

THE LAND WHALE MURDERS

CHAPTER 11: Couplet I Hardly Know Her

AUTHOR

Eugene and Anjus get patched up after a daring run around the city trying to solve a mystery that wasn't even a mystery. But before we check in with them let's see how Pirate Penny is doing down at Castle Clinton.

11.1:

PIRATE PENNY

It is complete! It's fully grafted now! Project Land Whale cannot be stopped!

GOON 1

Um, your pirate-ness?

PIRATE PENNY

What is it? I'm gloating!

GOON 1

We have gotten odd reports about those two nincompoops -- it appears they've been running all around the city. We can't figure out why ...

PIRATE PENNY

Could they be unraveling my plan ... each stop some elaborate trap laid for me? I destroyed the Four Elementals when I killed Hiram and I ended Maryanne ... those last two couldn't possibly ... this, this is annoying!

GOON 1

What should we do?

PIRATE PENNY

You plan and you plan. I put a complex and unwieldy plan into motion and what! A couple goo-goos want to tear me down!

GOON 1

Don't beat yourself up, boss, you're doing great!

PIRATE PENNY

Really, you think so?

GOON 1
Absolutely.

PIRATE PENNY
There are just times I feel like I'm only pretending to be an evil super villain, that I'm faking it ... that deep down I'm just a regular villain. Or even a below average villain like Von Bismarck or the Copperhead Democrats.

GOON 1
You're the best Gang Leader we ever had. We were waiting to tell you, but you got nominated for 10 Metropolitan Gang Awards.

PIRATE PENNY
The Gangys? Oh but the Tong always win ...

GOON 1
This could be your year ...

PIRATE PENNY
Not if Project Land Whale gets beefed before it gets going. We must make sure it goes off without a hitch! If those two idiots interfere, capture them and bring them to me! Alive.

GOON 1
Yes Pirate Penny!

PIRATE PENNY
It begins!

AUTHOR
Meanwhile at the Jewish Veteran's Hospital Eugene and Anjus had their wounds tended to and were ready to continue the fight as almost officer Shaindel "Doubles" Blum looks on.

11.2:

EUGENE
Mmmm, that's good morphine.

ANJUS
We need to get to Castle Clinton and end this!

SHAINDEL

And I'll help!

ANJUS

You need to get the police mobilized – whatever Project Land Whale is, it's big. We'll need all the help we can get!

SHAINDEL

Good thinking! I enjoy being a copper but solving crimes is also really fun. I'll rally the blue boys and raise the sirens!

EUGENE

You're not a full time flatfoot yet but this will get you the badge for sure. Now let's get going and also a refill on this morphine.

AUTHOR

As Eugene took the slippery slide toward addiction the three made plans to meet up at Castle Clinton later. Back at Police Headquarters Commissioner Roosevelt looked out at the dark storm clouds on the horizon.

11.3:

ROOSEVELT

Storm's a coming. Its monger weather ... FISH MONGER weather! And only one hero can bring you down! The Big --

FITZ enters.

FITZ

Commissioner?

ROOSEVELT

Huh? Oh Sergeant Fitz! I was just ... just signing forms. Forms, forms, forms.

FITZ

Aye you're like the King Puck in Killgorin. But I came to tell you that your cake has arrived.

ROOSEVELT

My afternoon cake! Bring it here!

ROOSEVELT starts eating the cake quickly.

ROOSEVELT

Vanilla. My favorite nilla.

FITZ

Cork my dingle you sure enjoy your sweeties.

ROOSEVELT

I take no pleasure in this, Sergeant. The latest medical journals say the best way to keep your pep is to ingest sugar. Bully! Sugar, nature's candy!

FITZ

Far be it from me to go against science but, there's an old Irish legend that complex carbohydrates and refined sugar cause –

ROOSEVELT

I don't care about old wives' tales! I'm certainly not mainlining this frosting for the sheer deliciousness of it! I am preparing! For something big!

Sound of thunder.

ROOSEVELT (cont.)

Oooh thunder!

FITZ

Sir, you have a lot of icing on your –

ROOSEVELT

Soul!

FITZ

Face.

ROOSEVELT

And soul! Buttercream dreams and caramel hopes.

FITZ

Also that patrol you sent to investigate Castle Clinton has ... disappeared.

ROOSEVELT

Bully! Sounds like job for ... THE BIG STICK!

FITZ

Oooh exciting!

ROOSEVELT

What?

FITZ

You going to change here?

ROOSEVELT

What do you mean?

FITZ

Change into your costume.

ROOSEVELT

I'm not ... ha ha I don't even know what you're talking about! (Beat. Stage Whisper.)

None can know my secret!

FITZ

I won't tell no one not even my priest!

ROOSEVELT

You'll have nothing to tell, because there's nothing going on here. Now on unrelated business I have to go. Unrelatedly.

FITZ

Please, my missus, she knitted me this ... it's got a nice tree motif and ... I thought I could be 'The Shillelagh!' And we could both ...

ROOSEVELT

Both what? Be normal police officers who do normal work?

FITZ

A sidekick –

ROOSEVELT

That unrelated business won't solve itself. I must go!

ROOSEVELT exits. Then he comes back in.

ROOSEVELT (cont.)

Oops almost forgot my stick. My ... unrelated stick. Ta-ta!

ROOSEVELT exits.

FITZ

Aw potatoes!

AUTHOR

Let's move to the battery of Manhattan, deep downtown, Eugene and Anjus head toward Castle Clinton.

11.4:

ANJUS

Castle Clinton built as a fort to protect the city then turned into a performance venue where ...

Distant calliope music, sounds of screaming.

ANJUS (cont.) The great clown fire that took my parents ...

EUGENE

Where did it take them? What? Oh ... the grave.

ANJUS

Just the thought sends shivers ... but I am going to face my fears!

EUGENE

Nothing will stop us now –

BEANS

Stop right there!

EUGENE

Yipes!

BEANS

I'm Pricilla Beans and you've been working to destroy my plan this whole time!

EUGENE

Are you ... Pirate Penny?

BEANS

Who? No! I just said I'm Pricilla Beans! You've ruined my life!

ANJUS

Look we don't even know you ... so ...

BEANS

It all started down by the docks! You were getting those birds and you bumped into me

–

FLASHBACK Eugene whistles as he walks down the street.

11.5:

BEANS

Watch it, mackintosh!

EUGENE

Sorry, hot birds coming through!

BEANS

What a puss on that mug. What's he so happy about? Don't matter none. How dare he! Doesn't he know I'm Pricilla Beans the most cunning thief east of the Mississippi! And it's – oh I'm late!

Back to the present.

11.6:

BEANS

You made me late!

EUGENE

That's hardly ruining your life ...

BEANS

That's not the half of it. I was tasked with stealing the famed German Geode from the Astronomical Society. They acquired it in a lawsuit. I had the perfect plan! I needed someone to tell them the geode was cursed and they'd throw it away. They're very superstitious! They always met on the roof of a police station to look at Saturn since this roof has an uninterrupted view of the sky ... I had the perfect patsy ...

11.7:

FLASHBACK The police station roof.

SPEEDY

Huh? No! I just like yammering! Points are for pencils not stories ya lunk!

EUGENE

Speedy is right! To the commissioner!

SPEEDY

Also that geode is cursed get rid of it!

MARYANNE

What geode? Never mind we must go!

ANJUS

Away.

BEANS

Good work, Speedy, you've gotten those no good scientists headed in the right direction.

SPEEDY

Just give me my ill gotten gelt. I don't care for schemes but this payola can buy me a spot in the marathon marathon a marathon of marathons that will take me from Vancouver to Canvoucer the secret city in Patagonia founded by rogue Canadians.

BEANS

Here just stop talking.

SPEEDY

And awaaaaaay I go!

SPEEDY runs off.

BEANS

Yes ... everything is falling into place!

The Astronomy club enters.

ASTRONOMER 1

I bet Saturn will be a real ring-a-ding get it?

ASTRONOMER 2

Oh you!

BEANS

Wait who are you fellas?

ASTRONOMER 1

We're the geode owning Astronomical Society!

BEANS

But who were those other jerks! You were supposed to throw away the geode!

ASTRONOMER 2

Never! Well maybe if a short and fast Jew had told us to. But now we're definitely donating it to the Natural History Museum where it'll be kept under heightened security! Let's away fellow space-heads!

11.8:

Back to the present.

BEANS

My plan was ruined! But I did have a slim chance to grab it before they handed it over to the museum. But just as they were heading into the building I was assaulted –

11.9:

FLASHBACK – outside the Natural History Museum

BEANS

Now's my chance! They're just about to –

FRENCHMAN

Aidez moi! Aidez moi! L'air l'air terrible!

BEANS

A runaway Frenchman in a – ooof!

FRENCHMAN

Mon dieu!

11.10:

Back to the present.

BEANS

I got tangled in his breathing hose and he dragged me halfway to Harlem before I managed to get loose. And the geode got locked away.

EUGENE

Well that's not exactly ...

BEANS

Oh there's more! With the geode in the Natural History museum there'd be no easy way to get it. But I found out there was a big donor – Henry B. Lubbins, so I was going to make an appointment but you got there first and by the time I tried ...

11.11:

FLASHBACK. Lubbins office.

ANJUS

Let us away!

EUGENE

Away!

ELLIS

I did a good job of being quiet. Good work, Ellis. Good work.

BEANS

Excuse me, I'd like to make an appointment!

ELLIS

Sorry I'm on break no more appointments.

11.12:

Back to the present.

BEANS

I had to kick rocks! But then I realized that Ellis fellow was the weak link. Through him I could get Lubbins membership form and sneak in at the big Bone Ball by dressing as Lubbins. So I seduced Ellis and then entrapped him in a multi-level rat marketing scheme where you sell rats to a friend who then sells rats to their friends but it never works. And quickly he owed a lot of money to a mysterious rat donor – me! So I blackmailed him into getting the membership form. But you kept getting in the way!

11.13:

FLASHBACK – Lubbins office.

MARYANNE

No, no. Let's go Eugene.

EUGENE

Fine, but.

MARYANNE

Come on.

MARYANNE and EUGENE exit.

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

Huh. What?

EUGENE

It's Eugene again. I forgot my hat.

ELLIS

You didn't have a hat.

EUGENE

Well played, well played. (Beat. To himself.)

So close to a free hat.

EUGENE exits.

ELLIS

And now back to my nefarious –

Another knock.

EUGENE
Me again.

ELLIS
What? What? What?

11.14:

Back to the present.

BEANS
I was waiting outside – I put a red herring on the steps of Blubberton to signal Ellis to make the drop. Using the old nursery rhyme: If you see a herring about, make sure to drop the membership without doubt; but if you don't see the fish; do with the membership whatever you wish!" And you took the herring –

11.15:

FLASHBACK outside Blubberton.

EUGENE
It's ... a red herring! Finally a vital clue! We should stay together all night and figure this out.

MARYANNE
I was going to the library in the morning ... I'll just get some red and fish 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 way down the block. OK then ... I'll just put this fish in my pocket.

11.16:

Back to the present.

BEANS

And since he didn't see the herring he could do whatever he wished! And he sold the membership to a membership collector for enough to get out of rat debt and thus he was no longer under my thrall.

EUGENE

I still have the fish in my pocket if you want ...

ANJUS

That's what that smell is.

EUGENE

I wish it was just the fish.

BEANS

Stuff your fish! I still needed that geode, and I realized there was an exact copy of Lubbins membership in Membership Magazine, a very low circulation niche publication that was only carried in one library. I tried to get it but –

11.17:

Flashback the Library

MARYANNE

Forgive me. I do not mean to be so cross. Women and our emotions, right? I must go.

MARYANNE runs off.

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.

11.18:

Back to the present.

BEANS

She was gaining fast so I needed to lighten my load so I tossed the magazine and it was promptly eaten by hungry, hungry newsies.

ANJUS

They do love magazine glue.

BEANS

So the membership was right out! Instead I decided I could just blow a hole in the museum when no one was looking. Since No Look Day was coming up the national holiday where everyone looks away in commemoration of when Horatio Gates Won the Battle of Saratoga by not looking at Red Coat Commander Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne in a one-on-one game of blind man's bluff.

ANJUS

We all know about No Look Day! Sorry, go on ...

BEANS

So I got a bunch of explosives at great personal expense and stored them in a safe place ... a condemned building. But it wasn't so safe was it?

11.19:

FLASHBACK the condemned building

EUGENE

It's dark in here, let me light this candle.

He lights a stick of dynamite.

ANJUS

Um, Eugene ...

EUGENE

Yes?

ANJUS

That's not a candle that's a stick of dynamite.

EUGENE

Damn you Alfred Nobel you've once again bested me. Oh! I'll just dunk it in this barrel of water –

He puts the dynamite in the barrel the water catches on fire.

EUGENE

Whoa that's not water! It's fire! What the bollywick!

ANJUS

It's spreading. And throw that dynamite!

EUGENE

Oh right the mite!

He throws it. A beat then it explodes. There's a deep rumble.

11.20:

Back to the present.

BEANS

I showed up just to see it all go kaboom! So that plan's out the window and I still don't have that geode! And the guy that hired me was getting antsy so I hired a master forger but that didn't work either –

11.21:

Flashback – Eugene's home

PROFESSOR MIKE

Oh I'm a master forger. Yeah I forge all sorts of things. How do you think I afford an upper floor on a teacher's salary? Can I hide this hunk of rock I'm working on with you?

EUGENE

I guess.

MRS. MIKE enters.

MRS. MIKE

There you are! You scoundrel!

PROFESSOR MIKE

That's Professor Mike's cue to beat feet!

MRS. MIKE

I can out run you any day you philandering egghead!

They both run out.

EUGENE

They have fun. Oops I dropped that thing Mike gave me and it's super broken. Oh well.

ANJUS

The letter?

EUGENE

Right, from Lubbins.

11.22:

Back to the present.

BEANS

And when I snuck out of the place that cop saw me again recognized me from the magazine-napping and gave chase ...

ANJUS

That's where Doubles went.

BEANS

Went after me! Luckily I had a back-up plan. There's a secret river that runs under Central Park put in by Olmstead when he designed the park because a mystic once told him that one day a giant bug would come from Mars and eat him unless he took refuge in an underground river.

EUGENE

Could still happen.

BEANS

Of course, and the river flows right under the Natural History Museum and there's a small hatch that goes right into the Hall of Minerals. Curator Osborn uses it to dump 'junk fossils.' But navigating a subterranean rapid filled river ain't easy and only one captain agreed –

11.23:

FLASHBACK – the Reel 'em Inn.

ANJUS

You'll take us to Coney Island?

PERCIFUL FANCY

I do have a booking for later tonight, but we should be back from that rabbit plagued refuge before nightfall.

11.24:

Back to the present.

BEANS

And you know how that turned out –

11.25:

Flashback the Rainbow Wind

PERCIFUL FANCY

Ha you missed boys! Now I'll swim to safety and -- oh no a shark!

A shark attacks him.

PINKERTON

That shark is shanking our bounty! Pinkertons get that shark!

Sound of the Pinkertons jumping into the water.

ANJUS

So that happened.

EUGENE

It looks like they're all getting swept out to sea by the current ... even the shark.

11.25:

Back to the present.

ANJUS

How are you remembering things you weren't there for?

BEANS

I HAVE A VIVID IMAGINATION! But with Fancy gone I had nothing! There was no way I could get that geode and why? Because of you!

EUGENE

Wow that really makes one realize that life really is an interconnected tapestry and who knows how we affect one another.

ANJUS

We are more alike than we are different.

BEANS

Stop learning lessons! And because of all of that I have something for you!

BEANS takes out a gun.

EUGENE

Yipes a gun!

AUTHOR

Pricilla Beans aimed the gun at them. But before we finish this let's check in with Shaindel who made it back to Police Headquarters.

11.26:

SHAINDEL is in the police station running around ringing the bell.

SHAINDEL

We need every cop! Seven alarms! Activate the reserves, the reserve reserves – mobilize the whole force –

FITZ

Belay that order! Everyone back to loafing!

SHAINDEL

But Sergeant Fitz!

FITZ

Listen ya wee lass I know you got your knickers in a twist but don't be giving orders, you ain't even a real copper, you're just a quota hire and barely one at that.

SHAINDEL

We need to get to Castle Clinton! Project Land Whale –

FITZ

Maybe the Commissioner should'a thought of that before he went off gallivanting without a sidekick.

SHAINDEL

What?

FITZ

La-de-dah you come in acting like it's our job to protect and serve but where's old Fitz's parade? No one respects the cops. No one gives us our respect.

SHAINDEL

Why don't you earn that respect by stopping Pirate Penny and her gang!

FITZ

Ooooh, earn respect! Earn respect? That what they teach you in them fancy schools? Hey boys, she thinks cops should earn respect!

COPS

Boo!

FITZ

You know what, boys? Day off for everyone!

POLICEMAN

I'm going to eat lunch outside!

OFFICER 1

Hey I'm going to use this time to help the community. By whistling at dames! They love the positive reinforcement about how all that matters is their looks!

FITZ

Not all heroes wear capes. Time to return to the hammock. Ach, that's good loafing!

SHAINDEL

Well I'm going to stop the Blow Hole Gang!

FITZ

No you ain't! You're a cop, you have the day off, so no policing while off duty.

SHAINEL

Well I'm not a cop am I? I'm just an almost officer and I'm going to almost take a day off –

FITZ

She's got me on a technicality! The worst kind of cality! Begorrah! I'm madder than a bilberry at the Lughnasa!

SHAINDEL

Hold on Elementals I'm coming!

AUTHOR

But would it be quick enough? Because right now Eugene and Anjus were staring down the barrel of a gun. Beans smiles.

11.27:

BEANS

It's all because of you ...

(Beat.)

That I realized crime doesn't pay. So I met with the person who hired me, we hashed it out and now I'm going to become a legitimate gun dealer. I got this gun for you.

EUGENE

I'm not really a pistol Pete but let me see. Huh I do feel masculated just holding it.

ANJUS

Who hired you to steal that geode?

BEANS

Finbar Gillum.

ANJUS

Who?

AUTHOR

The notary of crime whom neither Anjus nor Eugene ever met.

EUGENE

Huh I think I know him ...

AUTHOR

He didn't.

ANJUS

Anyway we're glad it all worked out.

BEANS

It really did, enjoy the gun!

EUGENE

Bye!

AUTHOR

And with that Pricilla Beans left New York and moved out west. Her gun shop became one of the most popular and eventually she'd go on to found the NRA. Not The National Rifle Association that was founded earlier in 1871. Rather the Nautical Rangers of America an elite gun-toting, deep sea diving rescue force. Maybe we'll get to that some other time.

ANJUS

See Eugene we can still do good in this world even if it's only by accident and happenstance.

EUGENE

We are good people. That's the lesson right?

ANJUS

As Alexis de Tocqueville once said –

She's hit with a blow gun dart.

ANJUS

Ow. Dart in my neck ...

EUGENE

Wiser words were never spoken.

ANJUS

No someone darted me with a ...

ANJUS collapses.

EUGENE

Anjus? Anjus! Is all that part of the quote? Or –

He's hit with a dart.

EUGENE

Ow! I've been hit with a blow gun dart. Now I know how De Tocqueville felt oooooh.

GOONS enter.

GOON 2

They're out.

GOON 1

Got 'em. Now bring 'em to Penny before the rain starts.

Sound of thunder, it starts raining.

GOON 2

Too late ... aah they're going to be slippery.

GOON 1

Less jabber more grabber!

Thunder crackles as the rain storm gets worse.

END OF Chapter 11