

# THE FLYING GOBLIN

## A Doc Savage Adventure By Kenneth Robeson

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A Complete Book-length Novel

by **KENNETH ROBESON**

***A fanatic stood ready to kill thousands in order to accomplish his purpose! But Doc Savage stood in his path!***

### Chapter I BIRMINGHAM JONES

THE long, many-windowed building was located in almost primeval wilderness. The somber-looking mountains of up-state New York rose around it, gauntlike in the night gloom. The building looked like a modern city institution transplanted to a quiet spot, where, especially at this hour of

the night, nothing could possibly ever happen.

There were the soft night sounds of little animals in the surrounding woods. A solitary dim light burned in what was perhaps an office of the hospital-type edifice. There was deep silence, an air of calmness everywhere. A rabbit scurried silently across the single dusty road that wound up to the place.





























































































had occurred near New York. He told about Duval, and of the man named Birmingham Jones.

Doc said, "Birmingham Jones, apparently, is working for someone with a diabolical scheme to create destruction and horror, Renny."

"What does Doc mean?" Monk said to Ham, as both aides listened.

"Keep quiet," the lawyer rapped.

Doc was saying, "Are you still tuned in, Renny?"

There was an abrupt, slight frown on the bronze man's usually placid features. He twisted the dials quickly, spoke again.

A peculiar crackling sound came from the loudspeaker, and behind the sound Renny's booming was heard to gradually fade.

Doc looked tense about something. The static sound increased, grew louder in the set.

Abruptly he whirled away from the radio apparatus, ordered, "Ham! Get on that direction-finder unit. Hurry! And Monk! Turn on the sound-detector!"

The stocky chemist, puzzled, jumped to obey.

Doc Savage called out positions to which the apparatus was to be set. Both units, he requested, were to be trained on locations that would indicate the Atlantic!

The static sound in the loud-speaker was getting worse. There was no trace of Renny's voice at all.

Doc suddenly turned off the short-wave, moved swiftly to the instruments that Ham and Monk were adjusting. Doc took charge.

For several moments, he made fine adjustments with the sensitized, delicate devices. Once he commented, "It appears to be closer now."

Ham, watching and listening to noises that came from the sound detector, asked, "What's coming closer—a plane, Doc?"

"No, the flying thing."

MONK jumped.

The chemist saw that the bronze giant was using several delicate instruments now. Some of them of Doc Savage's own invention, Monk knew that these detectors were uncanny in their

accuracy. They could tell exact location of anything in the air up to a radius of several hundred miles.

Doc had suddenly spun away from the detector devices.

"Quick!" he ordered. "The ray machine. Set it in position!"

Monk, the chemist in the bronze man's organization, was beginning to gain an inkling of the truth.

"Doc!" he howled. "You mean some sort of thing is gonna attack us—*here?*"

The bronze giant nodded briefly.

"The position of the thing is approximately fifty miles out to sea. It will reach here within moments now."

"Within *moments?*" Monk gulped, completely flabbergasted.

But Doc Savage was already flinging open especially constructed, huge windows in one wall of the big laboratory. The space opened to the night was all of a dozen feet wide, and gave a panoramic view of lower New York Bay, a part of Long Island. Beyond, was the Atlantic.

Doc whirled back to help Ham wheel a huge machine toward the wall opening. The thing looked like the kind of powerful searchlight used by army engineers in aerial bombardment maneuvers.

But when Doc Savage turned on the machine, no light came from its front. The machine was an invisible-ray device made to repel certain kinds of forces.

The bronze man made certain other adjustments, stepped back to the direction-finder.

He said tensely, "The ray should hit the flying thing within the next moment. If it doesn't—"

Doc let the words trail off, moved to a position where he could watch through the window opening.

The tone of his voice had indicated that if his calculations were wrong, then they were all doomed for some kind of destruction.

It was Monk who suddenly squealed, "*Look!*"

The best description of the phenomenon might be to state that a comet had exploded. There was a trail of sparks through the night sky as something smashed to fiery bits high in the air.

And as the weird, distant explosion took place, the bronze man seemed to relax slightly.

“Another moment,” he commented, “and it would have been here.” There was perspiration standing out on the bronze giant’s metallic features.

“But, Doc—” Monk started, full of questions.

The ringing of the phone in the library interrupted them. Ham hurried to answer it.

He was back almost instantly, his face strained and tense.

“It was the girl—Honey Sanders!” he exclaimed. “And—”

“She ask for me?” Monk got in, hopefully.

“—and it’s about Long Tom!” Ham finished.

“Long Tom?” Doc caught the urgency in Ham’s words.

“Long Tom is at our water-front hangar. He’s trying to hold off the guys who are trying to destroy our equipment and planes stored there!”

Monk let out a yell of rage. He was already leaping toward the door. Ham hesitated only long enough to hear the bronze man’s comment:

“Leave the ray machine turned on. It is hardly probable that there will be another aerial attack, but it might be wise to guard against one.”

Doc hurried with his two aides toward an express elevator that would drop them swiftly to the basement of the skyscraper.

THE “flea run” was the name Monk had once given to the high-speed, pneumatic-tube device that was almost an instantaneous method of transportation from Doc’s headquarters to the water-front hangar.

A small, compact cage carried the three men underground through a specially constructed tube. A cushion of air finally stopped the hurtling car with breathtaking suddenness.

Monk gasped, “Some day this blasted thing is gonna yank my head right off my shoulders!”

Climbing out, Ham said sarcastically, “That’ll be the day!”

Doc Savage said, “It looks like we’re too late.”

They were in a huge, vaulted space that contained several planes. These ranged from a vast, tri-motored ship to various types of small speed planes and autogyros. Every ship was an amphibian—capable of descending on land or water.

The warehouse floor sloped downward—to a wide apron of cement that dropped off into the Hudson River, adjacent. The hangar doors were open and there seemed to be a whole lot of excitement going on outside.

Doc, Monk and Ham raced across the vast hangar floor. But even as they ran, they heard the powerful roar of a ship that was taking off from the river. The mammoth plane rose into the air, circled, started picking up altitude. There came a rattle like the sound of hard peas striking the hangar roof.

Monk leaped to a spot of safety, followed by Ham.

The chemist yelled, “Blazes! Someone’s shootin’ from that damned plane!”

Doc, meanwhile, had reached the side of skinny Long Tom, crouched down in a grease pit off to the side of the hangar runways.

The electrical wizard had been pumping away with one of the machine pistols that Doc’s men always carried. But he straightened now, swore, and started climbing out of the pit.

“Damn!” Long Tom snorted. “They’ve got away.” He looked back into the pit, added, “All right, you two guys. It’s safe to climb out now.”

Monk stared as the first man came up out of the pit.

It was the stocky, ruddy-faced little constable—Sandy Gower. The evil-smelling pipe was clenched between his teeth, but he was so upset that it had gone out.

“Tarnation!” Sandy Gower fumed. “Paid twenty-five cents for this necktie, and now look at it!”

The flame-orange-colored necktie was grease-spotted as a result of his being in the pit.

Monk stared as he recognized the one who had ordered him temporarily held in jail. He gave Sandy Gower a sour grimace.

"You got stuck nineteen cents then," Monk piped, frowning at the sight of the loud necktie.

Another man came out of the grease pit. He was young, red-haired, not bad-looking. He stared around worriedly.

"Where's Honey?" the young man asked.

It was Long Tom who made explanations.

"This," he said, indicating the red-haired young man, "is Tod Smith, friend of the girl's." The electrical wizard jerked a skinny thumb at Sandy Gower. "So is the constable, here. They came to headquarters looking for her tonight after you left."

"Where's Honey?" repeated Tod Smith worriedly.

Long Tom said, "In the office, where she went to call Doc, here, and the others."

Tod Smith hurried over toward a small office that was in a corner of the large hangar building.

Monk looked after the red-headed young man quizzically. Ham caught the worried regard.

"That," the lawyer stated, "let's you out!"

It appeared that young Tod Smith was the girl's boyfriend.

As Sandy Gower explained, "We've both known Honey for some time. And, me, I'm down here and I'm gonna stick with her—to be her bodyguard from now on!"

Monk suddenly snorted. "Bodyguard? Damned lot of good you were doin' Long Tom by *hiding* down in that pit when he was tryin' to wing that escaping plane!"

Sandy Gower came over to Monk and said loudly, "Listen, here, ape! I still got that jail upriver!"

Monk's fists knotted. "Wanna make something of it?" the chemist demanded.

Doc Savage's voice put a temporary halt to the impending battle.

"What happened?" he asked, looking at Long Tom.

The skinny aide said worriedly, "We were up to headquarters when that black-light burglar alarm set off the signal at the lab. We hustled down here and surprised these mugs, who were all ready to bust up a lot of our equipment."

"But the blasted crooks got away!" Long Tom continued. "And you know, Doc, they had one of those big Clipper transatlantic planes. The pilot, radioman and navigation officer on that plane were being forced to fly the thing by those jaspers!"

Doc prodded quietly, "You have any idea who was in charge of the mob?"

Long Tom nodded, his pale eyes bright. "Yes. They called him Birmingham Jones!"

## Chapter XIV MYSTERY AT SEA

AT noon that same day, the fastest transatlantic vessel afloat moved slowly out of New York harbor and down through the Narrows, out toward the open sea.

Doc Savage's aides—Monk, Ham and Long Tom—were aboard. As were Honey, Sandy Gower and red-headed Tod Smith.

Honey Sanders insisted that, since she was mixed up in this mystery, she was going to see it through.

Young Tod Smith stated that he was not going to let the girl out of his sight. Thus he went along.

And Sandy Gower, grimly determined, went also, to watch over them both—though he bought a ticket in steerage.

Things had developed rapidly through the night, and when Doc Savage had mentioned that the strange menace had moved across the Atlantic, it was Sandy Gower who pointed out that a liner was due to sail that day.

Because of a war situation abroad, liners were only sailing about once a week now.

First, there had been the message from Renny. Contact had finally been made with the engineer in Doc Savage's organization.

Renny told of a strange thing that had occurred early that day in Paris. Some weird sort of explosion had destroyed one of the city's greatest cathedrals.

"Bomb?" Renny had been asked by radio.

"Well, no—not exactly," the engineer had explained. "More like one of those 75 millimeter shells they used during the World War. Only there was something damned funny about it."

"Funny?" Doc had queried.

"Yes. A whole lot of people heard it pass over Paris and the suburbs. A funny, whining sort of thing in the sky. And it didn't come from any war area, Doc! From all reports, it came from the Atlantic Ocean!"

It was shortly after receiving this startling information, and after Doc had absented himself from headquarters for several hours, that the bronze man made his announcement.

"The mystery will be solved in Europe," he had said surprisingly.

"But how?" Ham had asked. And then his eyes brightened. "You mean, Doc, because that millionaire, Duval, went there?"

The bronze giant's reply was, at first, puzzling.

"Duval is involved in this thing," he said. "But he is not the villain we are after. And yet it will be necessary to proceed to Europe before we clean up everything."

The truth suddenly became clear to Long Tom, listening intently. He recalled pertinent questions that Doc Savage had asked him.

Long Tom suddenly realized that Doc Savage had the mystery figured out! He was planning this last, strategic move!

DOC accompanied the others as far as Ambrose Light, where he departed from the ocean liner along with the harbor pilot.

The bronze man had directed, "You will wait for me at the hotel in Paris which I have named—the one where Renny and Johnny are now stopping."

It was Monk who said, "You're gonna follow in the plane, Doc?"

Doc Savage nodded. "It will take our largest plane and all available space for necessary equipment," he said. "That's why the rest of you must go on this liner. Also, there is something to be attended to here."

Doc had told Ham and Long Tom something about what he intended doing before leaving for abroad. It seemed there was some sort of urgent appointment in Washington.

Doc departed, stating that he would meet the others in about four days in Paris.

Two days later, in New York, the bronze man heard the startling information.

There had been a mystery at sea. Newspapers were full of black headlines. Cable companies had been first to reveal the puzzling circumstance.

They had been unable to reach the *Sea Queen* with routine cablegrams. Other agencies reported similar trouble. Government departments verified the comments.

The *Sea Queen*, greatest liner afloat, apparently had disappeared from the high seas. It was impossible to contact the famous vessel. Neither had any word been received from her in the past twenty-four hours.

The *Sea Queen* was the liner on which Monk, Ham, Long Tom and the others had taken passage!

WITHIN two hours after learning about the mystery of the *Sea Queen*, Doc Savage was in the great tri-motored, streamlined plane, headed out over the Atlantic.

Most of the special equipment had already been stored aboard the plane, and the bronze man had spent nearly all of those two hours in making a double check on the news reports of the liner's strange silence.

For almost half an hour, he talked on the telephone with certain navy officials in Washington. Whatever he learned appeared to throw no light on the mystery of the ocean liner.

Because when the bronze man started his long flight, his metallic features were grimly taut.

Sometime during that night, midway in the Atlantic, and flying at tremendous speed, Doc Savage heard the first of the S O S messages.

He made notations of the S O S calls each time they came through the ether. They probably lasted for well over an hour, and in the meantime, the bronze giant's ship had covered hundreds of miles.

All attempts by Doc to get in touch with the *Sea Queen* were useless. There were no replies to his urgent queries.

At four a.m., the S O S signals stopped, and there was complete silence after that. The bronze man's eyes held a question as his great plane droned on throughout the long night.

Using the automatic pilot, Doc Savage was able to take short naps. He showed little signs of fatigue, and this was perhaps explained by his remarkable physique, the constant and rigid training which he followed to keep himself in condition.

Late that afternoon, Doc circled the huge plane over famous Le Bourget Field. He had already radioed a message ahead to have Renny and Johnny meet him here at the airfield.

The bronze man set the plane down as though it might have been a light glider. The first to rush up to the plane when it rolled to a stop were the two aides.

One of the two was a giant of a fellow; the other tall and gaunt and looking like the advance agent for a funeral.

The giant-size one was Colonel John Renwick—better known as Renny—an engineer of repute.

The other man was William Harper Littlejohn. Everyone called him Johnny. He was as thin as a straw and wore glasses that contained thick lenses. He was perhaps one of the world's greatest archaeologists.

Renny boomed. "Doc! Didn't think you'd make it so quick. We just arrived here in time!"

The big engineer never talked in anything less than a bull roar. He and gaunt-looking Johnny were in the cabin doorway the moment the bronze man swung it open.

Sightseers had come running up, pushing close to the mammoth ship.

The gaunt archaeologist, Johnny, paused in the cabin doorway, stared at the crowd and said studiously, "Illustrate some manifestation of migration!"

The Frenchmen grouped about, stared.

"He means," Renny boomed, "scram! *Allez! Vite!*"

Renny's lionlike roar made the crowd withdraw.

Johnny was inside the plane, his face very sober.

"Doc!" he said. "We heard about that liner—the one you said Ham, Monk and the others were coming across on! Do you think they—"

Johnny let the words trail off, but what he meant was significant. The archaeologist forgot to use big words whenever he talked with Doc Savage.

Renny added: "Doc, do you think they . . . they're really lost at sea, I mean—dead?"

Renny's gloomy look was sadder than ever.

Before replying, the bronze man led the two aides to the cockpit of the plane, indicated a chart which he had used on the ocean hop. At various points on the chart, there were notations and marks. Strung out in a line, each mark was connected by straight lines to a single circle at some point distant.

Doc Savage said quietly, "The marks indicate bearings taken on the S O S calls from the *Sea Queen*."

Renny nodded quickly. "Sure, the papers here were full of it. And then those S O S calls finally stopped, didn't they, Doc?"

The bronze man agreed. "But," he went on, "by taking the readings from the plane, flying at hundreds of miles per hour, it was possible to get angles and to figure distance to the source of those messages. They were faked."

Both aides stared. "Faked?"

Doc Savage indicated, with his finger, the single circle on the chart to which all the straight lines ran.

"The S O S signals from the *Sea Queen* came from that point," he said. "And that circle indicates a small island two hundred miles off the coast of France, in the Atlantic."

LATER, Doc Savage turned plane and equipment over to the care of the two aides. At the airport, arrangements were made for the bronze man to use a fast, smaller ship, which he leased from one of the local airlines.

First, however, the bronze man sent Renny and Johnny on a quest for some special devices that he wanted to use in the rented plane.

Doc managed to get an hour of rest before setting out at dawn for the island off the seacoast. As he explained to the two aides:

"Stand ready to hear from me at your hotel. Also, one of you might check on all plane arrivals here and at other airports. Learn what you can about a man named Birmingham Jones."

Doc described Birmingham Jones in detail. "It is important that we find him."

Renny frowned. "But in your last message from New York, you said that the man behind this thing was called Valentine."

The bronze man nodded. "True. But Valentine, the real villain, has not yet revealed himself. He is working through this front, this Birmingham Jones."

Doc then added a detail that seemed to have no bearing on a man named Valentine. He mentioned the names of two countries that were at war, at the moment, in Europe. He said:

"You might check closely on any new developments in the situation between those two countries. Our embassy here will perhaps cooperate."

Soon, Doc Savage was putting the small, fast ship in the air. He took off as smoothly as though he had been flying the strange plane all his life.

And an hour later, the sun was getting warm in the sky when he picked out the hazy outline of the island far out to sea.

Moments later, Doc Savage was circling the isolated bit of land.

The size of the island would be, apparently, about four miles long and two wide. Hills rose up steeply from the rocky shore line at the southern end of the place. To the north, in what must have been a deep bay, the liner was tied up.

Doc dropped down lower in order to get a better view of the wooded isle.

The shrill, whistling whine came so abruptly that Doc Savage only had an instant's glimpse of the thing plunging upward through the slight ground haze.

Then there was the burst of smoke from the bronze man's plane and he was abruptly tumbling in the crazy spiral toward the southern tip of the island.

The smoke enveloped the entire plane, forming a black ball, and within that

dark core the plane motor sputtered and choked and then roared.

Swaying back and forth crazily, the plane continued its wild plunge toward the bit of land.

## Chapter XV RESCUE

SOMEWHERE near the southern tip of the island, from atop a wooded hill, a tattered-looking group of men watched the plunge of the bronze man's plane.

Those who stared skyward, their eyes wide, were Ham, Monk, Long Tom, and the girl—Honey Sanders—and her red-headed boy friend, Tod Smith.

Their clothing was torn and ragged, a result of pushing through the thick undergrowth that was almost everywhere, Monk's already homely face was scratched and blood-flecked. He looked like an ape with measles.

Even Ham's dapper attire was half in shreds. His appearance looked incongruous when compared to the slender, polished black cane that he was carrying. The cane was one that had been returned to Doc's headquarters from the damaged car left near Sleepy Hollow. Ham had brought the sword-cane with him on the voyage.

Ham, watching as the falling plane vanished beyond the crest of a hill to the south, let out a moan.

"I have a hunch," he said tensely.

Monk gave his partner a dirty look. "Hunch about what, shyster?" he demanded.

"That Doc might have been in that ship!"

Everyone stared. It was the girl, Honey, who looked thoughtfully at Ham. She came over to his side, making a hopeless attempt to fold her torn skirt around her shapely, slender legs.

"Why do you say that?" Honey asked. Sunlight touched her soft golden hair, and she was beautiful.

"Because," said Ham, "they released one of those flying things from the liner, and brought the plane down. It must have been Doc!"

















And as if to lend emphasis to the statement, the high, shrill whining sound came down off the canyon walls. It became a sharp screech that almost pierced the eardrums.

Monk started to say, "Betcha that's Renny and Johnny again—"

And then he let out a howl and stared.

The flying thing was high enough that a clear view of it was vague. And yet the hairy chemist saw enough of it to be apparently sure of his deductions.

"Doc!" he squalled. "It's that flying hobgoblin of a thing from Sleepy Hollow. One of them blasted things that wrecked the schooner and—"

"Yes," said Doc Savage. "It is the aërial torpedo."

"What—" the girl started to ask.

Before Doc could reply, the thing that flew with the speed of a comet had passed far overhead. A split second later, there came the terrific blast. For a moment, it felt as if the mountains would shatter all around them.

Doc ripped out, "They'll have the range shortly. Help me with this thing."

DOC had reached what looked like an old, long farm wagon loaded with strange-looking scientific apparatus. With Monk's and Long Tom's aid, he quickly pushed the strange unit onto the roadway.

Instantly, Doc Savage was up in the big wagon, manipulating gadgets that were on the heavy instrument-cases and equipment.

Long Tom seemed to gather immediately what the equipment was for, because he leaped to assist the bronze man.

Shortly, everyone heard the hum of powerful radio tubes.

Doc whipped a covering from one particularly large case. Compact storage batteries were revealed. The bronze man, his metallic fingers moving with skilled speed, was making various hook-ups.

Without pausing in his swift movements, he directed, "Long Tom, the ray machine is covered up there at the other end of the wagon. Uncover it!"

The machine was the one Doc Savage had used back at his New York

headquarters. Apparently he had brought it aboard in his big plane. Renny, though, had flown the equipment here.

Shortly, Doc had a short-wave transmitting set in readiness. Then he was speaking into a microphone:

"Ham?" he asked. "Is everyone clear of the aërial torpedoes?"

The others stared at Doc's mention of Ham.

A reply came back through a portable loud-speaker that had been hooked up. Ham said tensely:

"Yes, Doc. All except Valentine. I'm with Renny and Johnny in the plane. But, Doc—"

"Yes?"

"Valentine's releasing those things. You'd better clear out! Valentine managed to elude us the moment we got here, and he's in his place now—alone!"

"Then stay clear," finished the bronze man, and cut Ham off.

Monk, wide-eyed, piped, "I don't get this, Doc? Where the blazes is that shyster—"

But Doc Savage was manipulating another set of radio-control dials. His face was tense, his flake-gold eyes revealing that his brain was working furiously.

He started to say, "If we can pick up the range of the next one—"

The screaming, high-pitched sound came down out of the sky again—and this time the flying thing of death was very close.

It was so close over their heads that there was a peculiar burned-ozone smell in the air.

## Chapter XVIII FAREWELL TO DEATH

SO close that they saw the long, cylindrical object. Those with Doc Savage stared at the hurtling torpedo as it ripped through the mountain pass. It could not have been more than a hundred feet above their heads. The thing appeared to have fins, and a tail-like structure.

It did not explode, but disappeared swiftly.

Long Tom was frantically adjusting the ray machine, directing the machine









