

Callan goes and does it for nothing—and gets to wrestle with her an' all.

**A limp mine... 'how very appropriate,' said Angela**

HUNTER said, "Puerto Sanchez? ... I think you'd better go there."

"You shall have it," said Hunter.

"None," said Hunter. "I find that interesting."

And so did Callan. It would seem that Miss Wain had a damn good idea who Callan was—and what he could do.

Meres met him at Heathrow, and handed over the airline tickets reluctantly. Meres loved Spanish food. Near an indignant citizen denounced the morals of British Airways. They had no right to over-book. He had business in Malaga—export business. Callan thought Hunter must really want him in Puerto Sanchez in a hurry.

On the plane he drank one cautious whisky, but not even Meres had brought for him. Puerto Sanchez was a yacht harbour for yachts that cost a thousand pounds a foot or more. It wasn't St. Tropez but it was on its way. Callan looked at the wad of pesetas Hunter had sent him. Puerto Sanchez really must be on the map that was the kind of money it took. He read on. Rod Mercer didn't own a yacht, but he quit frequently hired one. And he liked them big.

The way he likes his women, thought Callan. A reminder that the Admiralty, though sailors and a therefore certifiable, still had a right to demand that Rod Mercer be delivered, breathing, to the Admiralty.

There followed a P.S. in Hunter's own hand. "Try not to overspend," it said.

The hire car waiting for him was a BMW, and in his glove compartment, to which he already had the key, was a 387 Magnum and a box of ammunition. This was droll. Shin Beth would send two hit men, three at most; not an infrequent sight in the ammo box was a note: Miss Wain's hire car was a Seat and even gave him the licence number.

He drove along the Marbella road to a restaurant with a car-pool and waded his way over lunch, then went to sit in the car until a white Seat 120 went by, and noted that Miss Wain looked almost as good in a green linen sheath of a dress as she did in a towel.

He dawdled along behind her, and the BMW crowded unhappily; it was not a car designed for dawdling—until they reached a sign that said Puerto Sanchez and turned off into a different world: a world where the trees gave more shade, where even in the height of summer there were roses, and grass that was as green as Anselma Wain's dress, and sprinklers that sprayed intervals to keep it that way.

She turned into a car park that contained everything from a Rolls-Royce Carmarue to a beach-buggy, and Callan kept on going to where the shopping streets began, parked in the first space out of the sun, and went back to wait.

She didn't waste any time. All she had with her was a small case and a small procession of admirers. Callan followed them all to the yacht base, where a million pounds worth of white paint, glowing mahogany, gleaming brass.

Miss Wain went aboard a floating pleasure dome called La Joya—the Jewel, but Callan reckoned it would take a fist-full of diamonds to pay for it.

She was greeted by a squat and muscular man in a yacht-captain's cap who was not Rod Mercer, then stared at her followers until they scattered to other, humbler yachts, and Callan went back to his BMW, and drove to the hotel. Hunter had teleaxed for him, weeping, thought Callan, as he read its dally raves.

A nice hotel, a dark, cool bar that served dark, cool drinks: the sort of bar that should have appeared at Hunter's. He went around—but all Callan drew were two Germans, blonde and sun-tanned and with that air of arrogant assurance that makes even old American money look pale and green. Callan gave up, went to his room and showered, and took his time about it. He couldn't think of anything else to do.

As he left the shower his bath-towel slipped from his hands into the shower-stall and came out sopping wet, which was not for the day.

He came back dabbling himself with a wet towel, and found he had a visitor: a stout and muscular man who had discarded his yachting cap and was wearing a knife instead. He wasted no time on preliminaries, just moved in and lunged.

He held the knife point upwards, the prok and the lunge was professional too, and Callan only just got out of his way, and the squat man spun, cleared a dancer, and moved in again, and as he did so Callan flipped the wet towel at him.

The sound it made as it hit his face was quite audible, and the squat man raised his arm, and Callan unseated the knife-wrist with the axe-head of his hand. The squat man dropped his knife and gasped with pain, then moved to the door and left, not even having time to take his shoes off.

From the well-deck there came sounds of merriment and a cork popped. Callan was in the lightweight jacket that was fastened but what else would you expect if you carried a Magnum and a box of ammo, and at once a sailor appeared, and blocked his path to the door. "This is Jorges boat," he said, and Callan remembered the yachting cap. "He had to go to take care of something, but he wouldn't be back till dinnertime."

So they drank more champagne and Callan idly waited and watched the crowd go by, including the two Germans, loaded with snorkel equipment, who got into a power-boat and roared off.

Fishing in the dark, thought Callan. Maybe they use radar now.

At last Mercer said: "Jorge. Well, well." Angela Wain said: "It could be me."

"That's right," said Mercer. "Or you and him together." He turned to Callan. "What do you think?"

Callan thought of towels, of shotguns, of knives. It depends on whether she's the sort of girl who learns by her mistakes, he said.

"If I were I wouldn't be sitting here waiting for two men to see sense," said Angela Wain.

Women's Lib at a time like this, said Mercer. "That's all we need." He turned to Callan. "You got any ideas, chum?"

How many does it take to run this boat? "You and me could do it."

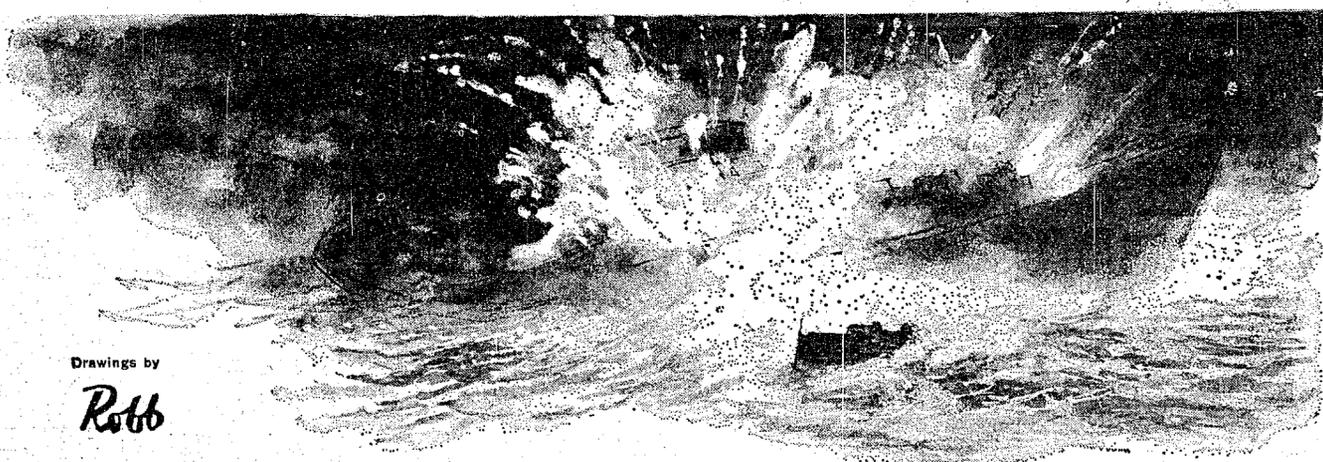
"Get rid of the crew then," he told the girl to do that, but she succeeded, blasting them ashore with a burst of Spanish like machine-gun fire, when she'd gone, she said. "I think, I honestly think I've gone off you, Rod. You can't prove it's Jorge."

"I can't prove it's you, either," said Mercer. "But I can't prove it isn't." Callan loved him like a brother.

When Jorge appeared, Callan showed him the Magnum and he put to sea, reluctantly, but he went, sliding past that white testiness, silvered by moonlight.

"But I am your friend, Rod," he said, more in sorrow than in anger. Your partner.

"You're not my friend," said Callan. "I'm to slap you with a wet towel!" Angela Wain looked up then. "I see," she said. "Perhaps I should learn by my mistakes."



Drawings by Robb

# The millionaire's toy was engulfed in flames

At least he now knew how the Israelis could come to diametrically opposed conclusions and both be right. But knowledge was no use to a dead man—and a dead man was no use to the Admiralty. He put down his glass. "I think we should go for a little cruise," he said, and Callan remembered the yachting cap. "He had to go to take care of something, but he wouldn't be back till dinnertime."

So they drank more champagne and Callan idly waited and watched the crowd go by, including the two Germans, loaded with snorkel equipment, who got into a power-boat and roared off.

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They lowered it, and one by one stepped into her. "I hope Shin Beth does get you," said Jorge from the deck of the yacht. "You are not my friend."

"Too true," said Mercer, and ripped at the starting-cord, the outboard roared, and they stood in towards the lights of Puerto Sanchez, remote as fairyland.

"You going to tell us what you're playing at?" Mercer asked.

"Two Germans," said Callan, "only they looked like actors playing Germans."

Callan said in Hebrew: "All I seek is peace and love." Once it had been a Shin Beth code signal. The two men froze. Callan added in English, "And if I don't get it, I'll blow your heads off. There's a Magnum under this hat."

He talked on, and they listened, and then he produced Mercer and Angela Wain, and they listened some more, and in the end Mercer bought more champagne.

"Why not?" said Callan. "They hardly send a couple of rabbits. Their idea of a joke, I suppose. A bit black for me."

"And why send them so early? They can't have got permission for the kill until they were actually in Spain."

"Gutted that way," said Callan. "Better cover, too."

"But how did they know where to be?"

He's full of questions today, thought Callan. Too and he had to ask this one.

"They got on to your bloke in Malaga," said Callan, "and now he's working for them too. He tipped them off where Mercer was."

Hunter's face turned an unpleasing puce, and Callan roared.

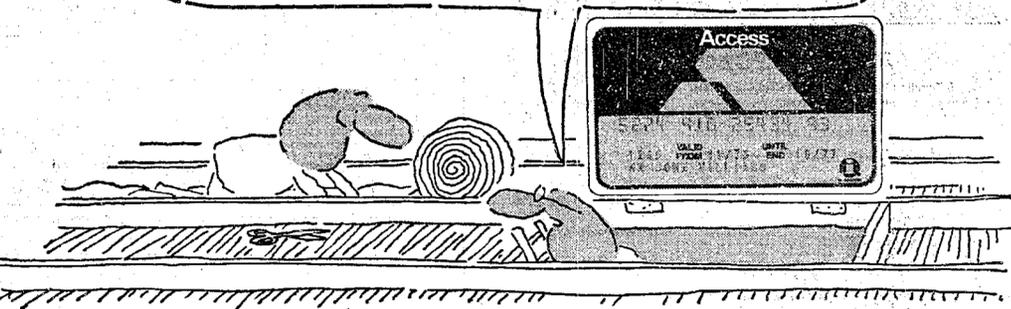
"Sit down," Hunter snarled. "I want a full report."

"Sorry," said Callan. "It's my rest day. And I've promised to give a lady a boxing lesson."

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