

The Pirate Strikes

The incredible exploits of Jack Stanford and Molly Simone

by Nick Shaw

Edited by Abdullah Alhomoud

[Sample provided with permission from the author.]

Nick Shaw

10,000 words

nickshaw00@gmail.com

The call came in as Jack Stanford swept through the Daily Tribune's front doors. A moment later, he exited the elevator and walked into the press room. Sam Darabont motioned for him from across the hallway and, removing his jacket, Stanford followed the editor into an office that smelled like ten years worth of stale smoke.

As the editor sat down, Stanford walked to the drinks cabinet and poured himself three fingers of Bourbon [How does he know he poured three fingers? Did he measure them?]. He stared out the window onto the city street below, his fingers clenching the glass.

"There's been another murder," said Darabont, lighting a cigarette. Stanford said nothing, tensing his forehead as the editor took a long puff. Smoke streamed from Darabont's lips like a broken exhaust pipe.

"That's the third one this week," said Stanford.

"The third one that we know of."

"Age?"

"19."

Stanford sighed. "Pretty?"

"So they say."

"Anything left of her?"

Darabont shook his head. Stanford peered across the city skyline.

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:23 PM

Deleted: E

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:24 PM

Deleted: a

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:24 PM

Deleted: in

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:26 PM

Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:26 PM

Deleted: . '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:26 PM

Deleted: s

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:27 PM

Deleted: from Darabont's lips

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:27 PM

Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:27 PM

Deleted: . '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:27 PM

Deleted: s

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:27 PM

Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:27 PM

Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:28 PM

Deleted: '

"Docks?"

"Yes."

Stanford knocked the bourbon back. Another one dead. A pattern emerging.

Darabont continued, "You know what to do, Jack. Here's the address." He pushed a slip of paper across the desk. Stanford stood in silence for a moment, then turned to the editor and gave a solemn nod. Taking the slip, he grabbed his jacket and walked out of the room.

"And bring Molly with you," shouted Darabont.

Thunder rumbled in the distance as the editor crushed his cigarette into the ashtray on his desk. He shook his head to dispel the smoke from around him, [Just a suggestion, but the point is to make it clear that he was shaking his head to get rid of the smoke.] and looked out of the high rise windows, beyond the skyline and off towards the docks.

#

Fifteen minutes later, Stanford pulled his scarlet Glasspar G2 to a stop outside a rundown warehouse. The oppressive, grimy [Very informal and only British. "Smog" would be more widely understood] smog of the inner city was replaced with the sharp tang of salty ocean air, catching on Stanford's nostrils as he

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:29 PM

Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:30 PM

Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:30 PM

Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:31 PM

Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:31 PM

Deleted: . '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:31 PM

Deleted: said

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-10 12:40 AM

Deleted: ,

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-10 12:40 AM

Deleted: shouting after him.

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:38 PM

Deleted: As whispers of smoke rose around him, he shook his head

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:38 PM

Deleted:

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:42 PM

Deleted: fug

exited the convertible. Molly Simone stepped out of the passenger seat and followed him as seagulls flocked around them, ululating and dancing in the air.

A police cordon encircled the warehouse, and a couple of green looking cops patrolled the perimeter. They straightened up as the pair approached.

"No press," said one, a kid no older than 20. Stanford ignored him and carried on past the cordon. The kid got smart.

"Get back behind the cordon, or I'll cuff the pair of you." He advanced on them, removing a set of handcuffs from his belt.

"That won't be necessary," said a voice. It came from the doorway of the warehouse.

"Cole," said Stanford, smiling and greeting the chief with a warm handshake. Cole Landon, a grizzled 40-year veteran of the force, shot the kid cop a withering glare, sending him packing [Packing? Very vague]. He turned his gaze back towards Molly and smiled, but he looked tired.

"Miss Simone, always a pleasure to see you."

"Oh, give it up, Coley," replied Molly, rolling her eyes.

"Not now, Landon," said Stanford.

The chief buckled, hiding his blushes.

"What's the score?" said Stanford, surveying the warehouse.

"It's not pretty. Another girl. Reported missing five days ago." [Who's talking here?]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:46 PM

Deleted: '...No press,".'...S ... [1]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:46 PM

Deleted: '...Get back behind t... [2]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:47 PM

Deleted: '...That won't be ... [3]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:48 PM

Deleted: '...Cole,".'...S...aid ... [4]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:50 PM

Deleted: '...Miss Simone, alwa ... [5]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:50 PM

Deleted: '...Oh, give it up, ... [6]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:51 PM

Deleted: '...Not now, Landon,"... [7]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:52 PM

Deleted: '...What's the score? ... [8]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:52 PM

Deleted: '...It's not pretty. ... [9]

"Name?" said Stanford.

"Dorothy Denny. Girl from the Upper West side."

"Let me guess... your guys told her family there was nothing to worry about," said Molly.

On the back foot, Landon shadow boxed. [This sentence isn't clear.] "We told them she'd probably turn up in the morning, if that's what you mean."

She raised an eyebrow. "It's not. You know what's been happening better than anyone."

"Don't bust me, Moll. It's standard procedure. You got any idea how many girls go missing in this city every day?"

"Any leads?" said Stanford, changing the subject. "I was hoping you'd ask that," said the chief. "If you want to take a look, I'm all ears. But no pictures." He turned to face Molly. "As I said, it's not pretty." He removed a torch from his pocket, flicked it on, and led them into the warehouse. [I think dividing the quote makes it flow better.]

Darkness swarmed around the trio as they walked into the gloom. The warehouse was derelict and filled with the smell of death. A standing lamp burned dimly in a far corner of the warehouse. Two men in white outfits were working beneath it, dusting and taking notes over the prone shadow of a body. It lay twisted on the ground. Landon led the reporters towards the corpse, stopping a few feet away. The smell overpowered them and

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:53 PM

Deleted: '...Name?' '...S ... [10]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:54 PM

Deleted: '...Dorothy Denny. G... [11]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:55 PM

Deleted: '...Let me guess... yo... [12]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:57 PM

Deleted: '...We told them she... [13]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:57 PM

Deleted: '...It's not. You kn... [14]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:57 PM

Deleted: '...Don't bust me, M... [15]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 9:57 PM

Deleted: '...Any leads?' S...ai... [16]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:05 PM

Deleted: stand alone...tandin... [17]

Stanford grimaced as he stared down at the dead girl. She was

ruined [Describe. You have a chance here to show how she looked]. "Who could do this?" he thought, [Redundant. Thinking is always done to oneself]. The poor girl never stood a chance.

["Broad" has sexual connotations. Not the best term for a dead girl]

"Same as the other two," Molly said. [This is confusing. Same as what?]

The chief nodded.

"Signature?" said Stanford.

Landon turned his torch towards the wall beside the body, revealing a bloody skull and crossbones. The skull grinned evilly in the half light, crossed red eyes staring back with sick glee over the body.

"Goddamn bastard," said Molly, her voice cracking as she shook her head.

Stanford turned away. [You should have described the corpse above, when they first saw her.]

"No one saw anything," said the chief, pulling a handkerchief over his mouth.

"Who owns the place?"

"The last owners sold out to some big shot developer from upstate. Something about turning the place into apartments. We should hear back from them soon. The permits haven't come

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:07 PM  
Deleted: '...Who could do thi ... [18]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:11 PM  
Deleted: '...Same as the othe ... [19]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:11 PM  
Deleted:

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:11 PM  
Deleted: '...Signature?' '...S ... [20]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:11 PM  
Deleted: the light from ...is ... [21]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:12 PM  
Deleted: '...Goddamn bastard, ... [22]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:21 PM  
Deleted: Dorothy Denny had been torn apart, her injuries so severe and violent that her features were barely recognisable.

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:22 PM  
Deleted: '...No one saw ... [23]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:23 PM  
Deleted: '...Who owns the pla ... [24]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:23 PM  
Deleted: '

through, so the place has just been sitting here, falling apart."

"Who found the body?" said Stanford, removing a small notepad from his pocket.

"A stevedore. Billy Herny."

"What was he doing in here?"

"Well, he *claims* he was just between shifts and looking for a quiet place to sleep."

"And you don't believe him?"

"I don't know, Jack. I'm as blind as you are," said the chief, his tired, bloodshot eyes giving away the sleepless nights.

"Any record?"

"No, he's clean, apart from a couple of nights he spent in the cells a few years back. Nothing heavy, just drinking too much and talking back to a couple of officers. I'll tell you, though, Jack, he wasn't half spooked when we spoke to him."

"Who wouldn't be?" said Molly, staring at the body.

"Where is he now?" said Stanford.

"He's across the way, at the harbour guard's hut making a statement."

Stanford nodded. "Five minutes with him?"

"We need these murders stopped now, Jack. The Mayor will be on my ass if we don't stop them. As will the papers, including

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:23 PM

Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:23 PM

Deleted: '...Who found the ... [25]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:24 PM

Deleted: '...A stevedore. Bil ... [26]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:24 PM

Deleted: '...What was he doin ... [27]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:24 PM

Deleted: '...Well, he *claims* ... [28]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:24 PM

Deleted: '...And you don't be ... [29]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:24 PM

Deleted: '...I don't know, Ja ... [30]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:25 PM

Deleted: '...Any record?' ... [31]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:25 PM

Deleted: '...No, he's clean, ... [32]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:26 PM

Deleted: '...Who wouldn't be? ... [33]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:26 PM

Deleted: '...Where is he now? ... [34]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:26 PM

Deleted: '...He's across the ... [35]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:26 PM

Deleted: '...Five minutes wit ... [36]

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:26 PM

Deleted: '...We need these mu ... [37]

yours. Whoever this lunatic is, we need him caught, and fast.  
Just do whatever you can. And don't tell nobody I let you in,  
right?"

"You got it, chief."

The trio exited the warehouse.

Two hundred [never start a sentence with a digit] metres  
away, Bill Herny sat in a hut surrounded by police, desperate  
and terrified.

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:27 PM  
Deleted: , if we don't

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:28 PM  
Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:28 PM  
Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:28 PM  
Deleted: '

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:28 PM  
Deleted: left the Dorothy  
Denny's body and

Abdullah Alhomoud 12-8-9 10:28 PM  
Deleted: 200