

placed the case carefully on the floor, and picked the *Cromwell* volume out of it.

"Where would you want it to go?" he said in an odd voice. "This is a valuable book."

"On the fifth shelf," said Roger. "Over there——"

"For God's sake stand back," said Aubrey. "Don't go near him. There's something damnable about this."

"You poor fools!" cried Metzger harshly. "To hell with you and your old books." He drew his hand back as though to throw the volume at them.

There was a quick patter of feet, and Bock, growling, ran down the aisle. In the same instant, Aubrey, obeying some unexplained impulse, gave Roger a violent push back into the Fiction alcove, seized Titania roughly in his arms, and ran with her toward the back of the shop.

Metzger's arm was raised, about to throw the book, when Bock darted at him and buried his teeth in the man's leg. The *Cromwell* fell from his hand.

There was a shattering explosion, a dull roar, and for an instant Aubrey thought the whole bookshop had turned into a vast spinning top. The floor rocked and sagged, shelves of books were hurled in every direction. Carrying Titania, he had just reached the steps leading to the domestic