



THEY DIED TWICE

A Doc Savage Adventure By Kenneth Robeson

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- ? [Chapter I](#)
- ? [Chapter II. THE HORRIFIED MAN](#)
- ? [Chapter III. THE BAD RENATICUS](#)
- ? [Chapter IV. PLOT, PLOT, PLOT](#)
- ? [Chapter V. A TWISTING TRAIL](#)
- ? [Chapter VI. WATCHDOG](#)
- ? [Chapter VII. A SKELETON SO HIDEOUS](#)
- ? [Chapter VIII. SECRET STEVENS](#)
- ? [Chapter IX. PLAN](#)
- ? [Chapter X. THE GUIDE](#)
- ? [Chapter XI. THE XOCHI](#)
- ? [Chapter XII. BLUE NOSE](#)
- ? [Chapter XIII. SILENCE LIKE A DEVIL](#)
- ? [Chapter XIV. BLUE FOR DEATH](#)
- ? [Chapter XV. LOST CLAN](#)
- ? [Chapter XVI. MEMORY, THE FRIEND](#)
- ? [Chapter XVII. DEATH WARNING](#)
- ? [Chapter XVIII. DONKEY SAM](#)

*Scanned and Proofed
by Tom Stephens*

Chapter I

COLONEL JOHN RENWICK disappeared on a Tuesday. He was gone for seven days.

That Tuesday evening, Colonel Renwick was to make an important speech. So his non-appearance on the lecture platform created surprise. As a matter of fact the speech would have meant many thousands of dollars in Renwick's pocket. The verbal outpouring was to be on "The Interdiffusion of Molybdenum by the Renwick Process," and its delivery was scheduled for the Regal Room of the Park-Ritz Hotel, where the cheapest room, even in depression times, was seven dollars a night. The Renwick process for molybdenum was actually going to cause another of those revolutions in the steel business. He had invented it himself.

Above all, Renwick was not a man to let thousands of dollars slip out of his pockets by not appearing on the lecture platform. He hated to talk in public, but he didn't hate it that badly.

"Monk" Mayfair, who was Renwick's friend, made a comment.

"A half-million-dollar stage fright," he said.

"There isn't any such thing," said "Ham" Brooks, also a friend. "Not with Renny."

“Sure,” Monk agreed. “What do you suppose happened?”

“It couldn't be a woman.”

“Not unless Cleopatra has come back,” Monk said.

This casual crack about Cleopatra had an uncanny relativity about it that, much later, made their hair stand on end. As a matter of fact, Colonel John “Renny” Renwick was not susceptible to feminine charms. He was not proof against them, but he was not susceptible.

For seven days, no word.

Renny Renwick did not report in.

This was something particularly alarming, because it was a thing-the reporting in-that he never failed to do. All of the Savage associates did it.

Renny Renwick was a member of the group of five men who, for love of excitement and other reasons, had associated themselves with Clark Savage, Jr., better known as Doc Savage, or the Man of Bronze, and also as an individual of mystery and legendary abilities, according to the newspapers.

Doc Savage had been trained from childhood by scientists to follow the unusual career of righting wrongs and punishing evildoers. For some time he had pursued this career with enthusiasm and success. Renny had become associated with Doc Savage. So had Ham Brooks, Monk Mayfair, and three others-Johnny Littlejohn, Long Tom Roberts, and a girl named Patricia Savage. Patricia was a cousin of Doc Savage, and not actually a member of their organization. But she liked excitement and had managed more and more to wedge herself into their group.

WHEN the daily reports stopped coming from Renny, they launched a search. It was a thorough hunt. Doc Savage, in addition to his own group, had connections with agencies which made a business of getting information and finding people. Doc had established one of the best agencies himself, and it was extremely effective.

(Those who have read the adventures of Doc Savage in the past are probably familiar with this agency, which is a detective agency without having that name. Its formation was connected with the unusual treatment which Doc gives to criminals whom he catches. These crooks are sent to a secret institution in upstate New York, a place called the “College,” where they undergo intricate brain operations that wipe out all memory of past, leaving, however, the normal functions of the brain intact. These “patients” are then taught useful trades and turned back into the world with a hate of crime and no memory of their own past. Because Doc has been extremely active, there are many of these “graduates,” and they have spread to the corners of the earth. Doc has organized many of them into an efficient agency for getting information which he may desire. It is particularly effective because the “graduates” have been taught unswerving loyalty to the Man of Bronze, as well as to the principles of right and justice.)

No trace of Renny was found. Not the slightest.

“Shall we tell Doc about this?” Monk demanded.

Long Tom Roberts, who was the electrical wizard of their group, shook his head slowly. “I hate to do that,” he said. “Doc is working on a plane locator gadget for the government, and orders are not to disturb him.”

They argued about that. There was no question of the importance of the experimental work Doc was doing. Overdoing, the others were beginning to think. Doc Savage had made repeated efforts to get into active combat service, but had been refused on the ground that he was more valuable at what he was doing. "You don't stick your brains out for the enemy to shoot at," they told him in Washington. "You are one of what we would call the brains of this country. On the fighting front, you would be only one man with a gun or an airplane. This way, you are fifty or a hundred thousand men, as far as effectiveness is concerned."

They left Doc alone, knowing he would drop everything if he suspected Renny was in danger. There was complete loyalty between Doc Savage and his associates.

Johnny Littlejohn, the archaeologist and geologist, made a statement.

"A subdolous durbar might deoppilate the labyrinthine aspects," he said.

They looked at him.

No one said a word for a moment.

Monk then said, "Words like them at a time like this ought to get you a kick in the ribs."

Johnny looked uncomfortable. It was a habit of his never to use a word anyone could understand whenever he could think of one they couldn't. "Sorry," he muttered.

"Did you have something on your mind beside the dictionary?" Monk asked him.

Johnny nodded. "I was wondering if anyone had noticed Renny in the company of any strangers before this happened?"

They considered this point. Long Tom Roberts, who looked as if he was going to furnish an undertaker with business next week, but who could whip wild cats, started violently.

"Hey, did anyone notice the little girl-man?" he asked.

"Girl-man?" Monk said. "What the hell?"

Johnny said, "I don't mean that the little fellow was prissy. It was just that he was small and rather fat, and had a face which reminded me of one of those little girls who play in the motion pictures. I've forgotten which one."

"How old a girl?" Monk asked.

"Oh, very young. Nine or ten years. There was something babyishly immature about the man, is what I mean."

"You saw Renny with this fellow?"

"Yes. That is, Renny remarked that the little fellow was following him around and making a nuisance of himself. Renny was working on this molybdenum thing he had perfected, and he didn't want to be bothered."

"Anybody know anything about the little fellow?"

No one did.

But then, the seven days had passed, and Renny Renwick came back.

And it was obvious something strange had happened.

RENNY RENWICK had lost thirty pounds. He was a big man, very big-six feet four, two hundred sixty-so that loss of thirty pounds should not make him look as cadaverous as he did. Obviously, he had lost more than weight.

Just what Renny had lost was the thing that began to puzzle them.

He was scared, or dulled with horror, or stupefied from some awful discovery, or something. They began to wonder what.

First, though, he was uncommunicative. Silent. Desperately silent.

When he returned he merely walked into headquarters-the latter was situated on the eighty-sixth floor of a midtown skyscraper-and sat in a chair. Collapsed in the chair was a better word. He said, "Hello. Anything been going on?"

They stared at him in surprise and growing amazement. His face had no expression at all. It was a face normally gloomy in expression, but now it was blank. Blank, they began to decide, because he was holding it that way by great force of will.

"What happened, Renny?" Monk demanded.

"Nothing," Renny said vaguely.

A poor lie.

Later, he began to tremble. The trembling was a kind of uncontrollable thing that began in his hands and crept up to his arms, and then went all through him. He was quite pale. He looked weak and hungry.

"Where you been?" Monk asked.

"Oh, different places," Renny said, and looked sick, as if the illness was in his soul.

"Hungry?" Ham asked.

Renny shook his head vaguely. "No," he said.

"When did you eat last?"

Renny said, "Last Tues-" and did not finish.

"Last Tuesday was the day you disappeared!" Ham exploded. "Mean to say you haven't eaten since then?"

Renny stared blankly, then shook his head with care. "I didn't mean-that," he said. "I ate-regularly."

For some reason or other, this was a lie, too. It was plain that he had made up his mind to tell them no truth whatever.

They studied Renny. He did not look in the least, sitting there, like Colonel John Renny Renwick, the civil and mechanical engineer whose accomplishments were known all over the world, and whose textbooks

were so advanced that they gave headaches to engineering instructors in the highest technological colleges.

He was emaciated. His eyes were sunken and there were dark hollows under them. His skin had an old cardboard quality-cardboard that had been rained upon. His clothes were disheveled, slept in, untidy.

“Look, Renny,” said Monk kindly, “if you have any friends in the world, we are they. Now tell us what happened to you.”

Renny sat there in complete terror.

“Nothing,” he said.

Monk got the others to one side. “We won't tell Doc about this yet,” he said. “But we'll keep close tab on Renny. Something has sure gone wrong with him.”

THAT afternoon, Renny went to the Museum of Art. He started out walking, or, rather, blindly pushing his way through the crowds on the street. It struck Monk and the others, who were trailing him, that his mind was so upset that it did not occur to him to get on a bus, subway or streetcar. It was obvious from the moment he started out that he had a definite destination, which proved to be the art museum.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is not devoted entirely to paintings, as its name might imply. It contains the art of the centuries, back through all the days of mankind, wherever man has created beauty or skill that lives.

Renny Renwick went to the section devoted to old Spanish art. He did not seem to know what he was seeking, and asked questions of a guide. He received instructions and walked on.

Monk and the others were careful not to let Renny see them. They cornered the guide. “What did that fellow want to know?” Monk asked.

“The fellow with the big fists, you mean?” asked the guide.

“Right.”

“He wanted to know if we had anything on Renaticus, of the Spanish fifteenth century.”

“Have you?”

“Yes. A statue of Renaticus. I told him where it was. He thanked me.”

“Who,” asked Monk, “is or was Renaticus?”

“Blessed if I know,” said the guide. “Some big shot back about the days of Columbus, I think. I don't know much about him. Never heard of him before, in fact.”

Ham Brooks said, “Come on. Let's see what Renny wants with an old Spaniard named Renaticus.”

Monk thought of something and snorted. “Renaticus,” he said. “And Renny. Wonder if Renaticus was an ancestor of Renny, or something?”

They overhauled Renny in time to witness a rather remarkable performance. When they first saw him in front of the statue, Renny was merely standing there, staring at it. His attitude was one of tension, with his

arms down at his side and his body tilted forward slightly in a stiff manner.

They gazed at the statue of Renaticus with interest.

Renaticus, or his statue, was very large. There was a kind of iron-fisted formidability about Renaticus in statue form that indicated he must have been an individual of strong qualities in real life.

“Jeepers!” Monk gasped.

Ham had seen it, too. All of them had. The unexpected quality of the statue of Renaticus.

But there was no time for comment because Renny Renwick suddenly seized the brass stanchion which supported a velvet rope that was there to keep spectators from getting too close to the statues. Renny tore this stanchion out by its roots and used the pipe to beat the statue of Renaticus to fragments.

Renny howled as he destroyed. He bellowed in a mad rage and wielded his club with frenzied violence. He picked up fragments of the statue and hurled them against the floor and the walls. He seized half of Renaticus' head and smashed it to the floor, then jumped on the fragments.

He broke off one of the big statue's hands and beat at it with the pipe as if he was killing a snake.

Renny's screaming-part of it profanity-and the noise he was making, brought museum attendants running. They saw what probably struck them as a madman destroying museum property. They closed in.

Renny fought them off. He apparently had no animosity against the attendants, but did not want any interference until he had finished with destroying the statue. When he had smashed head, arms, legs, feet, and one shoulder off the statue, he beat his pipe against Renaticus' solid stomach until the pipe was shapeless.

Then, realization of what he was doing seemed to come to Renny. He turned and ran.

Monk said, “Long Tom, Johnny-keep track of him! Don't let these fellows get him. But keep track of him.”

Monk clamped his hat on his head and made for another door.

“Where you going?” Ham demanded.

“Don't you think we had better tell Doc about this?” Monk asked.

Ham said, “*That statue looked exactly like Renny.*”

“That's what I mean,” Monk said.

Chapter II. THE HORRIFIED MAN

NOT all famous men look like great men at first glance, but in a little while, when you get to know them, the quality that makes them great always comes out. Greatness does not hide its light under a basket.

Doc Savage was stronger in this aspect than the usual celebrity, for two reasons. First, nature had given him a combination of bronze hair, bronze skin-suns had helped darken the latter-and a remarkable pair of flake-gold eyes, the gold of which seemed always in motion, as if stirred by tiny winds. Second, the scientists who had trained him from childhood had given him a body so unusual that it was instantly

evident he was far above the average.

Doc Savage was working in his laboratory, but stopped and came out into the reception room to listen to the story about Renny Renwick.

“We didn't want to bother you about what might have been nothing,” Monk explained. “But now it seems to be something.”

Monk then told the story of Renny's seven days of vanishment, and of the statue of Renaticus.

Doc Savage listened without interruption. Doc was a physical giant, but a quiet one, and seemed never knowingly to dominate a group or a situation. Yet there was such power in him, physically and in personality, that he seemed able to command any situation without effort. His close associates knew that this, like his other abilities, was a carefully mastered achievement. Not only scientists had contributed to his development; there had been philosophers, thinkers of all kinds, even deep mental students of India and Tibet.

Doc asked, “Did you investigate this Renaticus?”

Monk said, “Ham stayed behind to do that. He should be reporting in soon.”

They waited for Ham. He came in accompanied by Chemistry, his pet chimpanzee, an eccentric and unpredictable animal which he had collected in South America. Monk did not care for Chemistry, because the animal bore a distressing resemblance to Monk himself. That, Monk knew for a fact, was why Ham had collected the pet.

“Renaticus,” Ham said, “was a Spaniard who lived at the time of Columbus. He was quite a fellow in Spain in that day, a sort of a noble around the court of Ferdinand and Isabella. He took a big part in the conquest of the Granada Moors, which was going on about that time. He was also a bitter enemy of Alonso de Quintanilla, who was Columbus' friend, and influenced the queen's confessor, Fray Hernando de Talavera, to report on Columbus' project to find a new route to the Indies as impractical. That's all I know about him. He was a prominent opponent of Columbus in his day.”

Monk said, “But what about his fists?”

Ham shook his head. “Renaticus bore a startling resemblance to Renny. That's all I can say.”

Doc Savage was silent for a while—so long that Monk glanced at him uneasily and said, “What are we going to do? You've only got to see Renny to realize that something very, very serious has happened to him.”

“Renny will not talk to you about it?” Doc asked.

“He won't tell us a thing.”

“Where is he now?”

“Long Tom and Johnny are trailing him. They report in now and then.”

Doc said, “The next time they report tell them to seize Renny and bring him to headquarters, so that we can get to the bottom of this thing.”

LONG TOM ROBERTS and Johnny Littlejohn got their orders to fetch in Renny Renwick about an

hour later. Long Tom was a short-tempered fellow, and the others were sometimes afraid of him. He was not someone on whom you perpetrated a practical joke unless you could lick him, which not many could do. Johnny Littlejohn, on the other hand, was a kind of physical freak. Monk always described him the way you describe dachshunds—two men long and half a man tall. If there was anything wrong about this description it was the thickness part. Johnny was hardly half a man thick. He was indeed thinner than it seemed any man could be and still live.

Johnny turned from the telephone and asked, “Catachetical ubiquitariness is—”

“Why don't you learn bug language and get it over with!” snapped Long Tom. “What do they want us to do?”

Johnny frowned. “Bring him in,” he said.

Long Tom had been watching Renny's apartment window with a pair of binoculars. “It's about time,” he said. “It looks to me as if he was packing a suitcase and getting ready to leave.”

“What did he put in the suitcase?” Johnny asked.

“You do know small words, don't you. Well, he put in corduroy pants, laced boots, a hunting knife, some flannel shirts, a Mackinaw coat, and some heavy socks.”

“Woods-country clothing.”

“That's right.”

They crossed the street, entered Renny's apartment building. They did not knock on the door, having a suspicion that would not get results. They hit the door together, burst it open, and went in.

Renny whirled in wild—it was hard to believe Renny could be that worried-terror. He dropped a pair of moccasins.

“Where you going?” Long Tom asked casually.

For a few seconds it did not seem that Renny was going to make an answer. Then he shrugged cautiously and said, in a manner that showed he was pitifully desperate for them to believe him, “Oh, I thought I would go out of town for a little vacation. I'm feeling a little rotten.”

“I'm surprised you admit it,” said Long Tom. “You look like something that had been done to the Japanese navy.”

Johnny asked, “Where were you going, Renny?”

“To Lake Kakisa,” Renny said.

“Where's that?”

“Oh, up north in the woods.”

Long Tom said, “It's so far in the north woods that it's in the Mackenzie, which is next door to the north pole, practically speaking. What's the idea of going so far?”

Renny, white, tense, trembling, said, “I want to get away from things.”

“Well, you're not,” Long Tom assured him. “Doc said to bring you into headquarters, and that's what

we're going to do.”

Johnny yelled, “Watch out! Grab him! He's going to fight!”

LATER, Johnny carefully guided Renny Renwick into the midtown headquarters of Doc Savage. “Long Tom stopped downstairs to get a beefsteak for his eye,” Johnny explained. “He will be up.”

“You had a fight?” Monk asked.

“A tauromachian gladiatorialistic,” Johnny said.

Monk examined the two of them. “It must have been every bit as big as the words,” he decided.

Doc Savage addressed Renny Renwick. Doc had a voice which contained controlled power to such an extent that it was a slightly unnatural-sounding voice. “Renny, they have given me a rough idea of the way you have been acting,” Doc said. “We feel that something unpleasant has happened to you, and we want to help you. Furthermore, we consider it our duty as your friends to help you, so there is not much use in your arguing about it.”

Renny said nothing. He clamped his lips together.

Doc waited awhile.

“Get the truth serum,” the bronze man said finally.

Renny fought them then, as much fight as there was left in him, which, considering the circumstances, and that he had been licked once within the hour, was considerable. There was ten full minutes of it, part of it getting as far as the elevator and threatening to get down to the street. Finally, they got him doped with the truth serum.

The serum was a type lately improved by Doc Savage, and while it fell far short of what the bronze man considered the ultimate perfection which would be attained for this, or similar serums, it was efficient.

Renny seemed to become sleepy and yet not asleep. When he was questioned, the answers came in a clear voice. The clarity of the voice with which the victim spoke was the main improvement in this type. Other serums made the victim so groggy that much of what was said was not intelligible.

The story came out:

There was the little fat man with the little-girl face. His name was Jones, Albert Jones.

Albert Jones was a rather harmless little squirt, Renny had thought at first. He lived in a house somewhere in the suburbs, a private home which he occupied alone.

Exactly where Albert Jones' home was located, Renny still did not know.

“He had an invention in which he wanted to interest you, Doc,” Renny said.

“Why didn't he approach me, instead of you, if he wanted to interest me in it?” Doc asked.

“Albert said that he was overawed by your reputation. He was afraid to. He is a timid man, he explained.”

“So he approached you about the invention?” Doc asked.

“Yes,” Renny said. “He did.”

“What did you do?”

“I laughed at him.”

“Why?”

“The thing seemed silly.”

Renny was proving to be a very good subject under the truth serum, but that was probably because, down in his heart, he had wanted to tell them what had happened. Such a subject, one with a basic motive of righteous desire, would naturally be much more responsive to the stuff.

Getting the story proved to be a matter of interminable short questions and short answers which gave a direct response to the questions, but no other information.

Albert Jones, it developed, had invented an astounding thing.

THE invention of Albert Jones, stated in its simplest form, was a mechanical-electrical-chemical device, extremely complicated, which brought back the memories dormant in the human mind.

“Dormant memories,” Doc interrupted. “What do you mean by that?”

“Like instincts,” Renny replied.

Doc said, “The dictionary defines instinct as something implanted by nature, an outward impulse, unconscious, involuntary or unreasoning, as the result of an inherited tendency.”

Renny said, “That is what he meant.”

“There is not much scientific proof of anything like a dormant memory,” Doc said.

“Albert Jones can prove there is.”

“You were skeptical?”

“Yes.”

“And he proved to your satisfaction that there was such a thing as a dormant memory?”

“Just what is a dormant memory?”

“Something you inherited from your ancestors.”

“From your father, you mean?”

“From your ancestors. A father is an ancestor. So is a mother. Both sides of the family, Albert Jones said. But the dormant memories from the male side are the most prevalent.”

Doc Savage said, “In other words, memories are passed down from generation to generation the same as instincts, but they lie back in the human mind, unknown and unnoticed?”

“Out of the reach of the consciousness,” Renny said. “The consciousness has a connection with the things which it has experienced, but not with the things which it has not experienced. Things which happened to you in this life were part of your conscious experience, therefore your mind can reproduce them at demand, which is conscious memory. The memories your ancestor had a thousand years ago are not part of your present consciousness and never were, so you cannot deliberately make your brain produce them.”

Doc Savage looked at Renny sharply during this rather clear-for a man under the effects of truth serum-statement about mental behavior. The thing had a logical ring, although it was not entirely in tune with the opinions of psychologists and mental students.

Monk was impressed. “He's making this sound logical.”

Ham demanded, “What was this Albert Jones' invention, Renny?”

“A machine,” Renny explained. “Very complicated.”

“What does the machine do?”

“It stirs up the dormant memories and frightens them out into the brain, where they are like dreams, yet terribly genuine, because you seem to actually experience them.”

Renny finished this statement, then shuddered violently.

Doc eyed him sharply. “Renny!”

“Yes?”

“You are out from under the influence of that truth serum, aren't you?” Doc inquired.

Renny nodded sheepishly. “To tell the truth, Doc, the first dose of the stuff only had a temporary effect. It sort of got me to talking. I could feel it wearing off, but I got to thinking that, inasmuch as I had started the story, there was no sense in not going on with it. Anyway, if I had stopped, you would only have given me more serum.”

Doc Savage turned to Monk and said, “Monk, you helped in the development of this truth serum. Make a notation to do some more work on it. We have got to add a drug which will have an obvious effect on the patient for the same length of time as the truth serum, so we can tell when it is wearing off. This way we can not be sure when the victim comes out from under the stuff and starts lying to us.”

Monk said, “Yeah, that's a big fault in the stuff.”

“I wasn't lying to you,” Renny insisted.

Ham said, “Renny, you haven't told us what affected you so profoundly, kept you away seven days, and made you want to skip out for the North woods to forget.”

“Or about Renaticus, the stone statue,” Monk added.

Renny stared at them fixedly.

“I met Renaticus in the machine,” he said. “He is me, in the Thirteenth Century. It is frightening to meet yourself like that and find out what you have been.”

“Bad?” Ham asked.

“Bad enough,” Renny said, “to just about drive me nuts.”

Monk rubbed his bullet of a head and said, “This begins to sound completely goofy.”

Chapter III. THE BAD RENATICUS

THE little man named Mr. Albert Jones had been rather insistent, to the point of making a pest of himself at first, and, eventually, of half convincing Renny Renwick that there might be something to the dormant-memory-awakening machine after all.

“I didn't really take any stock in his thing,” Renny said grimly. “I thought he was a nut.”

But Mr. Albert Jones had finally prevailed on Renny to give the machine a try. “We met in a little restaurant around the corner,” Renny explained, “and we had some drinks, nonalcoholic vitamin drinks which Albert Jones mixed and which he said he liked. They weren't bad. We sat there and drank them and he told me about the scientific theories of his machine. They sounded reasonable. Jones certainly knew a lot of engineering lingo.”

Doc asked, “You finally went out and tried the machine.”

“Yes. We rode out in a car driven by Mr. Jones' chauffeur.”

“Oh, he's got money enough to hire a chauffeur?” Monk interrupted.

“He seems to have money, yes,” Renny said.

Doc put in, “If you rode out in a car you should have noticed where this Albert Jones lives.”

Renny looked uncomfortable. “To tell the truth, both of us went to sleep on the trip out there. It was late and it was a long drive.”

“When you got there you didn't know where you were?”

“That's right.”

“And he put you in the machine?”

“Yes.”

“Can you describe it?”

“Yes,” Renny said. “I can do better than that. I can draw a fairly comprehensive picture of it and label a lot of the parts, but that would take time, and I want to tell you what happened to me after I got in the gadget. Shall I go ahead with what happened to me?”

“Yes, tell us what you learned in the contraption,” Doc directed.

“You lie on a table,” Renny said, “and the main part of the gadget fits down over you. There is a whirring noise, and your senses get all upset.”

“What do you mean by upset?”

“You smell odors, see lights and hear sounds. None of the odors, lights or sounds make sense. Then you're off. Your mind seems to sort of turn black, and then it begins to come to you. You *see* yourself in

some other age.”

“Then it isn't like a dream?” demanded Monk.

“Not entirely. You *feel* it the way you do in a dream, only stronger. You walk, talk and experience the whole thing, in kind of a detached way. More of a photographic way, if you get what I mean.”

Doc Savage stood back and contemplated Renny thoughtfully. Outside, it was a rather biting, early-fall afternoon, with steel-colored clouds in the sky and a hint of stinging snow to come.

Doc said, “Tell me what you found in the machine, Renny.”

IN a voice of deepest revulsion, Renny said, “I became Renaticus, and Renaticus was *me*. It was terrible.”

“What made it so bad?” Monk asked.

“This Renaticus was such a rat,” Renny explained. “He turned my stomach. Then he committed such incredible crimes that it began to scare me.”

“Tell us about him.”

“Well, it was back in the days of Christopher Columbus.”

“The one who discovered America?”

“Yes. It was about the time Columbus went from Cordova to Salamanca, following the court. There was a war going on at the time, and considerable tension. Columbus had built himself up with a fellow named Alonso de Quintanilla, who had some influence with the king and queen. Like the way you cultivate the favor of a politician these days if you are trying to get something a little unusual out of the government.”

“Human nature hasn't changed much,” Monk suggested.

Renny scowled and nodded. “It kind of discourages you.”

“Go ahead.”

“Columbus had this idea of finding the Indies by going around the world, and he was trying to get the king and queen, Ferdinand and Isabella, to fix him up with ships, sailors and money. The queen's right-hand man at the time was a fellow named Fray Hernando de Talavera, and Columbus tried to sell him on the idea. That's where Renaticus came in. He didn't like Columbus. He did everything he could to oppose the thing.”

Monk grinned slightly. “An obstacle to progress.”

Renny stared at him. “Renaticus was a beast. You have no idea how incredibly evil some of those old-timers were. This Renaticus was a practitioner of the witchcraft order known as the *Jurginas*. This was a particularly evil sect of the day, one which worshiped the devil, whom they claimed appeared to them as a monstrous buck goat, black and loathsome.”

Renny frowned. “You know that little signal the kids use when they shake hands, one of them tickling the other's palm with his finger? Kids attach different meanings to the signals, but did you know the *Jurginas* originated this thing? It was their pass grip.

“The *Jurginas*,” continued Renny, “made a specialty of secret poisoning of their enemies.” The big-fisted engineer dropped his head and groaned. “It was awful. The most obscene, revolting, unbelievable things this Renaticus did. It sickened me. I’ll never forget them.”

“How did it end?” Doc Savage asked.

“When Renaticus set out deliberately to murder Columbus,” Renny said. “Poor old Columbus was such a nice guy. He was a promoter, of course, and always in debt and dodging his creditors all the time.”

Monk said, “I didn’t know Columbus was a dead-beat.”

“That is a matter of historical record,” Doc Savage said.

Renny nodded. “Poor old Columbus at the time was so hard up that he had to make his own clothes. He wove them himself and did a fine job. He had been a weaver by trade. He liked to draw, too, and picked up spare change by drawing maps.”

“What about the poisoning? Or didn’t Renaticus try to poison him?”

“Yes, he tried poison. But something must have gone wrong, because this happened before Columbus set out and found America. Or found the island called Guanahani by the redskins, but called San Salvador by Columbus.”

“How come you don’t know how the poisoning turned out?”

“Because I became so excited I awoke,” Renny explained.

JOHNNY LITTLEJOHN arose hurriedly and went into the library. The headquarters layout consisted of reception room, library and laboratory, and as Renny talked he had moved into the reception room. Johnny got a book, a historical tome, and consulted it. After he had skimmed pages awhile, he asked, “Are you a student on Columbus?”

“No, I never was,” Renny said.

“Well, your historical dope on Columbus seems accurate,” Johnny informed him. Johnny snapped the book shut. “I don’t get this. The thing is impossible, of course.”

Ham said, “Sure, it’s impossible.”

Monk snorted. Monk liked to disagree with Ham. He said, “They said something called radio was impossible, too.”

“Nuts.”

“On the face of it, this don’t look any more impossible than radio to me.”

Doc Savage stood at the window, thoughtful. “How did you get away?” he asked.

“From Albert Jones’ house? Why, I had a fight with the little fellow, and then I was taken away.”

“Why the fight?”

“I was upset. You’ve got to go through the thing I went through to know how I felt. There was this rat,

Renaticus, who looked like me, and who was obviously an ancestor. He had a lot of evil traits. I've felt the stirrings of such things in the back of my mind at times, impulses sort of, and it was sickening to suddenly realize they were things handed down to me by an ancestor who was a twenty-four-carat devil."

Incredulously, Ham demanded, "Did this little Jones lick you?"

"Well, yes, he did. I was all weak and flustered, and he popped me over the head, tied my hands, blindfolded me, then gave me a drug to make me sleep."

"What kind of drug did he give you?"

"An ordinary one from a drugstore. He had to go out and buy it. Left me tied when he was gone. He kept me there for a week. Then he hauled me in his car this morning and dumped me out."

"Where did he dump you?"

"On a side street in Sunnyside, Long Island."

Doc Savage was thoughtful. "By the way, in the beginning of your story, you mentioned an innocent vitamin cocktail which Jones mixed, and which you drank."

Renny nodded. "You think maybe it wasn't so innocent?"

"What do you think?"

"I've been wondering." Renny knotted his enormous fists thoughtfully. "Holy cow! It looks like Jones forced me into that gadget."

Monk demanded, "Why would he do that?"

Renny shrugged. "He said he wanted to bring the thing to Doc's attention, is all I know. He seemed a little disappointed about the results he got out of me when he put me in it."

"What comment did he make about those results?" asked Doc.

"He said he didn't know I had so many crook ancestors that I would have the memory of one turned loose in my mind," Renny said. The big-fisted engineer grimaced. "He said he wished he'd picked a better strain of man for his tests."

Doc Savage made his small, trilling sound.

THE trilling was a peculiarity of the bronze man in moments of mental excitement. It was a small sound, tiny and as exotic as the work of some unknown feathered creature in a tropical forest. The others stared at him. They knew it meant that something was strong in Doc's mind.

They hardly expected him to explain what it was. He had a habit of keeping his ideas and his convictions to himself. But he surprised them.

"Why did you smash the statue of Renaticus?" Doc asked.

Renny looked sheepish. "I was upset. I couldn't stand the idea of a devil like that living through history. I went up there to the museum to check on the actual existence of Renaticus, and the idea of smashing the

statue just seized me overwhelmingly while I stood there.”

Doc Savage nodded.

“The whole thing has a rather queer touch,” he said. “It might be good if we got in touch with this Albert Jones.”

“How?” demanded Renny. “I’m sure I don’t know where to find him. He always found me.”

“Did you say he went out and got a sedative and gave it to you?”

“Yes.”

“What was the sedative?”

Renny named the drug.

Doc said, “You have to buy that on a prescription.” The bronze man turned to Monk, Ham, Johnny and Long Tom. “Get hold of a retail-druggist’s guide for the metropolitan New York district,” he directed. “Send telegrams to each drugstore listed, giving the description of this man Jones, and the nature of the prescription, and ask if the drugstore made such a sale in the last few hours.”

Doc considered and then added, “Better offer a reward for the information from the store that made the sale in which we are interested.”

He turned back to Renny, asked, “Are you sure that you were hauled for at least an hour in the car?”

“Yes.”

“Did you go through any metropolitan districts, do you think?”

“I don’t know,” Renny said. “I was too groggy.”

“Send those telegrams,” Doc said.

Chapter IV. PLOT, PLOT, PLOT

THE man named Space was young and strong, but not much more could be said about him that was favorable. His clothing would have been good except that it was a little too carefully matched, too tuned to the man’s personality, which was distinctly hard brown.

Hard and brown was a good description for him. Age, not quite thirty. Weight, a hundred and seventy-five or eighty. Eyes the hard black of bakelite. A purposeful young man, and one not too thoughtful of others. Not thoughtful at all of them, in fact, if he had to sacrifice anything himself.

He looked, as he stood on the corner, like a corner boy or a poolroom hanger-on. He had been chain-smoking cigarettes.

Then the telegraph messenger came and looked nervously about before he spoke.

Space said, “Why the jitters, kid? Hell, nobody knows I hired you to do anything.”

The messenger boy swallowed uncomfortably. He was a nice clean kid, the only trouble being that five dollars was such a lot of money.

The boy said, "I got it. A telegram from Doc Savage to the drugstore, asking them to report if a drug had been sold to a man of a certain description. Somebody named Albert Jones."

"Good," said Space. "Go ahead and deliver your telegram, kid, and forget about this."

The boy was so relieved that tears came to his eyes. He had been afraid this man would want to take the telegram, and the boy knew that was a serious crime. The boy trotted away to the drugstore.

Space strode with lively excitement to his car and jumped in. The car was the car of a man who likes easy money. A robin blue as delicate as the sky in April and plenty of hard-to-get chromium. A big motor and red leather and a little bar that folded into a compartment.

Space drove to a solid house, but not an expensive house, half a dozen blocks distant. He went inside.

"Hy'ah, chief," he said to Albert Jones.

Albert Jones, being a fat little man with a little-girl face, prized dignity more than other men. He frowned his disapproval.

"It would be better if we kept this on a Mr. Space and Mr. Jones footing," he said sharply.

Space stared at him. Space was clever-he did not laugh. He was, in fact, cunning enough to look very sorry and to apologize, "I am very sorry. It will not happen again." He knew Albert Jones as a type, and he had nothing but contempt for the type, but showing contempt for people never got you anything, unless there was a time and a place for it.

"You have a report?" Jones asked with pleased dignity.

"Yes. Savage has telegraphed the drugstore asking if a man of your description bought a sleep-producing drug within the last few hours."

Albert Jones laughed. His mirth was something like the laugh of a little girl.

"Good, oh, very good!" he said. "I figured that Savage would be smart enough to spot the clue of my going out to buy the drug, but not slick enough to recognize it as a deliberately planted clue on my part."

Space nodded. For a moment his eyes were sharp, speculative. This little goof, he thought, has a brain or two in his head. Better watch him.

Jones said, "Good, very good, Space. That is all. I will not need you longer. Not today, anyway. You will return to your apartment and wait. Or you can take the afternoon off for a movie, or something."

"Sure you don't want me to help you with the rest of it?" asked Space.

"No," Jones said. "No, thank you."

"I'd be willing."

Jones became firm. Firmness in such a little effeminate-looking man was comical.

"This is a matter of great secrecy," he said. "I am sorry, Space, but I cannot accept your help."

Space stood there fighting disappointment. He clamped down on the urge to snarl out the news that he wasn't as dumb as Jones seemed to think him, and that he knew a great deal of what was going on. And that it all certainly wasn't what it seemed to be.

Which would not have been the truth, because Space did not quite know what was behind the mysterious doings of Mr. Albert Jones.

One thing sure-there was more to it than just the memory-awakening machine.

SPACE had reached a decision. This was evident in the way he jerked his thumb at a man named Prinz-Nickolas Prinz-who was working in a cigar store. Proprietor of the cigar store, rather.

“Lock it up,” said Space, indicating the place of business. “I got something to talk to you about.”

Prinz said, “Lock it up, hell. I bet nobody would even steal the stuff. You sure can't sell it to them.”

They went to a milk bar. Milk bars were not very popular in that neighborhood, so the place was about empty, and a table in the back gave them plenty of privacy.

“Take it you're not getting rich,” Space said.

“It don't take no genius to see that.”

“You still got connections?”

“I still got the old gang together, if that's what you mean. But hell, I can't keep 'em together much longer on what I make in that cigar store.”

“Working?”

Prinz snorted. “Not in weeks. Hell, three of them even joined the army for the excitement.” He cursed sourly. “Turning patriotic-can you imagine?”

Space glanced about, made sure no one was paying them any attention and that there were no mirrors which would reflect lip movements to an onlooker he hadn't noticed.

He said, “I have a dove. A lovely dove.”

Prinz stared at him. Prinz had known Space in the past. “Yeah? I've heard you call them doves before. They were. You want help?”

Space leaned back. He was not afraid to talk to this man Prinz because he could dominate the fellow. He could even put him in the electric chair if necessity arose. But he did not want Prinz to get the idea he needed help. He wished to dominate Prinz and Prinz's men; he had no use for Prinz if he could not dominate him. And if he could not he would find another who would do, although probably not as good. Prinz was a murderer who had killed at least twenty men, not counting those he had killed in the one or two wars in which he had participated. Prinz had a crazy, bloodthirsty streak-like a weasel in a coop of helpless chickens. Space felt he might need such a thing.

“I'll hire you and your men,” Space said sharply. “Hire you, understand?”

Prinz scowled. He took a drink of his milk. “That won't be cheap. We don't work often, but we don't work cheap.”

“Ten thousand a week,” said Space, knowing he was going to startle the other man, “for you and your facilities.”

Prinz was satisfactorily astounded.

“Cash?” he blurted. “It’ll have to be cash.”

“It will be.”

Prinz licked his lips. “Where’d you get dough like that? Not bootlegging. Not running guns or smuggling oil to the Japs?”

Space sneered politely and said, “You have always underestimated me, Prinz. The trouble with you is that you measure other men with yourself as a yardstick.”

Prinz became cunning. “No single week’s work, you understand. Not less than a month. Ten thousand a week, and another ten thousand for me, on the side, for incidental expenses. That will be fifty thousand from you.”

“Fair enough.” Space knew the value of impressing such men as Prinz, of overawing them. “That’s good. You’re hired.”

“I better see some money.”

Space grinned thinly, brought a wallet from a pocket and fanned it open. He riffled through the bills within. They were hundreds and five-hundreds, a deck of them.

Prinz looked at the money and made the sound of a beast.

“Father Satan!” he said.

SPACE had his man hooked, so he relaxed. He had outsmarted Prinz, overwhelmed the man with money and hired him, before Prinz had thought to ask what he was being hired to do. Space had an idea that fifty thousand would not have been enough for Prinz if the man had thought of getting an answer to that question. But now Prinz would not back down, even for death. Space knew the strange creed of men like Prinz.

Space drank more of his milk.

“Here is the background,” he said. “There is a fat little man with a girl-face named Albert Jones, who has invented a gadget.”

Space described Albert Jones’ so-called gadget. He gave a clear picture of the thing and what it would do, and it was much the same picture as Renny Renwick had given Doc Savage. He made Prinz understand the reasonableness of such a thing as memories from past generations locked fast in hitherto unknown storehouses of the human mind, and made the man believe that such memories might be released with the proper stimulus.

Suddenly Prinz saw the possibilities of the thing, or some of them.

“Glory road!” he gasped. “You could grab a descendant of one of those old pirates, like Blackbeard, who hid a lot of gold that was never found. You could dig the dormant memory out of the descendant’s mind, and he would be able to go right to the spot where the gold was hidden.”

Space grinned. “You begin to see.”

Prinz breathed heavily and licked his lips. He was elated by the possibilities.

“However,” Space said, “that isn't what I'm hiring you for.”

“What isn't?”

“Stealing the machine. That is what you think I want, isn't it?”

Prinz was startled. “Sure. Isn't it?”

Space shook his head. “Not now. We'll get it. But that will be incidental. But first, we're going to cut in on Mr. Albert Jones' game, whatever it is.”

A bus went by in the street outside, rattling its exhaust like a machine gun. A white-clad attendant approached them. Prinz was about to curse the man and drive him away, but Space headed him off by courteously ordering sandwiches and more milk, so that unpleasant attention would not be drawn to them.

When they were alone, Space said, “This Albert Jones has something in mind. Something big. He has hired a gang. He hired me, and he has more men like me—men who will do anything. Men who are clever. Men who are not afraid of the devil, and more than that, not afraid of Doc Savage.”

Prinz jerked stiff and stared.

Space continued, “Jones kidnapped one of Doc Savage's men named Renny Renwick and put him in the machine, gave him the works, and turned him loose. When he did that it was part of his scheme. I don't know what the scheme is. But it is big. Men do not fool with this Savage for peanuts. Not men who know what Savage is. And Jones knows. Or he wouldn't have hired men like me.”

Prinz continued to stare fixedly, and his lips moved and made something that had no sound, but which seemed to be merely the repetition of the name, Doc Savage.

Space continued, “Jones is going ahead with the scheme. I do not know what he is going to do next. But it is something connected with Doc Savage, a continuation of the plan that began with putting Renny Renwick in this machine.”

He leaned forward impressively.

“I am going to cut in on Jones' game,” he finished. “I am going to grab the ball from him and carry it over for a touchdown. I'm hiring you to help me.”

Prinz stopped staring and his eyes, when they moved, were the eyes of an animal in a trap.

He said, “Why didn't you tell me Doc Savage was in it.”

“I knew you weren't afraid of him,” said Space, knowing that was probably the one thing that would keep Prinz from walking out.

Prinz sat there white-faced for a while.

“We'll have to kill Savage right away,” he said. “We can't have him running around loose. You understand that?”

“I understand that,” Space agreed.

THEY left their sandwiches untasted, paid the check, and got in Space's bright roadster. "We'll go out and watch Jones and his place," Space explained. "You ride out with me. You can round up your men by telephone."

Prinz nodded stiffly. "Stop by the cigar store," he said.

From the cigar store Prinz secured a small suitcase, and when they were in Space's car, rolling through the city, he opened the case to show the apparatus within. "Radio," he said proudly. "One of them transceivers. I can contact my men with it. Modern, just like the army."

Space laughed. He was genuinely pleased. He liked efficiency in such things, because he had no misunderstandings about what he was tackling. It was a big thing, and not an ordinary thing-not ordinary when men like Albert Jones and Doc Savage were involved.

Eventually, they drove past the drugstore where Albert Jones had deliberately bought the drug so that Doc Savage would learn the fact. Space did not exactly understand that. Jones wanted Savage to get on his trail, of course. But what Jones intended to do then was something Space did not understand.

Space glanced at the drugstore and saw something which gave him a chill. It was hard, very hard, for him to control himself for a moment. He did not like being so scared; however, it made him feel good that he was able to control himself so fully that Prinz did not notice the way he felt.

"We could kill him now," Space said. "But it would be a little too early in the game, don't you think?"

Prinz suddenly looked as if he wanted to jump out of the car. "Savage is around here?" he gasped.

"In that drugstore," Space said.

Chapter V. A TWISTING TRAIL

THE druggist was amiable and co-operative. What was more, he had a good memory. "Yes, I know Mr. Jones," he explained. "I have known him for years-all the time he has lived in this neighborhood. A very fine man. An estimable gentleman."

"What does he do?" Doc inquired.

"Oh, he buys lots of ice cream and cigars from me," the druggist explained. "Or do you mean-what is his business?"

"Yes, what is Jones' business?"

"I don't know," the druggist admitted.

"What church does he attend?"

"I-ah-don't know."

"Is he married?"

"Well, I'm not sure."

It seemed that the druggist did not know Mr. Jones so well, after all.

“What is his address?” Doc asked.

The druggist knew that. He gave it with some relief, and effused thanks as he accepted the reward which Doc Savage paid him.

Then, when Doc was moving toward the door, the druggist called out, “Oh, wait! I thought of something else.”

Doc paused. “Yes?”

“Mr. Jones has been purchasing some rather unusual chemicals through me,” said the druggist. “I-ah-wasn't going to mention them, but you were so generous with the reward.” He hesitated uncomfortably. “The chemical lists are unusual enough that you might be interested. Would you care to see them?”

Doc said, “I would.”

“In the back room,” the druggist explained, and led the way through a partition.

The back room contained the motley stuff that back rooms in drugstores usually contain. There was a young woman bending over a work table, apparently mixing something in a pestle and mortar.

“I'll show you what I have to show you,” the druggist said. His voice was suddenly high and nervous.

The young woman turned slowly and picked up a cloth and then, with great quickness whisked the cloth aside and disclosed a large pistol which had the barrel sawed off.

The speech she made was long for the circumstances, and delivered all in one breath. “This is what we have to show you!-you will kindly get your hands up, because I happen to know about that bullet-proof vest you wear, and I won't shoot you there.”

THE druggist was white and shaking. It was plain that he had just been hired to do this.

The girl was interesting. Even to Doc Savage, who carefully thwarted his interest in such things, knowing that if he fell in love, enemies were sure to strike at him through the girl.

She was more than just a pretty girl. More to her than a sun-tanned skin of velvet, eyes as red-brown as the pelt of a hill fox, and clothes that were golden and in good taste. There was a racing vitality about her, a quality of speed, dash, of bounding force and lighted fuses.

She said, “Search him, Mr. Weagles.”

Mr. Weagles was the druggist and he was too scared to search anyone.

She then told Doc Savage, “I'm afraid to search you myself. I've heard about you. But I don't know whether or not I am afraid to shoot you. I might not be, though.”

Doc Savage made no comment. He did not look excited.

His quietness did not seem to surprise the girl.

“Back outside,” she ordered. “The rear door. It will do you no good to make a noise. There is no one in the drugstore except Mr. Weagles' employees, and they know what is happening.”

Doc Savage did as she ordered him. The drugstore was in a suburban section, and the rear opened into an empty lot of some size which had been planted with trees and bushes in profusion, and also surrounded by a high green hedge. Tables and chairs-for ice cream served from the drugstore-stood around. There was no one in sight.

“Mr. Jones!” the girl said sharply.

The little man with the little-girl face came out of a nearby bush. It was not hard to recognize Albert Jones.

He had told Renny that he was afraid of Doc Savage, that he was overawed by the Man of Bronze. He had not lied.

“Search him,” the girl ordered.

Reluctantly, but driven by desperate determination, Jones went over Doc Savage's person and removed the more obvious objects, which consisted of a number of small metal cases. “Goodness,” Jones said. “There seem to be innumerable things in his clothing. And he is wearing some kind of a vest that feels like canvas but seems to be made of steel.”

The girl was impatient with Jones' nervousness. “Take him to the house,” she ordered, “and we can finish the job there.”

Jones nodded shakily. He seemed relieved that she took the initiative and suggested ideas. It was the girl who paid Mr. Weagles, the druggist, a sum of money for his treachery in inveigling Doc into the back room.

They walked through the bushes to a side street on which there were no houses for four blocks. They went across the lots toward a small patch of woods in which stood a house.

Doc asked, “Buying the drug was a clue deliberately planted to decoy me to that drugstore, I suppose?”

“Yes, it was,” the young woman said.

“Whose idea?”

She nodded at the little man with the little-girl face. “Mr. Jones,” she said.

Mr. Jones looked miserable.

THE house was elderly but solid and made of brick. Its lawn needed mowing badly, or plowing up and reseeded. Doc was shown inside.

“My name is Rogers,” the girl said. “Annice Rogers. I hope you do not mind if we finish searching you.”

“Wait!” gasped the little man. He scampered away and came back soon with pale-amber liquid in a tall glass. “Drink this,” he commanded.

There was no loudness or excitement, but plenty of solid firmness in Doc's voice as he said, “From this point on we can make each other a lot of trouble or get along smoothly, depending on how it is handled.”

The little Jones was taken aback. “I-yes,” he said. “Yes, that is probably true.”

Doc said, "I want to know what this is about."

The little man seemed tongue-tied.

The girl, Annice Rogers, said, "Talk up to him, Mr. Jones. We are not committing any crime-not in our opinion, at least. So talk up to him."

Albert Jones had the facial expressions of a man squirming mentally. "I am afraid I managed this badly. I have an invention. I want your help with it. Did your friend, Mr. Renny Renwick, explain my invention to you?" he asked eagerly.

"Renny explained it," Doc said.

"Good!"

"What you did to Renny was not nice," Doc said. "He was a distraught, nervous wreck. His mental condition was so upset that, if we had not gotten hold of him he would have gone off to the Canadian Northwest. His life disrupted for months."

"He was leaving?" gasped Jones.

"Yes."

"I am so glad he didn't," Jones said nervously. "You see, my whole object in putting Mr. Renwick in the machine was to demonstrate it for your benefit."

"My benefit?"

"To draw it to your attention, I mean."

Doc asked, "Why did you want my attention?"

Jones was losing his nervousness and showing the signs of a fanatic. "The thing is wonderful!" he gasped. "Just think of its possibilities, in the right hands. All the facts of history, all the knowledge and discoveries since the beginning of mankind, all those things that have been forgotten, can be brought back to us if we get hold of the present-day descendants of the people who knew the things we want to know."

Doc Savage studied the other intently. "There are doubtless a few lost treasures for the locating, too."

"I am not interested in that," Jones said quickly. "Money does not intrigue me. It is the knowledge one could get from this thing, the infinite good one could do mankind."

Jones, in his growing excitement, stepped forward and put a hand on Doc's arm as he continued, "Think of it! Think what it would mean to Christianity, for instance, to have clear memories, memories as clear as a photographic record, of the days of Christ and His teachings. Think what that alone would mean to this troubled world today!"

His voice became shrill with agitation. "That by itself would grip the imagination of mankind today. It might even be a thing so great that it would drive from man's thoughts all this horrible cycle of wars we are having. Why, it could readily mark the beginning of a new era in humanity."

Annice Rogers was suddenly beside Doc Savage, her face eager. "You will test the thing, won't you? You see, we want you to take charge of it. Or Mr. Jones does. That is why we are doing this."

Doc Savage's metallic features remained without expression, but he was thinking, because there came

into existence the tiny and exotic trilling sound which was his unconscious habit in moments of mental excitement.

And, finally, he said, "Go ahead."

"COME on!" exclaimed Jones excitedly. "No, here-drink this!" He extended his glass of amber liquid.

Doc took the glass, examined the contents and asked, "The vitamin cocktail which you gave Renny Renwick?"

Jones nodded. "Yes. It is really a mild drug, of course. A modified hypnotic, as you may be able to tell from the taste. It is intended to merely soothe you and relax your body-separate your consciousness from your body to some extent. That is the way it works." He smiled apologetically. "As in hypnotism, my machine will not work well on a person who is tense and not relaxed."

Doc drank the liquid.

They climbed a stairway. There seemed to be an upstairs arrangement that was a great, unfurnished bare room. The stairs and walls were plain unpainted wood as they climbed.

Jones stopped dramatically before a door.

"I must warn you of something," he said.

"Yes?" Doc watched him.

"I have no control over what you will remember," Jones said.

"Then, in Renny's case, you did not deliberately make him remember Renaticus?"

"No. I have no control. I think your first memory will be the strongest one, the one which is most outstanding in your past-the past of your ancestors, that is. In the case of Mr. Renwick, it was Renaticus who tried to murder Columbus. In your case, I do not know what it will be."

"Then we understand that," Doc said.

Jones unlocked the door.

The place was a laboratory. The roof of the house was a shed-shaped affair on the south side. That entire side of the house was a huge panel of window glass.

The scientific apparatus in the place was modern, and there was a large quantity of it. In one end of the room stood an assortment of lathes, saws, grinders, a small forge, a welding outfit and other equipment for making objects out of metal and glass. Evidently, Jones manufactured most of his own stuff.

The invention itself was not immediately enlightening. It occupied the center of the room, in front of the big window, and there were curtains which could be drawn to shut it off entirely from view.

It was a great dark box of an affair. The dark box was obviously the jacket, which was made of wood, with here and there a glass-covered inspection window, or a tube which entered from another gadget, or an insulator for a wire.

Jones smiled.

“That is my first model,” he said. “It is very bulky and not very efficient.” He took Doc's arm. “Here is my latest model, which is much more compact.”

He whisked a cloth from a smaller box which could have been a casket, except that it was much larger.

“Completely self-contained,” Jones said proudly. “You need electric current, ordinary alternating current on a light voltage, for a connection. That is all.”

He opened the gadget, lifting a lid. There was a recess exposed which resembled the interior of a coffin. It had no satin lining, however. It did not look comfortable.

“You merely lie in it,” Jones said. “The machine does the rest. There is no danger, I assure you.”

“Now?” Doc asked.

“Now,” Jones said.

Doc got in the machine.

Chapter VI. WATCHDOG

SPACE, the hard-brown man who was looking out for himself, kept the telephone receivers clamped to his ears. The receivers were attached to an amplifier, which was in turn attached to a series of microphones cunningly hidden in the home of Albert Jones.

Space was lying in an unused garage several blocks away, and the man named Prinz, whom he had hired, was with him.

Space cursed as he listened.

“Damned if I get it!” he snarled. “He is going right ahead and putting Savage in that thing-as he said he was going to do. It doesn't make sense.”

Prinz said, “He gave Savage a logical explanation. He wants to put that machine in the hands of a man who will see that it is used right.”

Space swore again.

“That's not Jones' game,” he said. “I know it can't be. That Jones has gone to too much trouble.”

“He could be a screwball,” Prinz suggested. “Take a guy who was part-screwball to invent a thing like that, wouldn't it? Sure. A screwball is likely to do anything.”

Space swore some more, made no other answer.

Prinz asked, “Who hid the microphones in Jones' house?”

Space said, “I did. I've been checking up on Jones for a week.”

“And you're sure Jones is pulling something on Savage?”

“Positive.”

“Where does the girl come in?”

Space muttered profanely and adjusted one of the control knobs on the amplifier.

“Something strange about her,” he said.

“How you mean?”

“Her name isn't Annice Rogers, as she says.”

“No?”

“Her real name is Annice Stevens, and she's the daughter of an old fellow named Secret Stevens. That's really his name.”

“Which leads up to what?” Prinz asked.

“This Secret Stevens,” said Space dryly, “was once a close associate of Clark Savage, Sr., who was Doc Savage's father. Now don't ask me what that means. But it means something. I'm sure of that.”

Prinz lit a cigarette. He was nervous. “So Jones is putting Savage in the machine for some reason other than he just said.”

“Sure,” Space said. “It's as plain as the nose on your face, isn't it?”

“Why don't we just walk in and take the machine and be satisfied with that.” Prinz removed from a pocket a death-dealing device of his own inventing, a package of cigarettes, each cigarette being a cleverly fashioned, spring-operated gun containing a dart coated with cyanide and other poisons. He indicated his death device proudly. “I think I could take Savage with this,” he said. “Why don't we just walk in, grab him, and dispose of the contraption?”

Space was not tempted.

“There's something big behind this,” he said. “Let's find out what it is.”

Chapter VII. A SKELETON SO HIDEOUS

IT was a sensation of dullness at first.

It was not unpleasant, nor was it particularly inviting, because there was enough consciousness for there to be awareness, and that led to doubt, and doubt engendered fear. The sensation of consciousness, or awareness, never did seem to leave.

The lights came toward the end of the dullness, and enlivened it.

They were colored lights, but in gentle shades and gentle colors. Soothing and suave, slow and peaceful, strange and interesting. They were like the lights from the colorama cameras used in insane asylums to soothe the insane.

Doc Savage had the feeling that he was relaxed, and that he could not have been anything but relaxed, completely and deliciously. It was rather pleasant.

He began to hear the voice. It was a low voice, a friendly one, but one he did not recognize, and he did not understand the words either for a while, for they seemed to come out of an infinite fog. But finally the words were understandable. The voice was telling him to bring forth a memory which he had never had

before. Telling him to grope and grope and find the spot where hidden memories were locked, and to bring one of them forth.

By now Doc Savage had lost all awareness that he was in the machine which Albert Jones had invented.

The voice seemed quietly satisfied with itself, and finally it was silent, or at least Doc could no longer hear it clearly, although it might have been a background.

The memory began to come.

It was like approaching a battle.

It began gently. It was like a motion picture with sound—that is, Doc felt himself to be part of it, a living and acting presence, yet able to take no corporeal part in the thing.

A ghost must feel like that if there is any such thing as a ghost. A ghost walking among living people, seeing and hearing them, yet unable to speak or make its presence known. You try to grab one of the people before you to show him the error of his ways, and your hands pass through him, and he is not aware of your presence. That was the way it was.

Doc Savage saw his father.

He saw his father move and speak. It was his father. Clark Savage, Sr., was dressed as Doc had often seen him dressed. He was dressed for the jungle.

There was jungle all around. It was a tropical country. There were *uamil* bushes all around, *ceiba* trees, *cuhoon* palms, and *chichem* trees. There were tiny parakeets and pairs of yellow-headed parrots dining off *chichem* berries.

So it was Central America.

There was a man with Clark Savage, Sr. He was a small, wide man who was thin in spite of being so wide. He was a pleasant man, with a face as square and amiable as a child's building block. He wore snake boots, laced breeches, and a helmet; nothing else. An enormous machete was lying on the table.

The table was in a tent.

Doc Savage's father had just come out of the jungle.

“There is nothing,” he told the small man. “Nothing at all, Stevens. I reached the Valley of the Vanished, and it is all a cock-and-bull story. There are no Mayans and no treasure.” Clark Savage, Sr., was lying.

A MULTITUDE of thoughts ran through the mind of Clark Savage, Sr.

The man in the jungle with him was Secret Stevens, and to Stevens he owed a great deal. Stevens had saved the elder Savage's life on two occasions. He had furnished money for the scientific expeditions of Clark Savage, Sr., and more than that, he had given Savage faith when it was a precious and necessary thing. Literally his life and everything that he was he owed to this little man, Stevens.

Yet he was lying to Stevens.

Clark Savage, Sr., and Stevens were here in the Central American jungle on a partnership agreement. They were looking for a fabulous hoard of gold that was rumored to be located in a lost valley deep in

the Central American mountains. A lost valley, reported to be presided over by a vanished tribe of Maya. A legendary place, sacred to ancient Maya. A spot of fabulous wealth. They had come here to search for it, Savage and Stevens together, and they were to share and share alike.

Stevens had searched to the north.

Savage had hunted to the south.

They were meeting here.

Clark Savage, Sr., had found the valley, the strange Valley of the Vanished, and it was more fabulous and more amazing than any of its legends.

“I did not find it,” he told Stevens. “It is not there. The legends are based on nothing. It was a wild-goose chase.”

And, telling that he, Clark Savage, Sr., thought: It is not as if I were stealing from him, because I am taking something he has never had, except in his dreams. But I have to take it. I have to have a heritage of wealth to pass on to my son, Clark Savage, Jr. The man who is already known as Doc Savage.

“That is too bad,” said Secret Stevens. “It washes us up.”

The elder Savage thought: I will commit this one crime. My son has to have money. I put him in the hands of scientists when he was a child, and he has been trained until his abilities are beyond those of other men, and he will follow the career I have planned for him, the career of righting wrongs and punishing evildoers. He must have this gold. I will leave it to him as his heritage.

Old Secret Stevens was looking like a broken man.

“This is tough,” he muttered.

CLARK SAVAGE, SR., looked at poor old Secret Stevens and thought: This finishes him financially, of course. And his health has been wrecked by this expedition. That means he is a ruined man, financially and physically.

It was a hard thing to do to Secret Stevens. Stevens had been his friend, and more than that, his financial staff and his spiritual adviser. He was a good man, a kind man, was old Secret Stevens.

But there was incredible, fabulous wealth in that strange Valley of the Vanished.

“You are sure?” asked Stevens gloomily. “You searched everywhere?”

“I searched everywhere,” lied Clark Savage, Sr. “I missed nothing.”

And he thought: He will never know I am lying. I was not fool enough to bring back any samples of the gold, or anything to show that there is such a spot as the Valley of the Vanished. My native packers were not with me at the time. No one knows.

“What,” asked old Secret Stevens, “do you suggest we do.”

Clark Savage, Sr., shrugged carefully. “There is nothing left to do. Chalk it up to experience. Quit. Go back to civilization.”

“This meant a lot to me,” Stevens said.

“I know it did.”

“I spent every cent I have in the world. I will not be able to make another trip like this. My health won't stand it.”

I am going through with this, thought the elder Savage.

“That is too bad,” he said callously.

No one will ever know of this one crime, Savage thought; it will be a skeleton buried forever in my life.

Chapter VIII. SECRET STEVENS

WITH an expression of anxious concern on his fat little-girl face, Albert Jones assisted Doc Savage out, of the machine. “Take it easy, Mr. Savage,” he warned. “The thing leaves you very dizzy and confused, I admit. The symptoms wear off quickly, but in the meantime, take it easy.”

Doc Savage sank on a chair.

Albert Jones saw Doc's face.

“Oh!” Jones cried. “Oh, my! You've had an unpleasant experience!”

Doc Savage made no comment. His metallic features were like stone.

“Oh, my!” Jones gasped. “I am so sorry. Oh, I am sorry!”

The girl looked at Doc Savage with concern, then threw Jones a glance of disapproval. “What on earth is wrong with your machine, that it can't bring back pleasant things?” she asked angrily.

Jones was very concerned. He wrung his hands. “I'm so sorry, really I am. But I have no control over what the machine does. I told you that. It just unlocks the door to the secret memory boxes in the mind. Naturally, the box with the strongest memory flies open first. I can't help it. I'm so sorry.”

Doc Savage said, in a thin, strained voice, “Get me some coffee. I think that will straighten me out.”

“I'll make some,” the girl cried, and hurried away.

Repeatedly, Albert Jones tried to talk to Savage. The bronze man made no answers. The girl brought coffee, black as octopus spit and as strong as acid. Doc drank it. He sat there awhile. He got to his feet.

“Where are you going?” Jones gasped. “Please don't leave this way! Calm yourself. I brought you here to show you the possibilities of my machine for the good of humanity, and I want you to -”

“Do you know a man named Secret Stevens?” Doc asked.

The girl, Annice, turned her face carefully away.

“Why, no,” said Jones. “Stevens? Secret Stevens? No, I never heard the name.” He stared at the bronze man. “Is he connected in some way with the memory which you had in my machine?”

“That is right,” Doc said. “I have to find him.”

“But-”

“I have to find Stevens,” Doc said.

“But-”

“Come with me; you and the young lady,” Doc Savage said quietly. “I will explain what happened while we are hunting Stevens.”

“I . . . I have a car I will loan you,” Jones offered.

“My own machine is parked near that drugstore,” Doc Savage said grimly. “My friends will be there, too. We will speak to them so that they will not be worried.”

THEY found Doc's aides in and around the drugstore. Monk, Ham, Long Tom, Johnny and Renny had discovered Doc's mysterious absence from the drugstore, and they had turned the place upside down. Monk had become suspicious of the druggist. The homely chemist had cornered the fellow and was frightening the story of Doc's seizure out of him.

Doc's appearance relieved them greatly.

“Return to headquarters and wait for me,” Doc directed.

Big-fisted Renny Renwick looked at the bronze man's strained face. “I see you got a shock out of that machine, too, Doc.”

The bronze man nodded slightly.

“Can we help you?” Renny asked.

“No, thank you.”

“What is it?”

The bronze man hesitated. “A great wrong done a man,” he said finally in a low voice. “Which I can right myself.”

Renny saw that Doc did not wish to talk about it. He got Monk and the others in the second of their two cars which were on the scene and they departed.

Doc Savage, Annice and Albert Jones rode in Doc's car. The bronze man drove rapidly toward Manhattan. After a while he began to talk.

He told them what had happened to him in the machine. Both Annice and Jones listened intently, and both became uncomfortable. “Such a horrible thing!” Jones muttered. “About your own father! I am so sorry.”

Annice sat sidewise in the seat and studied the bronze man. She seemed much impressed by him. “You never knew of this incident in Central America before?” she asked.

“Of course not,” Doc said.

“Does this lost valley, this Valley of the Vanished, actually exist?”

The bronze man said that it did. He said so reluctantly, because the Valley of the Vanished was a secret from the world. It was known in a few quarters that he had a source of wealth that was secret, but actual existence of the place was unknown, as far as he knew, to anyone but himself and his five associates.

“What are you going to do about this?” Annice asked curiously.

“There is only one thing to do,” the bronze man said grimly. “Find this Secret Stevens and make restitution.”

The girl turned her face away and settled back in the seat. She looked rather strange, as if she might be disgusted with herself.

Doc Savage stopped at a police station and visited the detective bureau in order to consult the remarkably complete assortment of city directories kept on hand there. He searched for the name of Secret Stevens. Albert Jones and Annice helped him, but it was Doc himself who finally located the name of Stevens.

Stevens, Secret, 1280 Bolden Avenue, Englewood, New Jersey.

SECRET STEVENS did not look as old as might have been expected from his appearance in the machine-memory. There was an ageless quality in his squat, smiling figure. He recognized Doc instantly.

“Doc Savage,” he said. He looked the bronze man up and down. “You look a little like your father, of course.” He smiled. “A fine man, your father.”

“You were very close to my father,” Doc said.

“That's right.”

“How does it happen that you never got in touch with me?” Doc asked.

Secret Stevens shrugged. “I had nothing to offer you,” he said. “I am not a man who imposes on others. Won't you come in?”

Secret Stevens was a very poor man, Doc saw.

The shack was small, very cheap, and had the heart-rending quality that comes from cheapness and extreme cleanliness. The furniture was old and carefully patched. The house stood in a rather miserable section, shut off from the fine residences which composed a great deal of Englewood.

There was a large vegetable garden behind the house and a pen with chickens. It would be a reasonable guess that from these, Secret Stevens drew much of his livelihood.

When Stevens moved he limped slightly.

He apologized amiably for his limp. “Bullet through the knee,” he explained. “Got it in Central America one time in a fight in which your father helped me.”

Doc asked, “Not by chance on one of the occasions when you saved his life?”

Secret Stevens looked around sharply. “Son,” he said. “I never did anything for your father for which I expected payment. An offer of payment would have made me mad. It still does. So if you've got something like that on your mind, forget it.”

Doc Savage took a chair. He was uncomfortable. He said, "This is one of the hardest things I have had to do in my life."

Stevens frowned at him. "What's eating you, son?"

Doc told him, making it a complete story.

Stevens listened with obvious amazement and chuckling disbelief at the story of Albert Jones' machine for reviving dormant memories.

He became sober when he heard the part about the Valley of the Vanished—the finding of it and the withholding of the news of its existence by the elder Savage.

Doc Savage finished.

There was silence in the room for some time.

Secret Stevens wrinkled his small square face with quizzical seriousness. "Why did you come here, boy?"

"You were done a wrong," Doc said bluntly. "It is impossible for me not to do anything about it."

Secret Stevens looked at the floor. "You have had the use of that gold a great many years, I take it. In your hands it has done enough good to repay many thousandfold for any dishonesty connected with your acquiring it. Dishonesty, incidentally, for which you had no responsibility."

Doc shook his head firmly.

"There will have to be a restitution," he said.

Chapter IX. PLAN

THE man named Space beat his hands against his thighs in his excitement.

"This is it!" he chortled. "This is what I've waited for all my life!"

His helper, Nickolas Prinz, was much impressed by the set of microphones which Space had previously hidden in old Secret Stevens' shack. "Say, how'd you know to plant mikes here?" he asked.

Space said, "I told you the girl, Annice, is the daughter of old Secret Stevens. As soon as I found that out I planted the mikes in old Stevens' shack."

"Oh," said Prinz admiringly. "You don't overlook many bets."

Space was trembling in excitement. "For years," he gasped, "I've heard about the enormous wealth of this Doc Savage. Now I know where it comes from! What a break for the right guy!"

Prinz, who was a practical man, said, "You lack a hell of a lot of knowing *exactly* where it came from, if you ask me."

Space said, "We'll get it! We'll get it! I've got a plan!"

"What about Albert Jones' machine?"

"We'll get that, too." Space whirled. "Get your men out here! Get them out here fast!"

“How many of them?” Prinz asked.

“How many have you got?”

“Sixteen. But if we use all of them, it will cost you more-”

“Get them all!” Space snapped. “We won't fight about expenses. You know how much money may be involved in this? Maybe a billion dollars! Maybe more!”

Prinz, lifted by the contagious excitement of the other man, unlimbered his small radio transceiver and began getting in touch with his men. “All right,” he said shortly. “They're coming. What'll they do when they get here?”

“I want an airplane,” Space said. “I want a big, fast ship. One that can fly to Central America.”

Prinz became alarmed. “Hey, the government has a system of checking on all planes. You can't fly anywhere without being traced.”

“I want the plane traced,” Space told him.

“Huh?” Prinz scowled. “Look here, what good will this do you? Suppose there is a place called the Valley of the Vanished, which is full of gold. What good is that going to do you when you don't know where it is?”

“I'll find where it is,” Space said. “I tell you I've got a scheme that can't fail.”

IN the shack, Doc Savage had been arguing with old Secret Stevens for some time. The old fellow was surprisingly adamant about the situation. Suppose he had been wronged by Doc's father in the old days? It had been a long time ago. It was a forgotten thing. “Furthermore,” old Stevens said, “that gold has been put to a lot better use than I would ever have put it.”

Doc Savage looked around at the obvious evidences of poverty. “It takes a great deal of character to say that,” he said.

Stevens laughed. “I'm happy here. Maybe I don't always get all I need to eat, but I'm happy enough. My days of greed and wandering the face of the earth are over.”

There was a knock on the door.

Nickolas Prinz stood outside. He said, “I am sorry to bother you. I am an inspector from the county board.” He walked inside without being invited.

Doc Savage, instantly alert, asked, “The county board of what?”

Prinz suddenly showed a revolver. “Board of activities,” he said. “But don't be too active.” He waved the gun menacingly. “Come in, guys.”

His men appeared in a swarm. They scrambled in through the door. They knocked the glass out of the windows and climbed through.

Old Secret Stevens stared at them. He was a man of courage. He reached out, got a chair and threw it at Prinz. Prinz dodged the chair.

Doc Savage went down, skidded sidewise, and ended behind the large old iron stove. He took a grenade out of his clothing and tossed it. It was a smoker. It sounded like a small shotgun under water and filled the place with black, stinking smoke.

“Gas!” Doc Savage shouted, hoping that would have some effect. It didn't. They seemed to know the difference between a plain smoke bomb and one containing gas.

There was no fire in the stove. It was suddenly still in the shack. Doc took a lid off the stove and tossed it so that it rolled through the blackness.

There were no shots. But men charged for the sound.

They were, then, not going to shoot him if they could help it.

The bronze man came out from behind the stove. He said, “Stevens, Miss Rogers, Jones, get out of here!”

“I'll stick,” old Secret Stevens said dryly. “I've been in these things before.”

Judging from the sound, someone then hit the old man with a fist.

Doc asked, “Do you know who they are?”

“No,” Stevens said. He sounded as if he had been hit hard, probably with a fist.

Doc found a man and got him by the neck. But not before the fellow shrieked. The shriek brought aid.

After that the place was suddenly full of flashing violence. There was no shooting or knifing, but there was everything else in the way of a violent fight.

“Don't kill anyone!” Prinz kept gasping. “Don't kill Savage or Stevens.”

Doc said, “Jones! Miss Rogers!”

There was no answer.

“I think they got away,” yelled old Secret Stevens in the blackened, fight-filled shack. Then the old man croaked in agony. He had been hit again, with more damage this time.

A man got hold of Doc Savage. Doc tried but was not able to kick him off. Another man joined the first, then a third. Doc settled down to the grim business of getting loose.

But he was careful not to try too hard. He had decided to let them take him; he wanted to know what was behind the affair.

Wind came in through the open windows and the open door and blew the smoke away.

PRINZ got up off the floor, making faces, and reached into his mouth with two fingers and brought out what seemed to be two whole teeth and part of a third. He threw these on the floor.

Prinz ran to the door and looked out. The girl, Annice, and Albert Jones, were running away. Jones was running very fast for a fat man.

Two men appeared. They could have intercepted the girl and Jones but Prinz waved them back.

Old Secret Stevens was sprawled on the floor. A man stood over him, one foot on Stevens' throat, holding a chair ready in case Stevens should move, which he did not.

Doc Savage was a center, like the seed in a cling peach, of a knot on the floor. The knot was shaggy with arms and legs, which waved.

"Hold him," Prinz pleaded. "Hold him, whatever you do!"

Prinz went looking for something that would do as a club. He found the "lifter" used to take the lids off the stove, and with this he took several judicious whacks at Doc Savage's head.

"Careful," he pleaded, as if with himself. "This guy has got to be alive so he can be seen on the plane flight to the south."

He got Doc Savage motionless on the floor.

"Don't let go of him," he warned. He looked as if he was sweating blood. "Keep hold of him. We'll get ropes and a strait jacket or something."

Prinz ran to the door and looked out. He saw no sign of Space, so he dashed outside and ran along the path.

In the distance he heard the motor of a car start. It was the machine in which Doc Savage, Jones, and the girl had arrived. It went away as fast as it could.

Space came out of the brush and confronted Prinz.

"Jones and the girl get away?" Space demanded.

"Yes. I let them escape, like you said," Prinz told him.

"You mention my name?"

"No."

"Did anybody mention my name?" Space persisted.

"No."

"That's good," Space said. "It's important. Now, here is what you do. You get Doc Savage and Secret Stevens on that plane and head south with them."

"South where?" demanded Prinz.

"Central America. The country of Hidalgo. I've heard that's where this secret source of gold of Doc Savage's comes from."

"Hidalgo," said Prinz, "ain't exactly a definite destination. That country ain't so small, and it's back in them mountains, to-hell-from-nowhere."

Space was impatient.

"You head for Hidalgo," he ordered. "Fly out to sea first, and-no, better take the inland route. Fly high, and try to keep in clouds all you can. Keep away from defense areas, and try to avoid trouble."

"I would rather take the sea route," Prinz said grimly. "At sea you meet reconnaissance bombers, and we

would stand a chance of outrunning them. But we couldn't outrun army pursuit ships if they came up to investigate us."

"All right," Space snapped impatiently.

"Where do we head for in Hidalgo?"

"I'll advise you by radio," Space said, "when I find out."

"O. K."

Space said, "And I want another plane to head south with all your men, plenty of guns and ammunition. Take hand grenades, gas, and everything you would need."

"Need for what?"

"For anything that might happen."

"O. K." Then Prinz thought of something else. "You want this flight to attract some attention, don't you? You want it to be plain that we're headed south with Doc Savage?"

"Yes."

"How do you want us to attract attention to ourselves?"

"I don't care what you do," said Space. "Land at some little out-of-the-way airport on the way south for gasoline, and wind up by shooting at the airport attendants. That will draw attention to you."

Prinz laughed unpleasantly. "Brother, you like to do things," he said, "with other people's necks."

ALBERT JONES and the girl who had said her name was Annice Rogers drove wildly in Doc Savage's car. The machine had a great deal of power, and it was not difficult to keep the speedometer needle around a hundred whenever the straightness of the road would allow.

Having recovered her breath, Annice asked, "What went wrong? Who were those men?"

"I don't know," said Albert Jones grimly. "But they certainly played hell with things."

Annice said, "I think they are some men who are after that gold in the Valley of the Vanished."

Albert Jones almost took a corner too fast. The car skidded off on the shoulder and threw dust and clods high in the air. He got it straightened out.

"I think you are right," Albert Jones agreed, regaining color.

"But you have no idea who they were?"

"No."

"Have you hired anyone who would, double-cross you, Mr. Jones?" asked Annice.

"The only people I have hired are you and Doyle Space."

Annice tightened her fingers in her lap.

“Doyle Space-I’ll bet it is him!” she said.

“Maybe.”

“What are you going to do?”

Albert Jones caught sight of a building beside the road with a high flagpole and a sign announcing headquarters of the New Jersey State police.

“I am going to turn it over to the police,” he said. He jammed a foot on the brake and brought the car to a stop in front of the State police station.

He and the girl exchanged glances. “What about your machine?” she asked.

“We won’t mention that,” Albert Jones said. They got out and went into the police station. Being in a police station, or the recent excitement, or some such factor, suddenly made fat, little-girl faced Albert Jones too excited to speak coherently.

Annice told the police, “My friend, Mr. Jones here, and Doc Savage and I were visiting my father at 1280 Bolden Avenue, in Englewood,” she said. “Some men attacked and seized my father and Mr. Savage. We escaped. It was only a few seconds ago. If you hurry you may be able to catch them.”

“Great grief!” exploded the officer.

THERE were several policemen waiting around the trooper headquarters, and these piled into patrol cars. Howling sirens made them sound like a string of cats chasing each other up the road. There was deadly efficiency in the way they piled out at 1280 Bolden Avenue, and covered the vicinity, although it proved to be much effort for nothing.

Albert Jones was still speechless. It was evident that being in the company of police officers upset him greatly.

“Got away,” said the cop in charge.

Annice was suddenly near tears. “My poor dad!” she gasped. “He’s not-they didn’t-”

“He isn’t here,” said the officer. “Neither is Savage. There seems to have been a knock-down fight in the shack. They must have been overpowered and taken away.”

Albert Jones gathered enough control to say, “Officer, I want you to copy down a description of the men while it is fresh in my mind.”

Jones proceeded to describe Nickolas Prinz and such of the remaining assailants as he had seen. Annice, with hands knotted tightly, added some points of description which Jones had overlooked.

“You say these strangers just rushed in and seized Savage and Stevens,” remarked the officer. “You have no idea why?”

Jones said firmly, “Not the slightest idea.”

“All right, we’ll do all we can.” The police officer looked at Annice. “Do you think you’ll need a doctor, miss?”

She composed herself and shook her head. "No," she said. "No, I'll bear up."

BECAUSE Albert Jones was the more agitated of the two of them, Annice, herself, drove the car away from the scene. She headed toward New York.

"I think we should tell Doc Savage's friends, so they can help us," she said. "That is what I'm going to do."

As soon as the police were out of sight, Jones began recovering.

"You shouldn't have told them Secret Stevens was your father," he said.

"Why not?" Annice demanded. "He is. Why lie about it?"

"Well, the police are likely to start questions and find out about the machine," said Jones. "I wouldn't want them to do that."

Annice frowned. "They would be a lot more suspicious if they found out I was Secret Stevens' daughter when I had said I wasn't. After all, people around Englewood know Stevens is my father."

"Not many of them, I'll bet. You have been away in schools practically all your life." He eyed her disapprovingly. "You hardly knew your father by sight when you arrived a month ago, as I recall it."

Annice was hurt by this statement. She made no answer, but drove in angry silence to the long, multiple-approach to George Washington Bridge. Jones paid the toll and they rolled out on the bridge.

"Mr. Jones," she said.

"Yes?"

"Why were you so nervous around the police?"

The little-girl-faced Jones started, then avoided her inspection. "I was nervous, wasn't I?" he admitted. "I am awfully ashamed of it."

"You acted," Annice said, "like a man with a guilty conscience. You almost acted as if this affair might not be what you have led me to believe it is."

"I have always been nervous around policemen," Jones said uncomfortably. "It is nothing more than that."

He could not keep it from sounding like a lie.

RENNY RENWICK, the big-fisted engineer who was one of the Doc Savage associates, admitted Annice and Albert Jones into the headquarters reception room. Renny frowned at Jones and said, "I've given the subject a lot of thought, and I don't think I like you or your invention, Jones."

"Please!" Jones gasped. "Are your friends here? Call them! Something awful has happened."

Renny eyed him, said, "Holy cow!" and called Monk, Ham, Johnny and Long Tom out of the library.

Albert Jones confronted them.

“Don't interrupt me,” he said. “I seized Mr. Savage and put him in my machine, where an inherited memory was released in his mind. The memory was of Doc Savage's father having swindled his partner, Secret Stevens, out of the gold hoard in the place known as the Valley of the Vanished in Central America. Mr. Savage insisted on making restitution to Secret Stevens. We located Stevens in Englewood, New Jersey. While we were talking to him, a gang of unknown men set upon us and seized Mr. Savage and Mr. Stevens. We reported to the police, but the gang escaped with their prisoners. We came to tell you.”

“Blazes!” said the homely Monk.

There came the sound of a buzzer, softly muted. Ham said, “The door,” and went away.

Ham came back from the door looking astonished.

“A man who says his name is Doyle Space,” Ham announced. “He wants to talk to us. Says he knows what happened to Doc and Stevens.”

Chapter X. THE GUIDE

SPACE stood in the center of the reception room and looked at them with his hard-brown features. He was impressed by the office, but not upset. The big windows were open and the cool fall wind whipped across the sills, fluttering papers under paperweights on the big inlaid desk.

“I'm responsible for this,” he said flatly, “in a way.”

“You make an interesting start,” Ham Brooks told him. “Go ahead.”

Ham Brooks was very dapper in an afternoon coat and the correct trousers. His pet, the chimpanzee named Chemistry, was crouching in one corner of the reception room. In the other corner, in no pleasant mood, was a pig. The pig had extremely long legs and ears that were like Dumbo's, fit for flying. He was Habeas Corpus, and he was Monk's pet. Ham Brooks claimed not to care for him at all. Monk had owned Habeas Corpus for a long time and he had managed to develop some remarkable qualities in the hog.

Space sucked in a deep breath. He was nervous. He let a little of it show, but not all of it. It was natural for a man to be nervous when he confronted men like these, and Space wanted to be natural.

He said, “Jones, here, hired me. He hired me to help him trap Renny Renwick, then Doc Savage, and put them in the memory-awakening machine.” He turned to Jones. “That right, Jones?”

Jones admitted it was right. He seemed confused.

“I have a friend-*had* a friend,” Space continued, correcting himself.

He looked from one of them to another.

“The friend's name was Prinz-Nickolas Prinz,” he said. “I told him about Mr. Jones' invention.”

Jones blanched. He yelled, “I told you not to breathe a word to anyone!”

Space shrugged. “I'm not perfect. The Spaces have always made mistakes. I made one of the biggest, I guess.”

Suddenly the pig, Habeas Corpus, made for the chimp named Chemistry. It was done suddenly, for the shote was as fast as a fox on his feet. He hit the startled but belligerent Chemistry, bowled him over, took a couple of flying bites, and rushed onto a chair, where he followed the traditional African warthog method of reversing himself hurriedly, and going under the chair stern-first. Chemistry squalled twice and landed on top of a desk, where he crouched, glaring.

Space shrugged.

“This guy Prinz did it like that,” he said. “He grabbed Doc Savage and Secret Stevens. He telephoned me, not five minutes ago, and asked me to throw in with him. Said he had forced Doc Savage to show him the location of the Valley of the Vanished by threatening to kill old Stevens.”

Annice gasped and clamped her hands to her cheeks. “Oh, poor dad!” she cried.

Long Tom Roberts looked at her sharply. “Is your name Stevens?”

“Annice Rogers Stevens,” she said.

It occurred to no one, apparently, to question her about her previous use of the name Rogers alone. The matter of what had happened to Doc Savage and Stevens was of more importance at the moment.

Monk said, “Space-you say your name is Space? What is this friend of yours going to do with Doc and Stevens?”

“Take them to Central America to this Valley of the Vanished,” Space said. “And then kill them. He'll keep them alive until he finds the place, of course, so that they can show him where it is. Then he will kill them.”

Monk said, “Then the thing to do is light out on their trail.”

THE Hidalgo Trading Co. was a homely blimp of a warehouse on the Hudson River water front, not far from the spot where the *Normandie* had capsized. The warehouse had no connection with Hidalgo, the Central American republic, other than that it had occurred to someone as a name for the warehouse. There was actually no Hidalgo Trading Co., except in name.

Contents of the warehouse were a little startling unless one knew what to suspect. The submarine, for instance, was a surprising craft; it would have astonished a submarine expert, for it was an experimental craft only. Some of the boats in the place were experimental and others weren't. It was the same with the planes.

Monk Mayfair stowed his pet pig, Habeas Corpus, in the cabin of the largest plane in the place, a huge amphibian. He told Ham, “You keep that what-is-it of yours away from my hog.”

“Away from your hog!” Ham was indignant. “You got a crust! Your hog started it.”

“Don't try to argue with me!” Monk yelled indignantly. The two climbed into the plane, to all appearances about to come to blows.

Annice looked anxious and Long Tom chuckled. “You'll have to get used to that,” he told her. “They even fight in their sleep.”

Albert Jones was looking uncomfortable. “You aren't planning on leaving me behind, are you?” he

demanded.

“Holy cow!” Renny said. “You don't want to go along, do you?”

Space put in, “Of course he does. We all want to go along and help.”

“Why?” Renny demanded.

Space looked at them grimly. “We got you in this.”

Renny glanced at Monk and Long Tom and the others. They seemed undecided. “We'd better talk this over,” Renny said. They drew aside, and discussed the matter. Monk was heartily in favor of letting Space, Jones and Annice-particularly Annice-come along. Ham said, “Sure, a pretty girl always sucks you in!”

Monk told him, “You better hope that music you play with your mouth qualifies you for playing a harp in the next world, you overdressed shyster. Because one of these days I'm gonna close up business on you.”

It was Johnny Littlejohn, using small words, who made the suggestion that appealed to them.

“Take them along, so we can keep an eye on them,” Johnny advised. “After all there is something faintly fishy about this. The girl first told Doc her name was Annice Rogers. She didn't say anything about being related to this Secret Stevens. There may be something to this we don't see.”

So it was agreed.

They loaded equipment into the big plane-their fighting regalia. The array of gadgets they took along was remarkable, but loading them rapidly was no trick. The stuff was in light metal cases, marked for identification. It was always kept ready for trips such as this.

They began climbing in the plane.

Monk caught Ham's arm and held him back.

“We'll take another plane,” Monk said. “That way, if something happens to this ship we'll have another one.”

Renny, Long Tom and Johnny were surprised. But they decided it was a good idea. Monk and Ham, with their pets, stood in the big hangar and watched the great doors open. Soon they saw the plane move out of the hangar with motors muttering, and the massive doors closed. They listened as the big ship rushed away across the river.

“NOW, master mind,” Ham demanded, “what was the idea?”

“I had a brainstorm,” Monk confessed.

“That's a good word for your ideas. What was it?”

“It struck me that in the excitement over Doc being grabbed we sort of overlooked Albert Jones' machine,” Monk explained.

“What do you propose to do?”

“There's a landing field close to Jones' house. We'll take the other big ship, drop down there, pick up

Jones' invention and take it along.”

“That's robbery. Jones might not like it.”

“The way he grabbed Renny and Doc was kidnaping,” Monk said, “in case he wants to get playful about it.”

Ham Brooks heartily approved of Monk's idea about picking up the Jones invention but he did not say so. He hated to agree with Monk about anything.

They climbed in the other ship, which was slightly smaller and faster than the one the others had taken. The tanks were kept full, so there was no delay about that. Monk worked with the complicated instrument panel, got the motors-there were two motors-kicking over. He punched a button, causing the radio-controlled hangar doors to open.

“You notice something?” Ham asked.

“Huh?”

“Jones and that girl-they didn't seem surprised by this warehouse place,” Ham said. “They never even asked what it was. Sort of acted as if they already knew.”

“Not many people know what this is,” Monk said, which was as near as he wanted to come to agreeing with Ham.

They got out on the river and into the air.

NOT quite an hour later they stood in Albert Jones' attic laboratory and eyed the apparatus which the place held. “One is as big as a box car,” Monk complained, “and the other is the size of a coffin, which is big enough. I didn't think they were so bulky.”

Ham said, “It is the small one Jones used. Renny told me about it while Doc was missing.”

“Then we'll take the small one.”

Monk rubbed his jaw. “You know something? I think I'll take a few minutes off and peek at the insides of one of these. I'd like to know how such a thing works.”

The homely chemist stood back and contemplated the two devices thoughtfully.

“I'll try the big one,” he decided. “It looks as if it would be easier to figure out.”

He moved around the huge dark box, peering into the inspection ports. What he saw was complicated, but not very satisfactory. He could not get the least idea of how the gadget might work.

“Come on,” Ham said impatiently. “You couldn't figure that thing out.”

Monk was indignant. Since he was rated one of the world's leading industrial chemists, he figured that he had reason to be. “Listen, I have been through the best colleges in the world,” he growled.

“Sure, and they all gave you black sheepskins,” Ham said. “Come on.”

“Keep your socks pulled up,” Monk said. “I'm going to pry into the big one. It won't take a minute.”

He found what seemed to be a hatch, which was sealed with wax, and bore a label that said, Do Not Open. Monk broke the seal and pried open the hatch.

Fire, violence, noise, came out of the box. The box itself flew to pieces. Since it was a very large box, one that would have held several pianos, this was quite a phenomenon.

Monk found himself getting, or trying to get, off the floor on the other side of the room. "What happened?" he gasped.

"The thing blew up," Ham said dryly. He beckoned. "Come over here and I'll show you something."

Monk, much battered and confused, followed Ham to the smaller device. Ham indicated a card which was fastened conspicuously to the end of the oversized coffin of an affair. It read:

WARNING

ANY ATTEMPT TO OPEN THIS DEVICE OR THE OTHER ONE WILL ONLY RESULT IN THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE MECHANISM. FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE SECRET, I HAVE WIRED THE DEVICE SO IT WILL DESTROY ITSELF WHEN TAMPERED WITH.

ALBERT JONES.

It suddenly occurred to Monk that Ham had backed across the room just before the other gadget exploded. "You knew what was gonna happen to me!" Monk bellowed.

Ham laughed heartily.

As a matter of fact he had not seen the warning card until after the explosion. But it pleased him to have Monk think otherwise.

Monk shouted suddenly, whirled and rushed out of the room and down the stairs. Alarmed, Ham ran to the window. Then he saw what had caused Monk's excitement. A passing laundry truck which they could hire to haul the smaller machine to their plane.

Ham turned back and examined the machine doubtfully. The thing was equipped with handles for carrying, indicating it was intended to be movable. But he hoped it would not explode, particularly after they got it in the plane.

He decided not to show that he was nervous. It would please Monk to think he was scared.

THE machine was heavy. Monk and Ham and the laundry driver were perspiring by the time they had the thing loaded in the plane. Monk, with great contrariness, insisted on lashing the device near the front of the plane cabin. Where, Ham thought, it will blow us out through the front end if it explodes.

"That's the center of gravity and the place for it," Monk told him.

"I'll handle the radio," Ham said maliciously. "You fly."

The radio was in the far rear of the cabin, the safest spot.

Leaving a Monk who was not very happy about the whole thing, Ham took over the radio apparatus. There were two sets of equipment in the ship: the conventional one for direction-finding in the pilot's

cockpit, and a very powerful outfit for long-distance communication. Ham set the crystal-controlled transmitter to the wave length used by Doc Savage and his aides.

"Any news yet?" he asked into the transmitter mike.

Johnny Littlejohn's voice said, "An evanescent semeiotic--"

"You don't need to code it," Ham said angrily.

"A slight trace of them," Johnny told him, reverting to small words. "A navy patrol plane out to sea chased a mysterious commercial plane which was flying southward. The commercial plane got away in some clouds. We think it is the plane this Prinz is using to carry Doc and Stevens to Central America."

"We had better find a plane," Ham said, "so we can be sure this Space isn't lying to us."

They flew southward. The sea was a hard, cool blue, the clouds like steel shavings in the sky. There was a little wind, enough to give them a westerly set. Ham used binoculars on the sea periodically, looking for anything that might be of interest. A naval patrol bomber dropped down toward them on two different occasions, but they identified themselves by radio.

Then Johnny Littlejohn was on the distance transmitter.

"We seem to be following two planes," Johnny said. "At least, we have spotted two strange ships in radio communication with each other. They're using voice. Space says one voice belongs to this man Prinz, who grabbed Doc."

"Good," Ham said.

He went forward to tell the news to Monk, giving the boxlike machine a wide berth.

JOHNNY on the distance radio: "Ham . . . Ham Brooks."

"Yes."

"It's the plane that has Doc, all right. And there are two ships."

"How do you know?"

"They landed at a little airport near Titusville, Florida. They got gasoline. They refused to pay for it, and shot and wounded two people at the airport in the quarrel that followed. Then they took off."

"Any chance of Florida police or coast-guard planes overhauling them?"

"Afraid not. There's a heck of a lot of poor visibility over lower Florida. Cold front just moved in."

"They seem to be heading for Hidalgo."

"Yes, they do," Johnny agreed grimly.

IT was night for a long time, and then the morning sun came up with the brazen buxomness of the tropics, hot and gay. Ham Brooks had taken over the plane controls, and now he squinted his eyes in the glare. He looked around and found a small wrench, which he pitched at Monk, who was calmly asleep beside

the box containing Albert Jones' machine. Monk awakened with the violence of a cat that had had its tail stepped on. Sheepishly, he got himself organized and came forward.

“How did you sleep?” Ham asked.

“Like a top,” Monk assured him. “Took most of the night to stop turning and twisting. Where are we?”

“Hidalgo.”

Monk was startled. He jumped to a window. “Oh,” he said. “Just over the foothills.”

Ham said, “Take over, will you. I want to go back and talk to the others. Too bad the radio transmitter in this plane isn't hooked up with the cockpit controls.”

Monk got behind the wheel, dug out a bar of chocolate and a thermos of coffee, and began flying and eating. He looked around for familiar landmarks but saw none. The terrain below was startlingly rugged. He thought: Some day, a hundred years from now, when tourists discover this country, they will realize it is more picturesque than Switzerland.

Back at the radio, Ham said, “Johnny, you on deck this early?”

Johnny was excited.

He gave Ham a wave length in kilocycles.

“Tune in on that band,” he said. “And listen! Listen to the guy with the frog voice!”

“Who'll it be?”

“Prinz.”

Ham fished with the tuning dial. There was not a great deal of station interference here in the tropics, but the static was like eggs frying. Ham located the voice which he decided Johnny meant.

“Hello, Sam,” it was saying. “Hello, Sam. Come in, Sam. We have located this Valley of the Vanished. I want to give you its location. Come in, Sam.”

Exactly this same statement was made three times.

Then: “All right, Sam, I see your plane. Take a straight north turn and drop down carefully. We have ground signals ready.” A moment later the voice said, “Go off the air, Sam. We don't want the world picking this up.”

Ham switched the receiver back to Johnny's frequency.

“They're down in the Valley!” Ham exploded.

“Yes,” Johnny said.

“What are you going to do?”

“Head for the Valley as fast as possible. Maybe we can knock them out, or at least get there in time to save Doc and Stevens.”

Chapter XI. THE XOCHI

THE two planes fought the mountains for hours.

The mountains were an incredible assortment, peculiar to Hidalgo. They had everything but height, although they were not by any means anthills. The canyons were knife slashes, and the peaks needed fangs of stone. There was dense, impenetrable jungle, and great areas of white rock blistering in the tropical heat.

The air currents were the worst. You never knew what to expect. You would be cruising across a ridge and suddenly find yourself in what could be the outpouring of a giant funnel and blown thousands of feet in the air. Or it might be the reverse, a down draft that had the awful suction of a vacuum. One of these last nearly did for Monk and Ham. Caught in the frightening downward rush of air into a canyon, Monk fought the throttles and control wheel madly. He could not get the ship climbing up again until it had hit a treetop with a roaring of loosely waving leaves.

Ham yelled, "What're you trying to do, you idiot!"

"You want to fly this thing?" Monk demanded. He had lost several shades of color.

Ham distinctly did not want to fly the ship. He fell to watching the mountains, picking out landmarks. The peaks were like stone needles and that was familiar.

Then, suddenly, there was a narrow-walled gash that seemed to sink a limitless depth into the mountain. It was of bare stone, too steep and too flintlike in hardness to support the green stain of jungle growth.

Monk yelled, "I remember that. You follow it."

Ham nodded. He was relieved. He had been half afraid that they would not be able to retrace their way to the Valley of the Vanished just from memory.

The going was smoother now, and Ham was somewhat relieved. He thought: We've done a lot of needless worrying about some aviator flying over these mountains and stumbling onto the Valley. No danger of that. Self-respecting eagles would steer shy of this place.

Johnny's plane was only a short distance ahead. Down into the monster slash of a chasm, both planes sank. Ham rolled down a cabin window, fascinated. The motor thunder was tossed from the canyon walls to his ears in jumbled waves of sound. There was a small river below. Air, cooled by the water and thus contracting and forming a down current, seemed to suck them into the cooling depths.

Later, the progress of the craft along the chasm was a procession of leaps and drops and side-whippings, as though they were riding an amusement-park jackrabbit, or a roller coaster. Ham remembered that, too. He stared ahead, holding his breath.

"The Valley!"

he gasped.

A WIDENING in the strangely devilish chasm formed the home of the lost clan of Maya, a widening that was roughly the shape of an egg, with a sloping floor that was a little too rough for the landing of a plane.

Ham's eyes went automatically to the most fascinating and spectacular object in the Valley-the pyramid. The pyramid of gold. Not actually solid gold, of course, but a stone that was incredibly rich ore.

It was there, its sides as smooth as glass from top to bottom, except only in the front where there was a flight of steps, not more than twenty feet high. Like a straight ribbon the steps rose, from base to the flat top of the pyramid, where stood the delicate temple, its flat stone roof supported by square, wondrously carved pillars. Through the open sides of the temple, Ham got a glimpse of the remarkable idol of Quetzalcoatl, who came down from the heavens and lived among the Toltes, like Christ in the Bible, then disappeared over the sea. Quetzalcoatl, who looked strangely like a white man. Quetzalcoatl, whose heart became the morning star.

Monk called sharply, "You see their planes anywhere?"

Ham frowned, moved from one side of the plane cabin to the other. There was no evidence of the other two ships.

"They had time to hide them, I guess," he said.

Monk scowled. "I don't like this. I don't think they could have hidden two big planes this quick."

"I'll find out what Johnny wants to do," Ham said.

Johnny, over the radio, was puzzled by the absence of the two planes they had been following. Renny and Long Tom and he, Johnny explained, had been ready for an immediate fight to help Doc.

"We'll land," he decided.

In circling, they swept lower over the pyramid. More of its detail was visible and they could see the water, the sizable volume of water that poured steadily down the pyramid side, coursing in a deep trough inlaid near the steps. The water came from the pyramid top by an artesian system and, flowing away from the pyramid, it fed a long, narrow lake. This body of water in turn emptied into the river that ran down the chasm which they had followed. The Valley, itself, was the source of the river, which was the River *Metale*, meaning the mortar stone used in grinding meal by the Mayans. The source, the center, the fountainhead of all that was everlasting, in the eyes of ancient Maya.

"The lake," Monk said, calling his shot.

They had landed on the lake before; they knew it could be done.

Monk set the wing flaps, did a breath-taking, nose-high forward slip, and seemed to land on the water like a duck. There was a considerable splash, and he nearly overran the narrow confines of the lake. To avoid the strong current flowing into the river at the far end, he beached the nose of the craft.

The other plane, heavier laden, made a less tumultuous landing. Long Tom, who was at the controls, beached it near the first plane.

Everyone scrambled out.

"You see any sign of those planes we are supposed to be following?" Renny demanded anxiously.

"No," Monk said.

"Holy cow!" Renny rumbled. "I wonder what went wrong."

"Where are all the natives?" Johnny demanded.

"They'll stick under cover until they see who we are," Monk told him.

THE air in the valley was completely pleasant, cool without being cold, crisp without being too dry. It came to them laden with the pleasant odors of flowering plants, wonderfully fragrant.

Space burst out of the plane, leaping down to the beach sand that was as fine and white as sugar.

He stared at the pyramid, its glittering yellow wonder clearly visible over the flowering shrubs which carpeted the valley.

“That gold?” he demanded. He was very excited.

“Not pure,” Monk said dryly. “We had a piece of it assayed once, and it ran about fifty thousand dollars to the ton in free gold.”

Ham said, “That was before the price of gold went up, of course.”

Space ogled them unbelievably. “Then it *is* gold!”

“Yes.”

“Why haven't you taken it?” Space demanded.

Monk scowled at him. “Brother, let me put you straight right now. That gold stays here. First, that's the way Doc wants it. Second, I don't think anybody could ever get that gold out of here if the Mayans didn't want them to. You see, this place is sacred to Maya, the most sacred thing they have, and there are Mayan descendants living all over Central America.”

Space eyed him. “Be tough, eh?”

“Be impossible,” Monk said.

Space seemed to shrug the whole thing off. “It's cooler than I thought,” he said.

He started to go through the motions of buttoning his coat. And, suddenly, there was a revolver in his hand.

He let them look at the muzzle of the gun long enough to fully comprehend what it was.

“You can jump around all you want to,” he said. “But you'll be dead.”

He allowed them to think about that for a while.

He said, “I'm getting in the plane. Don't move, I used to be top man on a pistol team, in case you're wondering about that.”

He backed to the larger plane. He was very careful, keeping them menaced with his weapon. They could see him finally with a receiver clamped over his ears.

“He's using the radio,” Monk gritted his teeth. “Calling those friends of his!”

Johnny emitted a howl of mental anguish. “We've been gimmicked!”

“Sure we have,” Monk agreed. “Those two planes didn't find the Valley. They just used their radios to make us think they had. Then we rushed here to save Doc, as we thought-and showed Space where the Valley was!”

Albert Jones, surprisingly bitter, said, "A fine bunch of protectors you turned out to be."

"You are the cutie who started this," Monk reminded him.

Ham glared at Space and said, "The blasted, treacherous, *xochi!*"

"What's an *xochi?*" Annice asked.

"A small, greenish black snake which is very poisonous in these parts," Ham told her. "It fits this Space."

"All but the color," Monk growled. "Nothing green about that guy. Did he sell us a basket of cookies!"

SPACE stepped out of the plane, still menacing them with his gun. Apparently he did not like the desperate expressions on their faces, because suddenly he leveled his gun at Long Tom Roberts and fired. Long Tom looked foolishly at his coat, at a missing button. Space had done a rather spectacular thing in shooting off the button.

"I told you how I could shoot," Space said. "Now, shove this plane off the beach." He bounded to the sandy shore. "Shove both planes off the beach."

Alarmed, Monk yelled, "Shove them off?"

"Yes. Quick!"

There was a strong current at this end of the lake; it would pull the ships away immediately and send them into the boiling little river and down into the canyon. They would be smashed. Ruined.

Ham said, "Space, we may need these to get out of here!"

"You won't be going out," Space said. "Shove them off!"

Suddenly, none of them were under any delusions. Space was going to shoot them down. He probably had planned to do it within the next two or three minutes, as soon as the planes were headed for destruction.

Monk, in the Mayan tongue, said, "Somebody will get shot, but we've got to gang him."

Ham, in a tight voice, said, "Say when."

Monk's homely face became composed, the mouth open a little, the eyes narrowed. Monk had learned ventriloquism, he was suddenly remembering. He had learned it as a gag, in order to make his pig seem to talk. Originally, it had been a clever gag to get the attention of pretty girls.

"Let me get my hog off the plane," he said. "Let me call him."

Space said, "Go ahead."

There was a quality in his smooth, hard-brown voice that said he was going to start shooting them in a moment.

Monk called, "Habeas!"

The pig promptly appeared in the plane door.

The pig said, seemingly, "You want me to tackle this guy?"

The effect was far more astounding than seemed possible. The tension, probably, made it so. Space seemed to rise an inch off the beach and ogled the hog.

Ham and Long Tom went down, scooped up handfuls of sand. Johnny jumped at Space, which took courage. Space upped his gun and shot Johnny twice, one bullet in the arm, the other against the bullet-proof vest which Johnny wore. Ham and Long Tom threw their sand, got some of it in Space's eyes. The man tried to back-pedal.

Monk jumped. He got Space's gun arm, pulled, wrenched, and nearly tore the man's arm off getting the revolver. Space screamed in pain and, still screaming, whirled and scrambled onto the plane.

Long Tom followed Space onto the plane. Space kicked madly at him. They got on a wing, both of them, slugging. They worked out toward the tip of the wing, blindly, with no purpose except to annihilate each other.

The weight of the two fighting men was enough to tip the plane, the lighter ship, and the current caught it suddenly, swinging it loose of the sand. It drifted quickly and collided with the other ship, jarring that one loose from the beach.

Desperately, Long Tom bellowed, "Don't let the planes drift out!"

The others saw the danger to the ships. They laid hold of the hulls, fought to hold the floats against the current. But the water broke away deeply from a ledge close inshore and there was little purchase for feet. The strong current dragged the planes out into the stream.

They were carried toward the narrow canyon into which the little river roared.

Monk yelled, "Jump, Long Tom! Jump!"

Long Tom did not jump. He was knocked off the plane wing by Space, who might be a devil, but who was also a fighting man. He landed in the ice-cold river with a splash.

They could see that he was stunned.

Monk, Ham, the others, raced madly down the bank. Monk said, "Join hands. That current is fast. We've got to get him."

The pig, Habeas Corpus, took a flying leap and landed in the water, then made the shore. The chimp, Chemistry, also gained the beach, hardly wetting himself.

Monk got out into the current. The water hit him like a solid, icy monster. The stone bottom was glass slick. He lost his footing, but kept hold of Renny's hand, and Renny in turn held to Ham, who gripped Albert Jones, who was anchored finally by Annice.

They got Long Tom and hauled him out. He was unconscious. When they lowered him on the beach, water ran from his mouth and nostrils.

The planes were gyrating in the current like two big, crazy leaves. Their floats hit boulders with sounds of grinding agony.

Space crawled out to a wing end and watched for a chance, then sprang into space. A moment later he scrambled out on the bank-on the opposite side of the narrow river.

“WHERE’S his gun?” Monk gritted. Monk was not in sympathy with a long-established policy of Doc Savage that they should never take a human life. Annice came running with the gun which Monk had taken from Space, but had dropped. Monk grabbed it from her hand.

But Space was out of sight among boulders.

Monk groaned, watched the boulders with glaring ferocity.

The others tried vainly to save the planes. It was like trying to stop skyscrapers from toppling. The furious current hurled the ships along. Their wings bounced against stone boulders, against the rising sides of the canyon and finally began to crack up. It was a sound like tin cans being trampled.

Renny forlornly rumbled, “They won’t go all the way down the canyon.”

That was true. Both planes were soon lodged on the stones which fanged the river bed. But they were jammed there uselessly, the cabin of one submerged, the other out of the water, but hopelessly ruined.

They stared at the wreckage, feeling queer.

“We can rig ropes across the stream and salvage some of the equipment,” Ham said grimly.

Annice went back and worked over Long Tom. After a while, Long Tom sat up. He said, “I helped a devil of a lot.”

“You were very brave,” Annice told him. She looked at Johnny. “You are shot, aren’t you?”

Renny, startled, looking down at Johnny’s fingertips and the blood leaking from them and agreed with her that he seemed to be. Ham cut open his sleeve between shoulder and elbow. The wound was ugly to look at, but probably not serious, unless there was infection.

Monk was still watching the boulders across the stream for Space, but vainly.

Renny boomed, “I can’t understand where the natives are.”

Monk said, “Why not call them.”

Renny nodded. “Sure.” Then he put back his head and yelled out in Mayan. His voice was tremendous; parrots flew out of trees at the far end of the valley. Echoes gobbled back and forth like a lion roaring, getting smaller and smaller.

Ham and Monk exchanged glances and Ham said, “I’m going to scout around and see where everybody is.”

The others agreed. Ham moved away, walking cautiously and listening. He was puzzled-in fact, baffled. The lost tribe of Maya were their friends, the friends of Doc Savage.

For a long time the Mayans had been mining gold-the mining was a very simple operation, not much more than chipping the incredibly rich ore out of the vein-and taking it out of the valley, through the mountains by pack train. Eventually, and by devious route, the gold would arrive in the national bank at Blanco Grande, the capital city of Hidalgo, where it was placed to Doc Savage’s credit.

In order to get a shipment of the gold out in an emergency, Doc Savage had arranged a radio receiver, current for which was supplied by a water-operated generator, here in the valley. At a certain hour on

each seventh day, someone here listened in, and if Doc needed money he simply broadcast a few agreed-upon words in Mayan-and the money was on its way out of the Valley shortly.

In return, these men of ancient Maya-their customs and life differed hardly at all from the early days-demanded nothing but friendship from Doc Savage. They owed, they had always maintained, a debt of gratitude to the man of bronze. Doc had done them a great favor on two different occasions, when he had saved them from annihilation at the hands of greedy raiders.

(The reference is to the perilous affairs of Doc's two previous visits to the valley-first, his initial trip which occurred in "The Man of Bronze," and the second in "The Golden Peril.")

Monk and Renny and the others were thinking of this as they watched the spot in the luxurious jungle where Ham had disappeared.

The Mayans here in the valley were friendly. That was sure.

Yet there was nothing of friends-encountered in Ham's manner when he suddenly popped into view. He was running. His manner was wild.

"Beat it!" he gasped. "Quick! Get somewhere where we can defend ourselves!"

Monk blurted, "What on earth-"

"Run!" Ham bellowed.

The utter imperativeness in his voice put them all in motion. Johnny scrambled up, kept pace with them in spite of the bullet wound in his arm.

It was dark in the jungle. Dark, and suddenly there were figures around them. Silent, grim, fierce figures. A flood of them, pouring suddenly out of the gloom, seizing them, overpowering them.

Incredibly enough, Monk and the others realized, these silently grim figures were Mayans. They were Mayans of the ancient strain, the fellows who spoke Nahuatl, the basic tongue; they were men who had their *Shamans*, their *Chaacs* and *Mens*, the high priests whose word was their every law.

They fought a little. They might as well have saved their muscles and kept the skin on their knuckles.

"Ham!" Monk gasped. "You notice how much blue paint they're wearing."

Ham said, "Blue is the sacrificial color."

Monk, Renny-all of them who knew what the blue paint meant-lost color. It was horrifying, unbelievable. What they felt showed on their faces.

Annice Stevens stared at them.

"What does the blue mean?"

Ham shook his head. He didn't want to tell her that it meant death. Death, he was convinced, for themselves.

Chapter XII. BLUE NOSE

DOC SAVAGE knew the plane was over Hidalgo, and close to the legendary Valley. He had suspected

the ship was heading for the spot. Lately, the air had become incredibly rough, and several times the plane had been tossed up on its side, or over on its nose, so that he had glimpsed the nearby mountains. Mountains like those were found nowhere except in the neighborhood of the Valley of the Vanished, so that point was settled.

The bronze man had been kept handcuffed to the metal struts which formed the framework of the plane cabin. They had stripped him down to trousers, and they had ripped the pockets out of his trousers and cut the legs off above the knees so that he would not have enough cloth to do anything for which he might use cloth.

Secret Stevens was manacled nearby. They had stripped the old man also. Stevens, who was well past sixty at least, was a remarkably preserved old fellow, the age that showed in his face not being at all in evidence in the rounded velvet of his sinew-wrapped body.

Mad convulsions of the plane were making Stevens a little airsick.

"I don't think they're gonna make it," Stevens said.

Almost immediately, two men in the forward cabin screamed. Screeched out in complete horror. And the plane gave a leaping lunge.

They got a glimpse of a rock pinnacle, like a hungry gray-black monster, snapping at them, barely missing the plane.

Stevens chuckled grimly. "That's the second bad scare they've had. Third time, we may hit."

Prinz must have thought so too.

Prinz came back to them. He had handcuff keys, and the look of a man who had found a poisonous snake in his pocket. "I'll make a deal with you," he said.

Stevens said, "Deal you into hell, that's what we'll do."

"Pilot us into the Valley," Prinz offered, "and we'll turn you loose."

"Hah, hah, hah," Stevens said. "I would trust you as far as I could push one of these mountains. Exactly."

Doc Savage was thoughtful. He knew these mountains, the horrendous air currents. He had watched their pilot, and the man was not too skillful. He was convinced the flier could not get them through intact.

"Give us parachutes," Doc said suddenly. "Stevens and myself, parachutes."

Prinz scowled. "You can trust me."

Stevens snarled something that sounded like mirth without being funny.

"Parachutes," Doc said. "And a gun containing two cartridges."

Prinz stared. "Gun? Two cartridges?"

Doc said, "Insurance. We cannot shoot all of you with two cartridges. But we can guarantee our escape."

Prinz looked at him and cursed him. "What kind of a fool do you figure I am?" he snarled. He went away.

Old Stevens looked at Doc and said, "I don't like parachutes. I never used one, but I don't like them."

Doc said, "You might not like death without benefit of a coffin, either."

Later, but not much later, the plane suddenly fell off on a wing, upended and went streaking down. They could hear the pilot cursing in horror. Later, he got the ship level. But they were far down in the black maw of the canyon, with the angry white water almost under them. Death was very close.

Prinz came back to Doc again. He looked sick. He had two parachutes and a revolver.

"All right," he said.

DOC SAVAGE took the controls and put them into the narrow canyon, far down in the depths, where the violent air currents were at least more predictable, and where flying was smoother, or at least feasible.

The second plane followed him down. The pilot of that ship was younger, and more skilled. He managed to duplicate Doc's maneuvers and got along without too much trouble.

When Doc came out into the Valley, he turned his head to watch his passengers, studying their reaction to the pyramid of gold ore so rich that it looked like solid gold. What he saw was a little frightening.

They pounded the glass out of the plane windows in their eagerness to get a better view of the pyramid. They seemed mesmerized by it.

Doc said, "Jump, Stevens!"

"But-"

"They don't plan to let us get away. Jump!"

Stevens jumped. He moved fast. Doc followed him so quickly that his jump was almost simultaneous. Before the bronze man went out, he yelled, so that Prinz would see what was happening. The other pilot seized hold of the controls.

Out of the sliding hatch in the roof of the plane, Doc rolled clear, and bellowed, "Don't open the 'chute right away!"

Stevens probably didn't hear him, because he was dragging on the D-ring as soon as he was overboard. The chute blossomed like a white orchid. Doc, more cautious, held his yank until he got down close to the ground. A little too close, it developed, for he hit hard. He picked himself up, aching in several places, and ran to Stevens.

Stevens said, "They're worse than I thought!" Meaning the parachute.

There was a gobbling noise from the plane. Bullets made animal-running noises, loud, close by them. Stevens started to flee. Doc caught him and hauled him down, saying, "It is hard to hit a stationary man from a plane. If he runs, you can see him." He held Stevens motionless until the plane was at the far end of the valley, and banking. Then they sprinted and reached the jungle.

They watched the plane coming back. The two ships were close together. Then one pulled up, in order to leave clear air for the other one to try a landing.

Stevens said, "They can't land on the water, can they? They're ground planes?"

Doc nodded. "They're going to try to land on the beach. The wind just happens to be right for it."

The beach, as white as typing paper, was not straight, but neither did it curve enough to bother a good pilot. Its narrowness gave it treachery, but the wind was parallel with it, so there would be no cross-travel at the last moment of landing.

Both planes got down safely. First Prinz' ship, then the other.

Stevens looked at Doc's revolver. "There ain't more than two cartridges in there?" he asked longingly.

Doc broke the gun and showed him there were only two.

"We're up against something," Stevens muttered. "Two bullets, and there's fifteen of them, and us as naked as jay-birds." He eyed his abbreviated trousers disgustedly.

DOC SAVAGE took a chance, ran out into the open, and got both parachutes. The silk and the cords, might come in handy. He lost more time folding them.

Prinz and the other men had piled out of the plane. They unloaded weapons. Six men armed themselves, then ran toward the spot where Doc and Stevens were concealed.

"They don't waste time," Stevens said.

Doc Savage said, "We had better move."

They worked back through the jungle, Doc in the lead. A moment later, they were on a trail. A well-worn trail, one that had been used for centuries, and showed it.

Surprised, Stevens said, "The way you found this trail-you know the place."

Doc made no comment. He did know this part of the Valley. But there were other parts of it where he had never gone. The Mayans had forbidden areas, spots set aside for *Tecuhtli*, the power that warmed the earth, where trespassing was taboo.

They walked the path between *sakokum* trees, in jungle where everything was *yax*, which meant fresh, green and new and good enough for use in constructing altars to the Mayan deities. Only *yax* things were used by the Mayans. There were gumbo-limbo trees where tiny parakeets loitered, and flocks of *piam-piam* birds were fluttering from tree to tree and busy with their eternal squabbling. There were *zapote* nuts on the ground, looking like baseballs with a brown cover; good eating, their flesh mealy and cool with a custard flavor. Because they had not eaten for a long time, Doc picked up some of the nuts and divided them with Stevens.

"Nice place," Stevens said, looking around. "If it wasn't for the recent arrivals."

Doc came out on a rocky upthrust and stood there where he could see the two wrecked planes. He had noticed them from the air, and they had worried him. But it was obvious from the way they lay that they had been carried into the river by the current, also that they were deserted.

He had hoped to reach the ships. But it would not be wise. Prinz had dispatched an armed squad to guard the craft, and these men, running down the beach, had almost reached the planes.

Stevens was looking around, listening and frowning.

“Isn't this place inhabited?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Well, where is everybody?”

“All around us,” Doc told him.

“Huh?”

“We are being rapidly surrounded,” the bronze man explained.

Stevens stared at Doc, but he did not disbelieve; already he had realized that the bronze man possessed faculties, hearing and sight among others, developed to an acuteness far beyond normal.

And a moment later, silent Mayans came out of the jungle and closed in on them. Short, solid, dark men without words and without humor.

Doc Savage stared at them. He was shocked. So shocked that he made briefly the small trilling sound that was his unconscious habit in moments of stress.

Stevens-he knew enough to be frightened-asked in a low voice, “What about this? They don't act right, do they?”

Doc Savage said, “You see the blue paint they are wearing?”

“Yes.”

“The sacrificial color of death,” Doc Savage said quietly.

Stevens blurted, “You mean they may knock us off?”

The bronze man said quietly, “If they put blue paint on our noses and around our eyes, and red and white on our bodies-” He fell silent, watching two natives approaching, carrying reed paint-tubes containing blue and red. When he glanced at Stevens, the man's face was very white.

Chapter XIII. SILENCE LIKE A DEVIL

DOC SAVAGE made a speech. He made it in Mayan, being as careful as he could of the accent, and putting all the confidence possible in his voice.

He began quietly.

“I am glad to see you, and particularly you who have been my friends in the past, of whom I see several.” He passed his flake gold eyes over the crowd of natives. “There is Bish, and Koltec, who fought with me once. And there is Nillo, the hunter, and Chen, whose life it was my very good fortune to save. I am indeed glad to see you, my friends. But I am sorry to have to come to you again under such circumstances as these, for again there is sorrow and unpleasantness for all of us. Certain very bad men, the men who just landed in the two white-man-birds-of-noise, have come here meaning you no good. I do not need to tell you why I am here, because you know what I have done in the past to serve you. As before, I am here to help you.”

He paused to look at them, a little appalled. They were hearing him, but that seemed to be all. No word, no sound.

Doc kept his metallic features expressionless.

"I can see that all is not well," he continued. "But I wish to point out to you who is your friend. And you are my friends. A danger besets us. Those men on the lake shore are well armed with the fire sticks and the eggs that are thunder and lightning, and the clouds of fog that are death. Deal with them with care, but quickly."

There was no response when he stopped.

Now very worried, but trying not to show it, Doc said, "It is my wish to see and speak with your king, the kindly and all-benevolent Chaac."

They showed no expression, no emotion. He knew then that his words had been wasted on them, and that was strange, because these people owed him their very lives. And they were not an ungrateful people, and certainly not stupid.

One of them-Chen, whose life Doc had once saved-said, "Come" in Mayan. He said something to the two with the blue and red paint, and they retired.

Flanked solidly by the natives, Doc and Stevens were taken back through the jungle. There was no sound except the multitude of treading feet, the sound they made on the hard-packed earth of the *picado* trail.

In a low voice, Stevens said, "Like talking to posts, eh? But you got some results-they didn't put that paint on us. Or is that good?"

"The paint," Doc said, "would have been a sentence to death."

Stevens swallowed. "That's nice. Where they taking us?"

Doc said he was not sure.

They came out into a clearing from which they could see the lake shore. Abruptly, as if staged for their benefit, which possibly it was, there was a commotion at the lake.

There were shots, yes. Prinz's armed squad sent to guard the planes, suddenly broke and ran. Dashed madly for cover. But two of them did not reach shelter; they went down, legs folding, convulsing on the white sand until they became still.

"Poison arrows," said Stevens, who knew the jungles. "I wonder if they use *chichem* and snake venom?"

Doc said, "They use a concentrated *chalam* concoction, or formerly did. It produces temporary paralysis."

Chalam

was the tree, the sap of which was thrown into water to temporarily paralyze or stun fish. Sometimes the red berries of a certain liana was used for this purpose.

"There's something devilish about the silence of these people," Stevens complained.

THEY swung along through the jungle in a silence that was macabre. The natives were armed with the traditional weapons of ancient Maya, short clubs of wood which were inset with vicious-looking, razor-edged flakes of stone, like teeth in the jaw of a shark. Each man had a knife with a blade of obsidian stone.

They were men with very thick shoulders, powerfully muscled. They were not handsome by Anglo-Saxon standards, but neither were they unpleasant. There was a kind of placidity about them which even their silent grimness could not expel.

For clothing, they wore a short mantle over the shoulders, a thing made of leather, woven in a network, the ends projecting at the shoulders rather like epaulets. Their girdles were woven, dark blue, the ends forming short aprons front and rear. Their leggings were affairs similar to the shin guards worn by baseball umpires, a few of them ornamented with gold, and all of them colorful. The sandals had peculiarly high backs, a kind of gladiatorial quality.

They came abruptly upon the village, which had the same solidity, the same ageless stability, which had so impressed Doc when he first saw it.

Stevens turned his head from side to side like an excited owl, staring. The architecture of everything was the Mayan of two thousand years ago, the civilization that was greater, probably, than that of ancient Egypt. There were no arches, for the arch was never used in ancient Mayan construction. And everything, every exposed foot of surface, was replete with the carvings of animals, grotesque human figures and birds. It has been said that the Mayan decorators abhorred a vacuum; there was hardly an inch that was not ornamented.

The houses were stone entirely, neat and black cut from the native obsidian rock that came from the lower end of the Valley. Inset here and there were panels of gold quartz, and Stevens ogled these, gripped by the fascination which gold always holds for civilized white men.

They came at last to the building that was the largest of them all, not a great structure by modern standards, but one which lifted slightly above the others, setting upon a foundation of masonry.

They were ushered inside. Suddenly, they were released. A figure came toward them.

“King Chaac!” Doc exclaimed.

HE was as ageless as the civilization of these lost Mayans, was their king. He was tall and solid and stooped only a little with age. His hair was snowy white and his features were as nearly perfect as Doc Savage's own. It was said that he was a direct descendant of the red-headed Quetzalcoatl, the sky god of the Maya-Aztecs who was driven from Tollan crater, and whose heart became the morning star, according to legend.

He stopped. He did not come near Doc Savage.

There was misery in his face.

“I am sorry, my son,” he told Doc.

Doc Savage was astounded by the sadness on the ruler's face-and puzzled. There had been several uneasy minutes when he had wondered if the old sovereign might not be dead, and a new faction in control. But that apparently was not the case. Also, it did not seem possible that a change in administration in the Valley would make any difference in the attitude of this fragment of old Maya

toward Doc Savage. He had sincerely believed there was too deep a feeling between himself and these people for either of them ever to turn upon the other.

Doc asked, "Would you care to explain what happened to me-the attitude of your people? It has changed. There were very good friends of mine in the group which brought us here. They would not even speak to me."

King Chaac looked at the floor. "I am sorry," he said.

"My friends," Doc said. "Monk and Ham, Renny and Johnny, Long Tom and the others-are they safe?"

"They are all here," said the strangely miserable ruler of the Mayans.

"Safe?"

Chaac, instead of answering the question directly, made a statement that seemed at a tangent-until Doc later decided that the statement went to a very definite point, and told perhaps more than anything else that had been said.

"There have been solemnities between you and I, son, and there have been solemnities between you and my people," the ruler said. "These were solemn promises, the taking of blood oaths, the assuming of deep and everlasting obligations. All of these have been kept, you to us, and us to you, and always thus it will be. Because we of Maya keep such things sacred, even to facing *Ahpuch*, the lord of death, always and forever. So it shall be between us, as it has been, to the exact word of our promises, oaths and obligations, you to us, and we to you, for otherwise it cannot be."

The strange tone of this, the solemn manner of its uttering, the complex and subtle nature of the long statement itself, held Doc in thought for a moment.

Chaac added, "Would you care to join your friends?"

"I would be delighted," Doc said quickly.

Chaac, himself, led them through a door, and down long passages, the walls of which were wondrously carved and worked in designs of quartz so rich with gold that it was as if the stones were made of steel wool, the wool of gold instead of steel, embedded in the hard obsidian mass in the quartz.

Stevens muttered, "What was that long speech he made?"

"About our friendship and obligations," Doc said. "And how each of us would keep them forever as we had in the past."

Stevens said, "I don't like the feel of the atmosphere around here. You can feel the mood of people. The last time I felt a mood like this was in Africa a long time ago, and the cannibals ate two missionaries I was guiding."

MONK MAYFAIR emitted a howl of delight. His pig, Habeas, squeaked his feelings. "Doc!" Monk bellowed. "You got away from them! Where are they?"

"They got into the Valley," Doc said.

"I knew that," Monk said. "That is, Chaac, here, came and asked for Renny's help. They took Renny away with them. They were going to reach our plane, get some equipment, so they would have some

way of fighting Space and Prinz with modern weapons.”

“So Space was working with Prinz after all,” Doc Savage said thoughtfully.

“Working with him! Space is Prime boss!”

Doc Savage was silent.

The room was a stone one, long, but not wide, with the flat squareness characteristic of the local architecture. There was a bench with delicious fruit, very *yax*, as fresh and fine as the priests received. There was game, and fish-freshly broiled *machaca*, which was caught with the small berry resembling grapes and called the *pixbicabam*, to which the fish rose greedily.

There was clothing for them, too, fresh and fine. Elaborate and colorful after the fashions. Headdresses of flowers and feathers which fell in graceful loops. *Maxtlis*, or broad girdles, whose ends made aprons in front and behind, and short mantles made of the woven leather. There were leggings and wrist and ankle ornaments and sandals with the strange skyscraper backs.

King Chaac had withdrawn.

And, Doc realized suddenly, the door was locked. Barred with an ominous grinding noise on the outside.

Ham Brooks nodded slowly. “That’s right. Locked in.”

“I have noticed something strange,” Doc admitted.

“Strange is no word for it,” Ham said. “They won’t say a word to us. All they’ve said—the only time anyone has spoken—was when they came and asked Renny to help them.”

A small light leaped up in Doc Savage’s flake gold eyes. “When they asked Renny to help, did they first make a speech about the solemnities, the promises, the oaths, the obligations, between us? And how those promises, oaths and obligations would always be, as they always have been, kept to the exact word?”

Ham was startled.

“Yes—how did you know?” he exclaimed.

“And did they remind Renny of our solemn pledge to help each other out of any danger at any time?” Doc continued.

“That’s exactly what they said. Of course, Renny admitted the oath. And he went to help them. The rest of us stayed here. They didn’t seem to want us.”

Old Secret Stevens had embraced his daughter, Annice. They were tearfully delighted to find each other safe, or at least bodily intact.

Now the girl turned thoughtfully to Doc Savage and said, “The way I understand it, for a long time these people have been sending gold out to you whenever you wanted it?”

Since the matter was no longer a secret among them, Doc nodded. “That is right.”

“Then they must regard you as their friend.”

Doc nodded again. He had thought so.

“Then they're behaving very strangely,” she said.

Long Tom and Johnny had been making the rounds of the long room, jamming their weight against doors, boosting each other up to peer out of the high windows and noting the stone grills in place in front of them.

“We're sure locked in,” Long Tom said.

Monk Mayfair looked at Doc Savage thoughtfully. “I wonder where Monja is?” he remarked.

Doc Savage looked slightly embarrassed but made no comment.

“Who is Monja?” asked Annice Stevens.

Monk looked at her, grinned and made a wonderful shape with his hands. “Oh, boy!” he said. “And I don't mean to be vulgar about it, either. You may think you have seen what can be put up in the shape of a woman, but you haven't seen anything until you've seen Monja. She is King Chac's daughter.” Then, when Doc Savage had moved to the other end of the room, out of earshot, Monk added, “She fell for Doc in a big way.”

Annice looked at the bronze man. There was no lack of interest in her own gaze. But there was also thoughtful calculation. She said quietly, “This Monja hasn't forgotten him-no one could forget him. No woman. So it is just possible this Monja would come nearer helping us than anyone-if we could get hold of her.”

Monk gnawed a lower lip, thinking it not a bad idea.

Chapter XIV. BLUE FOR DEATH

THE door bar-it was of stone-made a grinding sound as it was lifted. The door, a foot thick of solid black stone as hard as glass, swung quietly on an ingenious pivot affair.

Renny was outside, heavily guarded.

“Doc,” Renny said. “I found out you were safe. I told them you had better help me. Will you?”

Doc Savage said, “Of course,” and moved out of the room. The door was closed behind him. Guards closed in around them, making no sound.

Renny said, “They want me to help them overpower Space and Prinz. I agreed, of course.”

“Naturally,” Doc said without emotion. “Have you found out what is wrong here?”

“I can't make it out,” Renny rumbled. “They won't talk to me. It's queer.”

They left the village, which was close against the cliff and thickly overhung by jungle so that its presence was not noticeable from the air. The jungle over the village, Doc noted, was a change since he had been here last. It indicated the Mayans were becoming apprehensive about discovery by the outside world. Not that they could be blamed. Their previous experience had not been good.

Renny explained, “I got to one of the planes, and removed enough equipment to make a stab at fighting Space and Prinz.” The big-fisted engineer was thoughtfully silent for a moment. “You know what those clowns, Monk and Ham did?”

“What?”

“They picked up Albert Jones' memory-machine, and didn't say anything to anyone about it. It's in one of the planes.”

Doc Savage was suddenly alert. “Damaged?” he asked.

“Doesn't seem to be. The cabin of that plane is intact. Looks all right.”

They went on. It developed that Space and Prinz and their men had been cornered against the shore of the lake. Evidently the invaders were afraid to leave their planes, on the theory that if the worst came to the worst, they could escape by air.

“Here is what I planned,” Renny explained. “About sundown, when the sun takes its heat off the mountain tops, there is a very strong wind for a short time as the cooling air above contracts and brings the air up out of the valley. That creates a breeze along the lake.”

“It was good you remembered that,” Doc said.

“Oh, I was interested in air currents when we were here before,” Renny explained. “What I did was this: I spread containers of that anaesthetic gas of yours around the place where Space and Prinz are holed up. When the wind starts, we'll turn the anaesthetic loose, and the wind will carry it down on them before the stuff becomes ineffective by mixing with air.”

“That should work,” Doc said. “But you had better add some moratory oxide-it's marked that way on the bottle-to the gas. You will find the oxide in Monk's portable chemical lab.”

“That will delay the stuff?”

“Make it remain effective longer in the air.”

“Good.”

But the word *good* was an ill omen. There was nothing good about what happened to them now. It is said by psychologists that complete surprise is always good; at least that it cannot be entirely bad. But there was nothing even remotely favorable in this.

A MAN came out of the jungle. He was dressed much as the other Mayans, perhaps a little more elaborately. But the tips of his fingers-all five fingers on each hand-were stained a deep, striking vermilion. The red coloring on the fingers marked him as one of the high priests of ancient Maya, which did not mean a priest in a religious sense at all, but a practitioner of the art of preserving the culture of old Maya.

He said something to their guards which Doc did not catch.

Doc and Renny were separated.

Doc was surrounded and kept where he stood.

Renny was taken away. He was escorted down to the lake shore. Openly. Anxiety sprang up in Doc Savage like a wild animal.

“What are you doing?” he said sharply. “They will kill him?”

The Mayans heard him and understood what he said. They looked uncomfortable, all of them, and those who had known the bronze man well on his previous visits seemed intensely distressed. But they did nothing.

Renny was turned over to Space and Prinz.

They did not shoot Renny, or harm him in any way.

They did look up in the direction of Doc Savage—they had obviously been told by the Mayans where the bronze man was being held. And one of them—Space—threw out a triumphant yell.

“We've got you licked!” he bellowed. “I asked them to deliver one of your men to show they meant business. They did it. They're on my side now.”

Doc Savage was stunned.

He turned slowly to look at the Mayans. Some of them, he knew, understood English. These did not meet his eyes, and none of them seemed comfortable.

The priest with the red fingers gestured, indicating Doc Savage was to be taken back to the village.

THE bronze man saw Monja as he was taken into the palace. It was accidental. She was standing behind a screen, apparently so that she could get a glimpse of the bronze man without herself being seen. A clumsy Mayan warrior upset the screen.

“You are looking more beautiful than ever,” Doc Savage said genuinely. Which was far more of a Casanovan speech than he usually made to women, even ones who approached the beauty of this Mayan princess who was descended from the red-headed Quetzalcoatl.

She was more exquisite than when he had last seen her, which was remarkable, because hers was the beauty about which a man thinks, and thinking of it, exaggerates, so that often the picture in the mind is dissatisfied with the reality on a second encounter.

Tall and golden, fashioned by the gods, the exquisite fineness of her beauty was like the work of some master in gold.

She had knocked Monk speechless, the sight of her, when he first saw her. And Monk was rarely knocked speechless by beauty. He always had a word, usually several.

Now she behaved strangely.

She did not speak. Tears came to her eyes while she stood there in a kind of rigid, wordless agony.

The guards hurried Doc Savage on toward the long room that was a prison cell.

The bronze man walked heavily, for he knew now that something terrible was going on here. Something that was fiendish and fantastic.

MONK and Ham and Johnny and Long Tom listened in blank astonishment as Doc Savage told them what had happened. Old Secret Stevens and his daughter Annice, and Albert Jones, were impressed, but less amazed, not knowing the Mayans as did Doc and his men.

"It's unbelievable!" Ham Brooks blurted.

Albert Jones snorted. "What can you expect of savages? You fellows didn't have the pull you thought you had with them, that is all. They've sold out to a slick-talking Space and that devil, Prinz."

Monk whirled on him. "Pipe down, brother! These people don't double cross their friends."

Jones snapped, "Don't bellow at me—"

Monk lunged forward. Monk was in a bad mood. "Little man," Monk said grimly, "I've been planning to get around to you. I've got a question or two."

Jones, suddenly alarmed, tried to back away, but Monk held him. "Now, now, Mr. Mayfair," Jones protested. "You are upset by things here and—"

"I was upset before I got here," Monk told him. "I think I was most upset by a little point no one has explained. The point is this: Why did Miss Annice neglect to tell us that her last name was Stevens?"

Jones said, "Why, I don't suppose she thought to say so, or she did say so and you never heard—"

Doc Savage put in quietly, grimly, "Why quibble, Jones? She never admitted knowing her father, or where he lived, after I got out of your machine and was hunting him. She knew where he lived, knew it very well, because she had lived there herself. She pretended Stevens was a stranger. Then, when he was seized by Prinz, and the fact that he was her father was jarred out of her, she seems to have failed to explain the fact, and hoped that everybody would forget about it."

Annice had not spoken. She was standing there, her face tight with discomfort.

Doc turned to her, asked, "Care to explain?"

"Don't!" warned Jones, suddenly frightened.

"Little man, I'll tie you in a knot," Monk told Jones.

Annice swung to Secret Stevens. "Dad, what shall I do?"

The old man shrugged. "Tell them the truth. That's the only sensible thing to do."

The girl faced Doc Savage. She had trouble untangling her tongue from her embarrassment.

"It was a snide trick," she said. "The thing that your father did to my father was no secret to us. Dad told me about it one time, but cautioned me never to mention it to anyone, and certainly not to try to do anything about it. He did not want me going to you, Mr. Savage, because he said it was not your doing and he did not want you embarrassed."

She paused and stared uncomfortably at a window.

"Albert Jones has been a friend of dad's for a long time." She flushed. "At least, I think it was a long time. As you know, dad has been an adventurer and explorer all his life, while I grew up with relatives and in school. I haven't really known him until the last month or so. But he told me about his experience with your father, Mr. Savage. And then, a few weeks later, I learned about Mr. Jones' invention to awaken inherited memories."

She colored painfully.

“We hatched a scheme,” she said. “The scheme was to convince you, Mr. Savage, that the machine was genuine, and then put *you* in it. We believed that, your father being a man of as strong character as he was, the memory of what he did to my father would be one of the memories awakened in you. We figured you would make restitution to my father-make him a rich man, in other words.”

Doc asked, “Where was Jones' cut to come from?”

Jones looked indignant.

“Dad loves me,” Annice confessed. “So he naturally would give me a lot of the money you gave him. I was going to turn most of that over to Mr. Jones in payment for his part in my scheme.”

Old Secret Stevens said, smiling slightly, “Maybe it was a kind of shady trick, but I'm not going to apologize for my daughter, because she was doing what she thought was right. She told me about it since we arrived here in the Valley. That was the first I knew of that angle.”

Monk started to say something to little Albert Jones, evidently something that would have been unpleasant, but there was an interruption, a noise of the door opening.

Mayans filed in. Two in the lead carried paint tubes, blue and red. And they were followed by other natives, large strong ones, grim with purpose.

They took hold of Monk. The astonished Monk stood still-until they began putting blue on his nose and around his eyes, and to stripe the rest of his body with vertical red.

Then Monk bellowed, “The sacrifice colors!” and began to fight.

IGNORANCE would have been bliss. Had they not known what the blue facial color and the red body stripes meant, they would have been spared at least some agony. But they knew the centuries-old significance of the colors with these people. The colors of death.

Monk, scared and fighting, was more than any normal half-dozen natives could handle. He laid his large hands, hands which could open horseshoes, on a man. He lifted the fellow.

“Ma! Ma!” the native bellowed.

Monk threw him and brought down four others.

Three Mayans began a mad effort to get the door shut. Doc lunged, picked up one of the men Monk had bowled over, and sent him skidding across the floor, to land like a log of wood in the door, blocking its closing for the moment.

Doc and Ham made for the door. They reached it, meeting a surge of Mayans from outside.

One Mayan started to use a stone-fanged club on them. He was yelled at by other Mayans, and the club yanked from his clutch.

“Take them without harm,” was the order.

Monk came through the door behind Doc, said, “Harm to whom?” and hit the group of natives like a torpedo.

Long Tom and Johnny, Jones and Stevens, even Annice, joined the fight.

In English, Doc said, "We will try to get to one of the planes."

More Mayans poured into the big corridor. They fought, fantastically, with the same silence which they had maintained from the beginning. No shouts, no angry orders. They seemed reluctant to even grunt in pain.

They fought into the hall. All of them were out of the prison room now. But they were unarmed, with no weapons, and Doc without any of his gadgets.

And the Mayans were not dubs at this kind of thing. They had grown up, all of these men, playing *tlaxtli*, which was the rather fiendish game of ancient Maya. It was played with a crude rubber ball, dimpled somewhat like a huge golf ball. The goals were four-foot rings about twenty feet from the ground, engraved with intertwined serpents, usually on opposite ends of a room. Like the goals in a basketball court, somewhat. The players were allowed to strike the ball only with their hips-but there was no restriction on what or how they could strike each other. It was a fiercely strenuous game, and excellent training for rough-and-tumble.

(The game of *tlaxtli*, as outlined here, is true color of ancient Maya, just as the costumes and customs of the lost clan of Maya are historically accurate, to the best of the author's knowledge-and the author has engaged in scientific exploration in the Mayan country. It is considered by some authorities that *tlaxtli*, which was to the inhabitant of the old Maya what baseball is to the inhabitant of Brooklyn, was the forerunner of the modern game of basketball.)

The prisoners were slowly beaten back, crowded together like sheep against a wall. Like fighting sheep, but nevertheless sheep.

The thing that happened then, as far as Doc Savage was concerned, was utterly unexpected.

The Mayan sovereign, Chaac, and his daughter, Monja, suddenly tried to get Doc out of the fight-rescue him.

Chapter XV. LOST CLAN

THEY appeared unexpectedly, Monja and Chaac, through a narrow panel set in the rear wall. Chaac, with the very violence and the impressiveness of his appearance, tried to accomplish the rescue of Doc.

"Stop this!" he shouted in Mayan. "It is my order! Cease!"

The Mayan warriors did come to a pause. Chaac sprang to Doc's side, took his arm and said in a low voice, "Come. Come with us quickly. You alone-for all of you cannot escape."

He tugged Doc toward the narrow rent of a door.

It did not work. A red-fingered priest shouted, "No, it is no king's word that commands you here!"

That touched off the fight again. But the respite had given Doc time to approach the narrow door. He fought furiously, throwing himself against the sudden flood of warriors that poured upon him.

The ruler, Chaac, went down, feet carried from under him, arms pinioned in an excellent imitation of a football scrimmage.

Doc, with Monja, found himself in front of the door. The bronze man hesitated for a moment, inclined to stick, to fight it out to the end. That was, he failed to realize at the moment, a vain act, because he had no

chance of winning. He was stronger than any man here, probably stronger than any three men here, but it was not three he was fighting. It was at least thirty.

“Please!” Monja gasped. “Come!”

He saw the sense of what she urged. With her, he pushed back through the door. They threw their weight against the stone slab and got it closed. It was a smooth sliding arrangement, rotating on hard stone marbles. A pin affair held it shut.

“Come,” Monja said tensely.

She led the bronze man through a passage, up a flight of stairs.

Already, there was pursuit behind them.

They topped the stairs and came out on a roof. There was a shout, a yelling uproar, and men rushed across the rooftops toward them.

Monja looked suddenly defeated. “They have headed us off,” she said. “We cannot escape.”

Doc Savage moved to the roof edge, which was overhung by a huge jungle tree, a great spreading affair which was a part of the entwining carpet of foliage that surrounded the place.

“Here,” he said.

He picked up the girl, swung her to his back. “Hang on,” he said. “Cling to my neck and body. Do not hamper the movement of my arms and legs.”

She looked at the trees, the gaps between them and the dizzy spaces above. She understood what the bronze man intended to do, and she was scared. But she did as he directed.

Doc made a run across the rooftop, a leap outward into space. He seemed to do easily what looked to be impossible. He landed, like a tight-rope acrobat, upright on a jungle bough. The bough sprang downward under their weight and groaned, but Doc kept his balance and ran along it. He grasped another branch with his hands, went hand over hand out along it, then higher, and once again, through space.

The Mayans stopped and stared.

“*Tizoc!*”

one of them said. Which was high tribute, even for the amazing strength and agility which had gotten the bronze man and Monja away from them. *Tizoc* was the legendary eagle of Maya, the eagle which was man, a watchman for Quetzalcoatl, who came to the Toltes after the shining snake disappeared over the sea.

Doc went on swiftly, higher and higher until they were lost in the jungle greenness and the growing dusk of evening.

THE bronze man stopped in a high, remote spot, in a great *ceiba* tree, and placed Monja in the safety of a vast forking bough.

“Your father and you sacrificed everything for me,” he said quietly, making it as a statement.

She was silent a moment. "It was no sacrifice. To you we owe everything."

Doc studied her thoughtfully. "To others, you must owe much, also."

She was surprised.

"You have guessed why things are as they are?" she asked.

"Only slightly," Doc admitted. "It was my suspicion, the previous times I was here, that there was another and higher clan of Lost Maya. I was never sure, and it was never mentioned, so I made no words about it."

A flock of noisy *piam-piam* birds went past, seeking roosting-places in the dusk. In the distance, to the west, under the cliffs, there were small moving lights. Very pale lights, somewhat bluish and phosphorescent in quality. They were moving, and there were men's voices with them. Searchers, no doubt.

"You were never told of the Clan of the Very Highest," Monja informed him.

"Then there is such a clan."

She nodded. "The Clan of the Very Highest live in a valley smaller, but more impenetrable than this. It adjoins this one, and is reached by secret passages from a part of this valley which is taboo."

She was silent a moment, assembling her words.

"The Very Highest," she said, "is the custodian group of the secrets of ancient Maya. There are not many of them, but they are of highest type, higher than any in this valley. As a matter of fact, the lowest member of the Clan of the Very Highest leaves the secret valley in youth, comes into this one, and becomes ruler here."

Doc was surprised.

"Your father, then, is the lowliest member of the Clan of the Very Highest?" he asked.

"That is right."

The bronze man was puzzled. "The Very Highest have ordered this reception I received?"

"Yes."

"But didn't they know, long ago, about the bargain between the lost tribe of Maya, and myself?"

"Yes."

"Then why are they acting this way?"

Monja looked at him sadly. Her face was golden in the dimming light.

"It is the gold which goes out to you that has brought terror and misery to our valley," she said. "The high priesthood, those of the Very Highest, have decided to end it."

"You mean-go back on our bargain?" Doc asked.

She shook her head.

“They are going to keep their agreement with you to the word,” she said.

Doc Savage was thoughtful. “I guess they could, at that,” he admitted.

“The agreement was never to keep you from the Valley, to furnish you gold when you needed it and in such quantities as you needed,” Monja reminded him. “Your agreement was to help us if ever we got in trouble, never to reveal the location of the valley if you could help it, and to stop anyone who learned of it from ever coming here.”

“So far, there has been no violation of that agreement,” Doc said.

“That is true,” she agreed.

“What are they going to do?”

“They are going to take you and your men into the inner valley, the Valley of the Very Highest, and keep you there forever. They say it was never agreed that nothing of that kind would be done to you.”

Doc Savage frowned suddenly. “This agreement between myself and the Mayans all goes back to the understanding between my father and the clan,” he said.

“True.”

“I had the impression,” Doc said, “that the agreement that we should come and go in freedom was in the bargain.”

Monja looked up sharply. “You are sure?”

“Would it make any difference?”

“Yes, it would-to all of us. Because it would prove Chi-Ahpuch wrong.”

“Who is Chi-Ahpuch?”

“The head of the Very Highest-the supreme leader.”

Doc Savage was grimly silent for a while. How deeply he was thinking over the situation was evidenced when he made the small trilling noise which was his unconscious habit.

“Could we get hold of this Chi-Ahpuch?” he asked.

“Perhaps.”

“Come,” Doc Savage said suddenly. “We can try something.”

THEY worked down toward the lake. Monja was puzzled, but the bronze man did not explain what he intended doing.

He asked, “What about Prinz and Space?”

“They are being tricked by Chi-Ahpuch,” Monja explained.

“Tricked how?”

“They were told that they would be permitted to help the Mayans overcome you and your men. They were also told that they would then be given the gold forever.”

Doc looked shocked.

“Given the gold forever,” he said, “has an ominous sound. If I remember rightly, that phrase in Mayan simply means burial in the golden temple well, the old sacrificial well.”

Monja nodded. “They do not know that yet. They will be told-when they can be seized and disarmed without danger.”

“This Chi-Ahpuch,” Doc said, “seems to be a sharp dealer.”

Monja nodded.

“His name means the mouth of death, as you may notice,” she explained. “But he is a just man, although hard. The honor of old Maya, and its integrity forever, are his life.”

Doc made no comment on that. It was probably true. The Mayans here had a high conception of honor, after their own philosophy.

The darkness gathered, became black and pleasant. The soft light from moon and stars made a kind of silvery reflected glow that was gentle in the canyon, and a brighter platinum ahead of them, on the lake.

“You are going to your plane,” Monja said suddenly.

“Yes.”

“There is a guard. One man.”

Doc said, “We will take care of him not without too much trouble.”

“I will show you where he is,” Monja said.

THE guard, a stocky man with a flint-studded club and an absent-minded way of standing watch, probably did not know, until he revived later, what happened to him. Doc came out of the darkness suddenly and was upon him. He got him down and worked on the man's neck nerve centers, bringing a kind of paralysis which would last for hours, an art which Doc had spent much time mastering.

“Drag him aside, where he will not be found for a while,” Doc told Monja.

The bronze man, himself, worked out to the wrecked plane which contained the machine invented by Albert Jones.

It was his first hope to remove the machine from the plane. But that proved impossible. The thing was too heavy, too bulky, for one man to handle under the conditions.

Doc directed the girl, “Keep a watch. It will take some time. A long time, perhaps, depending on how complicated this thing is.”

She said quietly, “I will be very watchful.”

It was long past midnight before Doc Savage left the plane, joined Monja and said, "Everything is set. Now if we can get this high priest, Chi-Ahpuch."

"You are sure this plan will work?" Monja asked anxiously.

"It is worth trying."

She nodded. They moved away into the darkness, toward the taboo section of the valley.

They made the trip without incident, except once, when they were forced to conceal themselves from a party of searching Mayan warriors carrying lanterns. The lanterns were astounding, although not entirely unknown outside the valley. They were made of *Locuyo*, the gigantic fireflies, an inch long, from which light emanated from two lamps or wells back of the eyes. They had a hard, greenish-black carapace, and furnished a rather inadequate illumination.

Monja stopped close to the cliff.

"There is a passage, well concealed," she said.

"A guard?"

"There has never been. The Mayans obey their laws."

She located the passage mouth, a simple affair, and stepped inside. Here also, lanterns of *Locuyo* furnished the illumination. They walked rapidly, side by side.

Monja was trembling. "This is sacrilege for me," she said, in a low, emotion-twisted voice.

Doc Savage had known that, and he was very uncomfortable. The sacrifice this girl was making was more, probably, than he or his men had been able to give to the clan of Maya altogether in the past. There did not seem to be any words to fit the situation.

They came out of the passage abruptly, into full moonlight that, through some freak in the slope of the cliffs in this new valley, penetrated with a brightness not found in the other valley.

Monja gasped, clutched the bronze man's arm and pointed. "Chi-Ahpuch!" she whispered. "What luck! Walking alone!"

This very small valley seemed entirely a garden, and the high-man of this ancient clan of Maya seemed to be taking a night constitutional which indicated, considering that the hour was long past midnight, that his conscience was not easy.

He was a tall, thin man and his age seemed an indefinable thing because painstaking living had preserved him so well. His hair was very white, which meant nothing about his age, because many of the Mayans became white-haired early in life.

He was a strong man by Mayan standards, but not strong enough to put up much of a fight when Doc Savage came upon him from behind.

"What are you going to do with him?" Monja asked, very frightened.

"Introduce him to Albert Jones' memory machine," Doc Savage said.

Chapter XVI. MEMORY, THE FRIEND

INTRODUCING Chi-Ahpuch to the memory machine was conducted in a friendly and matter-of-fact way.

First, it developed that Doc Savage had seen Chi-Ahpuch before, in the other valley, when the high priest was passing himself off as a simple Mayan. Not being complete strangers was a help.

In a far corner of the larger valley, away from interruptions, Doc began with a speech.

In the quiet, reserved fashion of conversation which the Mayans liked to affect, even when the excitement was intense, Doc told the story of Renny Renwick and Columbus. Chi-Ahpuch had heard of Columbus. In fact, the high priests of the lost clan of Maya were somewhat in touch, mentally at least, with the outside world. They knew of its historical development, even its current troubles.

Doc tried to sense the feelings of Chi-Ahpuch as he went along. He succeeded to some extent; at least he knew that the story of the memory machine took hold of the other man and interested him intensely.

Completing the recital of Renny's troubles with the memory the machine had evoked, Doc Savage launched into his own troubles, telling them exactly as they had happened. He told about his seizure, told of what he had found in the machine-of the treachery of his father against old Secret Stevens.

Chi-Ahpuch was much impressed. Enough, so that he put a hand on Doc Savage's arm. "It was very terrible, to learn a thing like that about your father," he said sympathetically.

Terrible was no word for it, Doc admitted soberly.

"I did not know your father well," Chi-Ahpuch said. "His dealings here were made with my father, who was the highest of the priests before me."

For a moment, Doc Savage made his tiny trilling. He could not help it.

This was it! It was everything! His guess had been good. He had surmised that Chi-Ahpuch was too young a man to have dealt with Doc's father. And he was.

Doc hurriedly worked around to the matter at hand.

"It is my belief, humbly presented to you now, that the agreement between my father and your father concerning myself, was to the effect that I should be permitted to enter and leave the Valley, always unmolested, together with such of my friends as I deemed trustworthy," Doc told the high priest.

Chi-Ahpuch was gentle, but firm.

"The word-records of the transaction say differently," he pointed out. "We were very careful to check on that, when we were looking for a method of rescinding our bargain with you."

Doc nodded

"We have a way of making sure," he said, "about which one of us is right."

"How?"

"The memory machine of which I have told you."

It took some selling to get Chi-Ahpuch to agree to try out the machine. But he finally consented.

RENNY RENWICK would have been amazed to watch Doc put Chi-Ahpuch through the machine.

What would have amazed Renny more was that Doc duplicated the exact system which had been used on both of them.

First, there was the hypnotic. The vitamin-cocktail, Albert Jones had called it.

It was nothing more or less than a drug which dulled and soothed the mind and weakened its strong reaction to consciousness so that the subject was susceptible to suggestion.

Doc next used another drug, stronger. It was a drug which was particularly kept out of the hands of the public, because while under its influence, a person was literally hypnotized and could be made to believe anything he saw or heard.

Doc put Chi-Ahpuch in the coffinlike box.

He did this carefully, first locating and disconnecting the system of wires and contacts which would set off the explosive designed to destroy the device if it was tampered with.

Albert Jones had arranged the explosive so that no one would be likely to learn that the device was all-every bit of it-a clever fake.

Lying in the box, Chi-Ahpuch was to all intents a hypnotized man. He breathed heavily. His eyes were wide open.

Doc talked to him. It was a very unpleasant job of talking for the bronze man, because much of what he said was possibly lies.

He told Chi-Ahpuch to see certain things-just as a hypnotist tells his victim to see or hear certain things. A hypnotist with a good subject can make the victim turn into, the victim believes, a dog, which will get down on the floor and bark and otherwise imitate a dog. Doc's system with Chi-Ahpuch was similar.

The machine had certain finer touches, however.

The movie, for instance. A 16-millimeter projector, handling short lengths of film silently. Doc had converted the projector over so that it would function from the plane's radio battery.

The film was the one which Jones had used on him in New York but Doc had edited it to take out Secret Stevens.

The part of the film which Doc used dealt with his father. It was a genuine picture, taken during one of the elder Savage's trips of exploration into Central America. No doubt it was a trip with Secret Stevens, since Jones must have gotten the negative from Stevens.

Part of the film had been faked, using a double, disguised as Doc's father-something a victim under the influence of the strong hypnotic would fail to recognize.

Doc had edited out everything but the individual pictures of his father.

As he showed these to Chi-Ahpuch, he spoke slowly, distinctly, repeating an imaginary conversation between the elder Savage and Chi-Ahpuch's own father.

High point of the conversation was the agreement that young Doc Savage was to come and go from the

Valley at will, with his friends.

After he had put that across, Doc let the gadget taper off, and waited for Chi-Ahpuch to come out from under the effects of the drug.

Monja was astounded.

“The machine is not genuine!” she exclaimed.

“Not in the least.”

“But what is its purpose?”

“The one it served,” Doc explained. “To trick me into telling Secret Stevens the location of the Valley of the Vanished.”

Monja was puzzled. “You say it served its purpose-yet it was not you who gave them the location of the Valley?”

Doc nodded.

“Secret Stevens and Albert Jones worked out the scheme,” Doc explained. “But Space and Prinz cut in on them, and things did not turn out exactly as they had hoped. Space and Prinz were slick enough to trick my friends into showing them the location of the Valley.”

Chi-Ahpuch came out from under the effects of the hypnotic. He was very impressed. As impressed, no doubt, as Renny Renwick had been, when he awakened thinking he had looked at the memory of his devilish-but imaginary-ancestor who had tried to murder Columbus.

He sat there for a while.

“We have done you a great wrong,” he said finally. “It must be righted.”

Chapter XVII. DEATH WARNING

IN the Inner Valley, in a pleasant glade, a campfire burned. Space and Prinz squatted near the campfire, too excited to drinking *balche*, the Mayan drink compound of bark and honey fermented in water, and they were slightly intoxicated. Mayan warriors came and went quietly, for Space and Prinz and their men were under guard-to keep Doc Savage from them, they had been told. The Mayan warriors wore anklets of *cucuji*, the lantern bug, to light their path and to identify themselves to each other.

Doc Savage walked boldly into the firelight.

Space and Prinz nearly turned handsprings in their astonishment.

“Help!” Space bellowed. “Here's Savage! Quick!”

Doc said quietly, “The natives brought me here, so they know where I am. They brought me here to tell you something.”

The pair stared at him, too amazed to move.

Doc said, “I have been asked to tell you that you are prisoners. Your cache of ammunition and weapons has been taken. All the arms you have are those which you have on you, and most of those have been

unloaded by the Mayan warriors-in cases where your men became intoxicated on *balche*.”

“You're crazy!” Space blurted.

Doc told them about the decision of the Very Highest in the Inner Valley, the decision which Chi-Ahpuch had reversed. The telling did not take long.

Stunned, Space demanded, “What will happen to us?”

“You will be kept here.”

“How long?”

“Forever.”

“The hell we will!” Space snarled.

“Be careful,” Doc warned hastily. “Only a few of you have weapons. You can not get out of the Valley.”

“We can fly out.”

“Not at night,” the bronze man said. “The air currents are even more treacherous at night. You would not get above the Valley wall.”

Space swore wordlessly, dove a hand into his clothing, and brought out a gun. Doc Savage had half-expected that. He moved backward, got behind a tree and kept going.

Space's gun made a rip-slam roaring in the night and brought thunderous echoes whooping down from the cliff walls.

Instantly, there was a bedlam of shouting around them. Mayan warriors yelling in the darkness. Yelling warnings to the white men not to resist. Some of them shouted in English, but it had no meaning to Space and Prinz and the others. The only thing that had meaning to them, probably, was the gold, and the prospect of losing it. They were gripped with a cornered madness, feeling their lives were in danger.

“The hole into the big valley,” Space yelled. “Head for it.”

Doc Savage, clear of danger himself, began shouting for the Mayans not to resist, not to risk their lives needlessly.

But an instant later, he was shocked into silence.

Two figures dashed into the glow of the campfire.

Albert Jones and Secret Stevens. They joined Space and Prinz. They were welcomed. Obviously, Jones and Stevens had already come to some kind of an agreement with Space.

The bronze man thought of pretty Annice Stevens and was sickened.

Space and Prinz, Jones and Stevens, and their men, fought their way out of the smaller valley into the larger, down the larger to the lake, and finally to the planes.

THE plane motors roared and threw thumping echoes against the walls of the larger valley. Their exhaust stacks spilled streams of sparks, and the ships swirled out on the beach surface. There was some

shooting from the plane windows, but it was needless shooting. The Mayans had stopped their pursuit.

Both planes shot across the sand side by side, a dangerous thing to do. The motors got full gun; the craft lifted. The beach was very narrow, but they got off together. They banked out slightly over the lake, for the smoother air there. Then they climbed.

They were lost suddenly in the shadows against the cliff. But they banked in time, and came back, climbing. There were a few shots from them, triumphant, directed at nothing. Shots that were undoubtedly the promise of a bloodthirsty return at a later date.

Twice, the ships circled. Then they tried to mount over the cliff edge. Right at the lip, the terrific air currents caught them. A boiling maelstrom of night air that was like the eddy behind a stick dragged fast through the water. The ships rolled and pitched and went out of control.

The sound of their crashing was weird, gruesome in the night. A long-drawn noise as if a monster had swallowed both ships and was digesting them in a mechanical insides. There was no fire, just a long grinding and rending as the ships twisted and fell down the face of the great cliff, striking and grinding, dropping and smashing, until they lost recognizability.

In the silence that followed, a few dislodged boulders bounded down the cliff face.

The parrots in the Valley quarreled for a while, and were silent.

Chapter XVIII. DONKEY SAM

THE morning sun came up with a glory that was breathless wonder to the Mayans, for their heritage was the sun. This morning in particular they stood at the *temalacatl*, the sacrificial stone, giving thanks for deliverance from their troubles.

There was, as further business this morning, the drafting of a speech of apology to Doc Savage, the Man of Bronze, for what had happened, and an invitation to continue as he had in the past to receive what he wished from the lost people of Maya. Chi-Ahpuch had arranged the matter. Chi-Ahpuch was clever enough to know that the previous treatment of Doc Savage had not been a popular matter, and he was more or less sincere himself, in wishing to right the wrong.

As part of the ceremonies at the *temalacatl*, King Chaac and Monja were forgiven, and commended as well, for their course of action. That, too, was a concession to popular favor by Chi-Ahpuch, possibly. But a smart move.

Monk took the occasion to get Doc Savage aside, alone.

“I got that memory machine,” Monk whispered. “Renny and Ham and I got it, and consigned it to the deepest part of the lake. Nobody’ll know it was a fake now.”

Doc Savage thought that was good for more reasons than one, and said so.

Monk glanced around, making sure that Annice Stevens was not in sight.

“That girl is taking it hard,” he said. “They found old Secret Stevens’ body with Prinz and Space and the others. All of them were killed instantly when the planes crashed.”

Doc asked sharply, “It was arranged that she should not know the truth about her father?”

“Sure.”

“How?”

“Oh, we told her he was seized by Space as a hostage,” Monk explained. “Told her Jones was seized for the same reason. But Doc, I don't get it. How come she did not know about her father being in cahoots with Jones?”

“That's easy,” Doc explained. “When she came from boarding school, Jones said it would be much better for Secret Stevens to keep in the background and let her contact me. They thought I wouldn't be suspicious.”

“Yeah, but what about the memory machine? She knew that was a phony.”

“I guess she did,” said Doc. “But Secret Stevens had filled her up with that story about my father cheating him and told her that the machine was the only way to get me to right the wrong. Of course, the whole story was a lie. My father never cheated Stevens because he found the Valley of the Vanished on a trip by himself, years after he and Stevens broke up. Stevens found out somehow about the Valley and concocted this whole plan. Then he brought Albert Jones into it and Jones, who was afraid of us, hired Space, who, in turn brought Prinz and his gang into it.”

Monk shook his head. “I wouldn't have believed it of Secret Stevens. He was such a nice old man.”

Doc said dryly, “You can't tell by looks. But anyway, we mustn't let Annice know he was a crook. Do the Mayans know that they are not to tell her anything?”

“Yeah,” Monk said. “Monja arranged that.”

Doc looked at the homely chemist sharply. “Monja?”

Monk shrugged. “She thinks you might be in love with Annice Stevens.”

Astounded, Doc blurted, “What gave her such an impossible idea?”

Monk chuckled. “I guess because you don't give her a tumble. She can't see that any natural-born man could fail to fall for her, unless there was a good reason. She doesn't see any reason here except Annice.”

Doc got hot under the collar.

LONG TOM ROBERTS approached, obviously with something on his mind. “I been checking over the radio receiver here in the Valley,” he said. “The one used to listen in on every seventh day at the agreed-on hour.”

“Something wrong with the set?” Doc asked.

“No, the set is fine.” Long Tom scratched his head. “But here is something queer.” He looked up at Doc, demanded, “Do you know anybody named Donkey Sam?”

Monk laughed. “Some name.”

Doc shook his head. “No, I do not know a Donkey Sam.”

Long Tom scratched his head again. "Then you don't know why he is offering half a million dollars reward to anyone who can find you for him?"

"Find me for him?" Doc said.

"And offering another half million to you if you can destroy a piece of black rock for him," Long Tom added.

Doc looked startled.

Monk laughed. "Some nut," he said, "trying to attract attention."*

Long Tom shrugged. "Nut or not, he's got enough money to hire the two biggest broadcasting chains in the country to carry his offer of the two half-million-dollar rewards."

Long Tom walked off, muttering to himself about nuts and rewards.

MONK eyed Doc Savage. "What do you think we had better do about this Monja and Annice situation?" he asked slyly.

Doc, carefully pretending not to hear the remark, said, "We had better get back to New York at once."

Monk laughed. "I've found it pays to run from 'em, too," he said.

*Monk dismissed the matter of Donkey Sam and his pair of half-million-dollar reward rather lightly. And the black rock much too lightly. Donkey Sam's offer was genuine; furthermore, it involved an incredible amount of mystery and danger for Doc and the others, before they saw the end of it. "The Devil's Black Rock," to be published in Doc Savage magazine next month.

THE END