

A flashing light on the mainland had caught Paul Terhune's eye—and a quick push caught him off-guard!



# PAUL TERHUNE

*in*

## QUEER TOWN

**HUGGING** the shivering fox-terrier under one arm, Paul Terhune peered through the partly-open door into the vaulted cellar, and wondered just what he had stumbled upon.

The cellar was a large one, and looked as though it might have been used for wines in past days, but at the moment it was stacked with miscellaneous merchandise in crates and packing-cases.

Some of these were open. Terhune could see wireless-sets, gramophones, and jewellery.

Standing amongst these stacks of goods were two men. One was in the uniform of an Inspector of the Police, and the other was a stout, prosperous-looking individual who was now pulling a wallet from his pocket and counting £1 notes into the Inspector's hand.

Terhune frowned. Below him were stone steps leading to the underground tunnel.

Transistor radios! Record-players! Jewellery! These were only some of the things stored there. Everything was brand new, and in the makers' packing-cases.

Why was Inspector Thacker taking a "rake-off" of ten per cent from the owner of Pantons Stores for these? How did the stuff come to be there?

Was it possible these articles had been smuggled in from abroad?

Terhune waited until the two men withdrew, their business settled.

"I think we can go on now, Spot," murmured Terhune, and he set the little dog on its feet.

It at once flashed through the cellar, out through another door, and vanished from his sight.

He switched on his torch and moved over to the crates and packing-cases which contained the goods which the two men

had been discussing.

There was no question of them having been smuggled in from foreign parts; they were all of British manufacture.

Shaking his head, and hearing the dog whining, Terhune went through into a small shop which had been used by a wood-carver.

"T. Usher, Woodcarver, Middle Street, Holdenwell," was the address on the dog's collar.

Paul Terhune guessed this was Usher's shop, but where was Usher?

The dog was whining and scratching to get out into the street, and after peeping to right and left to make sure nobody was watching, Terhune opened the door a few inches and let the animal out.

It at once set off at top speed down the road towards the centre of the town.

Terhune had discovered a lot of things that afternoon that had puzzled him. He did not intend to let anyone in this queer town know what he had been doing.

He was supposed to be sleeping in his room at the Pelican Inn. It was advisable to go back the same way.

He passed through the cellar, through the lower door, and down steps to the underground tunnel. This led him to the spot where a chasm barred his way.

It had once been bridged, but the link was now broken, and he was forced to leap to the other side.

Guided by the light of his torch, he tried to find the rope-ladder by which he had descended from the unoccupied hotel room.

To his dismay he discovered there were no less than three narrow side-tunnels. He did not know which to follow, but took one on impulse and finally found that it ended where a rickety wooden ladder went upwards.

This was not the rope-ladder he was seeking, but he could not resist going up the ladder to the top.

He found himself in a narrow space between stout wooden planks.

He found a catch, a plank swung to one side, and he was able to pass through into a large cupboard.

A dressing-gown hung on a hook nearby, and when he looked at it his eyes bulged. It was his own!

"Phe-ew!" he muttered. "I've got back to my own room. This is the way my unknown attacker came in behind me the other night. We're learning things!"

A matter of seconds found him in the familiar bedroom. He lay on the bed to think things out.

### Over The Wall!

JIM WINDLE, the inn's landlord, was as affable as ever at tea-time. Another visitor had arrived during the afternoon, a one-eyed sailor with a broken nose.

#### FOR NEW READERS.

Paul Terhune, the famous private detective, had accidentally arrived in the ancient walled island-town of Holdenwell. He soon discovered that strangers were not welcome.

At the local inn, Terhune had been refused accommodation by the landlord, Jim Windle. A plea to the police had been ignored until Inspector Thacker discovered Terhune had friends at Scotland Yard.

Terhune discovered a series of tunnels under the hotel when he went to rescue a trapped dog. The tunnel started under a hotel cupboard and led under the town to a cellar.

As Terhune was about to enter the cellar he heard Thacker speaking to a local shopkeeper. They seemed to be dividing up money.