

THE MALTESE FALCON

Credits

Directed by John Huston.

Screenplay by John Huston, based on a novel by Dashiell Hammett.

Produced by Hal Wallis.

The Characters

Sam Spade, a San Francisco private detective.

Miles Archer, his partner.

Effie Perine, their secretary.

Iva Archer, Miles Archer's wife.

Brigid O'Shaughnessy, a.k.a. 'Miss Wonderly', 'Miss Leblanc'.

(Floyd Thursby, a gunman, ex-body guard of a gambler who has disappeared in the Orient, a partner of Brigid.)

Kaspar Gutman, 'the Fat Man', pursuing Brigid and Thursby who have double-crossed him and have taken off with 'the black bird', a fabulously costly statuette.

Joel Cairo, effeminate associate of Gutman.

Wilmer, a homosexual youth, body guard of Gutman.

Sergeant Tom Polhaus, a San Francisco cop.

Lieutenant Dundy, his superior.

District Attorney Bryan, a politically appointed D.A.

Others include, Captain Jacobi, skipper of 'La Paloma'.

Luke, a house detective at the hotel Belvedere.

Frank, a taxi-driver friend of Sam Spade.

SYNOPSIS

1) Titles

Exteriors of San Francisco. The Bay. The Bridge. The City.
Title card superimposed:

"In 1539, the Knight Templars of Malta paid tribute to Charles V of Spain, by sending him a Golden Falcon, encrusted from beak to claw with rarest jewels - but pirates seized the galley carrying this priceless token and the fate of the Maltese Falcon remains a mystery to this day -

2) INT. SPADE'S OFFICE.

EFFIE enters from the outer office to announce that a 'Miss Wonderly' wants to see SPADE.

'Miss Wonderly' (BRIGID) explains that she has been given Spade's name at her hotel as a detective who could help her to find her sister, who has run off with a man called Thursby. BRIGID has located Thursby but he is refusing to disclose the whereabouts of the sister. BRIGID will be meeting Thursby and suggests that SPADE can follow him. She also warns SPADE that Thursby is armed and dangerous.

They are interrupted by the arrival of MILES ARCHER whom SPADE introduces as his partner. 'Miss Wonderly' produces two hundred dollar bills as an advance, and ARCHER, who obviously is attracted to 'Miss Wonderly', offers to handle the case personally.

3) SAN FRANCISCO STREETS.

A street sign: BUSH STREET.

ARCHER is leaning against a wooden railing in a side alley. He reacts in surprise to someone offscreen. A revolver is pointed directly at him. The single shot sends him backward through the fence and his body rolls down a steep slope into a vacant lot.

4) INT. SPADE'S APARTMENT.

At 2a.m., SPADE is wakened by a phone call telling him that his partner has been shot and is dead. Before he gets up to go to the scene of the crime, SPADE phones Effie at her home. He asks her to break the news to Archer's wife and adds, "- and keep her away from me."

5) EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS.

Arriving by taxi, SPADE is recognized by the cop who lets him through the police cordon and into the alleyway.

TOM POLHAUS, a plain clothes cop, is examining the corpse at the bottom of the slope. He climbs up to meet SPADE, shows him the gun, a heavy weapon of English make. Only one shot fired. SPADE re-enacts the position in which Archer must have been standing, facing the man who killed him and falling backward through the broken fence. He declines POLHAUS' invitation to examine the corpse, "You've seen everything that I could." POLHAUS says that Archer's own gun was still tucked away on his hip and that his overcoat was buttoned. He asks SPADE if Archer was working on a case. SPADE says his partner was shadowing a man called Thursby but avoids POLHAUS' attempts to question him further, "Don't crowd me, Tom."

6) INT. A PHONE BOOTH.

SPADE dials the number of 'Miss Wonderly's' hotel, learns that she has checked out, leaving no forwarding address.

7) INT. SPADE'S APARTMENT.

Returning to his rooms, SPADE pours himself a stiff drink. Presently, POLHAUS and LIEUTENANT DUNDY arrive at his door. They refuse his offer of a drink and begin to question him. Has Archer's wife been told and how did she take it? SPADE is non-committal. DUNDY demands to know what kind of gun SPADE carries. SPADE says he doesn't carry one, though there are some at his office. The police are free to search his apartment - providing they have a search warrant, of course!

POLHAUS tries to placate SPADE who obviously resents the LIEUTENANT's manner. DUNDY wants to know why Archer was trailing Thursby - who was their client? SPADE refuses to answer. Aggressive, DUNDY remarks that Spade seems to have been in too much of a hurry even to look at the corpse of his partner. Nor was it Spade who talked to Archer's wife: he told his secretary to do that. And what has he been doing since he left the scene of Archer's death? Where did he go? Has he been anywhere near the hotel where Thursby was staying?

SPADE, angry, swears that he's never seen Thursby. Why? DUNDY explains that Thursby has also been shot - outside his hotel, within easy walking distance of Bush Street. The LIEUTENANT comments that he wouldn't blame Spade if he had killed the man who shot his partner. If he did, he'll get a "square deal and most of the breaks." Thursby seems to have been living alone and has been in town for only a couple of weeks.

8) INSERT

A headline in the San Francisco newspaper reads:-
THURSBY, ARCHER MURDERS LINKED.

9) EXT./INT. SPADE'S OFFICE.

Next morning, SPADE, carrying a copy of the paper, arrives at his office.

The exhausted EFFIE indicates his inner office, "She's inside."

SPADE enters, discovering IVA ARCHER in full mourning, she moves to embrace him in a manner that indicates that they have been lovers. In great distress, she asks, "Sam, did you kill him?" Seeing SPADE's reaction, she dissolves in tears, begging him, "Be kind to me!"

SPADE stares at her. Sarcastic, he echoes her. "You killed my husband, Sam - Be kind to me!" But then, with more tolerance, he warns IVA that she shouldn't have come to him. When she pleads, "You'll come soon?" he promises, not too convincingly, "As soon as I can."

9) Continued:

When IVA has left, EFFIE joins her boss. SPADE reports, "She thinks I shot Miles. The cops think I shot Thursby. Who do you think I shot?"

EFFIE obviously has little liking for Iva. Is Spade going to marry her? "Don't be silly," says SPADE. Relieved, EFFIE offers the information that when her husband was killed Mrs. Archer was not at her home. When EFFIE went to their apartment, she was kept waiting while Iva undressed, but her clothes, dropped on a chair, were still warm: her hat and overcoat were underneath her slip. SPADE, though interested, assures EFFIE that he doesn't believe Iva could have killed her husband.

They are interrupted by a phone call. It is from 'Miss Wonderly' who has moved to a new hotel. She is registered as 'Miss Leblanc' and wants SPADE to come to her at once.

10) INT. A ROOM AT THE CORONET APARTMENTS.

As SPADE enters, 'Miss Wonderly' is still unpacking. She is nervous. She admits that Wonderly is not her real name: it's Brigid O'Shaughnessy. She also has another confession: the story that she told to Spade and Archer was not entirely true.

SPADE cheerfully assures her that they didn't believe her: it was her two hundred dollars that they believed.

BRIGID seems worried that SPADE could think her responsible for Archer's death. SPADE does not. "Miles knew what he was doing. He had ten thousand insurance, no children and a wife that didn't like him."

SPADE is concerned with more immediate problems, his own: the police are after him and he has to give them some answers.

BRIGID panics. Has SPADE told the police about her? Is it necessary that he do so? She seems to be near a state of collapse as she begs his help, "I need help so badly! I've no right to ask you. I know I haven't, but I do ask you to help me..."

SPADE studies her with admiration, "You don't need much of anybody's help! You're good! It's chiefly in your eyes, I think, and that throb you get in your voice..."

BRIGID is chastened. But she pleads that the lie may have been in the way that she said it, the danger is real enough. Physical danger, he asks? "I'm not heroic," she assures him, "I don't think there's anything worse than death."

Reluctantly, SPADE promises to continue his support. But he wants more money. If the police have to be stalled, he needs advice of a lawyer. How much cash does she have? He takes the five hundred dollars that she produces, answering her protest that she has to keep some to live on with the suggestion that she hock some of the furs or jewelry that he has seen her unpacking. SPADE also insists on taking a key to her hotel room.

11) INT. SPADE'S OFFICE.

SPADE makes a phone call to his lawyer. He may have to tell the coroner to go to blazes. Will he be able to get away with it and for how long?

During this, EFFIE appears, announcing a new visitor. The card that she offers to SPADE seems to be scented.

Ushered in, JOEL CAIRO is revealed as a dapper little man with a diffident and effeminate manner. After offering his condolences for the death of Spade's partner, he comes to the point. He has a proposition: he is prepared to offer SPADE the sum of five thousand dollars for help in the recovery of 'an ornament, a statuette, the black figure of a bird.'

SPADE is clearly intrigued. Before asking more information, SPADE talks to Effie on the intercom, telling her that she is free to go home as soon as she has locked up. Then he discovers that CAIRO is pointing a small but lethal-looking pistol at him.

More astonished than alarmed, SPADE follows CAIRO's instructions, submits as the little man starts to search him for weapons. But then, knocks the gun out of CAIRO's hand, seizes him and with one punch knocks the little man senseless.

Taking his time, SPADE searches his visitor. A wallet - which contains nothing like five thousand dollars. Three passports, one Greek, one French and one British. A ticket for tonight's performance at a San Francisco theater. SPADE waits for CAIRO to regain consciousness.

Recovering, CAIRO is less apologetic for his behavior than he is annoyed over the damage to his silk shirt. They resume their discussion of a deal. CAIRO insists that his offer was genuine: he may not have the money on him, but he can get it. On the other hand, he has no desire to explain more about 'the black bird'. If Spade doesn't know as much as Cairo does there is no advantage to Cairo in an exchange of confidences. CAIRO is plaintive as he asks that his gun be returned to him.

But as soon as it is put in his hand, he points it at SPADE again. He must insist on resuming the search of the office. SPADE is too much amused to offer any objection...

12) EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS.

Leaving his offices, SPADE senses that he is being followed. Trailing him is a youth with a hat pulled down over his eyes and hands thrust into the pockets of an oversize coat (WILMER). SPADE gets into a taxi. The youth does likewise. SPADE instructs the cab driver to make some sharp turns, then gets out and goes to the entrance of a very large block of apartments. Consulting the panel of buttons, SPADE presses half a dozen of them simultaneously. Inside, he makes his way downstairs to the basement where he escapes via the back entrance.

13) INT. BRIGID'S HOTEL ROOMS.

SPADE uses her key to let himself into BRIGID's room. He tells her that, with luck, he won't have to expose her to the police. He reports that he has had a visit from Joel Cairo who offered five thousand dollars if SPADE can recover 'the black bird'.

Mention of Cairo frightens BRIGID again. She admits that five thousand dollars is more than she could ever offer if she has to bid for Spade's loyalty. SPADE is sarcastic; hasn't she already tried to buy his loyalty with money and nothing else? Pathetically, but with obvious sexual invitation, BRIGID asks, "What else is there I can buy you with?"

Stung, SPADE responds by kissing her on the mouth - but then warning her that she still needs to convince him that she knows what she is doing. He needs more information. When she begs for more time, explaining that she needs to talk to Joel Cairo first, SPADE reaches for her phone. He calls Cairo's hotel to leave a message: they will meet Cairo at Spade's apartment later that evening...

14) EXT. SPADE'S APARTMENT BUILDING.

SPADE and BRIGID arrive by taxi.

From a parked car on the other side of the road IVA ARCHER watches them.

15) INT. SPADE'S APARTMENT.

As they enter his rooms, SPADE moves to his window, looks out through the curtains. In the street below there is another watcher, the youth in the overcoat.

When CAIRO is admitted, he also warns SPADE that there is a boy outside who seems to be watching the house. BRIGID is alarmed. What boy? SPADE explains that the boy has been tailing him all day but that BRIGID need not worry: Spade made sure that he did not follow him to her hotel.

BRIGID and CAIRO accompany SPADE to an inner room. They are very wary of each other, uncomfortable at having to conduct their negotiations in front of the detective. A neutral observer, SPADE watches them. BRIGID tells CAIRO that she has decided that she is willing to sell the falcon: she is afraid now - "after what happened to Floyd." "What did happen to Floyd?", asks CAIRO. With a glance at SPADE, BRIGID hesitates, says "The fat man." CAIRO reacts, "The fat man? Is he here?"

There is also, suggests BRIGID cryptically, 'the boy outside'. Maliciously, she suggests that it is up to Cairo to get around him - "as you did the one in Istanbul". This seems to enrage CAIRO who starts a retort, "You mean the one you couldn't get to come to -", BRIGID slaps his face before he can go on. CAIRO, livid, is reaching for his gun as SPADE jumps on him, disarms him, and slaps his face a second time. BRIGID seizes the gun. A ring on the apartment doorbell brings them all abruptly to their senses.

15) Continued:

SPADE warns them to keep quiet as he goes out into the hall, closing the door on them. He answers the front door. LIEUTENANT DUNDY and TOM POLHAUS are in the corridor: SPADE makes no move to invite them to enter.

Irritated at this, DUNDY warns SPADE that he would be wise to cooperate. There has been talk that Spade is going around with Archer's wife. SPADE and DUNDY are still in heated argument when there is a cry from inside the apartment - Cairo's voice calling for help. Grimly, DUNDY seizes this excuse to invade Spade's rooms.

BRIGID is holding the gun on the hysterical CAIRO. CAIRO's face is bleeding. He appeals to DUNDY, claiming that Spade and the girl have been assaulting him. DUNDY orders POLHAUS to take them all into custody. SPADE intervenes: it can all be explained. SPADE introduces BRIGID as an employee, an operative he has just hired. Mr. CAIRO is a client who hired them to recover something that is said to have been in the possession of Floyd Thursby when he was killed. Spade and Miss O'Shaughnessy have been questioning Mr. Cairo - perhaps a little too roughly - but does Mr. Cairo really want to press charges? SPADE challenges the little man, "Go ahead, Cairo. Tell him you'll do it. Then we'll swear out a complaint against you and he'll have the lot of us."

CAIRO hesitates. But DUNDY, unimpressed, says, "Get your hats." SPADE abruptly changes his tactics. He begins to laugh. "Don't you know when you're being kidded?", he demands of DUNDY. It is all a practical joke, promises SPADE, a charade for the benefit of the police. Uneasily, CAIRO and BRIGID recognize SPADE's maneuver and offer corroboration of the unlikely explanation. Recognizing the conspiracy, DUNDY unwisely loses his temper. He strikes SPADE. For a split second the scene is very ugly - but POLHAUS is able to get between the two men. DUNDY realizes that he has gone too far. SPADE, restrained by POLHAUS, warns POLHAUS, "Get him out o' here! I've had enough of this!" CAIRO sees the chance to leave with the police.

SPADE and BRIGID are left alone. Now that she's talked to Cairo, suggests SPADE, it's time she talked to him.

BRIGID prevaricates: it's time for her to leave. SPADE reminds her that there is still the Youth outside, the one who has been trailing her.

BRIGID is trapped. With considerable reluctance, and while SPADE makes coffee, she begins to tell the story that began in the Balkans, in Marmora. She saw 'the falcon' only once. They didn't tell her why it was important. They offered her five hundred dollars if she would help them get it away from the man who had it. But then Thursby found out that Cairo planned to double-cross them and take the falcon for himself - so they decided to do the same thing to him. By the time she arrived in San Francisco, however, she realized that Thursby had no intention of sharing with her either...

15) Continued:

SPADE listens. He still doesn't believe her: she's still lying. BRIGID, exhausted, admits that she's a liar. She's always been a liar. "Well, don't brag about it!" he suggests. He reminds her that they've got all night.

BRIGID's exhaustion seems genuine. "Oh, I'm - I'm so tired of lying and making up lies. Not knowing what's a lie and what's the truth." She leans back on the couch. SPADE studies her, stoops to kiss her...

Outside the apartment, the youth in the overcoat, WILMER, is still waiting and watching.

16) INT. LOBBY OF THE HOTEL BELVEDERE.

Insert: the sign HOTEL BELVEDERE.

SPADE enters the lobby, puts a call through to the apartment of Joel Cairo. No answer.

SPADE walks across the lobby to a figure in an overcoat, his face hidden by a newspaper, sits in an adjacent chair and announces that he wants to talk to Cairo. "You're gonna have to talk to me before you're through, sonny. Some of you will and you can tell the fat man I said so," he adds.

WILMER replies in obscenities. SPADE walks away, returns in the company of the hotel detective, LUKE, obviously a friend of SPADE's. "Why," asks SPADE, "does the hotel permit cheap gunmen to hang around the lobby with their heaters bulging in their clothes?"

WILMER reacts with suppressed ferocity. Leaving, he warns the two detectives, "I won't forget you guys."

SPADE is still with LUKE when he catches sight of JOEL CAIRO returning to his hotel. SPADE intercepts. CAIRO is in no state to talk to the detective: he has been up all night under police interrogation, repeating the unconvincing story that SPADE invented. He has told the police nothing of consequence. SPADE lets him go to his room.

17) INT. SPADE'S OFFICE.

SPADE enters his office while EFFIE is on the phone to Mrs. Archer. He indicates that he doesn't want to talk to the widow. EFFIE reports that Miss O'Shaughnessy is waiting for him in the inner office. Also that the office of the District Attorney phoned with the message that Bryan wants to see him. Also, there is another call, from a Mr. Gutman who has received SPADE's message and will phone again. "Gutman?", comments SPADE, pleased.

He goes in to his inner office to meet BRIGID. She is in a new state of panic: somebody has been searching her rooms. WILMER must have found out where she has been hiding. SPADE promises her that this is not likely. But it could be Cairo. It means, in any event, that they had better find another place for her to stay.

17) Continued:

SPADE returns to EFFIE. Does she feel inclined to help Miss O'Shaughnessy?: the girl may be in danger. Could Effie and her mother put her up in their apartment for a little while? Effie could explain to her mother that Brigid is a surprise witness who has to be kept under cover till the last moment.

EFFIE seems to have taken a liking to Brigid, and willingly agrees. As the two women leave, SPADE returns to his desk. He makes a call to Police Headquarters, promises that he will meet the D.A. later in the day.

While he is on the phone, IVA ARCHER reappears. Explaining that when she saw Spade with another woman last night she was wild with jealousy, IVA admits that she made a phone call to the police, an anonymous call, suggesting that they go to Spade's apartment. SPADE warns her that she had better prepare herself for police questioning. Where was she at the time Miles was shot? At home, she protests. SPADE shakes his head, "No. But if that's your story it's all right by me."

He hustles her out in time to answer the phone when it rings. It is the call he has been hoping for. SPADE promises that he will be at Mr. Gutman's hotel within fifteen minutes...

18) INT. GUTMAN'S HOTEL.

The door of the hotel room is opened by WILMER who watches SPADE with silent venom.

MR. GUTMAN, in contrast, is effusive in his welcome. He is a man of middle age and enormous girth, immaculate in a tail coat, gold watch chain looped on his huge waistcoat. Pouring a very big drink for SPADE, he notes with approval that Spade doesn't object to its size, "You begin well, sir. I distrust a man who says 'when'. He's got to be careful not to drink too much. It's because he's not to be trusted when he does. Here's to plain speaking and clear understanding

GUTMAN's courtesies do not conceal an undercurrent of menace. SPADE comes directly to the point, "Let's talk about the black bird." Beaming, GUTMAN congratulates SPADE on his bluntness, but explains that first he must know who it is that Spade represents. Miss O'Shaughnessy? Or perhaps Joel Cairo? It must be one or the other. SPADE shakes his head: perhaps not. "There's me," he reminds the fat man.

GUTMAN again shakes with laughter, "I do like a man who tells you right off he's lookin' out for himself. Don't we all? I don't trust a man who says he's not!"

SPADE manages to steer the discussion back to the black bird. GUTMAN asks if SPADE has any idea of its value. "You tell me what it is," suggests the detective, "and I'll figure the profit."

18) Continued:

GUTMAN is intrigued: then Spade doesn't know what it is?

"Oh, I know what it's supposed to look like," SPADE explains, "and I know the value, in human life, you people put on it. Cairo offered ten thousand for it." GUTMAN is not impressed. He hints to SPADE that the object is worth much more. Could it be that neither Joel Cairo, nor Miss O'Shaughnessy, really know what the bird is? "If they don't know, I'm the only one in the whole wide, sweet world who does."

"Swell! When you've told me, that'll make two of us," suggests SPADE, "You know what it is. I know where it is. That's why I'm here."

GUTMAN frowns. "Well, sir, where is it? You see, I must tell you what I know, but you won't tell me what you know. It's hardly equitable, sir. No, no. I don't think we can do business along those lines."

Uncharacteristically, SPADE seems suddenly to lose his temper. Shouting, he tells GUTMAN that he can get along without them. As the raised voices bring WILMER back into the room, SPADE wheels on him, "And another thing. Keep that gunsel out of my way while you're makin' up your mind. I'll kill 'im, if yuh don't. I'll kill 'im." SPADE makes for the door, still shouting, "Think it over. You've got till five o'clock. Then you're either in, or out - for keeps!"

SPADE slams the door. But as he walks off towards the elevators, his expression is one of delight and satisfaction. Glancing down at his hands, he notes that they are shaking. He goes into the elevator.

As the elevator doors close, the one next to it arrives and out of it comes JOEL CAIRO. He is looking at a newspaper as he walks off down the corridor towards Gutman's rooms.

19) INT. OFFICE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY BRYAN.

The D.A. is a silver-haired gentleman with the pompous manner of a politician.

"Who killed Thursby?" he wants to know.

"I don't know," says SPADE sitting opposite him on the other side of the desk. "Perhaps you don't," admits the D.A., "but you could make an excellent guess."

SPADE grins, glances at the two other men who are in the room, "Mrs. Spade didn't raise any children dippy enough to make guesses in front of a district attorney, an assistant district attorney and a stenographer."

The D.A. reminds SPADE that, as a sworn officer of the law, twenty four hours a day, he has the right to insist that Spade cannot withhold from him evidence of crime - except, of course, on constitutional grounds.

19) Continued:

SPADE reacts vigorously to the implied threat. Angry, he says that both the D.A. and the police have as much as accused Spade of being mixed up in the other night's murders. Spade has had trouble with them before, and his best chance of clearing himself is by bringing in the murderers on his own and staying as far away from the D.A. and the police as he can - "because you'd only gum up the works". In the middle of this rapid-fire tirade, SPADE breaks off to ask the male stenographer, "You getting this all right, son, or am I goin' too fast for yuh?" Assured by the astonished stenographer that it is all going on the record, SPADE reaches for his hat, declares that he is tired of being called names by every crack-pot on the city payroll. If they want to see him they better pinch him or subpoena him or something and Spade will come with his lawyer. "I'll see you at the inquest - maybe!", he retorts as he is closing the door.

20) EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET.

Outside his office, SPADE finds WILMER waiting in his doorway. "Come on. He wants to see you," says WILMER.

SPADE looks pleased. "Well, I didn't expect you till five twenty-five. I hope I haven't kept you waiting."

WILMER is sullen, his hands stuck into the side pockets of the overcoat. "Keep on ridin' me. They're gonna be pickin' iron out o' your liver!". SPADE grins back at him, "The cheaper the crook, the gaudier the patter, huh? Well, let's go."

21) INT. GUTMAN'S HOTEL.

Coming out of the elevator, SPADE leads the way down the corridor towards Gutman's room. As they approach the door, however, he slows down to let WILMER go ahead - as if to let him open the door - and, with a very sudden move, puts both arms round the boy to drag the overcoat back and down. WILMER's arms are caught in it. SPADE's hands thrust downwards into the pockets and reappear with two heavy pistols. Releasing him, SPADE invites WILMER to press the doorbell button, "Come on. This'll put you in solid with your boss."

GUTMAN appears, wearing a silk dressing gown. SPADE passes the guns to him, "Here. You shouldn't let him go around with those on 'im. He might get himself hurt. A crippled newsie took 'em away from him. I made him give 'em back."

GUTMAN is highly amused. Returning the weapons to WILMER, he dismisses him, and is once again the gracious host, offering SPADE a cigar, pouring drinks again and relaxing as they sit down to resume the interrupted discussion.

GUTMAN seems to have changed his mind about the sharing of information about 'the black bird'. While SPADE smokes the cigar, drinks and listens, GUTMAN expands on the story that he promises should amaze the detective.

21) Continued:

It is the tale of 'the Maltese Falcon'. Originally it was designed as a tribute offered to the Emperor Charles the Fifth of Spain by the fabulously wealthy Knights of Rhodes. Shaped like a falcon, it is made of gold and encrusted with the most precious jewels from the Crusader's treasury. Intercepted by pirates before it reached the Emperor, it never reached Spain. Its value disguised by a coat of black enamel, it was sold to a succession of private owners, none of them aware of its history until it fell into the hands of a Greek dealer, living in Paris. An antiquarian, the Greek guessed at its origins, removed some of the black paint and discovered the secret, but then re-enamelled it while he embarked on further research. His investigations came to the ears of Gutman who left at once for Paris but arrived too late. The Greek was murdered, his establishment burglarized and the statuette once more vanished.

For the next seventeen years, reports GUTMAN, the hunt continued. Finally, GUTMAN learned that the statue was owned by a Russian living in a suburb of Istanbul, "He didn't know a thing about it. It was nothing but a black enamelled figure to him, but his natural contrariness kept him from selling it to me. So-" GUTMAN hesitates, "I sent him some - er - agents to get it..."

GUTMAN replenishes SPADE's glass, watching him as he continues the tale.

"Well, sir, they got it and I haven't got it, but I'm going to get it." GUTMAN takes a seat beside SPADE on the sofa, pats his knee. Still watching SPADE, he asks, "How soon can you, er, or how soon are you willing to produce the falcon?"

"A couple of days," suggests SPADE.

SPADE studies his cigar as if he didn't like the taste of it. GUTMAN is continuing to discuss possible financial arrangements but SPADE finds some difficulty in concentrating. He sets down his glass very carefully, gets to his feet. His balance very uncertain.

From the next room, WILMER re-enters. He moves quickly behind the detective and trips him. SPADE falls full length to the floor. As GUTMAN watches, WILMER steps over SPADE's body and aims a vicious kick at his head.

JOEL CAIRO has also entered from the other room. He pauses to look down at the unconscious man, then joins GUTMAN who has changed out of his dressing gown and is putting on a bowler hat.

Silently, the three men leave the apartment.

22) INT. GUTMAN'S HOTEL ROOM.

The same scene. Now the room is in darkness, no light coming from the windows.

Eventually, SPADE stirs, gets to his feet.

22) Continued:

In the bathroom mirror he studies a horrendous bruise on the side of his forehead. He bathes it, moves out into the other room to switch on a lamp and make a phone call to Effie at her home.

He asks to talk to Miss O'Shaughnessy, is told that she's not there. "She didn't show up?", SPADE winces.

After a moment he begins a search of the apartment. He finds nothing that interests him. Presently, however, he notices a newspaper discarded in the wastepaper basket. Turning its pages, he notices the column which reports on the arrival of shipping in the port of San Francisco. An item has been circled in pencil: 5:35 P.M. - La Paloma from Hong Kong.

23) EXT. DOCKS.

Clouds of smoke. A Fireman with a hose is climbing up the ladder at the side of the ship on which is its name: LA PALOMA.

SPADE joins a Reporter who is questioning the SHIP's MATE. The fire seems to have started in the hold aft. Nobody has been injured. Only the harbor watch was aboard.

SPADE intervenes to explain that someone he knows went aboard this afternoon. He hasn't seen her since. He's worried. The MATE repeats that noone has been injured, if she came aboard she got off all right...

24) INT. SPADE'S OFFICE.

EFFIE has returned to SPADE's office. She listens to his report on the visit to Gutman and the fire at the docks as she treats the bruise to his head. She finds the tale about the bird thrilling: SPADE thinks it may also be ridiculous...

But they are startled by sounds in the outer office.

A TALL MAN has come in from the corridor, moving through the half open door to Spade's inner office. He is carrying something heavy and seems ill, unable to speak. SPADE reaches to support him as the stranger staggers, drops at SPADE's feet a parcel wrapped in newspaper. The MAN collapses on the sofa. EFFIE, terrified, watches as SPADE unbuttons the coat and shirt - both soaked in blood.

The MAN is dead. SPADE orders EFFIE to lock the door. Seeing that she is on the point of passing out and taking her by the shoulders to shake her into self-control. Then he reacts to the bundle on the floor. He lifts it onto the desk, "We've got it, angel, we've got it!", he tells the quivering girl.

24) Continued:

As the telephone rings, EFFIE takes it automatically. We hear a female voice on the other end, a hysterical voice. EFFIE is scribbling an address as the phone call is abruptly cut off at the other end. It was Miss O'Shaunessy's voice. EFFIE explains in panic. "She wants you! She's in danger!"

"Where is she?" demands SPADE. EFFIE consults the address, gives it to SPADE, begging him to hurry.

As he finds his coat, SPADE gives her rapid instructions. As soon as he has left, EFFIE is to phone the police. She is to tell them everything that happened, but say that it was Spade who took the phone call. "And forget about this thing. Tell 'em how it happened, but without the bundle."

EFFIE is staring at the corpse. Does Spade know who he is?

"Yeh! He's Captain Jacoby, master of the La Paloma."

25) INT. BUS TERMINAL.

SPADE carries the bundle to the window of the Left Luggage Office. He checks it in, takes the receipt and borrows a pencil from the Clerk. Finding an envelope, he puts the receipt inside, addresses it to a Box Number, then walks over to drop the envelope in a Post Office Box.

26) EXT. STREET.

Outside, SPADE searches among the ranks of taxis until he finds a driver whom he seems to know. Asking if the man has plenty of gas, he gives him the address. It seems to be a ride of some distance.

When the place is reached it proves to be utterly deserted. The number is a vacant lot. "Bum steer, Mr. Spade?" asks the Driver. SPADE nods, asks to be taken to a phone booth.

From it, he phones Effie again, asks if she is sure that it was the voice of Miss O'Shaughnessy on the phone. Effie, it seems, has carried out his instructions in her report to the police. SPADE urges her to go home and rest. He's going to go home himself...

27) EXT. SPADE'S APARTMENT.

When the Driver has dropped him back outside the entrance to his apartment, however, BRIGID emerges from another doorway nearby. Embracing him, she seems to be near exhaustion. She has been hiding in the doorway till he returned. She promises that she will be all right as soon as she can get some place to lie down...

28) INT. SPADE'S APARTMENT.

SPADE is still supporting her as he opens his front door. He reaches in to switch on the light.

28) Continued:

It reveals that he already has some other guests. They are all there: WILMER, with drawn gun, is behind the door. GUTMAN, also holding a gun, is in the armchair. CAIRO is at his side.

BRIGID clings to SPADE's arm. He leads her to the sofa and helps her to sit. GUTMAN, behaving as if he were the host in Spade's house, suggests that they all sit down and talk. WILMER moves to SPADE as if to search him. SPADE challenges the boy savagely: "Take your paws off or I'll make you use that gun. Ask your boss if he wants me shot up before we talk."

SPADE confronts the fat man: are they ready to make first payment on the falcon? GUTMAN produces an envelope, hands it to SPADE who examines its contents. Ten new thousand dollar bills. SPADE looks disappointed: in earlier talk much larger sums were mentioned. True, admits GUTMAN, but now there are more people to be taken care of.

"Well, that's as may be," remarks SPADE. "But I've got the falcon."

CAIRO still has his small pistol pointed at the detective, "I shouldn't think it would be necessary to remind you, Mr. Spade, that you may have the falcon, but we certainly have you."

SPADE dismisses the point. There's something else to discuss first, "We've got a fall guy. The police have gotta have a victim. Somebody to pin those three murders on!"

"Three?", protests CAIRO, "There are only two, because Thursby certainly killed your partner." "Alright, two," concedes SPADE. "I've got to find someone, a victim when the time comes. If I don't, I'll be it!" SPADE advances towards WILMER who is standing in the background, "Let's give them the guns. He actually did shoot Thursby and Jacoby, didn't he? Anyway, he's made to order for the part. Look at him! Let's give him to them."

There is a moment of chill silence. Then GUTMAN, with rather too much amusement, protests that the idea is quite preposterous, "But, my dear man, can't you see that if I even for a moment thought of doing such a thing - that's ridiculous. I feel towards Wilmer, here, exactly as if he were my own son. Really, I do. But if I even for a moment thought of doing what you propose, what in the world would keep Wilmer from telling the police every last detail about the falcon and all of us?"

"Let him talk his head off. I guarantee you nobody'll do anything about it," promises SPADE. He turns back to BRIGID on the sofa, sitting down beside her to ask how she is feeling. BRIGID is stiff with fear, whispers to him to be careful. GUTMAN, with his eye on WILMER, invites SPADE to elaborate, "If you're really serious about this, the least we can do in common politeness is to hear you out. Now, how would you be able to fix it - ", GUTMAN chortles, "-so that Wilmer couldn't do us any harm?"

28) Continued:

"I can show Bryan, our district attorney, that if he goes around tryin' to collect everybody he's gonna have a tangled case. But if he sticks to Wilmer here, he can get a conviction standing on his head."

SPADE's needling is having its effect. WILMER has a manic look. He moves towards SPADE, pistol clenched in the hand that hangs at his side, "Get up on your feet! I've taken all the riding from you I'm gonna take. Get up and shoot it out!"

SPADE merely laughs at the boy, "Young wild west!" SPADE advises GUTMAN, "Maybe you'd better tell him that shootin' me before you get your hands on the falcon's gonna be bad for business." GUTMAN hastily intervenes to placate WILMER who backs off while the fat man appeals to SPADE, "Your plan is, er, not at all satisfactory, sir. Let's not say anything more about it."

"All right. I've got another suggestion," offers SPADE, "It may not be as good as the first one, but it's better than nothing." He points to the little man who is standing at GUTMAN's elbow, "Give them Cairo."

"And suppose we give them you or Miss O'Shaughnessy!" shrieks CAIRO, "How about that?"

SPADE turns back towards BRIGID, "As for Miss O'Shaughnessy, if you think she can be rigged for the part, I'm perfectly willing to discuss it with you." "You seem to forget you're not in a position at all to insist upon anything," cries CAIRO. GUTMAN supports this, but SPADE returns to the argument, "If you kill me, how are you going to get the bird? And if I know you can't afford to kill me how are you going to scare me into giving it to you?" There are, SPADE concedes, means of persuasion besides killing and threatening to kill - that's true. But they're none of them any good unless the threat of death is behind them. He presses the point, "If you start something, I'll make it a matter of you having to kill me or call it off...And the trick from my angle is to make my play strong enough to tie you up, but not make you mad enough to bump me off against your better judgment."

GUTMAN is clearly impressed. CAIRO leans close to whisper something in the ear of the fat man.

SPADE grins at WILMER, "Six, two and even they're selling you out, sonny," he suggests, and adds to GUTMAN, "I hope you're not letting yourself be influenced by the guns these pocket edition desperadoes are waving around. Because I've practiced taking guns away from these boys before - so we'll have no trouble there. Wilmer, here, is - "

28) Continued:

SPADE breaks off because WILMER has finally lost control and is moving past GUTMAN, raising the pistol to shoot SPADE. SPADE, CAIRO and GUTMAN all react at once. While CAIRO tries to seize the boy from behind, GUTMAN grabs at WILMER's wrist. SPADE punches WILMER on the jaw, knocking him out. As WILMER's gun falls to the floor, BRIGID swiftly moves to retrieve it. SPADE turns back on her, takes it from her hand as he comments, "There's our fall guy. Now either you'll say yes right away now or I'll turn the falcon and the whole lot of you in."

GUTMAN is not happy. But SPADE is now armed. Reluctantly, GUTMAN accepts the situation, "You can have him."

SPADE is in control. He explains that he won't be able to get the falcon till daylight. In the meanwhile, he suggests it might be best if none of them got out of each other's sight until the business is transacted. In exchange for the ten thousand which Miss O'Shaughnessy is holding in the envelope, plus Wilmer, SPADE will give them the falcon and an hour or so of grace. But he returns to the question of who killed Thursby, and why and where was Captain Jacoby shot. "You see, I've got to know all that happened so that I can be sure the parts that don't fit are covered up!"

Deflated, GUTMAN tells the story. Thursby was Miss O'Shaughnessy's ally. They tried to make a deal with him, but he was quite determinedly loyal to her. So, in the hopes that it might persuade Miss O'Shaughnessy to patch up her differences with them regarding the falcon, they sent Wilmer to follow Thursby back to his hotel and Wilmer did what he did. Captain Jacoby, complains GUTMAN was entirely Miss O'Shaughnessy's fault. Mr. Cairo, a man of nice judgment, recognized that the advantage of pooling forces and it was Cairo who remembered what he had heard in Hong Kong where Jacoby and Miss O'Shaughnessy had been seen together, so when he saw in the paper the notice of the arrival of La Paloma, he put two and two together and guessed the truth: she'd given the bird to Jacoby to bring to San Francisco for her. At this point there was no place for Spade in their plans...

"Mr. Cairo and Wilmer and I went to call on Captain Jacoby. We were lucky enough to arrive while Miss O'Shaughnessy was there. In many ways the conference was difficult, but we finally persuaded Miss O'Shaughnessy to come to terms - or so we thought." GUTMAN studies BRIGID with grudging respect, "We then left the boat and set out for my hotel, where I was to pay Miss O'Shaughnessy and receive the bird. Well, sir, we mere men should have known better. En route, she, Captain Jacoby and the falcon slipped completely through our fingers. It was nicely done, sir. Indeed it was."

And they touched off the boat before they left, suggests SPADE? "Not intentionally," says GUTMAN, "though, I dare say we, or Wilmer at least, were responsible for the fire. While the rest of us were talking in the cabin, Wilmer went about the boat trying to find the falcon. No doubt he was careless with matches."

28) Continued:

"About the shooting," insists SPADE. GUTMAN continues, "We caught up with Miss O'Shaughnessy and Jacoby at her apartment. I sent Wilmer downstairs to cover the escape before ringing the bell. And sure enough, while she was asking us who we were through the door and we were telling her, we heard a window go up. Wilmer shot Jacoby as he was coming down the fire escape: shot him more than once, but Jacoby was too tough to fall or drop the falcon. He climbed down the rest of the way, knocked Wilmer over, and ran off."

GUTMAN looks reproachfully at BRIGID who is avoiding their eyes. GUTMAN continues, "We persuaded, that is the word, sir - we, er, persuaded Miss O'Shaughnessy to tell us where she had Captain Jacoby take the falcon. And we, er, futher persuaded her to phone your office, in an attempt to draw you away before Jacoby got there, but unfortunately for us it had taken us too long to persuade Miss O'Shaughnessy. And you -"

WILMER is recovering consciousness. GUTMAN breaks off to return to the boy. Sitting up, WILMER looks at GUTMAN. At CAIRO. At SPADE. And at BRIGID. In each of their faces he reads the same information. GUTMAN sounds genuinely regretful, "Well, Wilmer, I'm sorry indeed to lose you, but I want you to know I couldn't be fonder of you if you were my own son. Well, if you lose a son it's possible to get another. There's only one Maltese Falcon."

SPADE suggests that BRIGID go into the kitchen to make some coffee. GUTMAN stops her before she disappears: would it be a good idea if she left the envelope with them. She hands it to him. GUTMAN opens it to examine the money, "Business should be transacted in a business-like manner," he suggests, "For instance, there are only nine bills here now." He looks at SPADE, "There were ten when I handed them to you, as you very well know."

A silence. SPADE looks at BRIGID. She shakes her head. After a moment, SPADE confronts GUTMAN, "You palmed it?"

GUTMAN stares at him but SPADE repeats, "Yes. Do you want to say so, or do you want to stand for a frisk?"

There is a tense moment before GUTMAN giggles, concedes, "Yes, sir, that I did." He extracts the crumpled note from his waistcoat pocket, "I must have my little joke now and then. I was curious to know what you would do in a situation of this sort. I must say you passed the test with flying colors."

SPADE accepts the note, continues to insist that he ought to have more money but finally accepts the fat man's assurance that it is all that he can raise. GUTMAN does contribute a word of advice, however. Glancing towards the kitchen where Brigid has retired to make coffee, he whispers to SPADE that, if he plans on giving her money and doesn't give her as much as she thinks she ought to have, SPADE should be careful. "Dangers?" asks SPADE. "Very," says GUTMAN.

28) Continued:

Daylight is coming through the window now. SPADE makes a phone call to Effie, gives her instructions: she is to go to the Post Office Box, retrieve the ticket, take it to the Left Luggage office and bring the parcel to his apartment...

Later

EFFIE rings the doorbell, hands over the heavy object that is wrapped in tattered newspaper. When she has gone, the group gathers silently round the table to watch GUTMAN. He uncovers the thing which we now see clearly for the first time. It is a squat black statuette in the shape of a falcon, painted dull black. GUTMAN examines it, turns it in his hands. In a moment, he produces a small penknife and scratches at the paint - but presently he begins to grow tense. Jabbing at the object, he has become hysterical, "It's a fake! It's a phoney! It's lead! It's lead! It's a fake!"

SPADE turns fiercely on BRIGID, "All right. You've had your little joke. Now tell us about it." But BRIGID is in the same state of distress, "No, Sam! No! That's the one I got from Kermidov. I swear it." And CAIRO, supporting her, has broken into tears of rage, screaming at GUTMAN, "You! It's you who bungled it! You and your stupid attempt to buy it! Kermidov found out how valuable it was! No wonder we had such an easy time stealing it! You - you imbecile! You bloated idiot! You stupid fat-head, you!"

Gradually, the fat man recovers his composure, addresses SPADE and the others, "Well, sir, what do you suggest, we stand here and shed tears and call each other names or shall we go to Istambul?"

While SPADE considers the invitation, he notices that one of their number is not present: Wilmer is absent - and the door that leads to a back entrance to the suite is ajar.

SPADE sneers at them, "A swell lot of thieves." But GUTMAN is appealing to him, "I must ask you for the return of the envelope." SPADE protests that he has held up his end but, as GUTMAN puts on his bowler hat, the fat man reveals that, under it, he has a gun levelled at SPADE.

SPADE compromises: he extracts one bill as he hands over the rest, "This'll take care of my time and expenses."

GUTMAN invites SPADE to accompany them to Istambul, but on being refused, bids him a respectful goodbye. "The shortest farewells are the best." To BRIGID, he makes a present of "the Rara Avis on the table as a little memento."

As CAIRO follows GUTMAN out and SPADE is left with BRIGID, he phones the police, asks for Sergeant Polhaus and makes a swift report, "Here it is: Jacoby and Thursby were killed by a man named Wilmer Cook...Yeh. He's about twenty years ols, five foot six, wearing a gray overcoat. He's working

28) Continued:

for a man named Kasper...Gutman...Naa. You can't miss Gutman. He must weigh three hundred pounds. That fella Cairo's in with him, too. And they've just left here for the Alexandria Hotel but you'll have to move fast. They're blowing town. Now, watch yourself when you go up against the kid...Yes, that's right. Very. Well, good luck, Tom."

BRIGID, watching SPADE, is unprepared for the aggression with which he turns on her as he hangs up, "Now, they'll talk when they're nailed about us. We're sitting on dynamite. We've got only minutes to get set for the police. Now give me all of it, fast!" SPADE seizes her by the shoulders, demands, "When you first came to my office, why did you want Thursby shadowed?"

"I told you, Sam. I thought he was betraying me and I wanted to find out."

"That's a lie! You had Thursby hooked and you knew it, and you wanted to get rid of him before Jacoby came with the loot so you wouldn't have to split it with him."

BRIGID hesitates, admits, "I thought if he knew someone was following him, he'd be frightened into going away."

SPADE shakes his head, "Miles wasn't clumsy enough to be spotted the first night. You told Thursby he was being followed."

Again she concedes, "I told him. I told him. But please believe me, Sam. I wouldn't have told him if I thought Floyd would kill him."

"If you thought he wouldn't kill Miles, you were right, angel. Miles hadn't many brains, but he'd had too many years of experience as a detective to be caught like that by a man he was shadowing up a blind alley with his gun on his hip and his overcoat buttoned. But he'd have gone up there with you, angel. He was just dumb enough for that. He'd have looked you up and down and licked his lips and gone, grinning from ear to ear. And you could have stood as close to him as you liked in the dark. And put a hole through him with the gun you got from Thursby that evening."

BRIGID is in a state of near collapse. SPADE presses her till she makes the confession that she shot Archer, "I didn't mean to at first, really I didn't, but when I found out that Floyd couldn't be frightened, I - "

SPADE completes for her, "You thought Thursby would tackle Miles and one or the other of them would go down. If Thursby was killed, you were rid of him. If it was Miles, you'd see that Thursby was caught and sent up for it. Isn't that right? And when you found Thursby wasn't going to tackle him, you borrowed his gun and did it yourself! Right? And when you heard Thursby was shot, you knew Gutman was in town! And you knew you needed another protector, somebody to fill Thursby's boots, so you came back to me."

28) Continued:

Weeping, BRIGID throws her arms about his neck, incoherent in her protest. It wasn't only that. She would have come back to him anyway... but SPADE cuts her short.

"I hope they don't hang you, precious, by that sweet neck... Yes, angel, I'm gonna send you over. The chances are you'll get off with life. That means if you're a good girl, you'll be out in twenty years. I'll be waiting for you. If they hang you, I'll always remember you."

For some moments, she thinks that he's joking. When she realizes that he is not, she becomes hysterical again, unable to accept that he doesn't love her, that he cannot believe that she loves him...

"I don't care who loves who!" he declares, "I won't play the sap for you! I won't walk in Thursby's and I don't know how many others' footsteps! You killed Miles and you're going over for it."

SPADE is suddenly tired as he goes on, "Listen. This won't do any good. You'll never understand me, but I'll try once and then give it up. When a man's partner is killed, he's supposed to do something about it. It doesn't make any difference what you thought of him. He was your partner and you're supposed to do something about it. And it happens we're in the detective business. Well, when one of your organization gets killed, it's bad business to let the killer get away with it: bad business all around: bad for every detective everywhere..." She tries to interrupt but he goes on, "And if I do this and get away with it, you'll have something on me that you can use whenever you want to. Since I've got something on you, I couldn't be sure you wouldn't put a hole in me some day. All those are on one side. Maybe some of them are unimportant. I won't argue about that. But look at the number of them. And what have we got on the other side? All we've got is maybe you love me and maybe I love you."

"You know whether you love me or not," BRIGID accuses.

He accepts this. Maybe he does. He'll have some rotten nights but that will pass. But there's one more thing, "I won't because all of me wants to, regardless of the consequences, and because you've counted on that with me, the same as you counted on that with all the others."

"Would you have done this to me if the falcon had been real and you'd got your money?"

"Con't be too sure that I'm as crooked as I'm supposed to be," suggests SPADE. "That sort of reputation might be good for business - bringing high priced jobs and making it easier to deal with the enemy, but a lot more money would have been one more item on your side of the scales," he admits.

28) Continued:

"If you'd loved me, you wouldn't have needed any more on that side," she says. She kisses him with passion. While they are still embracing, there is a knock on the door and SPADE pushes her from him, "Come in."

DUNDY and POLHAUS enter. "Got 'em?" asks SPADE. "Got 'em," confirms POLHAUS as SPADE brings BRIGID to him, adding "Swell! Here's another one for you. She killed Miles. Oh, and I've got some exhibits: the boy's guns, one of Cairo's, a thousand dollar bill I was supposed to be bribed with. And this black statuette here that all the fuss was about." SPADE notes the expression of LIEUTENANT DUNDY, "What's the matter with your little playmate? He looks broken-hearted. I bet when he heard Gutman's story, he thought he had me."

"Cut it out, Sam," pleads POLHAUS lifting up the falcon. "It's heavy. What is it?"

SPADE has a curtain line: "The, er, stuff that dreams are of." He follows the police out into the corridor. The iron gate of the elevator door is closing on BRIGID, an image of imprisoning bars.

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