

The Land Whale Murders

Chapter 6: A Pigeon Amongst Friends

AUTHOR

Let's see where were we? Oh yes Hiram Blud was murdered, Anjus Troup was kidnapped and Eugene and Maryanne were going to sneak into Blubberton after hours. But what about the rioting at the Million Dollar Club. What indeed? Well let's turn the clock back a bit and catch up with Shaindel 'Doubles' Blum the almost police officer who due to discriminatory policies, was put into the lesser Europeans storage room at the club.

6.1:

MOIRA

Here you are, sit in any chair you like.

SHAINDEL

This is ridiculous.

RUSSIAN

Much is ridiculous, but here we are.

JOSIP

Maybe she's right, I'm actually an envoy from the micro monarchy of Novi Polji – I'm a diplomat and they diplo-stashed me in this room.

SHAINDEL

I'm sure you're all important!

RUSSIAN

Me not so much.

LITHUANIAN

Hi! I'm Mr. Frick's valet.

POLE

Oh yes look at the Lithuanian always talking.

RUSSIAN

Shut up, Pollack!

ITALIAN

Hey both of you shut your meatballs, mama mia.

AREMENIAN

Please my brother and I were split up. We're Armenian but they can't decide if we belong in this room or the Celestial waiting room because Armenia is technically in Asia but we look European. So they split the difference and split us up. And we've never been apart!

SHAINDEL

That's terrible.

RUSSIAN

He's terrible.

SHAINDEL

Hey now!

ARMENIAN

He's not wrong ... I do like to start fires.

SHAINDEL

That's no good, but how is it you all just sit here and accept this?

RUSSIAN

There has to be rules. In Tsarist Russia chairs sit on you. Because chairs have more rights! Besides if they let Russians like me in, then they'd let Lithuanians in!

LITHUANIAN

Hey! But he's not wrong. I want to go in sure, but if me, then what? Italians? Terrible.

He spits.

ITALIAN

Hey what's a'wrong with Italians?

RUSSIAN

Everything. You know joke: why is Italian bread so long?

SHAINDEL

Why?

RUSSIAN

So they can dip it in the sewer!

ITALIAN

Oh yeah? How do you sink a Russian battleship? Put it in'a the water!

LITHUANIAN

Ha!

POLE

Oh yeah why does a Lithuanian have a chair next to his bed? So he can take a rest after sleeping! Cause he so lazy!

LITHUANIAN

I'm not lazy! You're lazy!

ARMENIAN

Let's just all agree Serbs are most lazy!

RUSSIAN

Agreed!

POLE

Agreed!

SHAINDEL

Look, we can tell hilarious jokes all day or we can do something!

RUSSIAN

What are you anyway?

SHAINDEL

I'm Jewish.

POLE

Oh.

They all scoot their chairs away from her.

SHAINDEL

Don't you scoot your chairs away from me!

CASSIE, an African-American woman sticks her head in.

CASSIE

She's right!

RUSSIAN

Hey this is not your room! Get back to the Colored room!

CASSIE

It's only three-fifths our room, the rest is used for balloon storage.

POLE

Damn rich people and their balloons! They love balloons!

SHAINDEL

She has as much right to be here as us! Which is no right because we shouldn't be here either! They want to separate us and keep us in rooms because they're afraid of us.

LITHUANIAN

Because we are scary foreigners who will kill them?

SHAINDEL

No, because we're the same as them!

LITHUANIAN

So no kill?

CASSIE

No, we show them who's boss!

RUSSIAN

Them, they're the bosses.

SHAINDEL

Yes, technically true, but we have to show them they can't force us to bend to their stupid rules.

CUBAN enters.

CUBAN

Si, yo soy Cubano, and I don't even have a room!

CASSIE

So we're good enough to serve them, but not sit with them?

POLE

Yes.

CASSIE

I'm only here waiting until my brother Boston gets off work. He's a chef. They'll eat all the food he touches with his fingers and believe me he touches a lot of it. He's got a real finger thing, but they won't even shake his hand. That's humbug.

RUSSIAN

The touching food part or the not shaking hands part!

SHAINDEL

Both, both can be wrong! But we can't let these rich schmucks run things!

LITHUANIAN

Yeah! My cousin is a waiter. But I am the one doing the waiting!

RUSSIAN

Yes! We must destroy them!

POLE

ANARCHY!

SHAINDEL

No, wait, I am an almost cop!

AREMENIAN

Yes burn it, burn it all down! Fire, fire!

JOSIP

I've become an anarchist! The Hapsburgs will be destroyed!

IMMIGRANTS

Riot! Riot! Riot!

They storm off.

CASSIE

This spun out of control quite quickly.

SHAINDEL

Oy. I should probably stop this but ...

CASSIE

I bet my brother could slip us some venison sausages if you're hungry.

SHAINDEL

I could use a nosh, then I'll call it into the station.

AUTHOR

So Cassie and Shaindel shared some sausages as the Million Dollar Club burned. There was much looting. The cops did break it up eventually, but since most of the cops were Irish they could only go in through the service entrance. But that entrance was blocked by even more balloons so ... it's sad to lose such an architectural masterpiece, but then again they bulldozed Penn Station so what can you do? Well if you're a researcher into forgotten history it's spend your weekends alone. So lonely. But let's not dwell. Instead let's push forward. Or rather push ourselves to an abandoned warehouse where Anjus Troup is being held by the Blow Hole Gang. She's tied to a pillar. One of the Blow Hole Goons is watching her.

6.2:

GOON 4

It's pretty fizzing that you actually only have one eye.

ANJUS

Tell that to my badminton team ... so many missed shuttlecocks.

GOON 4

I wear this patch, but my eye is absolutely regular.

ANJUS

Boo-hoo.

GOON 4

Hey you don't gotta be a sourpuss about it.

ANJUS

You kidnapped me!

GOON 4

And what's so bad about that? Kidnapped? It's two nice words 'kid' a baby goat and 'nap' a baby sleep. Sounds pretty great.

ANJUS

Let me go!

GOON 4

You know you'd make a good pirate. Put a patch over your bum eye and trade your wood hand for hook hand ...

ANJUS

I'm a scientist and scientists and pirates are sworn enemies! Ever since Hippocrates brought down Jollius Rogerus off the coast of Santorini. It's the basics of science and piracy, or sci-pi.

GOON 4

If I wanted a sci-pi history lesson I'd apply for membership to the New York Historical Society, run for a position on the board, get elected and then appointed to the budgetary committee put in for a resolution to allocate funding to hire a professor from Dartmouth to create a lecture series on sci-pi, and then attend said lecture! But I ain't and I don't!

ANJUS

It doesn't matter! My fellow Elementals will save me any moment now. I'm sure all they've done is ask about me. 'Where's Anjus?' 'What's Anjus doing?' 'I wish Anjus was here.' I'm sure I'm the focus of all their energies.

GOON 4

What kind of name is Anjus anyway, Fijian?

ANJUS 4

It's the feminine form of Angus – at least according to my parents but I think they might have made it up, they were professional liars. They toured the liar circuit until one day they took me to the circus ...

Ghostly sounds of a fire and screaming.

ANJUS (cont.)

It's no mistake that carnival and carnage come from the same linguistic root - carn, meaning meat. For that night we were all the meat of fate when –

GOON 4

Sheesh you're worse than those Peking surgeons we Shanghaied and Hong Konged into Formosa-ing our plans for Project Land Whale.

ANJUS

Why'd you kidnap Oriental surgeons? What's Project Land Whale?

GOON 4

Oops floops, I've said too much! Come on Bill we've talked about this.

ANJUS

But we haven't talked about it Bill, you know ... I uh never noticed how your hair sparkles in the light.

GOON 4

I rub dirt in it! Wait ... are you trying to pump me for information?

ANJUS

Would a one-eyed, one-handed, botanist orphaned daughter of professional liars try to trick you?

GOON 4

That is a lot of adjectives ...

ANJUS

Maybe we can "oops floops," some more ...

AUTHOR

Yeah I'm not sure what's going on there. My research is spotty, but so is my glassware. Sorry I'm getting too personal this chapter. Instead let's keep moving! But where, where when, the when of night. The where: under cover of darkness, outside of Blubberton, inside our story is the place where Maryanne waits in the shadows as Eugene struts on up.

6.3:

MARYANNE

Where were you, we said seven!

EUGENE

Oh I thought you meant metric time. We scientists use the metric system, it's this faboo new measuring system that –

MARYANNE

I know about metric. And it's not new, it was invented during the French Revolution and there is no metric time!

EUGENE

Then what is wrong with my pocket watch? (checks it.)
So, it's not the duodi of the first decades of pluviose?

MARYANNE

And why are you wearing a fake mustache?

EUGENE

Disguises! You said it! You're dressed as ...

MARYANNE

What? What am I dressed as?

EUGENE

Hmm. I think there's no way for me to answer that in a satisfactory manner. So let's just go inside.

AUTHOR

They head inside and sneak their way into Lubbins' office.

6.3:

MARYANNE

Check his desk. I'll rifle through the rifle rack.

EUGENE

Let's see what's in here.

Opens a drawer.

EUGENE (cont.)

Nothing in here but some pictures of ladies' ankles and a bottle of whale lotion. Oh. Ew.

Shuts the drawer.

MARYANNE

What was that?

EUGENE

Just bibles. Just absolutely just bibles.

MARYANNE

There has to be something.

ELLIS enters.

ELLIS

Something indeed. Me! Ellis E. Ellison, Mr. Lubbins' personal secretary and it'll be my pleasure to throw you out!

EUGENE

What's the E stand for anyway? 'Egad you are such a jerk?'

ELLIS

No, Ellis.

MARYANNE

You're Ellis Ellis Ellison?

ELLIS

My parents were very stupid, now leave.

EUGENE

Listen Ellis Ellis –

ELLIS

One Ellis is fine.

EUGENE

Didn't you have a mustache last time?

ELLIS

No.

EUGENE

Do you want mine?

Eugene peels the fake mustache off his face. He offers it to ELLIS.

EUGENE (cont.)

Here.

(beat. Stage whisper.) It's a bribe.

ELLIS

No!

Ellis tears up the mustache.

EUGENE

My mustache! That was made from real muskrat fur!

MARYANNE

Wait what is Henry B. Lubbins –

EUGENE

The Third

MARYANNE

Personal secretary doing here after hours?

ELLIS

Running errands. I have plenty of ... errands.

EUGENE

Like murder?

ELLIS

No.

EUGENE

Are you sure?

ELLIS

Yes.

EUGENE

Are you sure you didn't not murder our friend Hiram?

ELLIS

Being that that is a double negative then I'd have to say yes. I didn't not not murder him.

EUGENE

You're good, almost too good – wait doesn't that –

ELLIS

Shall I ring the police and have you arrested for trespassing?

MARYANNE

No, no. Let's go Eugene.

EUGENE
Fine, but.

Come on.

MARYANNE and EUGENE exit.

MARYANNE

EUGENE
(As he's leaving.)
But if he'd didn't not murder him, then he'd. Wait. If one of him always lies and the other tells the truth ...

ELLIS
Good. They're gone. Now to sneak over to the desk ... mwahaha!

There's a knock on the door.

ELLIS (cont.)
Huh. What?

EUGENE
It's Eugene again. I forgot my hat.

ELLIS
You didn't have a hat.

Well played, well played. (Beat. To himself.)
So close to a free hat.

EUGENE exits.

EUGENE

And now back to my nefarious –

Another knock.

ELLIS

EUGENE
Me again.

ELLIS
What? What? What?

EUGENE
That sounds like the call of the tufted penguin: wut-wut-wut-wut!

ELLIS
CAN I HELP YOU!

EUGENE
My window was broken by a bird, do you know a glazier?

ELLIS
Why would I possibly – wait, I do. My cousin. I have his card. Here.

EUGENE
A-thank you. Wait –

He sniffs the card.

EUGENE
Is this card stained with ... fish guts?

ELLIS
No.

EUGENE
How about murder?

ELLIS
Goodbye!

EUGENE

Where are you going?

AUTHOR

And with that Eugene was forcibly thrown out the front door of the Blubberton building.

6.3:

Eugene crashes to the sidewalk.

EUGENE

But my hat.

THERE IS NO HAT!

ELLIS slams the door shut.

ELLIS

MARYANNE

Are you alright?

EUGENE

I'm fine I landed on my body. Ow.

MARYANNE

Well it seems that – wait what's that?

EUGENE

Oh ... my ... goodness. It's a ... it's a small crimson thing. It's. Huh. Fish. A smelt?

MARYANNE

How odd.

EUGENE

Wait it's no smelt ... a red herring! Finally a vital clue! We should stay together all night and figure this out.

MARYANNE

I was planning on going to the library in the morning ... I'll get some red and herring related documents then. Goodbye now.

EUGENE

Oh, sure, we can do that. I'll call you ... with my voice because that's the only way to reach you since they kicked me out of the telegram office. Wow you walk fast you're already waaaaay down the block. OK then ... I'll put this fish in my pocket.

AUTHOR

And so the next morning Maryanne went to the City Library. She had already requested several books and periodicals. She hoped to pick them up quickly and not run into ...

6.4:

Melvil Dewey.

MARYANNE

DEWEY

Maryanne Blud, by my decimal system I thought that was you. But let me check and make sure.

He grabs her butt.

MARYANNE

Remove your hand from my posterior.

DEWEY

Dew me? Kidding. Always a pleasure. I was coming up with some more subsections and I saw this stack of books. Did you request all these? You know reading gives you crow's feet. Don't want to mess up perfection.

MARYANNE

Give me the documents.

DEWEY

I like these modern women. Suffragettes and firebrands! Tell me do you ascribe to Free Love like Mrs. Woodhull or are you more chastened?

MARYANNE

My views are my own.

DEWEY

Let's see 599.5, 579.4 – interesting, and why then also do you want these 610's? A little advanced ...

MARYANNE

I have my reasons.

DEWEY

We all do. You're an artist and we all know artists are only one step above 306.74's.

MARYANNE

You think Walt Whitman worked the cathouses?

DEWEY

The Cowabungus Times said –

MARYANNE

You believe everything you read, Dewey?

DEWEY

I sort of dew. Get it – sort. Dew. Dewey. My system? Zounds!

MARYANNE

I don't have time for -

DEWEY

Come come, Mary Mary quite contrary let Dewey see how that garden grows.

MARYANNE

The books.

DEWEY

Don't. I can sort you into obscurity. I control the flow of information. One well-placed decimal and you're gone! Don't make me do to you what I did to Algernon Gulfloss.

MARYANNE

Who?

DEWEY

Exactly. So be a dear, smile. Let's get a little gooey with Dewey.

SHAINDEL enters.

SHAINDEL
Maryanne is that you!

MARYANNE
Doubles! Yes! Here!

SHAINDEL
Please call me Shaindel. Look at all these books! Well it is a library I shouldn't be surprised.

DEWEY
Who is this melon smuggler?

SHAINDEL
What?

MARYANNE
This is officer Doubles – of the police. Policewoman Doubles this is Melvil Dewey of the Decimal system.

SHAINDEL
Actually it's almost officer and I prefer Shaindel. Shaindel Blum.

DEWEY
How about we make some beeswax in the stacks.

SHAINDEL
Are you insinuating something?

DEWEY
Does a 599 612 in the 634?

SHAINDEL
I have no idea.

DEWEY
(To Maryanne.)
How about I give you these books and you give me some 306.72 ...

MARYANNE

How about I make you a 306.762

DEWEY

Feisty, feisty, me likey. But I have real work to do. But stop by my office if you're interested in some oratory. I'm quite the cunning linguist. Dewey out!

DEWEY exits.

SHAINDEL

Well he's terrible. What's 306.72?

MARYANNE

Sex.

SHAINDEL

And a 306.762

MARYANNE

A castrati.

SHAINDEL

All this sorting is too much for me.

MARYANNE

Perils of dealing with the papered arts. How did you know I'd be here?

SHAINDEL

I didn't! I was cleaning up the last pockets of the Million Dollar Club Riots. Which you abandoned me at, thank you very not at all. They started moving uptown. But that upset a group of vultures that Eugene released and then the vultures fought the rioters and I tried to break it up, but I got stabbed by beaks and a Slovak pinched my cheeks so I ducked in here and saw you. But Commish Roosevelt was blasting them all with his personal fire hose last I saw. He's got near 10 men working the bellows.

MARYANNE

So this is just kismet?

SHAINDEL

I do have some questions about your brother.

MARYANNE

I'm quite busy.

SHAINDEL

Too busy to help solve your brother's murder?

MARYANNE

Oh have you solved it? Have you done anything other than gallivant around and act almost like an almost officer? They only hired you to fill a quota. If you were a real legitimate officer you'd have done something, anything! Well?

SHAINDEL

I have a lead ... a kleynem one but ... there's been several disappearances of seamstresses and –

MARYANNE

A sewing circle? That's your big theory? What is it? That they quilted him to death?

SHAINDEL

It all started around the time your brother –

MARYANNE

Grab at straws, officer! Look it's not your fault. They laughed at my brother's murder so they put a joke on his case. I'm sure you're doing your best, it's just that your best isn't very good.

SHAINDEL

Ouch.

MARYANNE

Ouch indeed. But at least you can still say ouch. Hiram can't say anything anymore. And he loved saying "ouch." I remember all the times ...

Hazy memory

HIRAM

(Various ways.)

Ouch. Ouch! Ouch. Ouch! Ouch, ouch. Ouch! Ouch!

MARYANNE

Forgive me. But do let me know when you've cracked it. I must go.

MARYANNE exits.

SHAINDEL

I'm sorry. I'll try to ... who's over there? What are you doing with that Magazine? Don't you tear out a page! That's library property! That's no good! Come back! Stop! Police!

SHAINDEL runs after this strange person.

AUTHOR

As Shaindel runs after the magazine defacer, let's check in with Eugene and the glazier who was currently repairing his window.

6.5:

GLAZIER

There you go, window's good as new.

Taps on it.

EUGENE

That was fast!

GLAZIER

As our advert song goes:

(sings.)

No fuss, no muss, no dirty Navajos! Trust Ellis Glass for all your windows!

EUGENE

Not sure why you had to drag Navajos into --

GLAZIER

(Continues singings.)

Send for us for top notch service –

EUGENE

It's still going ...

GLAZIER

(Keeps singing.)

Make sure you go and ask for Pervis!

EUGENE

Great, well now –

GLAZIER

(Keeps singing.)

If Pervis ain't around ask for Albert Or any of our staff we'll help you out!

EUGENE

Very good and –

GLAZIER

(Keeps singing)

And if we've left for the day –

EUGENE

Oh still more.

GLAZIER

(Keeps singing.)

Don't worry we'll come on another day!

EUGENE

You rhymed day with day. That's –

GLAZIER

(Keeps singing.)

Ellis Glass because we care-ika!

Ellis Glass cause we love ... America! We really doooooooooooooo!

Long beat.

GLAZIER (cont.)

We'll send you a bill.

EUGENE

That's a very long song.

So is the bill. See ya grandpa!

GLAZIER leaves.

GLAZIER

EUGENE

Grandpa? What?

AUTHOR

But Eugene didn't have time to ponder the possible insult as not seconds later a fish with a note tied to it crashed through his new window.

A fish crashes through his window.

EUGENE

Aww, wha the fish? A note! Again!

Unfolds it.

EUGENE

It's from Anjus! Oh right Anjus she's been kidnapped, we should really be doing something about it. Like read this note! Let's see ...

ANJUS

(Reciting the note.)

Eugene, I need your help. I'm being held captive by the Blow Hole Gang at a warehouse, number 10 Gold Street. I was able to get this letter out because one of the Goons was captivated by my beauty ...

EUGENE

Huh. Well takes all kinds.

ANJUS

(As if hearing him.)

Ahem. Anyway, he snuck this note out for me. The gang takes a late night prostitute break at 11PM. He'll leave the rear door unlocked. Come alone. We can't risk a big – got to go! Save me, Anjus.

EUGENE

Yes! I need to do something.

He runs to his desk. Gets out some paper. Writes.

EUGENE

Must write back. "Don't worry, I'll be there. Love –" (Reconsiders crosses out love.) No. Not. Ah! Like!" "I'll be there. Like, Eugene." Now tie it to the fish and ...

EUGENE throws the fish out a different window breaking it.

EUGENE

Eugene to the rescue!

AUTHOR

But Eugene was not to the rescue. In fact he was quickly tied up right next to Anjus who was also gagged.

6.6:

EUGENE

Eugene needs a rescue.

PIRATE PENNY

Oh there's no saving you. No way, no how. You've fallen right into Pirate Penny's trap!

END OF CHAPTER 6