

# WINGS FOR THE KID



*Danny motioned the girl to keep quiet as he got to work.*

A "Danny" Novelet

By GRANT LANE

Danny's curiosity leads him on the twisted trail of the man who boarded an airliner dead, and a disappearing stewardess!

**B**IG MIKE RYAN was driving the police coupe, and saying, "It's a lot of nonsense, that's what it is. Chasing us way out here to LaGuardia Field! Maybe the guy just had a heart attack."

Slug O'Donnel muttered, "Maybe he was scared of those big airliners."

Ryan nodded, continuing to chew on his unlighted cigar, at the same time deftly guiding the car through the Tri-Borough Bridge traffic.

Seated between them, Danny Garrett said quietly, "I can't imagine anyone being scared of a modern airliner nowadays."

Staring gloomily out the window, Slug O'Donnel commented, "Anyway, I don't know why they asked for the homicide department—just because a guy croaks."

The three of them fell silent.

Mike Ryan was a heavy-set man with large features and a solid jaw. He wore a derby cocked on his head. He and Slug O'Donnel—tall and thin as a beanpole—were two headquarters detectives who had known young Danny Garrett for some time. The kid was somewhat of a phenomenon.

For he helped his copper friends solve crimes; he was good. Danny was a freckle-faced

kid slightly past fourteen, who had once shined shoes on the sidewalks of New York for a living. Now, because he had an uncanny ability for noticing little details and spotting hidden clues, he spent the best part of his time with these two homicide dicks.

Danny had been down at Centre Street headquarters early this evening when the report had been flashed in about a D. O. A. on a commercial airliner just in from Chicago. A passenger dead on arrival! As a matter of routine, Ryan had been sent out to investigate; he had been grumbling about it ever since they started the drive out to the huge airport.

Now the big hangars and the administration building of the municipal airport loomed up before them, while high overhead arriving and departing planes moved in a traffic pattern around the huge field. Danny watched the red and green wing lights flicker in the sky, fascinated.

Ryan followed a driveway that led behind the main building. Danny had never seen so many airplanes in his life. One after the other they took off smoothly from the seemingly endless runways that stretched off into the night; others came down for landings. There was no confusion.

Ryan parked and they climbed out, walking toward the waiting room. A crowd had gathered near one of the doorways. There seemed to be some excitement.

There was.

**F**IELD attendants were trying to keep curious people from pushing into the waiting room. Newspaper reporters and a photographer were there, trying to find out what had happened.

Ryan elbowed through the crowd, nodded to the cop on duty at the doorway. The three were permitted to enter.

The room inside was crowded with airport officials, a couple of pilots, standing to one side, and some civilians. Mike Ryan singled out a short, businesslike little man who had just appeared from a doorway on one side of the large room.

"Well, what?" the big detective said.

Danny recognized the man as Crouse, one of the medical examiners. He heard him say, "I'll tell you this, Ryan; it wasn't heart failure."

The kid moved closer, listening.

"The passenger was poisoned. I'd say he was

dead before he ever left Chicago."

"The hell!" exclaimed Mike Ryan.

"Then it was—" Slug O'Donnel started.

"Murder," said Crouse.

They all went into the small adjoining room.

Inside, were more airport officials and police, and the dead man. He was lying on a table, where the medical examiner had just finished with him. Danny took a swift look.

He guessed that forty or so would catch the man's age; he was well built.

Crouse handed Danny's friends a wallet and some papers. He said, "Apparently his name was Albert Shane—"

"Shane!" Slug O'Donnel exclaimed, and looked sharply at big Mike Ryan. The kid saw Ryan frown. Then the detective was quickly examining wallet and personal papers. He stepped forward and took a closer look at the corpse's face.

"Yeah," he said slowly and thoughtfully. "I met him once. Shane!"

"A special investigator for the D. A.," offered Slug. Then, questioningly, "Mike, wasn't there something—"

Ryan said, "Yes, there was! This man Shane"—he motioned to the corpse—"was sent out to Chicago recently by the D. A.'s office. I remember the D. A. himself called me to ask a couple questions. Shane was to pick up a guy wanted for questioning here in New York."

"On what?"

Ryan shrugged. "I dunno. We can find out." He turned back to the medical examiner. "You say he was dead *before* he left Chicago?"

"That particular flight," explained Crouse, "takes only four and half hours; I've checked. But this man's been dead at least six hours."

"Then how in blazes did Shane ever get aboard the plane?" demanded Mike Ryan. He swung toward one of the airport officials. "Get the passengers in here who were on that flight from Chicago."

"They've all gone" sir," said the man.

"Gone?"

"You see, the passengers had all departed by limousine for the city before the dead man was discovered. As soon as a plane comes in, the passengers board limousines and depart. Naturally, in times like these, they are in a hurry."

A reservations clerk spoke up. "I can get the list of passengers, though, sir. Every flight carries a manifest."

"Get it," ordered Ryan.

**S**HORTLY the clerk had returned, his face worried. "The passenger list has disappeared. It must have been stolen!"

Ryan's heavy face was set in grim lines. "Then get the pilots who were in charge of the flight."

An official explained, "The first officer—the co-pilot—has left too, sir. But I can get the captain; he's the one in charge anyway."

"Then get him!"

The clerk, given instructions, left the room again. Everyone was talking, and Danny slipped toward the door. He followed the clerk toward the field.

Two transports were ready to leave on western flights. Passenger agents and baggage handlers were hurrying back and forth. There was a chill in the air, a feeling of snow. Danny zipped up his leather jacket and pulled down his cap. The clerk had disappeared.

But the kid asked questions. He learned that the plane he sought was operated by Cross Country Airlines. Ordinarily, he was told, the ship would be serviced and sent out again, on a night flight back to Chicago. But the police had ordered it set aside. Yes, that was the plane—over there beyond one of the hangars.

Danny waited until no one was nearby, then started along a cement walk that led past the huge hangars. He reached the big 21-passenger Douglas plane. They really were enormous when you stood right next to them, it struck him. The plane was in darkness; no one around.

Then the kid stiffened, his bright blue eyes suddenly intent on a figure moving on the other side of the transport. It was a man, alone. Danny caught a glimpse of a pilot's smart, rakish cap. He wondered why the pilot was returning to the plane, alone!

He saw the man climb the flight of movable steps placed at the cabin entranceway. The fellow quickly disappeared inside the darkened ship.

Danny followed.

An instant later, as he slipped inside the dark main cabin, his footsteps were hushed by heavy

carpeting. Standing on the ground, the big plane tilted upward toward the forward end. Danny had to grasp one of the huge bucket seats as he moved forward, for the entrance doorway was at the rear of the cabin. He heard someone moving around in the officer's cockpit at the front of the ship.

Then something shifted quickly behind him. There was a tiny washroom, near the entrance door. Someone had come out of the room and leaped toward the kid. . . .

**D**ANNY whirled, barely in time to avoid the blow that had been directed at his head. His cap was knocked off; he was thrown off balance by impact of the heavy fist.

Breath whooshed from the kid's lungs as he crashed against one of the big seats; but he lurched clear of the shadowy figure, doubled forward and sent a hard fist boring into the fellow's stomach. The man grunted in astonishment.

The kid was tough, large for his age. A hard career earning his living as a shoeshine boy in New York had taught him how to use his fists—and his head.

Again the man rushed Danny. The kid turned, plunging up the aisle between the double row of seats. A door stood open at the front of the cabin. There was a passageway that separated the main lounge from the pilots' cockpit. In between were screened-in cargo compartments, radio equipment and luggage space. Dim glow from the cockpit forward told the kid this much as he looked around frantically for some sort of handy weapon.

Then his assailant was upon him again. A fist drove out and caught him a glancing blow alongside the jaw. He had a glimpse of a stocky form and bushy dark hair. This man did not wear a pilot's cap. . .

Danny's head snapped back. His teeth jarred with pain. He tried to grasp at something for support as his brain spun. Then the fist hit him again and things turned black. He had a vague impression that someone was shouting; of running steps and assorted sounds in the night that he tried to unscramble in his whirling thoughts.

Later, Mike Ryan was there, helping him to his feet.

Ryan asked with concern, "You all right,

kid?"

Danny's thoughts cleared. He gripped Mike Ryan's massive arm. "The pilot!" he gasped. "I mean—the fellow who was here on the plane—"

"Who?" It was Slug O'Donnel, right behind Ryan.

Danny explained about seeing the pilot board the plane.

Slug said grimly, "It wasn't the pilot you tangled with, kid."

And Mike Ryan added, "Come forward a minute, Danny."

They moved through the short passage to the pilots' compartment. The man was slumped over the dual control seats, his cap on the floor.

"This is the pilot," said Slug. "He's dead."

"Dead!" gasped Danny.

"His skull was fractured with a blackjack," Ryan said. "Was this the fellow who hit you, Danny?"

The kid noted the blond hair, the slim, angular body. "No," he said.

A few moments later Mike Ryan had placed police in charge of the dead pilot and they returned to the waiting room. Reason for the flight captain's murder was a mystery. They talked again to an airline official.

"How many passengers were there altogether?" asked Ryan.

"Twenty-one. We're operating to capacity on every flight these days," said the man.

"How many women?"

"None," the official said. "The passengers were government men traveling on priority, or else army or navy men."

Ryan frowned. He did not appear satisfied with the answer. He said, "Then that leaves only the stewardess."

"Yes," the official agreed. "She would be the only woman on the flight."

"What's her name?" Ryan asked:

"Evans—Ruth Evans. She hasn't been with us very long—"

"Where is she?"

"She has to go out early tomorrow morning on a return westbound flight. So she went right into the hotel in order to get some sleep. You see, we maintain quarters at one of the better hotels for the stewardesses—"

"See if you can get her on the phone,"

instructed the detective.

They followed the official into a small office. It struck Danny that Mike Ryan was intent on a purpose.

THEY waited while the call was put through. Then it became obvious that the airline official was puzzled as he talked to someone at the hotel. Finally he hung up and turned to them.

"It's mighty strange," he said.

"What?" prodded skinny Slug.

"That was the matron in charge of our girls; she says Ruth Evans didn't check in at all tonight. No one has seen her. They had already called the airlines terminal on Forty-Second Street and she never arrived there at all tonight!"

Ryan ordered, "Keep trying to locate her," and they went outside.

Danny asked, "Mike, why are you so interested in the stewardess?"

"Because of this," said Ryan, opening his big fist. In it lay a small, round woman's compact. It contained the insignia of Cross Country Airlines.

The kid's sharp blue eyes flickered. "Where'd you get it?"

"It was clutched in the hand of that dead pilot," said Mike Ryan.

A little later, Slug picked up another bit of information. It was possible that the stewardess, Ruth Evans, had a copy of the passenger manifest.

Mike said, "We'll talk to the chauffeur who drove the airport limousine."

They located the man. He had already returned from the airlines terminal across from Grand Central Station. He had just brought out a load for an outgoing flight, his last trip for the night.

"I'm off duty now," he said.

His name was Allison. He was sandy-haired and quiet, and fairly tall. He smoked a cigarette.

Ryan said, "About this girl—Ruth Evans. When you drove her into the city, did she say anything, did she give any hint at all she might be going elsewhere besides the hotel where she sleeps? What I mean is—"

Allison said, "But she didn't ride in with me, sir."

Slug exploded with, "She didn't ride in with you! You're positive?"

"Certainly," the driver said calmly. "I know

the different stewardesses from driving them back and forth all the time.”

Ryan’s eyes were thoughtful as he chewed on his cigar. A chill breeze made the tip of the cigar glow brightly. They were standing outside, near one of the long limousines. Ryan said to Slug O’Donnel:

“Leave orders to have this whole damn field combed for Ruth Evans. If they find her, report it to headquarters right away—”

“Where are you going?” asked Danny.

“Back to town, kid,” said Ryan. “The thing is to learn more about Shane, and what case he was on. The trail will have to be completely retraced. It starts at the D. A.’s office.”

Slug said gloomily, “I see where we’re going to be up all night.”

“Let’s get started,” said Ryan with impatience. And, to Danny, “Come on kid—”

“I think,” said Danny Garrett, “I’ll hang around awhile. Maybe something’ll turn up on Ruth, the stewardess. Besides, I like to watch the planes coming and going.”

“How will you get back to town?” Ryan said.

“I guess I can bum a ride in one of the limousines.”

When they had departed, Danny strolled over to where a large black limousine was parked in the shadows behind the administration building. It had been pointed out as the car that Allison drove. The driver himself had disappeared some place.

He heard footsteps coming from the administration building, turned, saw Allison, the chauffeur, following one of the fenced-in walks that bordered the field. Soon the man was nearing the airliner which had been a plane of death tonight. There was something about the angular, sandy-haired man’s movements that were both urgent and furtive. Once he looked back. Danny quickly gazed off across the field, as though watching a plane that was ready to take off. The pilot was revving his engines, checking his magnetos and gauges before starting down the field. The kid doubted if Allison saw him.

**W**HY WAS the driver going to the plane? He had no business there. Suddenly the man paused, drew back into the shadows near one of the hangars. Danny remembered that police had

been assigned the job of removing the dead pilot. The chauffeur must have spotted them.

Actions of the driver aroused the kid’s insatiable curiosity. The fellow had said that Ruth Evans had not ridden into New York in his limousine. Yet she had not been seen here at the field. Was the man lying?

On a sudden impulse, Danny opened one of the limousine doors and climbed into a seat. The wide seats each accommodated about four passengers, and could be entered from doors on either side of the long car. There were four or five of them. Danny thought he’d wait in the car and watch Allison’s actions. He climbed over the rear seat, guessing it would be safer to hide back there. The seat was long enough that he could lie down and remain out of sight, if necessary.

Light from a building window angled into the car and faintly illuminated its interior. It was thus Danny saw the handkerchief on the floor below the rearmost seat. He reached down, picked it up, saw that it was a dainty woman’s lace handkerchief. There was a faint odor of perfume. He examined it closely.

And he saw the airline insignia woven into one corner. Cross Country Airlines. Could it be—Ruth Evans’ handkerchief? If so, Allison *was* lying!

Footsteps crunched on gravel beside the long car. Danny dropped down on the seat not an instant too soon. The front door opened on the driver’s side and the sandy-haired man swung in behind the wheel. The motor started, then they were moving.

The kid, tense, lay full-length on the rear seat. It occurred to him that perhaps he should have left some sort of word for Mike Ryan or Slug.

Well, it was too late now.

**T**HE CAR followed the Grand Central Parkway extension at high speed. Soon they were on the approach to the long Tri-Borough Bridge. They passed above Ward’s Island. Danny lay stiffly, peering up cautiously from time to time, checking his whereabouts.

When he looked up again they were on the bridge span that crossed over Randall’s Island. Suddenly the driver swung onto one of the ramps that led from the main route. Danny gave a start.

This wasn't the way to New York. . . .

Then he saw where they were headed: the big stadium of Randall's Island took form in the night. The driver circled the structure, rolled up to a parking area that bordered on the fog-misted East River.

The stadium was in darkness; everything down here was deserted and lonely. The car stopped.

Danny held his breath. The driver did not move, but merely sat there behind the wheel, car headlights extinguished. Had he suspected that Danny was a passenger in the car?

Apparently not. The man merely sat there quietly, as though waiting for someone. Out on the river a Diesel-powered tug throbbed through the night. Somewhere, in the mist, a warning buoy bell sounded mournfully. It was eerie down here near the river, the darkness heavy and taut all about the deserted spot. Shortly the driver mumbled something to himself, opened the car and climbed out. The kid heard his footsteps crunching across the cinder fill near the water's edge.

Danny raised up, saw the man's vague figure moving along the shore under cover of the night gloom. So the kid quickly climbed over the seats and slid through the doorway that had been left open. He did not want to chance opening another door; the sound would carry on the still air.

He padded along quietly, trailing Allison. He had an idea where the fellow was headed!

A boat was putting in toward shore from midstream, its red and green riding lights flickering. There was a small dock just ahead. Allison was stepping out onto the landing float. He was, apparently, awaiting the arrival of the boat—a small tug of the type seen scurrying about New York Harbor.

Keeping to the shadows, Danny Garrett reached a shed located near the approach to the dock itself. He crouched down.

There was a guarded hail from someone on the tug. Allison answered it. Then the boat put in closer, its heavy mat fenders soon bumping the stringpiece. A man jumped to the float and secured a line.

Danny watched, tense.

ALLISON, the driver, hurried forward to meet the boatman. The arrival from the tug was powerfully built. He reminded Danny of a waterfront stevedore.

"Well?" the thickset man asked.

"I've got the girl."

"What about Shane's stuff?" The man swore. "The hell with the girl!"

"She's pretty important right now."

"What do you mean?"

"I think she was working with Shane. He slipped her the list of names, and *she* slipped them to somebody else. We thought it was the flight captain, but it wasn't. He was ready to squawk and so Ben had to knock him off."

"Okay, what about Shane?"

"Dead—like a herring."

"That means we make the girl talk."

"You're catching on—" Allison started.

"Where is she?"

"She liked to scratch my eyes out. I got her in the luggage compartment of the car, and I'll need some help."

"Come on, then," suggested the man from the boat.

Danny's blood ran cold as he listened. He was remembering how the luggage compartments of these oversize airline limousines were constructed. Below the cross seats, reaching from an opening at the rear of the car, they were huge. And the girl was in there!

As the two men moved off in the gloom, Danny heard Allison explaining, "She was in a hurry to get into town, and she piled in the limousine first thing, so I grabbed her and put her in the luggage compartment. I got her out of the way fast. She's bound and gagged."

Danny heard no more. The voices faded. The kid's pulse was pounding. In a moment, he guessed, they would be returning with the girl. She would be taken aboard the boat. There was information they wanted. And then . . . the river. . .

Danny shuddered.

There was no time to get help.

Furthermore, he had no idea which direction the tugboat would head. It could be either down river toward the Battery or out toward open Long Island Sound. Well, there was one way to find out. Go aboard the tug itself!

Under cover of the darkness, gliding along

the dock, he reached the boat and slipped aboard, ducking beneath the shadow cast by the wheelhouse bridge. There were, no doubt, other men aboard; he must be careful.

He moved silently aft, and crouched down behind a large coil of heavy rope. Shortly he heard Allison and the thickset man from the tugboat returning. He saw them carrying a struggling, twisting figure between them. The girl—Ruth Evans!

Danny crouched motionless in the shadows.

The two men carried the girl past the open door of the engine room. They were headed aft. The kid held his breath. The men paused at a small cabin doorway amidships, opened it, disappeared inside.

A moment later they appeared again, and the limousine driver was saying, "She'll be okay in there until we get down to the harbor. Ben's going to meet us at the Staten Island hideout. He'll drive down to the ferry and cross that way. After we question the dame, we can head out into the lower bay."

And that, Danny knew, would mark finis to another murder!

He saw the men move forward again and disappear toward the wheelhouse. Soon the tug was swinging out into midstream. Danny edged toward the cabin where the girl had been placed.

**H**E LOCATED the girl lying in a bunk. Swiftly he unloosened the gag that had been tied across her mouth, at the same time motioning for her to make no outcry. "Listen," the kid whispered, "I'll tell you who I am."

Danny explained his connection with the New York police department. Then, "You're Ruth Evans, the stewardess from that airliner, aren't you?"

She was trembling as she nodded. "That driver—Allison—seized me as I started to get into the limou—"

"I know," Danny said quickly, as he untied cords that bit into the girl's wrists and slim ankles. She was slender, and dark, just about as trim as a minute, the kid thought. He said, "Look, I'll leave these cords loose. They might come back any second; it will be better if we can fool them a little longer.

She started, eyes wide. "What do you mean?"

"I've got a plan—" The kid's blue eyes were thoughtful. "Can you wiggle out of those ropes if you really have to?"

The girl moved her hands and feet, then nodded.

Danny said: "And can you swim?"

"Ye-es," she admitted, puzzled. "But—"

"I just wanted to be sure," said Danny. He listened a moment, and when certain that no one was approaching, went on: "Why was that passenger, Albert Shane, murdered? How were you connected with him?"

Ruth Evans said, "I'm not really an airline stewardess. The job was arranged through the District Attorney's office and Washington. I was working undercover with Albert Shane, trying to spot the persons tied up with this refugee racket."

Danny frowned. "Refugee?"

"Yes, but not the kind you think!" The girl's eyes were brown and tense. "These are war criminals, a few of them who have managed to escape from Germany—a few men who were powerful in the Gestapo and things like that. They have plenty of money. And there are still crooks in this country who, for a price, will do *anything*."

"That's right," the kid agreed.

"Well, a few of these war criminals have reached this country. Some have got in by boat. Immediately they try to work their way inland. For a long time we've suspected a ring in Chicago. The man running it is wanted in New York. That's why Albert Shane was assigned to the case. He knew this man—"

"But how do you fit in?" asked Danny.

"We're positive a couple of these criminals were whisked to Chicago via airliner—the airline for which I've been working. The airline people, of course, knew nothing about it. But Albert Shane picked up a clue. That's why I was assigned to help him—"

Danny held up his hand, listened again. But he heard no sound. He nodded quickly for her to go on.

"Shane had all his information gathered. He was ready to report to New York and Washington, and then the F. B. I. would crack down. Then, just before he got aboard the plane in Chicago this afternoon, he was. . . murdered."

SHE SAW the question in the kid's eyes, explained, "Two men came aboard with him. They had him in a wheel chair and pretended to the other passengers that he was ill. He was wrapped in a blanket. It was just an instant before the plane took off. As soon as we were in the air, I knew he was dead. I didn't dare tell the other passengers; they thought he was sleeping. I told the captain—the pilot—to flash word ahead to New York so the police could be there—"

"But why was the *pilot* killed?" Then, seeing the horror that leaped into Ruth's eyes, explained, "He was murdered at LaGuardia Field a little while ago. They found him in the cockpit of his plane."

"Oh!" the girl half sobbed. Getting control of herself, she raced on, "It's my fault. . . he was killed. Once, Shane told me that if anything ever happened to him, to look in the hat band of his fedora. I did, on the plane, and found a slip of paper giving the names and addresses and everyone connected with this ring. I slipped it into the back section of my compact—"

"And," Danny supplied, "gave it to the pilot for safe-keeping. We found the compact in the pilot's hand. The murderer missed it—"

"Yes," the girl whispered, "it's my fault. If I hadn't given it to him—"

Danny said, "Then you would have been murdered!" He realized, suddenly, he liked this alert, pretty girl.

She had a great deal of courage. "The only reason you're alive now," he added, "is because you have information they want. They've got to know what you know, and what has been relayed to Washington—"

He paused, held up his hand, whispered, "Listen!"

Feet were moving along the outside deck, near the cabin.

DANNY swiftly leaped toward the doorway. He prepared to act the moment the door was opened.

But the footsteps paused. A man cursed, said, "It's a damned police boat, just off our port side. Take it easy so they won't get curious. They won't pay any attention to a tug!"

A police launch! Danny's pulse leaped.

He heard the footsteps fade aft and whispered

to the girl, "Stay right here. I'll be right back."

Her eyes held confidence as she nodded. Danny eased open the door and peered out into the night. He saw that the tug was already clear of the East River now, down in the wide bay. The water was choppy from swirling currents. Off to the left he made out the harbor police boat, moving slowly on patrol. The nightly inspection along the docks was under way. They'd disregard this tug, so common around New York Harbor.

He had to do something!

Voices were talking forward. He saw a figure come down from the wheelhouse and start toward the engine room. It was Allison, the limousine driver. That meant one man was probably left on the bridge, the thickset man who had appeared on the dock.

Allison was talking to someone in the engine room. The kid went silently along the deck, reached a steel ladder that led up to the wheelhouse. He went carefully up the steps.

The doorway stood open. A stiff, cold breeze swept off the bay, but Danny had his leather jacket zipped up tightly so there would be no sound of it flapping against his body.

A man stood at the helm, eyes intent on the police boat near the shoreline. The kid moved with sudden, wiry action.

The whistle cord was directly behind the wheelman's head. Danny caught the cord, yanked frantically downward and held on. A terrific blast shattered the quiet night.

The man spun, one hand still on the wheel. With a snarl of mixed surprise and rage, he swung a fist at the kid.

But Danny jerked on the cord furiously. A series of sharp, staccato blasts split the night. He knew that such a signal from a harbor craft was a sign of distress. If those on the police launch heard the sound. . .

Then the man released the wheel completely and dived toward Danny Garrett. The kid was knocked sprawling across the tiny cabin, but he leaped to his feet, whirled toward the doorway and down the ladder. Allison and another man appeared from the engine room.

Danny swung the other way, circled the deck, dropped down in darkness behind some deck machinery. The searchers missed him, started the other way.

Then the kid leaped to the cabin where the girl was waiting. Flinging open the door, he yelled, "Hurry! Take off your shoes and dress!" He was kicking off his own shoes. His trousers and jacket followed.

Then he raced with the girl to the outside deck. Someone yelled. A man followed this with a shot from the bridge. The shot screamed through the night.

Danny and the girl leaped overboard.

**T**HEY WERE swimming, and to Danny, the water did not seem as cold as he had expected. Excitement pounded the blood through his veins, and he guessed it was the same with Ruth.

The tug had pushed on into the darkness, its Diesels a steady throbbing now. They were trying for a getaway toward Staten Island, Danny surmised.

The girl was a good swimmer. But Danny warned, "Take it easy. The closest place is the Brooklyn shoreline. It's going to be tough."

The choppy waves made talking almost impossible. Danny wondered if the currents would carry them away from shore. That, and the waves....

Then he saw a searchlight probing across the water. It was the police boat, streaking after the tug. There were shots. . .

Soon there were other boats, and more lights, and more shooting in the distance. But they—Danny and the girl—had not been seen! He watched her worriedly. She was tiring! And ahead, the grim dark outlines of the wharves and docks seemed miles away. Could she make it? If not, would he be able to aid her?

He lost track of time. It seemed hours later when a brilliant searchlight beam picked them up. Then there was a police launch, its motor pounding loud in his ears, and the kid thought he had never in his life heard such a welcome sound. It was right alongside them, and the next thing he knew they were being lifted aboard.

Blankets were wrapped around them. He kept thinking how pretty Ruth was, even all wet like this.

A harbor cop was saying, "You sure are lucky, son. Blowing that tug whistle was plenty smart—"

"You caught them?" asked Danny.

The police sergeant nodded. "No.4 launch did. We were looking for them, especially after hearing from Mike Ryan—"

Danny's eyes flashed. "Ryan?"

"It seems, kid, that Ryan went back to the airport, looking for you. He trailed that airlines limousine. A watchman on the bridge saw it cut off there at Randall's Island, and reported it. Ryan figured out that those guys had you on a boat somewhere on the river. It was flashed to us from headquarters, and so we started hunting."

Another boat pulled up alongside—a patrol boat. Big Mike Ryan, followed by Slug O'Donnel, came aboard. Danny said, "Mike, this is Miss Evans, the airline stewardess who was missing." He told them the girl's story.

There was a grin on Slug's bony face. "I *told* you the kid was up to something!"

Ryan said, "We got some of it from the D. A.'s office, kid. The rest we found in Miss Evans' compact. Already things are rolling in Chicago and New York. Things are going to clamp down so hard on that refugee ring they'll never know what hit them. We also grabbed a guy named Ben, on his way to Staten Island to contact Allison. A patrol car picked him up. He killed that pilot."

"I know," said Danny.

"Another thing—" Ryan started, and then, for once, his heavy, hard jaw relaxed. "Look," he said with feeling, "you two have had enough for one night. As soon as we put into shore we'll get you something hot to eat. The girl can tell us the rest of it later."

Danny looked at Ruth, at her nice brown eyes. "We've got plenty of time," he said. "I'm not at all sleepy."

The girl returned his smile.

Slug said with amazement, "Maybe *I* ought to jump into the bay too. I need *something* to wake me up. How do you do it, kid?"

Grinning, Danny said quietly, "Well, Slug, I'm young."

Ryan laughed heartily.

(THE END)