

THE LAND WHALE MURDERS

Chapter 13: There's Nar Wright Way to Humpback a Beluga

AUTHOR

The city is confusing for a bird. Especially a bird released after a long sea voyage in a small crate. Pheasants are native to Asia but have been introduced throughout the world. Hunted, made into hats, released in a grand gesture to Shakespeare. Yes he mentioned the pheasant in *The Winter's Tale* but it's as a joke and a joke that has lost its meaning over time. A shepherdess is talking to the clown and the clown says: "Advocate's the court-word for pheasant; say you have none." To which the Shepherdess replies: "None, sir; I have no pheasant, cock, nor hen." And that's it. For that six pheasants were stuffed in a crate and sent to New York. And now it was raining which just annoyed the pheasant more. But little did this pheasant know as it disorientedly flew around in circles above Castle Clinton that a battle for the city was raging below. Almost Officer Shaindel "Doubles" Blum was fighting an ichthyo-villain, the Fish Monger while Anjus Troup was battling the Blow Hole Gang. But more importantly a giant sperm whale was given legs and was going to be unleashed by Pirate Penny who was really Maryanne Blud. She was currently engaged in a swordfight with Eugene Neddly.

13.1:

Sounds of the sword fight as Eugene and Maryanne clash swords.

EUGENE

You're good at this.

MARYANNE

To prepare for my gang leading I studied all manner of weaponry. I learned the blade from Dagmar the Stabby, the greatest female swordswoman of upper Wallonia!

They clash some more.

MARYANNE (cont.)

You're also doing quite well.

EUGENE

All dumb luck and adrenaline. I was supposed to learn sword fencing at Princeton, but I signed up for the wrong fencing

elective and ended up helping a group of brigands steal and resell furniture. That was one crazy summer ...

MARYANNE

Reminisce not with me!

EUGENE

Whoa you almost stabbed me!

MARYANNE

That's the point!

EUGENE

Ha! Point! Nice.

MARYANNE

Stop it!

EUGENE

I loved you, you know!

MARYANNE

Oh please! You created a version of me! It's poisonous! Fawning infatuation turning women into objects!

EUGENE

Hey some of my favorite transitive verbs give action to objects! Objects are great!

MARYANNE

Not when they're people, Eugene!

She knocks him back with a strong swing of the sword.

EUGENE

Easy! You just cut one of the ropes!

MARYANNE

DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO!

AUTHOR

Maryanne lunged at Eugene and stabbed a hole in his waistcoat. He tottered back before regaining his stance. Meanwhile below at the Land Whale's feet Anjus crashed against some lobster traps which were still filled with lobsters. Lazy Goons they should have put them in a tank but ...

13.2:

ANJUS crashes into the traps.

ANJUS

Uf. Ow. All right Blow Holers I'm only going to let you throw me into things for so long before I figure out some way to stop you.

GOON 4

Oh I'm sure you will!

ANJUS

You don't have to be sarcastic about it!

GOON 4

I was more being sardonic.

ANJUS

Well how about you eat lobster!

AUTHOR

Anjus grabbed a handful of lobster and tossed them at the Goon.

GOON 4

Ow! They pinched my privates!

AUTHOR

She grabbed two more and held them out threateningly at the Blow Hole Gang.

ANJUS

Back up unless you want a claw to your tackle box.

GOON 2

Zooks! She's double barreling those crustaceans!

AUTHOR

Now for the time being Anjus had the upper claw. Back atop the whale the duel continues ...

13.3:

EUGENE

But you're so much more to me.

MARYANNE

You don't even know me!

EUGENE

I read all your poetry books!

MARYANNE

Those prattling cleaned up verses? Censored and edited! My real art, my real words are so dark no magazine would publish them!

EUGENE

What about one of those dirty ones like "Ankles! Ankles! Ankles!"?

MARYANNE

Nothing will contain my fury!

AUTHOR

She cut another rope as Eugene managed to dodge her blade just in time. Almost Officer Shaindel "Doubles" Blum was also doing her best to avoid the giant hook of The Fish Monger. They bobbed and weaved around all the hoses and hydrants used to keep the Land Whale moist ...

13.4:

SHAINDEL

I'm sick of this *meshuge* hook! *Genug!* Enough already!

FISH MONGER

I do not tire, I do not stop!

SHAINDEL

What do you want a medal? They make me clean the whole police station and do the laundry!

FISH MONGER

That's rather unfair.

SHAINDEL

Right? They won't even let me beat up suspects! And they even let the elementary school kids who visit the station do that!

FISH MONGER

And you are quite adept at fighting. Few who've faced me lived this long!

SHAINDEL

Yeah I'd be a great actual factual Officer!

FISH MONGER

Maybe you can do it ... IN HEAVEN!

FISH MONGER swings his hook it just misses her. She falls back into a pile of hoses.

SHAINDEL

Stupid hose pile I think I twisted my ankle.

FISH MONGER

Now there is no escape!

SHAINDEL

Oh *now* there's no escape, but before - ha! You didn't expect me to crawl so fast! All those hours on my knees scrubbing witness blood has made me speedy on my all fours!

FISH MONGER

Come back! I can only lumber menacingly so fast!

AUTHOR

Shaindel scooted away from The Fish Monger as somehow Eugene still managed to keep the sword fight going -

13.5:

EUGENE

You killed Hiram and -

MARYANNE

You think that didn't hurt me?

EUGENE

Not as much as it hurt him!

MARYANNE

We're all killers! This country killed the Indians, women are subjugated, children slave away in factories! For what? We fought a bloody war to keep people as property!

AUTHOR

She raged as she cut through yet another rope in her attempt to slice Eugene.

MARYANNE (cont.)

We decimate nature! Why not let this whole rotten continent sink into the sea!

EUGENE

That's not really fair to the Canadians.

13.6:

AUTHOR

Back down below by the Land Whale's giant foot Anjus holds the Blow Hole Gang back with her lobsters.

ANJUS

Yeah that's it! Now put down your long spears and give up.

GOON 4

Long spears? That's it! We can just stab at her from a distance well free of the lobster pinch range!

GOON 2

Yeah! Get her!

ANJUS

Eep.

AUTHOR

Anjus took off and the Goons gave chase! Anjus and the Goons ran laps around the central room. She passed by Shaindel ...

13.7:

SHAINDEL

Hey Anjus!

ANJUS

Sort of busy right now!

SHAINDEL

Ugh this tangled *knupn* of hoses is ... wait! I remember what my Sergeant used to say -

SERGEANT

(Echoing memory.)

You ain't good for nothing now shut ya yap!

SHAINDEL

I really didn't learn anything of any value from police cleaning! But I do know what happens if I turn on this valve!

FISH MONGER

Who are you talking to!

SHAINDEL

My biggest advocate - ME!

AUTHOR

And with that she grabbed the water valve and turned it on; suddenly the hoses all whipped to life as they filled with water. The Fish Monger was quickly tangled in them.

FISH MONGER

By the devilfish! What hosiery is this!

SHAINDEL

And now for the big blast!

AUTHOR

She turned the valve the other way and the large hydrant next to her shot a giant blast of water right at the Fish Monger! It knocked him back and then the water carried him toward the large drain.

FISH MONGER

(As he's circling down the drain.)

No! My only weakness ... drains!

Sound of FISH MONGER getting sucked down the drain.

SHAINDEL

Slime ball in the corner pocket!

BIG STICK enters.

BIG STICK

Big Stick - Big Entrance! I was able to commandeer a teamster donkey and ride it up to Cooper Union where I met with Professor Toddleheim who took the potion and sealed it in a lead box. Then I was able to commandeer a team of newsies to pull me in a sled back here. Now I can help take down the Fish Monger!

SHAINDEL

I just defeated him!

BIG STICK

What? I don't even get in one punch? That's ... rather great job, I knew you could do it.

(Sad resigned.)

Bully ...

SHAINDEL

We still need to help Anjus and stop that walking whale! She's still running circles but those Goons are catching up!

BIG STICK

Well then it's time for those Blow Holers to take a *trip* to Stick City!

AUTHOR

Just as Anjus ran by, Big Stick then very dramatically held out his stick and tripped up the Goons.

Sound of the Goons all crashing together and falling over.

BIG STICK

Did the leaves change color, cause it looks like you're all enjoying the fall!

ANJUS

Thanks for the assist, B.S.

BIG STICK

Big Stick, big you're welcome.

ANJUS

Now we can help Eugene!

GOON 2

Not so fast!

SHAINDEL

One of the Goons was left untripped!

BIG STICK

And he's aiming that harpoon launcher right at us!

GOON 2

Gotcha joiks!

SHAINDEL

We're boned.

AUTHOR

But also boned was Eugene who just dropped his sword.

13.8:

EUGENE

Ow, hand cramp.

MARYANNE

And now it ends!

AUTHOR

And with a quick slash she brings down her sword!

EUGENE

Oh, huh you missed?

MARYANNE

Did I?

The last rope falls away.

EUGENE

The last rope! Ha! But we got you! We took your potion!

MARYANNE

You mean this potion?

She takes out a vial from between her breasts.

EUGENE

You had a backup between your bazooms? So sexy, but terrible, but sexy.

MARYANNE

To be great at villainy or mediocre at bowling follow one simple rule: always get a spare. Down the hole!

She pours the potion down the blowhole. The Land Whale starts to groan and move.

EUGENE

No! She's poured it down the blowhole! Oooh. Uh. It's moving! Oh no!

MARYANNE

Oh yes!

EUGENE

Agree to disagree!

AUTHOR

The Land Whale let forth a deep bellow and began to move its giant feet taking its first step ...

13.9:

GOON 2

Time to get a harpoon in the - oh no!

The giant foot squashes him.

ANJUS

He was squished by the Land Whale's foot! Well didn't see that coming.

BIG STICK

That's what I call fancy footwork!

GOON 4

NO! I was best man at his wedding. Oh his wife will be so -

He's cut off by Shaindel who knocks him out.

SHAINDEL

Shut yer yap!

ANJUS

Nice punch, Doubles.

SHAINDEL

Call me Shaindel, but we've got bigger problems than everyone using that terrible nickname - the land whale is loose!

BIG STICK

Don't worry this looks like a Stick job!

AUTHOR

With a noble nod and a serious stare The Big Stick took up his trusty stick and held it like a javelin and hurled it toward the Land Whale.

Sound of the stick flying through the air, it hits the land whale and just bounces off and thuds to the ground.

BIG STICK

Welp that didn't work. It's up to Eugene now ...

AUTHOR

The Land Whale let out another bellow and crashed through the walls of Castle Clinton and began its slow shambling reign of downtown destruction. Eugene and Maryanne held on as the beast lurched forward. The rain poured down as lightning flashed overhead.

13.10:

MARYANNE

It's amazing! Kiss New York City goodbye, Eugene!

EUGENE

That's not hygienic. One time I licked a horse cart and I -
whoa.

MARYANNE

Steady, my boy! He just leveled Delmonico's!

EUGENE

He's getting slippery! You have to stop this!

MARYANNE

Why?

EUGENE

Because there's good here, Maryanne! Humans build amazing things! Universities, the hamburger steak sandwich! Both delicious in -

MARYANNE

It's unnatural!

EUGENE

It's the same as termites building a mound, or beavers, or a bird's nest! This city, us, it's all natural because we're natural. Humans are part of nature! Use the crude oil! End this madness!

MARYANNE

I changed my mind.

EUGENE

So you'll stop?

MARYANNE

I'll stop. Stop humanity! I'm not going to use the oil! I'm going to let the Land Whale destroy everything! And then I'll get another land whale and then maybe a sea giraffe - I'll make all sorts of weird beasts that will level everything from here to Peking! Humanity is over!

EUGENE

I understand. I have my birds and -

MARYANNE

Oh your birds! You've done nothing!

EUGENE

I love them.

MARYANNE

Just because you love something doesn't mean you're good at it! Pathetic! You're pathetic!

EUGENE

Please Maryanne -

MARYANNE/PIRATE PENNY

Maryanne is gone! I'm Pirate Penny! Leader of the Blow Hole Gang! Mistress of destruction!

EUGENE

I didn't want it to come to this, but ...

EUGENE takes out the gun.

PIRATE PENNY

A gun?

EUGENE

It was a gift. Long story. But ...

PIRATE PENNY

You'd never ...

EUGENE

To save this city I will. For you see ... whoops.

AUTHOR

The rain had made the land Whale slick and slippery and Eugene slipped and fell backward as the gun slipped from his hand and fired into the air before falling off the Land Whale.

PIRATE PENNY

You can't even kill me right. Everything you do is meaningless! You released those birds, you fired your gun, nothing you did matters! I changed the world, I -

EUGENE

Look out!

PIRATE PENNY

I'm not going to fall for - what the bird!

AUTHOR

'What the bird' indeed for at just that moment Maryanne was hit by a dead pheasant that had fallen out of the sky after being shot. This dead bird so far from its natural home smashed right into Maryanne and knocked her backward causing her to lose her balance and fall into the Land Whale's blowhole plugging it up.

PIRATE PENNY

Help I'm stuck!

EUGENE

It's stopping!

PIRATE

If his blowhole gets plugged up he'll explode! Help me Eugene!

EUGENE

It's over *Pirate Penny* you've lost!

PIRATE

No, no, no no, no, no. That's not fair! That's ... that's ... you and your goddamn birds!

The land whale wheezes and rumbles.

EUGENE

Goodbye.

PIRATE PENNY/MARYANNE

But you loved me.

EUGENE

You were right. I loved an idea. I need to let you go. You made your whale now go explode with it.

PIRATE PENNY/MARYANNE

Huh. Wow that's cold ... and hot. I like this Eugene.

EUGENE

Really? Uh, I mean - yeah dame, whatever. I gotta skidoo and, slippery ...

AUTHOR

Eugene slid and rolled down the side of the whale bouncing off its foreleg and landing in the arms of ...

13.11:

EUGENE

Anjus! You caught me!

ANJUS

Lucky right? I was just showing Doubles and Big Stick how big this branch I once found was.

EUGENE

Neat but it's going to explode we should run!

BIG STICK

Verily which way now?

SHAINDEL

If we cut across Exchange Place then -

BIG STICK

Broadway is our best bet -

ANJUS

At this time of day?

BIG STICK

If we take Washington across to -

EUGENE

Um, guys?

SHAINDEL

What about Greenwich?

EUGENE

Guys!

BIG STICK

That might work but only if -

EUGENE

GUYS!

BIG STICK

What?

EUGENE

Whale!

BIG STICK

Oh it is swelling to enormous size, I think it's about to -

Sound of the whale exploding.

AUTHOR

And with a great sloppy boom the Land Whale was no more and the force of the beastly blast knocked everyone in different directions. Meat, blubber, and viscera coated the streets. Eugene and Anjus landed in a bit of whale foot. Both soaked in whale guts.

EUGENE

We did it! We saved the city!

Sound of a building collapsing.

ANJUS

Mostly.

EUGENE

We're heroes! We're going right to -

13.12:

Sound of a jail door sliding shut.

AUTHOR

The city jail and after a few hours of being mistreated Sergeant Fitz paid them both a visit where they tried to explain everything ...

FITZ

I've heard enough of your blarney!

EUGENE

But I have so much blarney to give!

FITZ

So you're saying it just blowed itself to kingdom come like a leprechaun on St. Mary's Day? And what, you expect old Sergeant Fitz to blow cabbage out his arse and into his ole crooky now do you? First off, how can anyone create such a creature? It's impossible. Ach, a Land Whale. There's a better chance of me old granny passing on potato pie.

EUGENE

Well it's possible—

FITZ

Muh gran loved her tater pie! She'd never. She'd be in the grave, her boney moldy arm would be reaching across from the never after for a slice of steaming hot potato pie! Tell me how did they graft any sort of arm onto a whale. Why the vein attachment and tissue generation would be as probable as St. Patrick kissing a snake on his scaly lips! You expect someone grew a giant leg for a whale, by what? Reverse engineering some recessive allele and creating some sort of vestigial organ from a cetacean ancestor? That's as possible as Father O'Brien shaking hands with Pastor Gillory.

EUGENE

Is that likely?

FITZ

(In a rage.)

Heavens to clovers in a bonnie, bonnie field, NO! Never and no how! It's the most absurd thing I've heard!

EUGENE

Should we tell him about that time we fought a mummy?

ANJUS

No.

FITZ

Might as well give tanist to a sheep! This story is ridiculous from the word go! Not a bit of the science makes sense and some of the geography of this city is less than accurate and I'm pretty sure some of your turns of phrase have not yet even entered the lexicon! Ridiculous! Ridiculous!

ROOSEVELT and SHAINDEL enter.

ROOSEVELT

And yet here we are! Towel them, Doubles!

SHAINDEL

Fresh from the laundry.

EUGENE

Thanks. I'm sticky in so many more places than usual.

FITZ

But Commissioner! Their story makes as much sense as reading the Lebor Gabála Érenn to an Ulsterman!

ROOSEVELT

Sometimes it's best to smile and enjoy the ride, I mean you're a bit of an Irish stereotype yourself.

FITZ

What! Why I oughta ...

ROOSEVELT

Here have some corned beef!

FITZ

Oh corned beef! The brine brings a sense to my soul!

FITZ exits eating corned beef.

EUGENE

But our story is true ...

ROOSEVELT

I know. A certain friend told me all about it.

EUGENE

Friend. I get it. You mean Mayor Strong? He heard about us?

ROOSEVELT

I was talking about The Big Stick.

EUGENE

Right. I wonder what happened to him ...

ROOSEVELT

I'm sure he's around ... somewhere. Anyway, things have all worked out for the best. So I'm giving you the city's highest honor: 2nd Place Ribbons!

ANJUS

Wow!

EUGENE

Hurray! I'm going to put mine on my mantle!

ROOSEVELT

How nice! I'm sure you'll look back fondly when you go back to your sciencing.

EUGENE

Actually we talked it over during our long confinement and we decided we want to help people directly so we're going to be science detectives.

ROOSEVELT

Huh, all right, that sounds like a real thing. But there's more! Almost officer Shaindel ...

SHAINDEL

I prefer Shaindel. Oh wait. Awww.

ROOSEVELT

Because of your bravery and heroics we're going to make you Shift Commander. However because these officers will never take orders from a woman you'll have to dress up as a man named Irving Dodge and then you'll still need to log in hours as yourself - someone's got to clean the station - so you'll work long grueling triple shifts and have to pretend to be someone you're not, but you get to be a real policeman! Oh and we also will have to cut your salary by ten percent to pay for all the farcical elements of this plan. No big deal.

EUGENE

Hurray!

SHAINDEL

Wow all I ever wanted to be is a police officer and I realize - that's a stupid dream and I'm sick of all the hoops and hoopla I have to jump through! I want to help people directly! So I'm going to become a private investigator!

ANJUS

But that's what we're doing.

SHAINDEL

I know we'll be in direct competition!

EUGENE

Hurray?

ANJUS

Stop saying 'hurray.'

EUGENE

I can't ... I think I have a condition from all the traumatic stress I suffered. I mean I basically killed the woman I was in love with who murdered my best friend. Hurray ...

ANJUS

That's our Eugene!

They all laugh. [Hurray?]

ROOSEVELT

I'm just glad it worked out! And also -

FITZ runs in.

FITZ

Begorrah! Commissioner! Former Democratic Presidential candidate Sam Tilden has been possessed by a monster from Hell! -- he's calling himself the Daemo-crat and he's breathing hellfire all around Time's Square! Waaaaaah!

FITZ runs off again.

ROOSEVELT

This sounds like a job for ... The Big Stick!

EUGENE

We should find him!

ROOSEVELT

Oh, I think he ... look over there!

FITZ, EUGENE and ANJUS look away as Roosevelt bounds off.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

(as he runs off)
Big Stick, Big Exit!

The rest turn back.

EUGENE

Oh he's gone. But it was nice of him to point to that nice part of the wall with the crack.

SHAINDEL

It is a good crack.

ANJUS

So can you get us out of this cell?

SHAINDEL

Oh the commissioner had the key ... I'm sure he'll be back soon.

Long beat.

EUGENE

Hurray ...

ANJUS

I guess everything worked out.

AUTHOR

Indeed it had and even more than they realized. The exploded whale meat was donated to the poor slums of the city and they held a big feast. Every orphan went to bed with a belly full of whale that night ...

13.13:

ORPHAN 1

Whale makes my tummy happy.

ORPHAN 2

Yes but when shall we hunt the most dangerous game?

ORPHAN 1

Soon Tubercu-Louis, soon.

AUTHOR

The complex water systems installed by the Blow Hole Gang into Castle Clinton to keep the Land Whale hydrated made it the perfect place for the new New York City Aquarium where people could learn about the sea and through endless badgering learn to save the oceans. And eventually our economy shifted from a dependency on whale oil to crude oil which is ... um. Moving on, the birds that Eugene released including pigeons, sparrow, and most especially starlings became a huge problem as an invasive species that forced local birds to extinction and decimated crops.

13.14:

FARMER'S WIFE

Father Farmer where are our crops?

FARMER

The birds, they took it all. They left us nothing.

FARMER'S WIFE

I guess its death for us.

FARMER

Yup.

AUTHOR

So when you hear a starling tweeting loudly in a tree you can thank Eugene. Maryanne died in the explosion. Her poetry went out of print soon after because a mysterious millionaire bought the rights to all of her works.

13.15:

MR COWABUNGUS

Excellent burn all the copies.

ASSISTANT

Sir, we have used our shell companies to buy both Random House and Harpercollins. And we've managed to get dirt on both Simon and Schuster, they will be no concern.

MR COWABUNGUS

Perfect. Now the work begins, Poetry shall perish.

ASSISTANT

It will be done ... Mr. Cowabungus.

AUTHOR

And that about ... oh right the Fish Monger's body was never recovered. I think that's everything. And so we come to the new offices of Troup & Neddly: Elemental Investigators. The wood was freshly varnished, paint still dripped from the crown molding but they were open for business.

13.16:

ANJUS

Check out this door. It now opens and closes!

EUGENE

Good work partner.

ANJUS

Cheers to us!

EUGENE

Hooray!

SECRETARY enters.

SECRETARY

There's someone here to see you.

EUGENE

Our first client! Send him in!

SECRETARY

This way, sir.

The MUMMY shambles in.

MUMMY

Revenge! Revenge!

EUGENE

The mummy!

ANJUS

Yipes!

MUMMY

Revenge! Revenge!

AUTHOR

The old mummy shambled toward them, arms outstretched. There was nowhere to hide, nowhere to run. They were not going to get their security deposit back.

MUMMY

Revenge!

AUTHOR

Thank you for joining us as we rediscovered one of the lost stories of history. This has been - The Land Whale Murders ... Volume 1.

END OF CHAPTER 13

END OF VOLUME 1