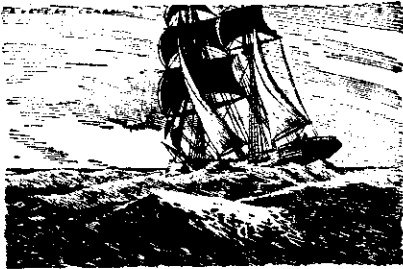


# Thriller by R.L.S.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S famous sea mystery *The Wrecker*, which he wrote in collaboration with his step-son, Lloyd Osbourne, has been adapted by the BBC as a three-part radio drama under the title of *The Mystery of the Empty Ship*. A transcription of the serial, each part of which is an hour long, begins from 3YC at 8.0 p.m. on Monday, February 1. The plot concerns two young Americans, Loudon Dodd and James Pinkerton, partners in various speculative enterprises in San Francisco, who bid at auction for the wreck of the brig Flying Scud lying on Midway Island.

The "wreckers," as they are called, are wreck-buyers, not criminals who lure ships to their destruction in the old English sense of the word, and they expect to get this particular wreck cheaply enough. However, a half-



caste lawyer, acting on behalf of a mysterious Englishman, bids against them, forcing up the price to a figure that makes them suspect there is a valuable cargo on board—possibly opium.

They outbid the half-caste and Dodd goes off to Midway, only to discover that the Flying Scud contains little of value. But he does find a photograph which shows that the supposed survivors who were landed at San Francisco were impostors, and from then on he determines not to rest until he has discovered why someone was so anxious to secure a comparatively worthless wreck.

The hunt for the truth is full of suspense and incident, and the solution is unexpected. The parts of Dodd and Pinkerton are played by Guy Kingsley Poynter and John Glenn.

Lance Sieveking, who adapted *The Wrecker* for the BBC, described it

in the *Radio Times* as "one of the finest full-sized mystery stories ever written, by Stevenson or anyone else. The interest and development never flag; and the way in which clues and incidents tie up with each other across hundreds of pages is an astonishing feat of construction." Lloyd Osbourne has described how he collaborated with Stevenson on the book. Sitting under a huge mosquito net, first on the island of Tembinoka and then at Samoa, Osbourne would draft out a chapter while Stevenson rewrote what Osbourne had written the previous day. "It was conceived in such high spirits and with so much laughter and entertainment," Osbourne said, "that the zest of its authors is surely to be found in the story."

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### Clues Across

1. "In his hands are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the — is his also" (Psalm 95).
4. Red rose made into an ornamental screen.
8. These vegetables change direction in the beginning, and revolve rapidly backwards in the end.
9. The sort of parcels in which good things are proverbially wrapped up.
10. He wrote "The Song of the Shirt."
11. Coasting (anag.).
13. The rat becomes a menace.
15. Male hawk.
18. "The mountains look on —, And — looks on the sea" (Byron).
19. One in the hand is said to be worth two in the bush.
22. "Man's inhumanity to man Makes countless thousands —" (Burns).
23. Offence.
24. Unhappy about a musical instrument.

25. Taken by students and bank robbers?

### Clues Down

1. Figuratively buried with the cessation of hostilities.
2. Handel's is well known.
3. Found is H.M.S. "Pinafore."
4. Hand over.
5. Rode out of order after the rest.
6. Strongly operative.
7. This law excludes females from dynastic succession.
12. As a whole, an instrument used by some dancers, but in pieces a fisherman might do this.
14. Whale with dorsal fin.
16. Paying guests.
17. "When the merry bells ring round, And the — rebecks sound, To many a youth and many a maid, Dancing in the chequer'd shade" (Milton, "L'Allegro").
18. Mum has a written afterthought, and the result is a contagious disease.
20. Unskilful.
21. Scottish sea port and holiday resort.

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