



**Danger Trail #11**  
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*Port of Bilbao,  
The year 1700*

Alan Andal led the way over the rugged terrain, maintaining a steady pace that left his partner short of breath and straining to keep up. Hiram Dee refused to quit though. He knew his ally was right, that time was growing short, that the time was nigh, that at last, the decades-long battle between his family and Mary Seward was about to come to a successful conclusion.

Alan was tall and broad-shouldered, athletic and limber as he loped over the rocky heights leading up away from the bustling Spanish port that they had landed in not hours earlier. Shaggy black hair framed a broad, tanned face, his firm jaw lined in a thick black beard, dark eyes focused on their target: the remote cliff-side villa of the vampiress that had so long plagued the Dee family.

“Quickly, we’re nearly there, my friend!” Alan hissed back to the huffing and puffing Hiram. He gave a glance over his shoulder to the smaller man, a look of excitement over his face.

Hiram’s round face was red with exertion, thin brown hair cropped close. He struggled with the pace, but Alan could only watch with admiration at the will that propelled such an out-of-shape man on such a hard pace. Hiram was well-fed, the girth under his leather hunting clothes indicating a life of luxury. He gave a quick, forced grin at his partner as he continued. “Nearly... there... ” he echoed with a nod. He tugged on the straps of his knapsack, cinching them up as he felt the weight like a block of lead. He gave a brief thought of thanks that his friend carried the other weapons.

The mismatched pair continued the steady, demanding route, at last reaching the small orchard to the south of the estate, where they took a moment to let Hiram collect himself. They studied the low white-washed building ahead. Alan rested a strong, callused hand on Hiram’s shoulder and gave a comforting squeeze. “An auspicious night, Hiram,” Alan said as the smaller man looked up at the dark clouds. Not that it would have been much brighter, for there was a new moon, and that just aided their cause.

“Ready, Alan?” Hiram asked as he raised himself back up onto his tired, short legs. When his partner nodded, they crept slowly to the house. Hiram skillfully opened the shuttered window and Alan helped to boost him over the sill.

Then the two continued to creep into the villa, down a narrow corridor, peeking into various rooms as they sought out their quarry. It was in the inner courtyard that they found her, appearing from a mist, tall and regal, elegant and beautiful in her dark velvet dress, red hair bound up tightly on her head. Hiram’s mouth formed a thin, determined line as he gestured at Alan to creep around the side before stepping out to face her. He slid the knapsack from his shoulders and stared at the woman’s blood-red mouth, avoiding those hypnotic eyes.

“Time has come for you at last, Mary Seward!” he shouted as he let the sack drop to the ground with a plop and gripped the leather-bound book within. His fingers thumbed the page edges, finding the notches he’d placed and sliding the digit between the sheaves. “Tonight it ends!”

Mary merely gave that smug, self-serving smile as she looked at the soft academic and stepped toward him. “You’re correct, Hiram. Things are at an end. I see you were good enough to bring my book. How sensible.”

“I bring your doom,” he retorted, giving a slight swallow, nervous as he was before the powerful creature. He knew she could crush him all too quickly, and played on her ever-growing arrogance to let Alan Andal get in position with the enchanted sword. He pulled the book up and flipped the pages open to the ritual within. “The undoing of all your evil.”

“Do you like my home, Hiram? I do hope so, because it took a lot of work to make it attractive enough to draw you here,” she said to him as she paused a few feet from the hunter. “But one needs an appropriate location for such momentous occasions as meeting my patron.”

“Patron?” Hiram glanced around into the dark, wondering where Alan was, wondering where this patron was. He thought he saw shadows shuffling in the dark corners of the courtyard and he swallowed again.

“Yes, patron,” Mary said as shadows broke away from those dark

corners to reveal a dozen people around him, each sporting hungry red eyes and wicked fangs. "He helped me. Helped me find strength to finally end this little conflict. Helped me to craft my Blood Red Moon."

"Who?"

"Vandal Savage," Alan Andal said as he slid the enchanted sword through Hiram's heart, killing him in a quick stroke. "You were a good man, and a worthy hunter, and so I grant you peace in your death."

Hiram dropped the book, and slowly slid off the glittering blade and to his knees as Mary suddenly appeared directly before the killer. She snatched the book up angrily from the ground and glared at her ally. "He was to be mine!" she hissed.

"He was too good for you, Mary," Vandal said as he casually cleaned the sword with a cloth, making Mary recoil slightly. "You have your minions and you have your book. Now prepare to..." He paused when he saw her face contort with greater rage. He saw blank pages flipped back and forth around the ritual bound in its center. He gave a grim smile of respect and glanced at the dead man at his feet.

"A fake! You were fooled by a fake! This is not the diary!" Mary screamed as Vandal watched her tantrum. "You get nothing, if I don't have the diary!" She found notes jotted into the back pages as Vandal watched in bemusement. "One of his cousins fled to Russia, and the other to the New World. Who knows which one has the actual diary."

"If either. If those are the paths they took. Fairly safe to say, they could well be lies. Well played, Hiram." He looked at Mary and let the bemusement fall from his face. "The game goes on. You have your cult. You have your strength, and now the upper hand in your petty little feud. Use it." He turned sharply on his heel and marched from the building, leaving Mary to hiss at his retreating form in impotent rage.

### *The Danger Trail!*

Issue #11: "The Stolen Myth Affair, Part Two"

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*Off the Peruvian coast,  
September, 1935*

It was an oppressively humid dawn as the men worked on the cargo ship, preparing it for its departure later in the day. The hold was full, the supplies in place, and the crew were hard at work securing lines and hatches and sundry other important tasks. At least until one of the men thought to look around and muse over the sudden lack of birds.

< “What are you going on about?” > another crew member asked, as he paused and glanced around. < “What’s the problem? Miss yer little bird-ie friends?” >

Some of the men guffawed, but a couple of the other veterans on the crew joined the first man with concern. Then one of them pointed toward the land and stared in horror. Then more of the men stared, as shock, surprise and a vast flock of birds washed over the crew. They dazzled and blinded the men as they flew through the air over the ship, driving the sailors to duck for cover, and shield their eyes and try to hide.

Slowly, the birds departed the ship, having done their favor for the Daughter of the Didi, and the men they cowed with their display never had the chance to even notice the two women who had stormed the ship. One was in simple leathers, with raven-black hair and deeply tanned skin, lithe and petite, and she secured the crew in the wake of her partner. Also with dark tresses, the second woman was a tall mass of muscle and warrior skill, moving through the distracted men with singular ease. When all was done, the crew had been left on the dock, and the ship had headed out into the ocean with the two women in command.

Rima the Jungle Woman spent the first day working the hoists and sending the weapons of destruction over the side of the ship and sinking to the depths of the Pacific. Queen Hippolyta spent the first day guiding

the ship with ever-increasing skill toward a very special place; one that both women knew would lead them ultimately to their quarry.

Rima eventually joined her new companion on the bridge, covered in a sheen of sweat, a proud smile on her face over her day's efforts. "Everything on track?"

"Yes it is," Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, replied with a smug smile of her own. "I figure we should be at the local triangle in another day, and from there, we can pick up the Savage's trail."

"Good. Very, very good," Rima said. "How long do you think it will take this man to figure out what's happened to this operation? Think we'll get a chance to beat out any warning signals?"

"I don't know. I hope so, I truly do. But from all I could learn from our oracles on Themyscira, this man is exceedingly well-informed and tied into the vast dealings of Patriarch's World," Hippolyta replied with a heavy heart. "To gain the edge of surprise on him is reportedly very difficult."

Rima settled a comforting hand on the royal warrior. "Considering all in our favor, sister, I suspect if anyone can surprise him, it is us."

Hippolyta reached her hand up and put it over Rima's and her confident smile returned quickly. She only nodded as the two women stared ahead into the vast sea.

### *East Hampton, New York*

King Faraday drove down the long ribbon of road, settled into the seat of his advanced Cord 812 (as the public would one day get to know it), the sleek black car trailing behind an older vehicle. Evening was settling long shadows that Faraday did his best to use, dropping back at convenient curves to try and prevent his target from getting suspicious. With the information he'd been given by Flynn, Faraday had spent the last few days on the go, with almost no sleep, digging harder than ever for a lead, and now that he had one, he would be damned if he'd lose it.

Thus he was on this road, heavily lined in woods, headed out toward the very tip of Long Island it seemed, following Richard Davis, assistant to the Commissioner of the Bureau of Lighthouses; a man who had come into ownership of a very nice home out in this area, not the sort of location a civil servant normally could afford. Flynn had talked to Faraday about Project M, and after scouring paper trails and hunting down leads and informants, determined M stood for Montauk. The lighthouse in particular, and that led him to Davis, and on this very evening, to the lighthouse beaming its brilliance into the darkening sky. Faraday drove past Davis's destination, as the agent watched his target pull up to the beacon tower. Faraday found a place to pull his own sedan off the road, and then crept back to the lighthouse. He tested the front door, and found it unsecured, heightening his tension already.

He opened the door and blinked as he let his eyes adjust to the dull yellow bulbs lighting up the hall inside. He moved up to the base of the iron stairs spiraling up the outer wall, which he also pressed his back to, and he stared up. No sign of Davis, no way he could have gone up, not in the short time he was out of sight. He glanced over to the door that led into the attached building and crept over to it, testing it as well. When he did, the door burst open into his face, knocking Faraday back with a hard grunt as two men leaped out at him.

One of the burly men quickly grabbed Faraday by the lapels of his jacket and hefted the agent back to his feet, only to bring their forehead against the bridge of Faraday's nose.

"Ugh!" Faraday saw stars explode before his eyes as he staggered back, and felt a hard blow to his jaw that spun him to the right. "Secret Service agent!" he cried out to test his theory. When he felt the first thug kick him in the side, he knew that he'd found some of his conspiracy. He rolled with the kick, landing on the cement floor and continuing to roll over.

The thug stepped up and tried to jam his foot back down into Faraday, but the agent instinctively grabbed the man's heel with his hand. A hard and sudden twist sent the attacker falling to one side as the other thug moved in to grab Faraday's outstretched arm. Faraday rolled onto his back, unbalancing the new attacker, bringing his own foot up to catch the man in the chest, sending him crashing to the far side of the room.

Quickly, Faraday was on his feet and pulling out his pistol, swinging the butt around to catch the first thug in the temple. The man went down hard this time, and stayed down as Faraday pointed the weapon at the second man. "You've just volunteered to give me the nickel tour, fella," Faraday stated as he watched the man stagger to his feet.

The man raised his hands in surrender and walked slowly to the attached building, He led Faraday down a short hall and through a locked metal hatchway. "You have no clue how much trouble you're getting into," he finally said as he started to walk down a spiral staircase. "You think you're government, but you've got no idea."

"Please, tell me the master will make me regret my curiosity," Faraday requested with a roll of his eyes as he looked around at his surroundings. The simple clay stone walls circled them as they headed down below the installation above. The air was clammy, and Faraday suppressed a momentary shiver.

"You got no idea," the thug retorted as he unlocked a new hatchway now. "I'm gonna love this." He chuckled and threw open the door, then darted inside.

Faraday hurried in after him and raised his gun. He leaped for a counter he saw out of the corner of his eye, taking cover and waiting for the attack, peering cautiously for a return target. Instead, he saw the man who'd led him there, unconscious on the floor. He slowly stood up as he realized that there were a half-dozen others also unconscious, scattered around the room. He looked at the mix of researchers, laying near tables of lab equipment, at the base of strange electric machines, all of it a mix of the cliché scenes of a dozen different fictional mad scientists' lairs. In the middle of it stood a woman, possibly the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen, with smooth porcelain skin, deep dark eyes and ruby red lips, her face catching his gaze nearly instantly, almost keeping him from noticing she was missing a hand.

"Good evening, Agent Faraday," the woman said softly as she walked to the stunned G-man. She stepped over the unconscious thug on her way, not noticing the victim as she held her remaining hand out to Faraday. "My name is Rowan, and my queen sends me under a flag of truce."

Faraday took a long, hard blink and then looked at her again. He holstered the revolver and stared hard at her, trying to resist the fact that she acted on every male instinct in his body. "Is that right now?"

"The proof lies around you. Everyone in here still lives. Do what you will with them, they're unimportant now," she answered in a soft, sweet voice, gesturing at the room with a sweep of her stumped arm. "What is important is that you agree to the truce."

"What would that be?" Faraday asked as he pulled himself away from the vampire and knelt down to check the various unconscious people. They lived; she hadn't lied... yet.

"A mutual foe, one we both need to oppose, or he'll risk everything each of us holds dear," Rowan said in that voice like velvet and chocolate. It was a curious mix of pleading and strength, and wormed its way into his brain as he stood to face her again.

"Then Flynn was right? This wasn't one of Seward's operations?" Faraday asked, clutching onto his suspicions like a life preserver as the sea of words and sensations washed over him.

"My queen dirty her hands with such... crudity?" Rowan sounded offended as she again made a sweeping gesture with her good arm, sending an array of glass tubing crashing to the floor. "Oh no. That's not her way. Not our way. That's Savage's way."

Faraday considered her words carefully, weighing his options. He'd learned so very little about this Vandal Savage, but the little he had gleaned about "the master" indicated he was coming closer and closer to something very big, and the closer he got, the harder it got to pull more information from Savage's people. He gave a heavy sigh and nodded. "Okay. For now. But don't expect me to trust you, or your queen."

"No more than we trust you, Agent Faraday," Rowan assured him. "I know you're already working out a way to use our alliance to your advantage. It's why the Queen of Blood extends this olive branch to you. You're the only one of her recent foes that possesses the qualities that can best work against Vandal Savage."

This made Faraday frown even more, and he balled his fists up angrily. He wasn't sure if this was a compliment, or an insult, but either way, he was being told he was thinking like Seward, and that left him unnerved and very unhappy. Still, the mission was to stop Savage, so he let his breath out slowly and said, "Since you've already put down all my potential leads, I can only assume you know where to go next?"

"Why yes, Agent Faraday. I do indeed. Come along." She gave him a sweet smile, eyes glittering like dark jewels before she turned and walked a flowing walk out of the room.

Faraday felt his eyes swim again, his concentration faltering from the powerful charisma of the woman. *It was clear why Seward sent this creature out to deal for her cult*, he thought to himself. As he followed Rowan out of the door, he noticed a bulletin board littered in papers and quickly snatched a thumbtack, slipping it into his pocket.

### *The Graf Zeppelin, High above the Atlantic*

The sleek airship streaked through the skies, offering a grand vista for the quartet of adventurers that were eating in the dining room. Cyril "Speed" Saunders held court with his newfound friends, who were still impressed by the connections he'd pulled in to land passage aboard the graceful craft. Even now, as they savored the delicious meal and an excellent vintage wine, Speed explained to them how he and the *Graf Zeppelin's* owner and current captain, Dr. Hugo Eckener, had met. His audience was listening with rapt attention interspersed with laughter.

"Oh, poor Speed, just hanging there like a hooked fish getting pulled out of the drink," Michael Gallant teased the young man as he slapped the side of his leg.

"That wasn't so bad; it was the shark that was chewing on my brand new leather loafers that was the tipping point!" Speed explained, as the ladies stared at him in shock, then realized he was telling an elaborate 'fish' story and began to laugh at the image.

"Speed! You're crazy!" Harriet Cooper declared with a gentle slap to his forearms as Argent tried to control her laughing enough to sip her glass of wine.

"But yeah, me and Hugo's son Knut, there we were, bouncing around the ship, trying to sew, and I mean, the two of us, we'd never so much as sewed a button on a sleeve, but there we—" Speed paused as a crewman stepped up to the young adventurer.

"Excuse me, Mr. Saunders, but there's a message coming in for you in the radio room," the crewman explained in a heavily accented voice. "Could you come with me, please?"

"Sure. Be right back, guys," Speed said as he stood up and headed out of the dining room.

"Okay, Harriet, spill the beans," Michael said as he leaned in toward the slender, auburn-haired young scholar. "Was he totally joshing?"

Harriet shrugged her slim shoulders and sipped her own glass of wine. "Beats me, but I wouldn't be surprised if it's true. It's clear Dr. Eckener knows him, and he pulled some heavy strings to get us on board. So I can only guess he was really running around the outside of the zep-pelin."

"This ship doesn't get out to America very often," Argent St. Cloud confirmed. "And they always fill up quickly. Whatever he did, Speed found us passage in style, you have to admit. This is amazing."

Michael nodded as he drained his glass and then glanced around. He got a strange look in his eyes and slowly stood up. "I'll be right back. You gals stay here, act like nothing's up."

"Nothing is up, is it?" Harriet asked as Michael quickly moved out of the room, and she looked back at Argent. "What was that about?"

"No clue," the silver-haired beauty answered with a slight frown, "but if there's going to be hanging off of the side of airships, then I want in." Now Argent stood up and smoothed out the dress over her full hips and

started to march after Michael.

"But I don't like hanging off of airships," Harriet said softly, to no one in particular, as she watched the woman leave. She looked around, feeling very alone suddenly. She gulped the last of her wine, and stood as she poured out another glass, then gulped that down as well. "Ah hell." Fortified, she then headed after her companions.

Speed was seated at the radio, next to the operator, and held the headphones to his ear, leaning over a microphone. The radio operator started to explain, "Okay, you're connected. I'm going to hit this switch, and the other end will start, then you just press this button and..."

"I know how this works, thank you," Speed interjected and hit the switch for the crewman. "This is Speed, speak your nickel."

"Hello, my friend," came the crackling voice, strident and even, and distinctive even over the static. "This is Hans Von Hammer."

"I'd recognize that voice anywhere, Ace," Speed replied with a big grin. "What's up? How'd you know I was up here?"

"Friends," Hans replied without further elaboration. "I have been trying to reach you for a few days now. I had hoped to implore you to come out to London and lend me your aid."

"Well, ain't you in luck," Speed chuckled as he leaned back in the chair. "I'm headed there now. Good thing you caught me. What's the situation?"

"Mutual enemies," Hans explained, remaining terse. "I'll meet you at the airfield when you arrive, and I can explain everything more freely there. Just be very careful on the way over."

"I'm thousands of feet in the air, I think I'm okay. But thanks for the warning. I'll see you in another day or so."

"I will see you then, Cyril." The line disconnected and Speed stood up and handed the mike and headset back to the crewman.

“Thanks for your—” Again he was interrupted and Speed turned to look out the door as Michael used his considerable strength to push in a second crewman, gripping his arms tightly. “What’s this?”

“Caught this guy following you, Speed,” Michael explained. “He seemed to be watching us at dinner, but I thought it was just him being an attentive server. But then I noticed he’d headed out after you. Any clue who he is?”

Speed tugged off the cap the stranger wore and pulled his face up to look at it, eyes quickly going wide in surprise. “Holy! You were at the temple!” Suddenly, the strange man lashed out with his feet, kicking Speed hard in the chest and sending him crashing over the radio operator and into the equipment. Michael found himself unbalanced having to suddenly hold all of this man’s weight alone and this let the stranger flip the bulky adventurer over his back when his feet were again on the floor.

“Damn, he’s strong!” Michael groaned as he tried to disentangle himself from the other two men, his arms aching from the sudden breaking of his hold.

“He’s a vampire, that’s why!” Speed declared as he tried to shake off the stunning blow. The vampire had dashed out of the door to escape, and both men were surprised to hear a loud thump on the radio room wall.

Michael was the first to pivot around the doorway and saw that Argent had hooked her arm around the fleeing man’s arm and pivoted, using all her strength and his momentum to force him into the thin wall. The vampire growled angrily as he shook his head and faced the silver-haired woman, but Michael tackled him at the knees, bringing the enemy to the floor. Speed leaped over his bulky companion and brought his knee against the side of the vampire’s head, dazing him despite his supernatural endurance.

The two men grappled the vampire’s arms tightly, trying to hold him. “What the hell are you doing here? This isn’t a coincidence!” Speed barked at the creature.

“Making sure you’re in no position to save the diary!” the vampire snarled as he used his superior strength to twist about, shoving Speed

back-first into one of the walls, cracking it and making Speed slump breathlessly.

Argent wasted no time bringing her knee up into the vampire's stomach as Michael used all his power to pull the creature into the opposite wall and try to immobilize him, but neither had the effect they wanted. The vampire lashed out with his free arm, striking Argent in the side of the head and sending her to the floor. Before Michael could blink, that free arm had gripped his thick neck and started to squeeze, choking off his air, but the blond adventurer refused to let go of his own hold, battering the vampire again and again into the wall, each attempt weaker than the one before.

Finally, the vampire contemptuously threw the light-headed Gallant down the hall. "Now then, let's get to the killing," he said as he turned back toward Speed hungrily. In his head, he was running through the rest of the plan: rigging the airship to crash into London, and then jumping to freedom before the catastrophe. Then he could return to his beloved queen—

His thoughts ended very suddenly as he finished his pivot back to Speed and stepped into the broken chair leg being thrust at him by some woman he'd not even noticed before. *Where had she com—* Then he collapsed to the floor, unmoving, unthinking, and Harriet Cooper sank against the wall, collapsing and shaking as she sat next to Speed, who was still catching his breath. He looked at the monster, now staked in the middle of the corridor, then glanced down at Michael, who was helping Argent to her feet. He wrapped an arm around Harriet's shoulders and leaned her into him, soothing her shaking body.

"That's my girl," he said softly, smiling as she held onto him now and Michael and Argent stood over the vampire, planning their next move.

*The Atlantic Ocean,  
far below the Graf Zeppelin*

Even with the shortcuts and tricks known to the two women, the ocean voyage had been long and hard. Two people manning a cargo ship made

for a difficult trip. Hippolyta had guided the vessel through the 'triangle' and brought it to the seas around Paradise Island, before sailing back out of the Atlantic's more famous Bermuda Triangle and up the eastern seaboard of America.

The skilled tracking senses of Rima enabled her to follow the dangerous trail of their quarry, the mysterious and menacing Vandal Savage, and now it was she who kept the two on course, still determined, but the trip was wearing on them. And despite her knowledge of the hidden paths of the world, Rima couldn't understand where she was headed... she just knew she was. She missed the jungle, she missed the equatorial climate, and she missed land, but she struggled to push those thoughts into the back of her mind.

Hippolyta was also missing home, and was growing impatient with the voyage now. She knew to trust Rima's abilities, but found it harder to understand why she should trust them. Her heart and mind conflicted as day turned to night, back to day, and once more into night when a powerful beacon of light cut through the darkness.

"There," Rima said. "We need to go there."

"The Savage is in command of that lighthouse?" Hippolyta asked with an excited growl in her husky voice.

"No... no. There's another reason," Rima mused as she watched the queen grow frustrated again. "Patience. We're on track, I feel it in my bones. It's a part of the path, I know." She didn't quite believe herself even, but she refused to give up on her knowledge of those hidden paths now. They'd never let her down before.

As the night grew darker, and the ship drew closer to the lighthouse, Rima's sharp eyes caught sight of a small boat headed out toward them. Her hearing caught the distant sound of the motor, and then it was cut off. Cut off so that more normal hearing would never pick it up.

"There are hunters on that launch," she informed Hippolyta. The warrior pulled out binoculars and aimed them in the direction the huntress pointed, barely able to make out a shape. Rima could see it though, a small boat being rowed toward them by two people.

"If you say so," Hippolyta said with a frown.

"They're allies," Rima said confidently, folding arms over her chest.

"How do you know?"

"They're sneaking up on the ship. Two people coming up on a cargo vessel can't be pirates," Rima explained as she kept her amazing senses peeled for more information. "They must think it's an enemy they need to infiltrate. There is no way they can know the crew is replaced, never mind by two outsiders such as us." Hippolyta smiled at that and nodded.

"I see what you're thinking. If they think the crew is here, it is the Savage's crew, and they're hoping to infiltrate it. Thus enemies of the Savage," Hippolyta finished surmising. "And allies of ours?"

"We can hope. And they may be what led me here, for they may well know where we need to go next."

"Let's go and greet them then," Hippolyta said with a cocky grin and led the way out onto the deck. The pair of women waited until the small launch came even closer, and then she spoke again, her commanding voice easily reaching out over the waves.

"Greetings there! I am Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons! Announce yourselves and your purpose and be recognized!"

"Queen of the... Where the hell do I find these people?" The muttering voice reached the sharp ears of Rima, who smiled broadly and leaned over the side of the ship.

"Faraday, is that you? It is I, Rima!"

"You know this man?" Hippolyta asked her companion, not pleased with what she was pretty sure she heard him say.

"I do. He is a good man, he is definitely here to help us," Rima said with an excited trill in her voice. "We should help him and his friend up."

“Good... man.” The queen rolled the words together with some distaste but lowered ropes to secure the launch. “We’ll see if such a thing can happen.”

Soon, the two newcomers were clambering over the side of the ship and Rima gave Faraday a hug, a gesture that shocked the man as much as Hippolyta, who eyed the agent suspiciously. “Good to see you too, Rima. What brings you and your... friend here?”

“The same thing that brings you and your friend here,” Rima said as she looked at the lovely, pale woman who followed him over the rail of the ship. She made it no further before a sword was at her neck and Hippolyta glared at her angrily, and then stared at Faraday.

“Vrykolakas!” the warrior declared angrily, and stared at Rima again. “He brings death with him!”

“I do have to ask why you bring a dead woman with you, Faraday,” Rima asked as she too stared at Rowan.

“Please. I am no Greek,” Rowan sneered, immediately regretting her words as the steel pressed to her slender neck harder. “No offense intended, ‘Your Majesty’. We are here searching for a path to Vandal Savage. We seek his destruction, I can only assume you two do as well.” She leaned her head away from the blade and looked at the Amazon.

“Faraday?”

“It’s true, Rima. For now, we’re working toward the same end,” Faraday said, reaching out to grab Rowan by the stump of her arm, pulling her from Hippolyta’s reach. “Whether any of us like it or not.”

“I do not like it,” Hippolyta snapped as Rima put a hand on her forearm. “But the Savage is a bigger threat for now. Like it or not.”

“I’m so glad we have that sorted out,” Rowan said with a wan smile. “I’ll be making a home for myself below decks. Let me know when we reach our destination.” She walked off to leave the handling of the ship to the living.

“Where are we going, Faraday?” Rima asked, trying to quickly change the course of the discussion, the queen and the agent staring at each other long and hard.

“England. Savage’s trail leads to England.”

### *Somewhere on the trail*

“I don’t remember this trip being so tough the first time I took it,” Midnight said as he took a moment to catch his breath. His suit coat bore long rips, his blue tie was askew, and his midnight blue fedora tattered as he ran a gloved hand through his mussed black hair.

“I don’t know about your first trip,” Trin Dee answered, looking only slightly less disheveled but nearly as tired, as she paused to give Midnight a moment’s rest in the dark and littered back alley. “But if it wasn’t so hard, it was because your enemy did not have ambushes lying in wait. None of the foes we trail this time are so forgiving.”

Midnight pursed his lips and nodded grimly at her words. “Yeah, guess you’re right at that, little lady. But as my dad always used to say, if you have people jumping out of the dark with nasty hooked blades ready to gut you, you must be doing something right.”

Trin stared at her partner, brow arched curiously at him. “Your father used to say that?”

“Well, I’m paraphrasing to suit the occasion.” He grinned at her as he pushed himself off the wall he was leaning against and pushed his hat to sit deep on his brow. “Ready to continue?” He pulled off the ruined coat and tossed it to the side, rolling up his sleeves.

She nodded, a mischievous glint in her eye the only indication she shared in his joke. The pair marched out of the alley and onto the fog-covered street, not slowing as Midnight followed the young woman who knew this trail better than he. As they turned a corner, they were beset by several men, charging the pair with a cry. She responded with her own shout and whirled against them, flashing kicks and dancing

punches lashing out as Midnight lowered a shoulder and tackled the first, flipping him over his back and head-butted a second. Brute power and athletic grace tore into the group of men trying to stop the adventurers. When the pair reached the far end of the street, the fog grew damper and clung to them and the cobblestones. Midnight's left eye bore a horrid bruise, and he had a cut lip, while Trin's left arm was bleeding from the bicep. But she let out a tiny grin and looked at her partner.

"We have arrived," she announced simply.

"Wonderful. Fantastic!" Midnight replied with a triumphant shake of his fist. "Where?"

"Hm. Good question," Trin muttered. The pair glanced around, looking for a clue, but both stopped when they saw a portion of the fog start to move and coalesce. Trin slipped her butterfly swords out from the depths of her jacket, ready to attack viciously at the forming vampire. But Midnight held an arm out in the way and smiled instead.

"Trin, this is a good vampire," he said as the elegantly dressed man stepped toward them, and bowed low. "This is Andrew Bennett. Andrew, this is..."

"Trin, descendant of my best friend, and guardian of my secrets," Andrew Bennett said in a reverent voice as he raised himself back up and looked at the young woman. Midnight couldn't help but notice that, for the first time, Trin was unnerved, her stance uncertain, her face confused. She took a deep breath to try and calm herself, and then bowed low as well.

Midnight tipped up the brim of his hat and asked, "So, you're saying you two know each other?"

### *Somewhere else in London*

Vandal Savage walked out of the foggy night and onto the empty London street. He was large and imposing, dressed in his elegant black suit for tonight. He tugged lightly at his sleeve, adjusting the suit coat as he

walked steadily toward one particular building. He hadn't wanted to stop here. He was on a strict timetable, something he hadn't had concern for in quite some time. But in this instance, it had to be adhered to, his immortality was irrelevant to the matter at hand. But no, first he had to stop here, regardless of the greater plan.

He walked up the aged, worn steps and wrapped a thick hand around the brass knob of the front door. It was locked, but that proved no obstacle as he forced the door to open anyway, and entered the hall. He took a moment to look around, then marched up the creaking steps to the second floor landing. He glided through the hall with purpose, wanting this to be done now, and stopped at a simple wooden door. He pressed his hand against it, and frowned before battering it down with a sweep of his powerful arm, before entering and staring at the sole occupant, of the room, of the building.

"Richard Occult."

"Vandal Savage."

Doctor Occult, mystic detective, looked over at the intruder from the far side of what was once his study. Like the rest of the house, it was empty, save for chalk markings he'd laid out on the floor. They looked almost like a game board, and in truth, some children might have mistaken it for a 'Snakes and Ladders' board. Both men knew better though.

"Your better half is gone, and that leaves you open and vulnerable, as always," Vandal Savage finally said in an angry mutter.

"There was no way I was leaving her here, with all our possessions, knowing you'd be stomping your way in here, Vandal," the detective replied with a smirk as he fingered the disk in his trench coat pocket.

"You play the game of immortals well for one so new to the table, Richard," Vandal complimented the smaller man as he folded his thick arms over his broad chest, looming over the detective. "Not well enough to stop me. But well. A shame you'll never get to do better."

"Underestimating me, Vandal? I thought someone with your vast experience wouldn't do that," Dr. Occult taunted his foe.

“No. But you don’t fully grasp what is happening here. Oh, you think you do, and in some small way, you have some of the pieces correct. But as you move your pawns around the board, hoping to trap me, hoping to flank and surprise me, you fail to understand one very important thing.” Vandal Savage glanced quickly at the hand in Occult’s pocket, and then chuckled. “Two... two very important things, Richard.”

Dr. Occult slipped his hand out of his pocket, the Symbol of Seven clutched tight to his palm. “What’s that?”

“First, your talisman doesn’t save you from me. I’m not magical. I know magic, I understand ritual and sorcery... but I’m not a creature of magic, and your talisman will not dispel me so readily, or force me from this confrontation.” He grinned and laced his fingers together, cracking them in preparation, as Dr. Occult’s face lost some of its stoicism. “Second, you move your minions across the board by way of the Danger Trail. And what you don’t know, what’s lost in the depths of that Ineffable Libram you try to hide from me, is the truth of the matter, Richard.”

“What truth?”

Vandal stepped across the room, over the chalk board, and easily battered through the mystic defenses of the magician. Doctor Occult moved out of the way of the first blow, but was shocked at the speed and agility of such a huge man as a backhanded punch smashed across the back of his neck and sent him skittering across the floor.

“None of the maneuvers your pawns make can be hidden from me as you move them through the Danger Trail, Richard. Because to walk the Danger Trail is to follow in my footsteps.”

Dr. Occult attempted to backpedal from a vicious punch as he digested the information, but an audible click drew his attention to Savage’s wrist and something shooting out from under the black sleeve that struck him between the eyes, and then the world went dark.

*To be continued...*

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## From the same author on Feedbooks

Danger Trail #1 (2007)

Danger Trail: The Blood & Dragon Affair, Part 1 (of 3)

Danger Trail #2 (2007)

Danger Trail: The Blood and Dragon Affair, Part 2 (of 3).

Ninjas and vampires and diabolical plots, oh my! King Faraday, Speed Saunders and the Enemy Ace are joined by a masked crime-fighter as they face two secret societies with a monstrous agenda! Pulp action at its finest as we seek out...the Danger Trail!

Danger Trail #3 (2007)

Danger Trail: The Blood and Dragon Affair, Part 3 (of 3).

Learn the mission of the Blood Red Moon! Uncover the mastermind behind the Black Dragon Society! Watch our heroes try and work together when some can't trust others, and one has no clue that there's cavalry coming to the rescue! Who would have thought marital strife could be so much danger for the heroes, or so entertaining for the readers! It's the conclusion to "The Blood and Dragon Affair!"

Danger Trail #4 (2007)

Danger Trail: The Verdant Darkness Affair, Part 1 (of 2)

Mightiest Mortals #1 (2007)

Mightiest Mortals: With a Stroke of Lightning!

Mightiest Mortals #2 (2007)

Mightiest Mortals: In a Crash of Thunder

Mightiest Mortals #3 (2007)

Captain Marvel: Under a Seal of Six Gods!

Justice League #8 (2007)

Justice League: Lucky Number 7.

What are the chances that a rash of good fortune across the globe could be the League's next case? Pretty good when this luck starts rewriting the laws of the universe and threatening the existence of

ages-old mystic defenses keeping ancient, primordial forces at bay!

Justice League #9 (2007)

Justice League: To See Tomorrow.

Why are there hawk soldiers of Thanagar on Earth? Who are the strange new superhumans appearing around the globe, testing and probing local governments? What exactly is the Justice League facing when a quartet of self-proclaimed heroes declares Earth "their last stand?" It's the beginning of an epic threat wrapped inside two strange mysteries that will leave the Justice League hoping that Earth survives "To See Tomorrow!"

Justice League #10 (2007)

Justice League: To See Tomorrow, Part Two (of Four).

"To See Tomorrow" continues as the stakes only get higher and secrets slowly start to unravel. Hawkman and the Martian Manhunter are caught between the Thanagarian invaders and their own satellite! The rest of the League is caught between Mon-El and Wandjina! And in the big picture, it's all symbolic of the Earth being caught between the enigmatic Overmaster and a still-hidden mastermind with dreadful intent!

Danger Trail #5 (2008)

Danger Trail: The Verdant Darkness Affair, Part 2 (of 2).

What connection lies between la Llorona's kidnapped children and Nyola's captured heroine Rima? What is drawing the natives of Central America and Mexico together? Speed Saunders, King Faraday and Midnight are joined by Doctor Occult to learn the truth before an Empire of Blood washes over the land!

Weird Western Quarterly #11 (2008)

Johnny Thunder: Steel Heart Iron Soul.

As Johnny Thunder, John Tane has evaded the deathbed oath to his mother never to do violence, and become Mesa City's great protector. Now he's about to be challenged on a whole new level when a powerful land baron makes a grab for greater wealth and glory, and the enigmatic renegade, Madame .44, has Johnny Thunder's heart in her sights! What might be his most dangerous

mission yet will also be the first chapter in a ballad of love and gunslinging like the Wild West has yet to see!

*Danger Trail #6 (2008)*

Danger Trail: The Man in Stitches Affair, Part 1 (of 2)

*Danger Trail #7 (2008)*

Danger Trail: The Man in Stitches Affair, Part 2 (of 2).

The Revenant Program proceeds apace as Saunders and Midnight must struggle with former ally King Faraday to find the evidence that can shut down Doctor Zero for good! Maybe, just maybe, newcomer Argent St. Cloud can help out!

*Speeding Bullet #4 (2008)*

Bulletman: The Birth of Bulletman, Part 4 (of 4): Man Made Gods. This is it! The mystery is revealed and the gloves come off as Bulletman duking it out with the Murder Prophet and his god of murder, the Nihilist! Can he come through his baptism of fire and blood intact? And even if he wins, does the Prophet truly get the last laugh?

*Danger Trail #9 (2008)*

Danger Trail: The Nation of Murder Affair, Part 2 (of 2).

As Speed Saunders and King Faraday join Argent St. Cloud to search for Michael Gallant, a wave of murders leaves the city of New York reeling as the heat rises, tempers flare, and Rue Morgue revels in the bloodbath!

*Danger Trail #8 (2008)*

Danger Trail: The Nation of Murder Affair, Part 1 (of 2).

Gangsters want Thomas Dewey dead at all costs, bringing Michael Gallant onto the case, Argent St. Cloud at his side! But when Murder, Inc. steps up to the challenge, can even he call on enough reinforcements to save the day?

*Danger Trail #10 (2008)*

Danger Trail: The Stolen Myth Affair, Part 1 (of 3).

It begins here! Threads woven from the start of the series, put into play centuries beforehand, all start to come together in this issue, as familiar faces return to the scene, dark forces gather for the

attack, and the secrets of the Trail yawn wide and threatening! All this and a special guest-star...the Queen of the Amazons!

*Danger Trail Annual #1 (2008)*

*Danger Trail: The Savage Sins Affair.*

As the Stolen Myth Affair heats up, as a covert war rages on the Danger Trail, take a peek inside the history of the man who has set this all into motion...Vandal Savage! Balloon Buster Steven Savage is doing just that as he uncovers threads and connections surrounding the many figures of the age that all lead back to this diabolical mastermind, some stretching back centuries! If the truth about him can't be unraveled soon, those threads will choke the present day and continue into the future!

*Danger Trail #12 (2008)*

*Danger Trail: The Stolen Myth Affair, Part 3 (of 3).*

Vandal Savage begins his plan to bring the world into his control! King Faraday, Speed Saunders and Midnight, along with their assembled allies, make their bid to stop him, but there are three queens in this game, and each one has their own vision for how the endgame should play out! It's the end of the first year on the Danger Trail...is it also just the end?

*Speeding Bullet #1 (2008)*

*Speeding Bullet, Part 1 (of 4): Modern Gods.*

James Barr has developed a special device that allows him tremendous powers! Now he steps into a new world of masked men and heroic deeds, but is he really ready to take his place among the world's newest gods? Will the Murder Prophet usher in an age of blood first?

*Speeding Bullet #2 (2008)*

*Speeding Bullet: The Birth of Bulletman, Part 2 (of 4): Deepest Secrets.*

James Barr steps into costume for the first time, and Bulletman is on the case of the Obermyer murders. But so is another person...the actual killer, a mysterious being called the Murder Prophet, who is paving the way for his master, and the police and the rookie hero struggle to catch up and stop him!

Speeding Bullet #3 (2008)

Speeding Bullet: The Birth of Bulletman, Part 3 (of 4): Bleeding Truths.

The race is on to uncover the real killer as Detectives Farley and Doherty try to dig through the murder mystery, Martin Obermyer meets the killer and Bulletman stumbles in a critical way, leaving him to face the fury of his wife!

Mightiest Mortals #4 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: Wielding Fists of Virtue.

Captain Marvel is caught between a throwdown with Ibac and Sivana launching an all-out assault on our hero and the Fawcett itself! As bad as that is, though, it gets worse for Kit Freeman...much worse! Meet Sabbac!

Mightiest Mortals #5 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: Scenes of a Day

Mightiest Mortals #6 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: Between Opposing Forces.

Freddy finds himself having the most startlingly worst day of anyone's life! Can it be worse than losing a close relative? What about the dark secret within another relative? Or the secrets being held by his best friend? It all comes crashing down on him in a terrible avalanche of revelations! All this while the city moves on without him!

Mightiest Mortals #7 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: From the Shadows of Twisted Minds.

Get ready for action and excitement! Freddy buries his cousin, Christopher Freeman, and has another showdown with his step-brother Tim Karnes. And we discover just how fiendish Sivana can be when he pushes Captain Marvel's every attribute in an issue in which the World's Wickedest Scientist...doesn't even appear! All this, and the fate of Beautia!

Mightiest Mortals #8 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: To the Truth of the Matter.

Billy and Freddy have their confrontations on secrets kept, power hoarded and relations hidden, all the while the forces of the law

struggle to keep Lady Justice apart from her new champion and Miss Minerva asserts her innocence!

*Mightiest Mortals #9 (2008)*

*Mightiest Mortals: The Abyss of Blood Relations*

Fawcett City goes on despite the gang war, despite the debut of new heroes, despite it all, Fawcett City goes on. Come and see how it does, as Chief Kitchens deals with the presence of Captain Marvel and what it means for his police force! And has Miss Minerva over-played her hand?

*Mightiest Mortals #11 (2008)*

*Mightiest Mortals: The Tide of Heroism.*

The beginning of the stunning two-part finale to Captain Marvel's first year! Sabbac has gone on a rampage, and Ibac is taking advantage of the chaos! Bulletman struggles to intervene, but everyone wants to know where Captain Marvel is! All this and more (and boy, do I really mean it this time)!

*Mightiest Mortals #10 (2008)*

*Mightiest Mortals: The Punishment of Good Deeds.*

Amazing origins issue as we discover the secret behind the magic words, and the history of Sabbac and Ibac! Freddy walks into a deathtrap, Victor Craize starts to feel the power of the people, and the police make a startling discovery about Miss Minerva!

*Mightiest Mortals #12 (2008)*

*Mightiest Mortals: By an Act of Love.*

This is it! Sabbac is on a rampage! Ibac sends his men out against the leaderless forces of his gangland opponent! Into the middle of this stands Captain Marvel and his allies! When the smoke clears, who will stand triumphant?

*Nightwing #30 (2008)*

*Nightwing: The Riddle of the Sphinx.*

Just when you'd think Dick's got enough trouble juggling Titans duties as Nightwing, solo duties as the Batman, and mentoring duties with Tim, things get harder. There's a new villain hitting the streets, one with a dangerous delusion, and Dick's not happy

to see that Nightwing is apparently on the case, without Dick's permission! Come and join us for "The Riddle of the Sphinx!"

Nightwing #31 (2008)

Nightwing: Riddle of the Sphinx, Part 2 (of 2)

Dick must try to get to the bottom of the crazed King Tut and foil his rampages, but he also needs to figure out how to deal with the new Nightwing! As he digs up more information on both, all three men spiral into a collision course of tragic proportions, and Professor McElroy might just be the ultimate victim in all of this!

Justice League #11 (2008)

Justice League: To See Tomorrow, Part Three (of Four).

Things are falling into place at a rapid pace now... for the villains! With the League stretched thin across the globe, friends come racing to the rescue and the action only heats up! Watch Hawkgirl lead the storming of the JL satellite; witness Superman confront Mon-El over his mysterious mission; and thrill to the throwdown between Wonder Woman and the Persuader, as the master villain behind it all draws closer to his goal! All this and more!

Danger Trail Vol. 1 (2009)

This volume collects Danger Trail #1-12 as well as Danger Trail Annual #1. This is the complete first story arc in which our pulp heroes confront the treachery of the Blood Queen, the Dragon Queen and their mysterious backer. Stay tuned for Danger Trail #13 coming soon!

Danger Trail #13 (2009)

Danger Trail: The Brown Lady Affair, Part 1.

In the wake of the battle with Vandal Savage, Speed Saunders has set his sights on finding the Sigil of Seven; that quest being his only remaining link to the missing (and treacherous) Harriet Cooper! His friends Argent St. Cloud and Michael Gallant, along with ally Doctor Occult, want to know what his intentions are, but first they must untangle a dark scheme involving the ghosts of Great Britain!

Mightiest Mortals #13 (2009)

Mightiest Mortals: Opening Passages.

As Fawcett City recovers from the fall of Ibac and Sabbac, our heroes find more things to be worried about. Susan Barr must prosecute the bloodthirsty Tim Karnes while reassessing her stance on costumed crime-fighters; Dudley must wrestle with what he should reveal to Billy, and Billy must deal with the fact that Freddy refuses to return to his crippled body!

*Danger Trail #14 (2009)*

*Danger Trail: The Brown Lady Affair, Part 2 (of 2).*

Speed Saunders must deal with the fact that the artifact Harriet had been searching for, the Sigil of Seven, is Doctor Occult's primary weapon against supernatural evil! In the wake of her treachery, what can that mean? And none of our heroes can take the time to figure it out now, as they struggle to save Michael Gallant from the Dagger of Koth!

*Danger Trail #15 (2009)*

*Danger Trail: The Falkenstein Affair.*

Once rivals of the air and enemies at war, now the Enemy Ace and the Balloon Buster must work together to penetrate the secrets of Castle Falkenstein and the strange mad scientist ready to bring two worlds together to fuel his rise to power!

*Danger Trail #16 (2009)*

*Danger Trail: The Blood of Templars Affair.*

*Danger Trail #17 (2009)*

*Danger Trail: The Blood of Templars Affair, Part Two.*

Things heat up for our heroes as they head into an ancient Knights Templar castle as one of three groups desperate to unlock its secrets and find a powerful relic that will decide the victor in the opening battles of a far greater war, one that has the attention of the enigmatic Sanguine Father! A far greater war that echoes across the decades!

*Danger Trail #18 (2009)*

*Danger Trail: Affairs of Blood and Fate, Part Two: The Angel of Death!*

The strangest crossover of all times continues here, as Rose Psychic, Eel O'Brien, Speed Saunders, Midnight, Trin Dee and Andrew

Bennett find themselves caught in a holy war between the forces of the Order of St. Dumas and the Sanguine Father, who offers a glimpse into a terrifying future for the world!

Danger Trail #20 (2010)

Danger Trail: Affairs of Blood and State, Part 6 (of 6).

Danger Trail #19 (2010)

Danger Trail: Affairs of Blood and State, Part 4.

Weird Western Quarterly #18 (2010)

Weird Western Quarterly: Lust Faith Love Treachery.



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