not been especially impressive, and they had suspected all along that this was an outer passage, containing a few traps to discourage vandals.

The mummy man came to an arched opening cut in the solid stone. The aperture was surrounded by chiseled hieroglyphics.

"Whew!" said Johnny, after he had puzzled over the characters.

"What's it say?" Long Tom wanted to know.

"A curse on any one who enters," Johnny explained. "It promises a number of horrible forms of death to all who defy the curse. But it need not alarm you. These tombs usually have such curses carved upon them."

Monk mumbled thoughtfully, "Yeah, but I always think of that Tut-ankhamen tomb they opened years ago. Didn't just about everybody concerned with that die in some strange way or another?"

"Coincidence, purely," Johnny assured him.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan did not help Monk's peace of mind when he paused to stare dramatically at the hieroglyphics, then get down and touch his forehead to the rock before them.

At the end of a short corridor beyond the opening was a wall of masonry blocks, sealed with mortar.

The mummy man told Doc Savage, “We will have to remove those stones.”

Doc went to work on the joints. His knife had a blade of more than ordinary temper, and it loosened the mortar. Fifteen minutes saw the first block out, and the rest were easy.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan spoke in a worried voice.

“He says the stones should not have been that easy to remove,” Doc translated.

“He thinks they have been tampered with?” Monk exploded.

“Something like that.”

They were prepared for the confusion into which they walked. Great jars were in fragments on the stone floor. Mummy cases had been torn open, the ornaments—probably gold and jewels—pried off. Mummies had been unwrapped, kicked to pieces. Precious metal inlays had been pried out of the walls.

It had all been done thousands of years ago.

“Just another tomb,” Johnny groaned, “already rifled.”

A vast, rumbling noise throbbed against their ears.

Chapter 17

THE FIGHT IN THE TOMB

THE rumble came abruptly at first, like a thunderclap, and its echoes throbbed and thumped as thunder does.

“Another daggone rain,” Monk said hollowly.

Doc rapped, “Quick! Back the way we came!”

Monk began, “But what——”

“That was explosive, not thunder!” Doc said sharply. “General Ino and his men must be blowing their way out!”

They raced for the noise. The disappointment of finding the tomb empty after so much trouble, instead of being a let-down, had enraged them, made them ripe for a fight.

Monk paused to grab Pey-deh-eh-ghan.

“You’re comin’ along,” Monk gritted. “And if you think you ain’t, just make a pass at me!”

The mummy man was meek. Spirit seemed to have gone out of him.

There was another explosion, louder because they were closer. An instant later the smell of burned powder was in their nostrils.

Doc, in the lead, heard or saw something, for he blocked their way, crowded them back around a corner. An instant later guns smashed and lead raked at the stone.

“We’re in swell shape for a fight!” Renny complained.

They were still naked, weaponless.

Doc pressed them back until they were behind the stone slab of a door, existence of which could be detected only on close examination.

“Wait here,” he directed.

He produced, from a pocket of a carrier vest which he wore under his clothing, several small glass balls in a metal case. He gave these to Long Tom.

“Anæsthetic grenades,” the bronze man explained. “Six of them. All we have. Use them only as you have to.”

Long Tom exploded, “But you——”

Doc did not explain. He glided through the door and closed it behind him.

The bronze man’s aids listened. And almost immediately there was a burst of shots, excited yells.

Monk snarled, “I ain’t gonna stay here while Doc takes all the chances!”

He lunged for the door, but Renny and Long Tom both got in his way. Renny let his flashlight go out.

“Don’t be a sucker,” Renny advised. “Doc knows what he’s doin’!”

“Yes,” Ham put in. “Try for once to have some sense!”

Renny had not turned his flashlight on again. The device had to be wound every few minutes, for a spring operated the tiny generator that served instead of a battery.

Long Tom grunted suddenly, explosively in the darkness. There were scuffling sounds.

“Hold your breath!” Long Tom yelled. “Pay Day—broke—anæsthetic grenades
_____”

His warning was too late, for the others had leaped forward and were already in the anæsthetic gas. They could not tell. The stuff was odorless and colorless. It did not even burn their lungs.

The feeling of irresistible drowsiness went warmly over them and chased away any desire to fight, any interest in what was happening or might happen. The last of the five, and Pey-deh-eh-ghan, were asleep before a minute had passed.

On the other side of the stone door, General Ino’s voice said loudly, “They’re in here. I heard them yell! Help me find how this door opens.”

It was not a hard door to open, and the anæsthetic gas would not affect them when they got in. The stuff became ineffective after mingling with the air less than a minute.

General Ino warned, “Watch out for that Doc Savage!” and repeated the admonition in Arabic.

DOC SAVAGE was having some difficulty, but not inside the labyrinthian passages of the tomb. He was outdoors. The sky had an unnatural clarity, if one did not know the desert, and stars were like a million sparks. Storm clouds walled the west, like a skulking monster that rumbled and snorted lurid flame.

The bronze man was trying to climb the sides of the canyon. He had his silken cord unwrapped to its longest, and was flipping the collapsible grapple upward. Each time it failed to catch and came clinking back.

He changed his position, gliding along the wall of stone, tried again. No luck. He stepped back. The wall was much too sheer.

It looked as if every handhold had been carefully chiseled away. Nature had never made a wall that smooth.

After his survey, Doc picked another spot. On the third attempt the grapple held, but pulled loose when he was almost a score of feet up. He landed with catlike ease from a fall that would have crippled many men.

He tried twice more; then the rope held, and he climbed. Only a ledge, but it was over halfway up. He threw the grapple, and it came back with heart-breaking regularity. Then it caught.

He climbed and stood on the flat top of a table-land. All solid rock. But it was not level. It sloped from all sides, toward the middle, almost a cup.

The bronze man seemed to know what he was doing. He ran down the sloping stone, careful of his footing, and reached a black patch that was almost circular and nearly ten feet across.

It was a hole. Starglow did not penetrate far into it, for it went straight down.

No loose stones were about. Doc dug out a coin, a half dollar. He waited until the thunder was quiet in the west, then dropped the half.

The sound which came up out of the hole was such a noise as can be made by putting a finger in the mouth and pulling it out again, hard.

THE bronze man seemed satisfied, as if he had proven something important. He glided back to the cliff's face and let himself down to the canyon floor with the grapple. He headed for the mouth of the tomb.

The bronze man was always cautious. It was one of the reasons he had lived. Now he did something that might have seemed unnecessary. He stopped outside the entrance of the barracks chamber from which access to the tomb was had.

"Didn't you see him?" he called harshly in Arabic.

"*Wallah!*" exploded a voice inside in Arabic. "Did he pass?"

There were guards at the entrance. Doc had sounded like one of them, and they had been deceived.

"There is another way out," Doc growled in Arabic. "He escaped by that route, and may come this way. I am coming in to help you watch."

He walked boldly into the rock chamber.

There were two of the guards. It was dark enough that they did not recognize him in time. Doc struck one's jaw, and the fellow trotted back against the wall, stood there a moment, then fell on his face.

The other grabbed for his rifle trigger. Doc got his hands, brought an elbow up under the man's ear, then swung at his temple. The Bedouin was quick. He dodged the second blow, backpedaled, got a knife out. He had confidence in his knife. He leaped.

The knife blade had been blued, or painted, so that it did not gleam in the moonlight which was reflected into the place. The fellow did not slash or swing. He held the blade ready for a sudden dart, the most difficult blow to stop or dodge.

The under-the-ear blow had paralyzed the man's throat muscles. Trying to yell, he made only croakings. But he would yell before long.

Doc threw his shoulders down, his feet forward. His feet hit the other's ankles. He upset. Doc grabbed the man's legs, but released them instantly, so that the slash the fellow made with his knife missed. The swing carried the weapon arm around to the man's side. Doc, leaning forward, made his fist reach the fellow's jaw.

Doc got into the Arab's burnoose. It was not a good fit. He carried the other Bedouin's white garment, and both their weapons, and found the stone trap-door open.

The passage and the rooms of the tomb were too quiet. He did not hear voices, until he reached the chamber where they had found evidence of vandalism—the rifled tomb itself.

General Ino was saying, "We had them once, and didn't do it. That's one mistake we won't make twice. *Oui, monsieurs.*"

Shaster asked, harshly, "How?"

Proudman Shaster sounded as if he were in the grip of his beheading fever.

“Can you cut off a head with that?” the general questioned quietly.

“I can make a really wonderful try!”

When Doc looked into the chamber, Proudman Shaster was leaning over Ham with a machete, the same weapon with which he had beheaded the Arabs in the fight which had all been a mistake.

DOC had an easy shot with one of the rifles he had just captured. Shaster, all his teeth showing, his eyes popping, set himself for a blow, and was motionless an instant.

The flame from the rifle muzzle seemed to leap almost to Shaster’s knife hand. The shot crashed, thundered, died out and left only Shaster’s scream of agony.

Two of the Bedouins were furnishing light and odor with torches they had improvised out of their flowing garments. Their surprised leaps caused showers of sparks to fall.

Shaster went to the floor with his mangled hand. He bellowed like a branded animal, one long bawl after another.

The white renegade of the Bedouins, Sandy, kept his head better than the others. His pistol came out of its holster spouting lead.

Doc did not shoot at him. He got the men with the torches—firing at their hands. One torch went out.

Several of the men were shooting by now.

Doc spun, yelled out in his natural voice, so they would have no doubt about who he was, and ran. He traveled fast, for death was at his heels—and he had a certain spot he wanted to reach in a great hurry. He dropped his rifle.

He made it—crawled through the opening which was carved to resemble a great human mouth. Howling, shooting, the foes were no more than a score of feet behind.

Doc leaped. His fingers caught the elaborate carving of the headdress, and he hauled himself up. He had room enough to cling there, just above the opening. But, by little more than stretching their hands up, the men could touch him as they came through.

The first of the Arabs charged through. Three of them, shoulder to shoulder.

Doc had dropped his rifle, but he still held a revolver he had taken from one of the door-guarding Bedouins. It was a cheap gun. He cocked it, and tossed it far down the corridor, in the direction he would have taken had he continued his flight.

The gun hit, jarred, off, exploded. That was because it was cheap. But there was a touch of luck, too. The bullet came back and shot two Arabs through the legs.

They squawled, returned the fire, imagining it had come from their quarry. They were not cowards. They charged recklessly.

The men flowed under Doc with giddy speed. General Ino and Proudman Shaster were last.

Doc let them get away, then dropped down and ran to his five aids and Pey-deh-eh-ghan.

Chapter 18

WATER

THE effects of the anæsthetic gas did not usually wear off in less than half an hour, and nowhere near that time had elapsed.

Doc, however, carried—it occupied the tiniest space—a hypodermic needle containing several shots of a drug which, once it was in the system, neutralized the stupefying effects of the anæsthetic, and would revive a victim in a few minutes. He used that now.

Monk, with the physique of the gorilla he resembled, was the first to turn over and get up. He took a swing at Ham, seeing him near, then fell upon the lawyer and began pounding him. Monk had awakened with what is sometimes called an anæsthetic drunk.

Doc grabbed him, shook him, and Monk came out of it.

“Well, I’ve been wantin’ to lambaste Ham anyway!” he mumbled.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan was the last to recover. He got up shakily, looking bewildered.

“I’ll bet this modern world is turning out to be quite a thing for him,” Long Tom said, dryly. “I wonder how he likes it?”

Running feet approached along the passages. Enough of them that their sound was a dull roar.

“Found they were tricked,” Doc said. “We had better move!”

“This place ain’t extensive enough for much fightin’,” Monk complained.

Doc scooped up the rifle which he had dropped, picked up another lying near by. Renny got Proudman Shaster’s machete. One of the torch-carrying Arabs had also dropped a weapon, and Johnny appropriated that.

They scattered, seeking an exit.

“Holy cow!” Renny boomed. “There ain’t any way out!”

But there was. Pey-deh-eh-ghan showed it to them. He shoved on the wall, and a stone slab fell into another passage on the opposite side. The slab was not hinged. It fell heavily, made much noise, and broke in several pieces, so they could not replace it.

They scrambled over the fragments. Several shots banged, and the bullets narrowly missed Ham, who was the last through.

“They—must have—kicked me—when unconscious!” Ham gasped. “I hurt all over!”

Monk heard that, rushed back, and helped Ham. This was so unexpected that Ham nearly fell down.

Ham had no way of knowing it was contriteness which was moving the homely chemist. Ham had been senseless when Monk, anæsthetic drunk, had pummeled him. But Monk knew that was what had almost disabled Ham.

They made time—until Pey-deh-eh-ghan suddenly whipped away from them and ran back toward General Ino’s men.

“FOOL!” Renny bellowed. “He’ll get killed.”

The mummy man was squawling something in his tongue, and when Renny tried to pursue him, Doc stopped the big-fisted chemist.

“Listen!” Doc rapped.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan repeated what he was yelling.

Johnny translated. “He says for us to go on! He will lead them off and lose them on another route!”

General Ino’s mob had stopped shooting. But they were still coming.

Pey-deh-eh-ghan howled something else.

“He says to crawl into a niche a short distance down this passage!” Johnny exploded.

“Quiet!” Doc warned.

That was so that General Ino’s men would not hear them. They were close. Their hard breathing was audible, like many snakes hissing.

Then Pey-deh-eh-ghan yelled out shrilly, angrily. It was plain that he was attracting General Ino’s men. He succeeded, and they turned their charge in that direction.

Doc and his men were left to themselves.

Monk breathed softly, “I’ve cussed that mummy guy and I’ve wanted to wring his neck, but from now on, he can have what I’ve got! He’s risking his life to save ours!”

Doc said, “Do not be too sure of that! We had better move!”

“Huh?”

“Quick! Explanations can wait!”

They crept forward quietly, heading for the exit, alert for some signs of straggling foes. But the enemy seemed to have kept together. They were all on the trail of the mummy man, even Proudman Shaster and the torch bearers with their shattered hands.

Creeping along, each of Doc’s men unexpectedly found the bronze giant beside them. He pressed something into their hands, something round and hard and about the size of a garden pea.

“Put that in your mouth,” he told each one. “Have it ready to break with your teeth.”

“I don’t get this,” Monk complained. “Pay Day told us to stay in that niche; but you, Doc——”

Ham interrupted, “You’re going to talk us all into a grave with that curiosity of yours. Pipe down.”

They were in the chamber of the kneeling stone statues when the great gurgling noise first reached their ears.

“Run!” Doc rapped.

They ran, but they were not across the room when the water hit them. It seemed to pour through doors, through openings in the ceiling. Great falls of it, a yard across.

“Break those pellets!” Doc shouted. “Keep them in your mouths and hold your breath!”

THE water came down with Niagara violence. The flood of it washed them off their feet, pummeled them about, smashed them against the statues, washed the statues over. It roared and boiled, and time after time, they fought to the top, until there was no top, for the water had filled the room completely.

Through it all, they kept their mouths closed and did not breathe. They knew, now, why Doc had told them to do that. The pellets held a chemical. Not oxygen. Some chemical mixture which supplied, for a few minutes, the effect which oxygen supplied upon the human system.

After a time, they found the bronze man seeking them out, assembling them, one at a time, at the door, and when they were all there, guiding them forward swimming until at last they reached the exit in the barracks room.

It was no trouble to get out. Water was boiling up through the hole, for the tomb was completely flooded. They were washed out and onto the floor of the canyon, bruised, ill, and almost suffocated, for the chemical pellets were losing their effect.

Doc got them away from the water, and they all lay there for a time.

“The top of the cliff is hollowed out to catch rainwater,” Doc explained at last. “The water runs into a reservoir under the rock, evidently, and it can be made to flood the tomb when a trap is set off. It must have been one of Pey-deh-eh-ghan’s traps for robbers who came to rifle his tomb, or more properly, his treasure storehouse.”

Monk muttered, “Then Pey-deh-eh-ghan drowned himself to get the rest of us?”

“You should know Pey-deh-eh-ghan better than that by now,” Doc said, dryly.

“You mean he got away?”

“Probably.”

They found no signs to show that Pey-deh-eh-ghan had gotten away. They searched. But these black rock mountains did not hold a trail. There was stone everywhere, so hard that it would take no mark from hobnails, much less bare human feet. They did find the pets, Habeas and Chemistry, roaming.

Next, they tried to get into the tomb. The water had filled it, and Doc’s chemical pellets were not effective enough to permit them to explore it.

After they had tried several times, Long Tom said, “If Doc hadn’t guessed what Pay Day was up to, and gotten us part of the way out, we’d never have made it.”

They were very tired. They slept the rest of the night after a fashion.

Next morning, Doc announced, “We will start a shaft to drain the tomb.”

Monk, never backward, suggested doubtfully, “I can get along without seeing the inside of that place again.”

“We will drain it,” Doc said.

THEY drained it, and the labor took three weeks. They used metal parts of their plane's motors for tool material, and there was plenty of food from the Arab camp. They sent the shaft in from the canyon floor, and the water ran out for almost three hours. Then they went in with torches.

General Ino, Proudman Shaster, Sandy, the rest, had died. They found the bodies.

They did not find Pey-deh-eh-ghan's body. But they found something that Pey-deh-eh-ghan, from what they had seen of him, would almost have given his life to keep them from finding.

Doc located it after six hours of sounding with a hammer from the plane. It was not a door, but a stretch of the stone which rang hollow. They spent two hours breaking through.

Doc stood beside the opening and motioned Johnny, the archaeologist. "Want to be first?"

"Think it's safe?" Johnny asked, doubtfully.

"It may be worth the chance," Doc said.

Johnny stepped through, or partway through, and used one of the flashlights which they had found in the plane. He stood there for an unexpectedly long time. Then he drew back. His face was distinctly white, his eyes brighter than any of the others ever remembered having seen them.

"It *was* worth it!" he said, hoarsely.

They all went in.

When they got out again, they had to sit in the shade of the canyon wall for some time before they felt like discussing what they had found. Then they spoke about it in whispers, without knowing why—for they were men who had seen fabulous wealth before.

"The treasure of Pey-deh-eh-ghan," Johnny said, slowly, and using small words. "Supposed to be one of the great lost hoards of history."

"And not exaggerated a darn bit," said Renny, for once not rumbling.

Monk, who occasionally took an interest in jewels, muttered, "I've been tryin' to figure up what the stuff in that first vase, or bowl, the one next to where we broke in, is worth. Listen, I counted a hundred and eleven diamonds, and not one of 'em less than five carats, or I'm dizzy!" He sighed. "Aw, nuts! I'm dizzy anyway!"

"The first true thing you ever said," Ham remarked, unkindly.

"I wonder," Long Tom pondered aloud, "how much was taken by the thieves from that outer tomb, the one that was vandalized?"

"Nothing, probably," Doc said.

"Eh?"

"There were probably never any vandals."

Long Tom exploded, "I don't get you?"

"Pey-deh-eh-ghan," Doc explained, "was a smooth article. It is my guess that he rigged up that outer tomb to make it look as if it had been sacked, then concealed the entrance to the inner treasure trove thoroughly.

“Any one finding the outer tomb, which was easy to find, but not too easy, would have thought the place had already been ransacked of all valuables. It was a trick.”

“If we find him, we’ll ask him about that,” Long Tom suggested.

THEY next heard of Pey-deh-eh-ghan in a queer way. It was after they were in Cairo, shipping the relics from the tomb, converting the wealth into funds for hospitals and the great charity organization of which Doc was a director.

They did not hear of Pey-deh-eh-ghan directly. But they did hear of a tall, strange-looking man, dark of skin, with a flowing white beard and hair, who had come in out of the desert, unable to speak a word of any language the best interpreters knew.

The strange man’s picture had been in the newspapers, and Doc got copies of the journals.

It had been Pey-deh-eh-ghan.

The strange man’s picture had been in the papers because of the way he had died. He had been walking along the street, when he had heard a radio loud-speaker which stood in front of a music store. Instantly, he had dashed into the street, as if fleeing from the loud-speaker, and a car had run over him and killed him.

The speaker on the radio at the time had been the well-known American, Doc Savage, announcing the discovery of a treasure tomb in the Nubian Desert.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *Resurrection Day* by Lester Dent (as Kenneth Robeson)]