

gravel was only a blind to get the natives here so that they could haul the sulphur to the *Bolivar* which would start out to sea and then go to the cove behind our place." Her voice trembled as she went on. "But Rodolfo arranged to have another steamer hi-jack the load. That's why that woman came here. Dad overheard how she killed Carras and confronted Rodolfo with evidence of his treachery." Her voice broke. "Rodolfo killed them."

I groaned. The cove was about two miles away. If I could stand them off—I decided to take a chance. "Look," I said. "Take my car and go into town. Get Wilson and a detachment of Marines. Tell them to come out fast. Maybe we can stop them."

I ran out, climbed into Quesada's car. It was light but fast and in record time I made the cove. I stopped the car at a safe distance and went along behind the bushes that lined the road.

Monita had been right. There had been a hi-jack in progress. The crew from a steamer—I made out the name, *Steuben!*—was holding guns on the bunch from the *Bolivar*, who were herded along shore.

Peeper was cursing the natives, who were just finishing up. The girl was standing there coolly smoking a cigarette. I itched to get her neck between my hands. Just then, Peeper growled. "Where in hell is Rodolfo? He oughtta be here now."

The girl laughed. "He'll be along. As soon as he disposes of that little fool." She looked at her watch. "Do you think I should go back and get him?"

Peeper started to say something when suddenly a sailor yelled and pointed to the sky. "Looka. It's coming here!"

I followed his finger. And could have shouted for joy. A Marine scouting plane was flying low over the ships. It couldn't help seeing what was going on. And it would radio its findings right back.

Consternation spread like wildfire as the plane zoomed over our heads. The natives broke and ran. The sailors from the *Bolivar* took the opportunity to set on their captors and in a minute curses and grunts and the sound of blows split the air as all hell broke loose.

I SAW Peeper start to run. I jumped from my hiding place. He saw me coming. I dropped to the ground as his gun barked. My shot caught him in the stomach and he pitched face forward. Some of the sailors were running for the ships. One of the men tripped over Peeper's body.

The plane flew low and a blaze of machine gun bullets went over our heads. I laughed, even then. It was McGregor piloting the plane. And he could handle his guns. I knew nobody would dare move toward the ship now.

Suddenly, I caught a flash of white. In the excitement, Peeper had slipped away, unnoticed, and was running hell-bent-for-leather toward a car. Her legs flashed white in the sunlight as she pulled up her skirt to make better speed.

My arm ached horribly as I pounded along behind her. She looked back once, saw me. A bullet from her derringer whipped along—

(Continued on page 107)