

# DARK LEGEND



Christopher Stires



# **DARK LEGEND**



**CHRISTOPHER  
STIRES**



ZUMAYA OTHERWORLDS

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AUSTIN TX

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DARK LEGEND

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*For Brian and Katie*

*And much of Madness, and more of Sin,  
And Horror the soul of the plot.*

— Edgar Allan Poe  
“The Conqueror Worm”

## PRELIMINARY

1998

*Ashley weighed the manuscript in her hands.*

What had she walked into?

She studied the pile of yellow, curled paper. There were one hundred carefully hand-printed pages. One hundred pages, Jack Carpenter had said, about a young adventurer who had been murdered during the last days of the California Gold Rush.

Good God, she thought. Santa Fe to Denver in coach. Then five hours in a rented jeep that only responded to second and third gear up mountain roads with more twists and turns than a personal-injury attorney. For what? For an interview with a mysterious writer who hadn't published a single word in more than three decades. Why was she doing this?

She traced her finger across the top page on the untitled manuscript. This was creepy. Why did he want her to read this before their interview? Was Jack Carpenter some kindly old gentleman whose bubble wasn't on center or a psycho who used the ground remains of stupid journalists for his coffee?

She had decided that if he walked into the den and started quoting from Poe's "The Raven" or Ben Franklin's "Eight Reasons to Marry an Older Woman" she was headed down the mountain even if she had to coast all the way in neutral.

She opened the manuscript to the first page.

## GREETING

I am a ghost.

It is said that ghosts are people who do not know they are dead. That may be true in other circumstances, but I know I'm dead. I was murdered.

South of the magnificent city of San Francisco, past Monterey, is Rimpau Bay. It is a small coastal town slipped among the tall cliffs and deep forests. Now, as when it was founded in 1849, the town caters to travelers and fishing boats and the like. The founder was Pieter Vanterhoff from Amsterdam, who became a millionaire in the gold fields near Sutter's Mill. It is his house, christened Journey's End, that I walk each night.

I do not know personally of other hauntings. There are no spirit get-togethers. But, yes, I have heard the legend of Anne Boleyn returning to her Norfolk homestead in England with her severed head in her hands, of the 17th-century merchant ship known as *The Flying Dutchman* still sailing the ocean near the Cape of Good Hope; and in my own birthplace, the hills of Arkansas, I've heard about the





Cherokee warrior who has come each spring for more than 200 years searching for his lost bride. I know the stories. Whether those phantoms exist or are simply tales to frighten small children I do not know.

I do exist, however.

What follows is my story – how I was murdered, and the events after. It all began in the early summer of 1855 in the city of San Francisco...

**BOOK ONE**

**COOP**

# 1

“William Henry Cooper from Madison County, Arkansas,” I said. I extended my right hand across the bright faro table as I juggled in my left the plate of free food from the bar.

The dealer nodded wearily. A smoldering store-bought cigar jutted from the corner of his mouth. I lowered my ignored hand and sat down at the empty chance table.

The dealer was an older man—thirty-five, maybe even forty years of age—with a thick red-brown beard that was beginning to show gray at the cheeks. He was a head shorter than me but wider at the shoulders. His wardrobe was a worn black suit topped with a crisp white shirt and red silk vest. The smoke from his cigar curled lazily upward obscuring his facial features.

But I didn’t need to see his face; from his body movements, it was obvious he was bored and tired, and that was the reason I had picked his table.

Popping a quartered section of apple into my mouth, I looked across the quiet saloon. *Saloon* wasn’t the proper word. The Bella Union on Portsmouth Square was a seventy-foot-long palace with



fine chandeliers, marble-topped tables and red gilded wallpaper. On the walls were giant mirrors and paintings of beautiful ladies not dressed ladylike for public. Gold and green couches were scattered among the gaming tables for a body to light on for a moment's rest between wagers, and a trio of quick men stood behind the mahogany bar that ran the length of the room. In the rear, a musician in a blue suit and stove-pipe hat played a fiddle to a sparse early-afternoon crowd. While the tune he played was not a toe-tapper, it was soothing and peaceful. The air smelled of stale sweat, burnt tobacco and spilled beer.

It was grand.

"Game?"

I turned back around.

"Pardon?"

The dealer waved his open hand over the table. I picked up a hard-boiled egg then nudged my plate to the side as I studied the tabletop. A painted reproduction of each type of card was displayed. "What are the rules?"

"Faro..." He pronounced it pharaoh like the Egyptian kings mentioned in the Old Testament. "...or buckin' the tiger, is played here with a single deck. You bet on any card you fancy. Suits ain't a concern. I deal two cards. Any bets on the first card dealt loses. Any bets on the second card wins. Bets on any other cards can be left for the next play or pulled. If a pair is dealt, then anyone playin' the paired card loses half their bet. The odds are even money."

I bit into the egg and pretended to mull the idea over for a moment. Then I slowly pulled a Liberty silver dollar from my pocket and placed it on the queen.

The dealer turned up a deuce and a ten.



"I arrived in San Francisco three days ago," I said hanging my hat on the back of my chair and settling in. "Came to make my fortune, sir."

"You're about five years too late," the dealer remarked as he turned up a six and a seven. "The glory days are over. San Francisco's gettin' civilized. I personally know of two Bibles in town." He puffed on his cigar. "What do you think of the great Puerto de San Francisco?"

"There's a wonderment around every corner," I replied.

The dealer grinned. I knew instantly I'd been pegged as an ignorant fool from the backwoods. I'd seen the look before.

"Yes, the city's a wonderment, all right," the dealer said. "How have you fared so far?"

"Well, I started out with a stake of two hundred and eleven dollars. Had to sell my horse this morning. Now I have the Navy Colt pistol that Pa gave me on my last birthday at home, one extra shirt, a copy of *The Three Musketeers* by Mr. Alexandre Dumas, and fifty-nine dollars."

The dealer showed a queen and a jack.

"Fifty-eight," he corrected, picking up my dollar.

I finished my egg and slipped another dollar onto the eight.

"Where you been playin'?" the dealer asked.

"At the Parker House, the Mazourka, and the El Dorado. The El Dorado is where I parted with most of my stake."

"Was she worth it?"

I hid my grin behind my fist.

"I was on the trail alone for a long time."

*A long time* was putting it in simple terms. In parts of Texas and the New Mexico Territory I hadn't



seen another living soul—not even a lizard or jack-rabbit—for days. When I walked into the El Dorado saloon and saw this lovely lady dealing blackjack I was enchanted. *Enchanted* was a word *she* liked to use.

She was from Ireland—the lakes of Killarney, I believe she said—and she had the sweetest voice. An angel’s voice. I could have just listened to her talk for hours. At one point, she touched my hand and wished me good fortune. Then she proceeded to take every dollar I had in front of me. It was a pleasure.

The dealer flicked ash from his cigar.

“We have three females workin’ here at night. Two deal cards, and the third sits near the door sellin’ preserves and little cakes.”

I glanced at the door and brushed dirt from my wool shirtsleeve.

“Maybe I should pocket enough money to buy a cake.”

The dealer leaned across the table. His face was rugged, and a nearly healed knife scar etched down his left temple, disappearing into his beard. His eyes commanded the most attention, however. One was bright blue and the other dark brown.

“Women are one for every ten men in San Francisco,” he said. “Insult one, and you’ll get carved by a dozen men before you know what happened. But, if you’re inclined, I know a place on Dupont Street where you can get a poke for a modest sum. For a little more, you can have one stay the whole night.”

I shook my head. Heat pumped into my cheeks and ears.

“The Dupont Street whores are one of the wonderments of the world,” the dealer continued. “A



travelin' man should see all the wonderments he can while he's up and able. No one lives forever."

My face burned. "No, sir. I have my faults. I know that. I gamble and have been known to swear upon occasion. I have also been in my share of bare-knuckle fights..." I paused. "And I killed a man while I was staying in San Antonio, Texas. But I do not take the Lord's name in vain, I do not drink or break my word, and, most certainly, I do not take advantage of a lady's misfortune." I straightened my shoulders. That little speech was mainly the truth. Mainly. "No offense intended to you, sir."

"None taken," the dealer said, smiling as he reshuffled the cards. "But you have the wrong view, son. The fortune of one of the richest families in town was started in a whore's bed. It is an old and honorable profession. A much-needed profession, I might add. When they talk about gold in them there hills, they ain't talkin' about the Sierra Nevadas."

I turned away. Over at the next table, a Mexican gentleman with a turquoise-handled knife sheathed on his belt was having a run of luck at the roulette wheel.

"I also made some promises to the womenfolk back home," I said quietly. That was the complete truth. "I must honor my word."

The dealer nodded. "Waitin' for that one special lady to come along? The one you can take home?"

"Yes, sir."

"Admirable. I tip my hat to you."

I shrugged.

The dealer showed a five and an eight. He placed a dollar next to mine.

"You made mention of a man you killed down San Antone way."



“Yes,” I replied. A knotted fist nudged the pit of my stomach. I knew that fist would always be there. “I was playing poker. A friendly game with twenty-five and fifty-cent bets. A windstorm had come up, and we were passing the time until it blew over.

“There were four of us, including a traveler from New York state with chigger bites covering his chin and throat. I hit a lucky streak. Won six hands in a row. After the sixth win, the traveler from New York state passed an insulting remark about my ma. I asked him to apologize, and he went for the handgun in his belt. He shot first, but my shot didn’t miss.”

“You shouldn’t let it fester on your mind, son. You really shouldn’t. Your mother’s honor was impugned. You had no choice.”

I shook my head and lapsed into silence. No choice. At night, when I closed my eyes, I could still see the shocked look on the fellow from New York’s face as the bullet cut into his chest center square. I killed him, and I never even learned his name. You should know a body’s name if you kill them. Still, despite my nightmares, I certainly had no wish that the situation had gone the other way.

The dealer sensed my mood. He continued to turn cards but remained quiet also. The table stayed empty except for him and me. The Mexican winning at the roulette wheel was attracting most of the room’s sparse attention. Well, gambling attention. The free food piled at the end of the bar held the most interest.

I was still even when the dealer reshuffled again. I leaned back in my chair, watching. Each time he had gone through the deck, he played until he had eight cards left then reshuffled. I was ready. The time had arrived to make my move.





As we proceeded through the third round, I shifted my dollar between the queen, eight, and five. There was no particular reason to pick those cards. What I played didn't matter. Yet.

When the dealer had ten cards remaining, I cleared my throat loudly. He looked across the table at me with his mismatched eyes.

"I was born on the sixth of March, eighteen-thirty-six," I told him. "That was the very day that Mr. Davy Crockett, Mr. Jim Bowie and their fellow Texicans were finally defeated at the Alamo by General Santa Anna and his army. Grandma said it was an omen. That it meant I would stand my ground no matter what the odds. I don't believe she was talking about faro, but it seems to be time to make a stand."

"Crockett wasn't Texan. He was from Tennessee." The dealer tossed his cigar butt into a spittoon. "And I thought you were passin' time till the lady sellin' cakes came around."

"No, sir. I'm here to make my fortune." I studied the table for a moment, although I already knew my play, then pulled two gold Double Eagles and one gold Eagle from my pocket.

A faint grin edged the dealer's lips.

"Fifty dollars. A wonderment. I take it that you're finished greasin' me with tales about your mother and father and one extra shirt?"

I put the coins firmly on the ace.

The dealer flexed his fingers, making a little production of it, then turned up a king and an ace.

"My brothers and sisters won't play cards with me," I said as the dealer set fifty dollars beside mine.

"I ain't one of your relatives, son." He held up the remaining cards. "Again?"

Smiling, I nodded and moved the gold to the four.



The dealer showed a nine and a four. He stacked one hundred dollars on the table.

"How many cards are left?" I asked innocently.

"Six," he answered, fanning them across the table.

I drummed my fingers on the tabletop for show. "I'll bet all I got that the next two cards are a pair."

The dealer chuckled then turned his head. "Kellogg!"

A squat, balding man wearing a pinstriped suit hitched up his trousers and drifted to our table. He had a round face with a flat nose and a small cluster of warts over his thick left eyebrow.

"There's six cards left in the deck I've been turnin'," the dealer told him. "The traveler here wants to bet two hundred dollars that the next two cards make a pair."

"Sucker bet," Kellogg responded, eyeing me.

I smiled. All Kellogg saw was an ignorant hillbilly far from home. I wanted to wipe that look from his face.

"I'll take the wager if the management won't," the dealer said.

"If you had two hundred dollars, Max, you'd be on the other side of the table," countered Kellogg. "Take it."

"Hold up," I said. "If you think it's a sucker bet then give me odds, sir."

Kellogg looked past me. A small group of men had eased toward our table. Even the Mexican at the roulette wheel had turned about.

"Give the boy odds," someone called.

"Maybe the house is the sucker, Kellogg," another man said.

"All right, cornbread," Kellogg said tightly. "Three-to-one odds. But after you lose, you leave."



I heard side bets being wagered behind me. Most were siding with Kellogg.

The dealer waited until Kellogg signaled to go. He turned up the six of spades. Then the six of hearts.

Someone patted my shoulder as the dealer stacked six hundred dollars next my two. More than one chuckle filtered across the room. The Mexican grinned at me. His front teeth were rimmed in gold.

I gazed up at Kellogg. A vein throbbed on the man's neck above his starched collar. The look was gone.

"Eight hundred dollars," I remarked. I hoped I sounded cocky and full of myself. "I'll bet it all that there's another six among the remaining cards."

The afternoon crowd grew quiet.

The dealer was expressionless. I glanced from him to Kellogg, who was rubbing the warts on his forehead.

"Well, sir?"

Kellogg hitched his trousers. "Even money."

"Why don't you throw in a room for the night?"

"What else are you going to bet?"

I chuckled. "I'll clean every spittoon in the Bella Union and shine your shoes."

"Done."

We waited, measuring each other, as the crowd made their bets.

The dealer slipped a fresh cigar into his mouth.

"Turn the cards," ordered Kellogg.

The dealer showed a queen then a jack. Two cards were left. More bets were wagered. The Mexican touched a silver cross hanging from his neck and grinned confidently at me.

I wasn't worried.

The dealer turned over the six of diamonds.



Kellogg cursed. Chuckling, I nodded to the Mexican. I was having the time of my life. The dealer handed me eight hundred dollars in paper and coin. Standing, I raked the entire sixteen hundred into my hat.

I looked up, about to buy a round of drinks for the house, when Kellogg walked away. Something was wrong. The Bella Union manager was taking the loss too easily. At the Parker House and the Mazourka I'd had to do some fast talking and buy a couple rounds to cool the situation. This didn't make sense. Not that I was cheating. I didn't have to. But the big gambling houses didn't like to see money heading out the door. Especially their own money.

Kellogg continued toward the rear of the saloon. He never glanced back.

"Bueno, compadre," the Mexican laughed, slapping my shoulder.

I smiled and juggled my hat in my hands.

"You can get your room key from the bartender," the dealer said. "Amazin' luck, son."

"There's no such thing as luck."

The dealer shook his head. "You're not as good as you think you are."

I pointed at the last card. "Six of clubs."

"Care to wager on it?"

I backstepped. I wasn't going to push the situation any further than I already had. I wasn't stupid.

"I'm done for now."

The dealer flipped the card over.

It was the ace of spades.

## 2

*After tipping the faro dealer twenty dollars, I* went up to my room and deposited my belongings. The room was small—probably the smallest the Bella Union had—but it didn't matter. There was a table to write a letter home on, a horsehair mattress with almost clean sheets that I didn't have to share, and I would be sleeping under a ceiling.

It's amazing how a body takes ceilings for granted until you haven't stood beneath one for a few months. I'd found I liked ceilings. There was a comfort in them.

I rested for about an hour then wandered down to Sacramento Street. I had purpose in my wanderings.

First, I got a hot bath. Paid ten dollars extra for fresh water. Then a haircut. The barber was a man from Bordeaux, France. During the course of our conversation, I mentioned to him that I was reading *The Three Musketeers* written by a fellow countryman of his. The barber replied that he could read some but didn't bother. Books and such were a waste of time. I did not leave him a tip.

I came out of the barber shop feeling good. I was refreshed and ready to take on whatever came my



way. I was also feeling a little guilty about feeling good. I'd just spent more money on a bath and a haircut than my cousin made in a month as a school-teacher. But then, my cousin could have come with me.

Next, I found myself a tailor. He was a tiny Chinese man who, after measuring my sizes, said my new cotton suit—gray in color with a red silk lining—and four white shirts would be ready in three days. At least, I thought he said three days. I wished that the tailor had spoken more American or me some Chinese.

From his scars and body movements, I knew the tailor had been a fighting man at one time. I'd met a few professional soldiers in my life, including Pa's older brother, Uncle Ethan, who rode with General Zachary Taylor in the Black Hawk War and the Mexican War. The Chinese tailor had the same manner and presence. He would have been an interesting fellow to know and had to have some good tales to tell. Had to. Like, how does a Chinese soldier become a San Francisco tailor?

One thing was for certain—San Francisco was rapidly becoming my favorite town on the map. There were people here from all over the country and all over the world, and most were attempting to do the same as me. They were trying to make their fortunes.

The sun had set as I headed back toward Portsmouth Square. I still had one place to locate, but it would have to wait until tomorrow. I wanted to find a bootmaker. In El Paso, I'd played cards with a vaquero who had the handsomest pair of boots I'd ever seen. They were black, almost knee-high, and had silver trim with silver Spanish spurs. I intended to



spend what my schoolteacher cousin made in a year for a pair just like them.

When I returned to Madison County, I intended to go in style, with more money than my folks knew existed, a sharp wardrobe, a string of Tennessee walking ponies, and enough adventure tales it would take a full year for the family to hear them all. When I returned to Madison County, I would no longer be just one of the poor Cooper children. I would be an adventurer, a traveler, and a man to be reckoned with. I'd step aside solely for people of character.

There was only one problem with my plan. I had no idea what I'd do *after* I returned home. None at all. Yet.

I did three things well and didn't think it was immodest to admit that—farming, dancing, and cards.

With farming, I never found the satisfaction my pa and brothers did in working the land. I could appreciate what their sweat had accomplished. I could. But I hated it. In the bad years, they broke their backs and had nothing to show for it. I hated to see Pa go—with his hat in his hand—to the damned moneylenders.

As for dancing, Grandma, who hailed from Richmond gentry, said I had the light foot from her side of the family. It didn't matter whether it was a square dance or a waltz or the Virginia reel, I enjoyed them all. Partly, I guessed, because it was the only time I didn't feel awkward around the ladies.

I was somewhat backward in that area. In the presence of an attractive woman, or upon hearing a suggestive remark, I blushed from head to toe. Always had. On the dance floor, however, my carefully patched shirts and mended pants didn't matter. On



the dance floor, Miss Rebecca and the others sought my company. On the dance floor, I had few equals.

And then there was cards. I could remember every card played from a deck then wipe it clean from my mind when the deck was reshuffled. I have always been able to do it. It came natural. I was eight when my brothers and sisters and cousins quit playing cards with me. In fact, before I left home, I couldn't invite myself into a card game in all of Madison County or the seven counties surrounding it.

At a card table, I had no equals. I have to admit, however, that the faro dealer at the Bella Union turning over the ace of spades troubled me. It bothered me more than the management not making a fuss about my win. It should have been the six of clubs. Was I losing my touch or was the dealer trimming the deck?

That's what I was thinking about as I headed back toward the Square and cut down a moonlit alley between two empty clapboard buildings.

"Bust him, Chaney!"

The two men came out of the shadows in a rush. They were dressed like the sailors I had seen near the Wharf and about town. One—the man who had yelled—had the looks of a Plains Indian, and the other was a big blond-haired man.

They expected me to run. They were prepared for that.

I should have.

Being the thirteenth and youngest child with nine older brothers and three older sisters, I had learned to defend myself at an early age. I had to, in order to survive, because no matter how far up the line the original fight started, it eventually trickled down to me.





My sister Amanda Rachel—six years older—took up for me. She came to my aid when the odds were overwhelming and taught me how to fight. She taught me to punch, slap, kick—biting and scratching I learned on my own—and, most important, when to run.

Amanda Rachel would have been disappointed in me.

As the two men neared, I swiveled about and heel-kicked the closest one in the knee then fired a straight right into the man's unshaven face. Chaney staggered back with blood streaming from his split lip.

I swung around, and the Indian tackled me. We went sprawling into the dirt. I fought to get free of a bear-hug, but he was attached like a leech, pinning my arms. Finally, I pulled my left hand loose and hammered his back. The Indian held on tighter.

"Hold 'im, Dakota," Chaney growled.

As I struggled, I was aware Chaney was coming toward us, hesitating only long enough for Dakota to take some of the wind out of me. At last, he stepped in close and booted me in the ribs. Once, twice. I felt something crack.

I twisted my head near Dakota's face, found the Indian's ear and clamped down my teeth. He screamed and released me. Tasting blood, I rolled onto my side and grabbed Chaney's ankle as he kicked again. I yanked, and the blond-haired man fell, bouncing off a wall. Dakota and I scrambled to our knees at the same time. I sledgehammered the Indian in the cheek with a left hook then jumped to my feet.

Now was the time to run.

I didn't make it.



Dakota latched on to my leg, and I crashed again into the dirt. They piled on me instantly, pounding my ribs and back. I elbowed someone and heard a grunt, then a sharp blow glanced off my temple. My mind clouded, my body felt weak. I knew I was losing.

In some penny dreadfuls I'd read, the hero is about to be overcome by the villain, sometimes by several villains, when—as he has reached his lowest valley and knows for certain his demise is at hand—he remembers his lady or country or cause and pulls a last surge of righteous energy from deep within. Then he defeats the villains.

I never believed that. Never. I could take a punch or two, but several take their toll on a body. There'd be no final burst from me. I was done, and I wasn't thinking of home, Ol' Glory, or apple pie. I was only thinking about the pain racking my body.

Suddenly, I realized Chaney and Dakota were no longer pounding on me. I shifted slowly onto my back and stared up at the night sky. Chaney knelt beside me, his breathing loud and ragged. Dakota stood on the other side. Reaching down, Dakota grabbed the front of my shirt and hauled me to my feet. Blood matted the side of the Indian's face. A piece of his lower ear dangled by a flap of skin. He quick-punched me in the gut and, as I doubled over, slammed me backward into a wall.

My insides felt like they had been in a twister, my vision fogged. Chaney limped over. He flashed a knife then jabbed me under the chin. Dakota stepped away and slipped on a pair of spectacles. I wondered how he had kept them from being broken during the fight. Stupid thought, considering my situation.

"Don't fidget," whispered Chaney.



Blood trickled down my neck.

Dakota patted me down until he found my money. He pulled the pouch out and poured the coins into his hand. Stepping into the moonlight, he began to count.

"How much ya got there?" asked Chaney.

Dakota shook his head. "Only about forty dollars."

"Where's the rest, farmer?" Chaney demanded.

"We know ya won a bundle this afternoon, an' if'n ya lie to us I'll cut your black tongue out."

I coughed.

"Where's the rest, ya bastard?"

"At the Bella Union," I answered, shifting my weight. "Hid in my room." Next to my Navy Colt pistol, I added to myself.

"Not even a dumb dirt grower would leave that much in a hotel room," Dakota said. "No one is that dumb. I bet it's in his boots."

"It'd better be," remarked Chaney.

I flexed my fists. I figured I had one chance, one move to make, before Chaney carved me open from ear-to-ear.

Dakota squatted.

"No one lives forever."

The words floated out of the darkness, echoing from the far end of the alley. Chaney's jaw tightened, and he looked down the alley toward the voice as Dakota stood up.

"I have a pistol," the voice continued. "Which one of you wants to be coffin-meat first?"

Chaney straightened his shoulders. I could smell the sweat and whiskey on him. Dakota edged backward, slipping off his spectacles.

"Leave the youngster's money and get."



"I don't think you have a gun," Dakota said. "If you did, you wouldn't be hiding in the dark."

A pistol roared. Dakota cried out and clamped his hand over his other ear, dropping my coins as he did.

"Now they match," the voice said calmly.

Chaney stepped away from me and glanced at Dakota.

"Move, you sons of bitches!" the voice snapped. "Or die where you stand!"

They ran.

A man emerged from the night shadows. It was the faro dealer from the Bella Union.

"Are you all right?"

"I will be, sir." I stooped slowly, my insides aching and my head throbbing, and picked my money. Most of it, anyway.

"Who commanded the forces at the Alamo?" the dealer asked.

"What? Colonel William Barret Travis."

"Who's the President of the United States?"

"Mr. Franklin Pierce."

"Doesn't appear that they scrambled your brains," the dealer said. "Is Pierce really the president?"

I chuckled briefly. It hurt.

"Appreciate your help. I surely do. It was a tight situation."

The dealer strolled to the alley entrance and gazed out.

"Can I buy you dinner?" I asked, rising.

"I believe you can." The dealer turned and tossed his pistol to me.

I caught it one-handed and looked down as a cool breeze whispered through the alley.

The gun was a Navy Colt pistol.



The one Pa had given me.  
The one I'd left in my hotel room.

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