

# Skalrag

By Jessea

Submitted: April 28, 2005

Updated: April 28, 2005

*An orphaned boy and rumored killer, Jerome tries to escape a dangerous gang out on the streets.*

Provided by Fanart Central.

<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/Jessea/14196/Skalrag>

**Chapter 1 - Skalrag**

**2**

# 1 - Skalrag

Skalrag Oil spilled from the open tank into the water as the two tall men hoisted it over the rail into the ocean. I knew this wasn't right. I had read articles in the paper about oil spills and other disasters, Rescue stories about men who had taken in ducks and cleaned all the oil out. I smudged a clump of sand and kelp under my foot. But then again, I thought, I really don't have a choice. But I had. Even when Boujii, the boss, had tricked me into joining, I had known, somewhere in the back of my mind, that it was the wrong decision. After my parents died, everything had gone downhill. I would run away, but I feared for my life. This was getting dangerous. Of course, I didn't have much of a chance living anyway. This gang would "get rid of" anyone that they did not find uses for, and I had started to feel pretty useless. Today they were "getting rid of" Dr. Skalrag, the mastermind of the group. He planned all the major robberies and murders. The gang now had reason to believe that he was trying to get them all caught by the police. That was why I had gone with the oil pourers. I didn't want to be around when it happened. When the tank was finally empty, the men turned around, "Get back in the truck, kid." I don't think they would have cared if they left me behind, but I could go to the police if I escaped. When we got back to the hideout, I helped heave the heavy oil tank from the truck and carry it to the door. This one would hold tonight's loot. We brought it over to the door. One of the men let go of the barrel and I felt it get considerably heavier. He knocked on the door and a quiet voice from inside said, "Password?" The thug on our side of the door replied, "Sweet tart," and the door slid open. We followed a skinny gang member with a weasel-like face down the hallway. I noticed that he was always chewing on a mint. The other thug let go of the tank and I was left to carry it. I wished they would give me a little help, but I knew better than to ask. "AAAAARRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH," the scream came loud and clear as we had reached the room of Dr. Skalrag's final breaths. I dropped the barrel with a loud clang. The clang reverberated all around the room. I couldn't take it any more. I ran for it. "What was that?" shouted Boujii, and I was quickly grabbed and brought before him, next to the body of the former scientist. Without even looking up into those steely eyes, I would have known that I was next for the fate of Dr. Skalrag. "Boy, why did you drop the tank? That is inefficient. You know what I do to inefficient people," he glanced at the body. I noticed a hole smothered in blood on its chest. I gulped, "I didn't mean to. I just was startled by the scream." "So you still get queasy at the sight of blood, eh? That don't work well with me." "No sir, I do not get queasy at the sight of blood. I once tried to kill a man." "Oh yeah, did you do this to him?!" Boujii pulled out a gun and shot a few bullets into the dead man's torso. I watched in disgust as blood poured out of those wounds that would never heal. Then I did the thing I wanted to do least. I threw up. The gang laughed. "You're lucky I'm in a good mood today kid," then I'd certainly hate to see you in a bad one. "I'll give you a chance to escape. You have ten seconds." I jumped to my feet. This was not going to be easy. Was this a game they played with all their enemies? A joke? "Ten..." I sprinted across the room. "Nine..." I pushed some barrels out of my way. "Eight... Seven..." I bolted to the door. "Six..." I undid the latches. "Five... Four..." I turned the knob. "Three... Two..." I was out and running. "One...Go!" Before I was halfway across the street, I heard the shouts of ruthless men pursuing me. Maybe I can lose them down the alleyways. I streaked behind a pair of shops, darted left at the end of the path, and jumped a fence and found myself in somebody's front lawn. "Got him!" weaselface called to the others as he grabbed me from behind, "Hello brat," he said to me. Soon I had a five or six thug escort to return me to the hideout where what fate would await me? I hate to imagine. But then something happened that raised my hopes. A voice from behind us shouted "Freeze! Put your hands up, and let the boy go. I have a gun." Yes, a police

officer! But the gang didn't exactly follow directions. They did let the boy go, but they also ran like antelope from a lion. I was left alone, waiting to meet my rescuer. "Come here boy, how can you get into so much trouble? Don't answer that. What is your name?" The man did save me, but I still didn't know if I could trust him so I said the first name that came to mind, "Skalrag, my name is Skalrag. Are you a cop?" I didn't see a badge. "No, I'm a bum. I live on the streets." "Then where'd you get a gun?" "Who said bums can't have guns?" he smiled. This was going good so far. I had a feeling that the police were still searching for me, so I didn't want to meet up with them, and although this man was a bum with a gun, at least he wasn't shooting anyone, "Now, do you know where those people live?" I eyed him suspiciously, wondering why he would want to know that. Still smiling, he said, "Don't worry, I don't intend to harm you, and I don't intend to join them." Slowly, I pointed, "Down in the old oil warehouse by the dock." "Let's go have a look around." So we walked slowly to the dock, somehow, he kept me talking all the way. We talked about nouns and oxen and other things. I found out his name was Denny Reed. It felt like he was testing me, x-raying my mind with questions, and I didn't want to give away my real identity, so I was careful, but I think I still gave some subtle hints. If he put two and two together, he didn't show it. When we reached the warehouse, I showed him the door. He slowly drew his gun and pried open the door, as quietly as possible. Luckily, there was no one inside. We crept down the hallway to the main room. He opened a few of the barrels and examined the stolen goods. He pulled out a notebook and scribbled a few things down, mumbling, "valuable bracelets, Zoom brand yo-yos..." Why, I wondered, would a bum need to do that? Then he pulled out a walkie-talkie and started speaking into the mouthpiece. Then I realized I had been tricked! "You are a cop!" "Yes, and what of it Skalrag?" "Nothing, but, uhh... I think I should get back to my parents now," I couldn't very well run from a cop. "Good, we can stop at the station on the way." OK, things stopped being good at an estimated thirty seconds ago. "Wait a minute, what's this?" he tugged on a stand of hair inside the barrel of goods. He was rewarded by a small yelp of pain. He once again pulled out his gun and said, "OK everyone, out of them barrels." Almost simultaneously, the gang rose out of the barrels, hands in the air. Boujii was holding a gun, but it was not him who shot. There was a bang and he slid silently to the floor. I fainted. Denny picked up his walkie-talkie and spoke into the mouthpiece, "I think I'm going to need backup." After the police had come and rounded up the gang, Officer Denny loaded me into his car to drive me home. I instructed him on the way. I really didn't have a destination, but I still didn't want to be caught. After about fifteen minutes of steering with the old wheel and axle, Denny finally said, exasperated, "Could you just tell me the address?" I quickly answered, "1253 Vein St. Watt Ville, Utah." He gave a small laugh and said, "Kid, if you're going to make up an address to tell a police officer, don't tell him his own home address!" and that was it. There was nothing left to do. I opened the door, jumped out of the car, and ran. After a minute or two, I finally quit, grateful that he wasn't chasing me. I caught my breath and smiled. I had survived. Officer Denny was still chuckling to himself when he entered the police station. When he passed the front desk the chief came out and asked, "Where's that boy you had with you, Denny? We'd like to question him." "I just took him home," said Denny, smiling. "YOU JUST WHAT! THAT BOY MIGHT HAVE BEEN JEROME HAROLDS, THAT MISSING KILLER BOY, AND YOU JUST TOOK HIM HOME!" Officer Denny walked past the chief to his own office, still smiling inwardly, and answered in one word, "Yup."