Murder at High Tide

by CHARLES G. BOOTH

CHAPTER 1

THE PUZZLE OF PARADOS

ARE you Mr. Morrison?"

I shall never forget Dan Parados as I saw him when I turned my head at the sound of his arrogant voice. He was stepping through the French window in the library of his sprawling hacienda on San Lucas island.

Dan Parados had been called "the most sinister figure on the Coast."

"Are you Mr. Morrison?" His tone was tyrannical.

"No," I said diffidently. "Mr. Morrison is ill. I am Alec Munf. Do you—"

A [illegible] I learned later [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

"You were fortunate, Mr. Parados."

"Shrewd," he corrected. "Keep 'em scared, pay only when you have to, oil your wits—and you'll make money even in the antique business. If a man can't hold what he's got he should lose it."

"You wouldn't complain," I ventured, "if some one were strong enough to take your wealth from you?"

"I'd like to see the boy that can do it." He laughed boastfully.

"If you lose your life you'd have lost everything, wouldn't you?"

His magnificent conceit had irked me and the words were out before I realized it.

"What d'you mean by that?" he shouted furiously.

"I'm sorry," I apologized. "I suppose I was thinking of the impermanence of life."

The door opened at the moment [illegible] entered.

[illegible] was [illegible] that [illegible] girl [illegible]

[illegible] brought into [illegible] that [illegible] something between the two [illegible] the door. [illegible] [illegible] her [illegible] [illegible] corruptly.

Parados [illegible] toward [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]