

'What Use Is My Life To Me?'

Rogue Riderhood lived near the river in a dark, dirty house like an animal's hole. After Jesse Hexam's death, people kept away from Riderhood and no one came to his house.

But one evening, Riderhood had a visitor. He was a rough looking man with long hair and a thick beard. His skin was brown and he was dressed like a sailor. But Riderhood noticed that the man's hands were smooth and white.

'Have I seen you before?' Riderhood asked. 'You've not been to sea lately, I think.'

'You have sharp eyes,' said the man. 'I have been ill after a bad voyage. I lost everything and had to fight for my life. Will you take a drink with me?'

In answer, Riderhood took two dirty glasses from a shelf and put them down on a low table. The other man took a bottle and a knife from his deep pocket. With great care, he opened the bottle and then put it and the knife on the table.

'I know that knife!' said Riderhood in surprise. 'It belonged to a sailor called George Radfoot.'

'It did.'

'What's happened to him?' asked Riderhood.

'He's dead. Killed in a most terrible way.'

'And that's his coat you're wearing too. I want to know more about George Radfoot. How did he die? And how did you get his things?'

'He came to this house,' the stranger said. 'It was the night of the Harmon Murder. I know that you have tried to blame that killing on an innocent man. You did it for the reward, for money.'

'They were only words, sailor. Hexam's dead. Words can't hurt a dead man.'



'I know that knife!'