

THE HAND OF STEEL

As told by G-8 to Robert J. Hogan

Out of the fires of war, fed by the blood and hatred of destruction, comes the Cripple of Hartsburg! What is the curse he has placed on the head of the Allies?¾what mad vengeance is sought by his distorted brain? Only G-8 can learn the answer and to find it he must search the hungry jaws of death!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTELLIGENCE GOES MAD

IT WAS almost mid-morning. G-8, the master flying spy, and his Battle Aces had been out on routine patrol since dawn. Certain reports of enemy activity had drawn the Master Spy up to the Front to investigate for himself.

At the point of the tight V formation, G-8 flew his famous Spad. At the one side of his tail was Spad number seven, flown by big, iron-jawed Bull Martin, former all-American halfback who loomed out of the cockpit and glared down at the activity on the German side of the lines.

On the other side of the Master Spy, Nippy Weston, the little terrier ace, flew close. His Spad was number thirteen, for Nippy defied superstition and laughed in the face of death. The terrier ace was grinning now as he watched things below and followed his chief.

The three flew together so expertly that those who saw them from the ground were often apt to remark that they must be tied together.

G-8's steel-gray eyes had finished their scrutiny. At intervals, those eyes had shifted quickly up into the sky about him, then down to the ground to spot the details of the enemy movements that they saw. Now the Master Spy nodded with satisfaction and signaled for a turn. The three swung around as one ship and headed back for Le Bourget field, the base of the Master Spy and his Battle Aces.

All three Spads were battle-scarred. Many round fabric patches told of the combats they had been in; told of enemy bullets that had probed for them and missed, often by the fraction of an inch.

There was little concern on the Master Spy's face as he brought his plane down to land on the great airdrome. But then, concern seldom was apparent on those features. He had made himself, through practice, a master of self-control.

"It looks as if Heinie is getting ready for something," Bull Martin said, as he cut his motor and climbed out of his cockpit.

"You wouldn't kid anybody, would you?" Nippy chirped up.

The big fellow glowered at him.

"What's eating you, squirt?" he demanded.

The little terrier ace grinned.

"You are, as usual," he shot back. "Here we go over and see the enemy moving their reserves up to the Front, all along the lines. It's plain enough for a two-year old to see. Then you climb out of your old number seven and make the wise observation that the enemy is moving up all along the line! Do you think the rest of us were blindfolded?"

"Personally," G-8 ventured as they walked toward their apartment in the end hanger, "I'm wondering why the enemy is doing this. They must have *some* reason. They've even advanced their training fields. We know they've got nothing but kids left, and they're bringing them up near enough to the Front so that they can be rushed into action in a couple of hours."

"Maybe," Bull suggested, "they're planning a big drive."

G-8 shook his head.

"I don't think they'd take a chance on that," he argued, entering their apartment living room. "They're pretty low on everything, including men. A drive of any magnitude would exhaust their supplies. That's why I'd like very much to know what they've really got in mind."

"Did you notice," Nippy asked, "that no enemy planes took after us this morning? Maybe they *wanted* us to see this movement."

Battle, the blank-faced English manservant and master of the makeup kit, appeared in the doorway of the kitchen.

"I say, sir," he suggested, "quite a while has passed since your very early breakfast. I'll be glad to whip up a batch of pancakes for you, sir, if you like."

Big Bull Martin grinned.

"Battle, you're sure talking right up my alley when you say that. I can use about a dozen pancakes right now, or just about as quick as you can get them made."

Nippy laughed.

"You're running true to form, all right," he chided. "I'll bet if you were in the death-house waiting to be hung, you'd look forward to the last day—just because they serve you a whole banquet then."

Bull grumbled something on his way to the washroom, and G-8 smiled at Battle.

"Yes," he said, "I think some wheat cakes would go pretty well. I want to call up Intelligence to report this, and then I'll be right with you."

"Righto, sir," the English manservant beamed. He vanished into the kitchen.

The Master Spy went to the telephone and called Intelligence. Presently he got a response—a strange response. The agent at the other end snarled:

"Who do you think you are calling at this hour? I'll have you shot!"

G-8 stopped and stared for a moment into the mouthpiece.

"Who's speaking?" he demanded curtly.

"This," said the voice, suddenly pompous, is agent V-5. I'm the head of Intelligence. I tell you, I'll—"

The Master Spy cut in.

"This is G-8," he announced. "I want to make a report."

"G-8?" the voice said. "I never heard of you! You're crazy!"

G-8 flushed.

"You think I'm—" he broke off. "You say you're V-5? Well, put somebody on that can talk sense."

The voice at the other end shouted, "That's insulting! I demand satisfaction! I'll meet you on the field of honor! You're crazy, I tell you!"

V-5's voice went off into a horribly insane peal of laughter.

Frantic with apprehension, G-8 worked the receiver hook.

"Hello, hello!" he barked into the mouthpiece. "Operator! Operator! Get me Intelligence. I want to speak to a *sane* person. Somebody has gone crazy down there!"

Nippy and Bull stood waiting, but the line at the other end, except for a faint humming, seemed to go dead. G-8 stared into the mouthpiece. Thoughtfully, slowly, he hung up the receiver.

The two Battle Aces had come close, and Bull was frowning quizzically. But this incident, as most incidents did, seemed to strike Nippy as being humorous.

"Probably somebody kidding you, G-8," he suggested. "Some wise guy."

The Master Spy frowned.

"I hope so," he said earnestly.

"Holy Herring, what happened?" Bull demanded.

"Nothing much," G-8 admitted. "Except that V-5, the agent who takes the report at Intelligence headquarters, sounds like a lunatic. He seems to have the idea that he's chief of Intelligence. V-5 is only a desk man. He's never been out on an important case. He thinks I'm crazy."

Nippy chuckled.

"Well, I've thought so myself, sometimes," he admitted.

Bull glared at the terrier ace.

"Shut up and let G-8 go on, will you?" he boomed.

G-8 turned to the telephone and lifted the receiver again. This time the operator's voice answered.

"Operator," the Master Spy said, "this is G-8. See if you can get me S-9 at Intelligence, will you?... Yes, S-9. He's assistant chief.... Thank you."

He waited a full minute, then a voice came across the wires:

"This is S-9. Who dares to call me?"

The master Spy frowned.

"This is G-8," he announced. "I want to make a—"

That was as far as he got.

"G-8?" the deep voice said solemnly. "You can't be. G-8 is dead!"

For a moment the Master Spy's face became suddenly pale and his hand grasped the receiver more tightly.

"Listen," he cracked, "are you S-9 of American Intelligence?"

"Of course!" the deep voice bellowed back, so loud that it made G-8's ears ring. "Of course, I'm S-9. Do you think I'm lying? I'll kill you!"

The Master Spy took a deep breath.

"I'm G-8," he repeated. "I have a report to make."

A bellowing laugh came from the other end of the line, and G-8 blanched.

"You're G-8 and you have a report to make!" S-9 repeated. "That's funny. A report like a gun! Ha-ha! Bang, bang! You're dead!"

The Master Spy's face had turned white. The crackling laughter was still coming through the receiver when he slowly put it back on the hook.

There were few times when the Master's Spy's face took on a baffled look, but it did now as he turned away from the telephone. Nippy and Bull had heard the conversation as it came through the receiver, and the usual smile on Nippy's face had vanished.

"Jumping Jupiter," he cracked, "what's coming off?"

G-8 started for the door that led into the storage end of the hangar, where his long, low roadster stood waiting. His words were crisp:

"They've gone mad at Intelligence headquarters!"

CHAPTER TWO THE FIEND WITH THE HOOK

NOT by the wildest use of his imagination would G-8 have been able to picture the deep-laid plot now developing across the lines: a plot in which these strange happenings at Intelligence constituted only a small part. Nor could he possibly know that it had all been planned by the distorted mind of a crippled German airman known as *Herr Goulon*, the Cripple of Hartsburg.

At the very moment that G-8 left the end hangar to attempt to unravel the mystery at Intelligence headquarters, *Herr Goulon* was in conference with a high official of the German Empire.

Herr Goulon was a grotesque-appearing figure. He was of good size, but his left foot was twisted, and that leg was bent and shorter than the other, so that he lurched to the left with each step he took. His left arm ended in a cruel, iron hook, where the hand had once been.

His face was a ghastly thing to see. Part of it had been burned away, and the skin had been drawn back by force and sewed there so that above his mouth, the skin was tight and the cheeks were sunken in like those of a mummy. His mouth was a hideous hole. The lips could not be drawn together and there was a perpetual gleam of ugly teeth, as if he were always grinning.

Herr Goulon's eyes blazed across the table at the German *offizier*, a gaunt man with dignified military bearing, but dressed in civilian clothes.

"You ask me," the cripple gutturalled, "what is behind my plot—why I hate the *verdammte* Americans with all the bitterness of which a human heart is capable. I will tell you. When the Americans entered the war, I was an ace—one of the greatest, as you know. One day I met G-8, the *verdammte* one, in an aerial combat behind the Allied lines. I was shot down. I crashed and was burned. They took me to one of the American hospitals, where American doctors and nurses worked upon me. You see the result!"

He looked down bitterly at his twisted foot and at the iron hook where his hand should be.

"I am sure they could have saved me from being a cripple if they had cared to, but no! It is my belief that they caused me to become a cripple *purposely*, so that I would not be able to escape from their prison camp later on."

His face contorted in a horrible grimace.

"But I tricked them. I pretended to be paralyzed, and made them keep me in their *verdammte* hospital until I was able to hobble about. Then, one night I escaped, stole one of their planes, and returned. Now I am in a position to retaliate. They shall pay for my suffering, for the fact that I am forced to go through life crippled like this."

A crackling sound, meant to be laughter, came from his throat.

"*Jawohl*, they shall pay for it—in the blood of their men and women—*und* the *Vaterland* shall reap the benefit."

The gaunt man's brow knit in a momentary frown.

"It does not seem possible, *Herr Goulon*," he confessed, "that the enemy medical staff would *purposely* cripple anyone—especially after he had been taken prisoner."

Herr Goulon's bulging eyes flamed.

"Do not tell me what happened!" he snapped. "I am positive of it! *Lieber Gott*, are you standing up for the enemy?"

The gaunt one backed down.

"*Nein*," he said, "of course not. I was only wondering whether or not you were purposely crippled. But that does not matter. Your hatred has no doubt inspired you to greater things, *und* I am here to work with you—to do what I can for the good of the *Vaterland*. You have already started some of your work?"

The hideous face of the cripple contorted in a grin of cunning.

"*Jawohl*," he said. "At this very moment, their entire Intelligence force is stricken with insanity." He leaned forward eagerly. "How is *that* for a beginning?"

The gaunt one's eyes widened in astonishment. He stared at Goulon.

"*Ach du Lieber!* Do you know what you're saying?" he asked. "How did you accomplish such a thing?"

The fiend shrugged.

"That is merely one of my lesser inventions," he said. "You know something of vibrations and key notes and such things, perhaps?"

"Vibrations and key notes?" the gaunt one repeated.

"*Jawohl, jawohl!*" Herr Goulon nodded. "Surely you know the simplest principles of vibrations? You know, it is said that if a fiddler can strike a certain note, and gain the proper pitch—then play it long enough—he can cause a steel bridge to shatter to bits. I have worked on that theory—on the basis, *mein Herr*, that everything has a destructive vibration point—a key note. I have discovered that all human bodies have the same key note. Do you realize what that means? It means that if I can produce a vibration which is the same as that key note, it will—"

The gaunt one straightened.

"*Himmel!*" he cried. "You do not mean that you can break up human bodies by striking the key note long enough?"

Herr Goulon let out a cackling laugh and shrugged.

"*Nein*, that is not my object," he said. "Which would be more devastating, *mein Herr*—to have a group of your soldiers fall dead?—or to have them turn insane, so that they would kill their comrades in the army?"



The gaunt one nodded.

"You're correct," he admitted. "I hadn't thought of that."

"So," Herr Goulon continued, "I invented a wireless beam that produces the same pitch of vibration as the key note of the human body. My agents in Paris have been ordered to install my apparatus so that all persons who pass into Intelligence headquarters through the front door will become insane within an hour. I have done this of my own volition, without help from the government. But now, for the greater feats, I must have assistance. I have called you here so that you may make an investigation of what I have told you—so that you may see for yourself that my statement about the Intelligence agents going insane, is true. Then you will arrange a meeting of high army commanders tomorrow morning at this same time. At that time, I shall disclose my greater scheme for ending the war quickly. This scheme, combined with my wireless apparatus for causing insanity, will give the *Vaterland* control of everything, and"—Herr Goulon grinned greedily—"will satisfy to some extent my lust for revenge."

The gaunt man rose.

"Very well," he said. "I shall make the investigation as you suggest, and also arrange the

meeting." He stopped suddenly. "But about this *verdammt* one you mentioned. You must be careful of him. He is a devil."

Herr Goulon's eyes shot sparks.

"Do you think I could forget him—the one who shot me down and was the beginning of my trouble? *Nein*. I have thought of him constantly, night and day. I am about to begin work on him now. A friend of his, an airman who is not such a great pilot, has been drawn into a trap and shot down not far from here. Even now, he is being brought here so that I"—he grinned again—"may interview him. I will learn from him some of the habits of this one they call the "Master Spy." *Und* you may depend upon this: tonight at midnight, G-8 will die."

"Good," the gaunt one nodded.

HE LEFT hurriedly. Before his car had rolled from sight of *Herr* Goulon's headquarters, another car drew up. Two armed guards forced a young American pilot to walk to *Herr* Goulon's room.

The pilot was grave-faced. He seemed to know that he was in plenty of trouble, but he was ready to take whatever came. He stopped suddenly at sight of *Herr* Goulon and a shudder passed over him.

"Why are you so horrified, *mein freund*?" *Herr* Goulon demanded with a rasping laugh. "Remember this: you Americans made me look this way! What is your name?"

The American pilot's lips pressed closer together. One of the guards held out a tag.

"We tore this tag from around his neck," he said. "He is Lieutenant Wesley Patrick." The pilot was silent.

Herr Goulon's lips parted wider in a grin.

"You walked into my trap very nicely, *Herr Leutnant*," he said.

Patrick spoke for the first time:

"So you set a trap for me! I can't quite figure that one out. I'm not at all important."

"No," chuckled *Herr* Goulon, "but you know someone who is. I understand that you are acquainted with G-8?"

Lieutenant Patrick tensed.

"What has that to do with it?" he demanded.

"Simply this," *Herr* Goulon told him. "You're going to tell me of the habits of the *verdammt* one, and of the habits of his friends. Does he work with any woman spies?"

Young Patrick would not have made a good Intelligence agent. He said, "No," but the expression on his face plainly belied his words. *Herr* Goulon caught it at once.

"Very well! We shall get to the bottom of this quickly. I cannot waste any time! Do you see this hook where my left hand should be?"

Patrick made no move.

"I shall tear the flesh from your bones if you do not tell me what I want to know!" Goulon threatened

Patrick shuddered visibly.

"I tell you," he cried, "G-8 doesn't operate with any women!"

"You lie!" *Herr* Goulon charged. "I know there is some girl that he works with. She's known by a letter and a number. What are they?"

Patrick shook his head desperately.

"I don't know of anybody," he said.

Herr Goulon nodded to the guards and pointed to two ropes that hung from the ceiling.

"String him up!" he ordered.

Lieutenant Patrick's struggles were useless. He was trussed up, and the fiend advanced, holding his hook ready before him.

"Now," he cried, "once more I ask you! What is the letter and number of the girl? Who is she?"

Hanging helpless by his wrists, Patrick shook his head.

"I tell you I don't know of anybody," he repeated.

The hook came down, slashing across Patrick's chest. His uniform was ripped apart and a great furrow of his flesh was torn out. Blood spurted down the front of his body.

"Tell me!" *Herr* Goulon roared.

"I don't know!" Patrick yelled.

Again and again, *Herr* Goulon ripped him with the hook. He was tearing the flesh from one leg, ripping the American's body to shreds.

"Stop, you devil!" Patrick screamed. "I—"

Herr Goulon emitted a cackling laugh, and tore on with his hook.

"Revenge! Revenge!" he screamed. "Tell me before you die!"

Patrick was shrieking with pain as that hook dug into his muscles and left torn masses of flesh. He was delirious, now, from the torture that the hook was inflicting. He didn't know what he was doing or saying.

"Stop!" he yelled. "I—I'll tell you! It's R-R-1! She—"

"R-1, Herr Goulon said. "That's good!"

He left Patrick hanging there, blood spurting from his body, and leaped for a telephone. He called his wireless station and shot a message across the wires:

Advise agents to trail R-1. She must be made insane, captured, and brought here as quickly as possible. I will be waiting.

He grinned hungrily.

"The hook shall soon gouge *her* body!" he gloated. "I shall tear her to shreds for my revenge. *Und* G-8, when he comes, will be captured! And by midnight—"

He broke off in triumphant laughter. Then he whirled to the two guards.

"Take down Lieutenant Patrick's body," he ordered, "and carry it out to my warming plane. I am leaving for Le Bourget, where the *verdammte* one has his headquarters, at once.

CHAPTER THREE MURDER AT HEADQUARTERS

THE long, low roadster carrying G-8 drew up in front of Intelligence headquarters. From his position behind the wheel, the Master Spy bent down and looked up at the windows of the building. He could see as far up as the second story.

At one window he could see a grinning face—the face of one of the higher Intelligence agents. He looked very silly standing there, waving his handkerchief at someone across the street. G-8 turned to stare in that direction, but he saw only

an old flower woman trudging along. Then the face vanished from the window.

G-8 left the roadster and walked rapidly toward the entrance to Intelligence headquarters. There were no guards there, and the doors were open wide. From somewhere down the corridor of the first floor he heard wild, inane laughing. Then a silly babbling of voices came to him.

He mounted the steps slowly and paused. A strange feeling seized him as he stood there, not quite in the entrance. He couldn't describe that sensation even to himself. It was uncanny, almost as though he were standing on the threshold of another world. Then something made him back away and go down the steps toward the sidewalk again.

From there he looked up at the face of the building. Then his eyes traveled from it to the next building, which housed the general staff and his own high commander, the only real superior that he knew. Sudden impulse caused the Master Spy to turn and walk toward that building. Two guards presented arms when they recognized him.

"What are they doing, turning Intelligence headquarters into an insane asylum?" G-8 asked of the corporal of the guard.

The latter shook his head.

"I don't know, sir," he said. "We've heard strange sounds coming from the building now and then."

"But what about the guard out front?" G-8 demanded.

"The guards were there the first thing this morning," the corporal told him, "but I haven't seen anything of them since."

"I think," prompted the other guard, "that they went inside."

"Is everything all right in this building?" G-8 asked.

"So far as we know, sir," the corporal said.

"The general in?"

The corporal nodded and said, "Yes, sir."

G-8 strode into the building and ran up the stairs to the general's office. But he found the great offices of his chief vacant and the door open. He hurried out into the hall again and there met one of the staff officers. The man's face was lined with

anxiety and his words were tense and vibrant with emotion.

"You're looking for the general?"

"Yes," G-8 nodded. "I've got to see him at once."

"He's over here, in one of the side offices."

A moment later, the Master Spy entered one of the offices at the side of the building. A group of high officers were standing at the two windows that opened on an alley. From those windows, they could look into the Intelligence building.



G-8's chief turned a troubled face to him. He was evidently nervous.

"There's something crazy going on over there," he said. "Look!"

G-8 looked across the narrow alley and nodded.

"Yes," he said, "I know. That's why I hurried here from Le Bourget. They've

gone crazy over at Intelligence."

"That's putting it mildly," the general said.

G-8 was staring past him through the window. In the office opposite, a strange sight presented itself. Three Intelligence agents and one of the guards from the front of the building were in the room. At the moment, they formed a circle, hands joined like children at play. Now they started moving around, singing a nursery rhyme:

*"Lazy Mary, will you get up³/₄ will you get up?
Lazy Mary, will you get up³/₄ will you get up today?"*

The chant went on as they danced around the circle.

"It's ghastly!" the general said.

"How long has this been going on?" G-8 demanded.

"We just noticed it a few minutes ago," the general told him. "What in the name of heaven has happened?"

G-8 shook his head and made no answer. He watched, fascinated by the simple, insane antics of the men before him. The general was sorrowfully shaking his head.

"Do you know those three agents?" he asked a moment later.

G-8 knew them well and said so.

"They are," he said, and his voice became a little husky, "three of the most brilliant minds we have in Intelligence."

"You mean, they *were*," the general corrected.

"Yes, sir," G-8 agreed. "They were."

They went on singing, *"Lazy Mary, will you get up?"* then the guard, who seemed to be the leader, shouted, "No, I won't get up. We'll all go back to sleep."

At that, the guard and the three top-notch Intelligence officers fell to the floor, laughing and screaming in mad delight. Suddenly, the guard leaped to his feet, whipping out his automatic.

"Let's play war!" he screamed.

The agents were getting up. One shook his head and shouted:

"No, I won't play war!"

The guard laughed delightedly

"All right, you won't play war," he cracked. He swung around and raised his automatic and pointed it at the sulking agent.

But G-8 had already anticipated that move. The Master Spy wasn't taking any chances. His own gun was out of the holster in a flash, and he came charging past the other officers. There was a loud explosion as he pulled the trigger, and flame darted from the muzzle of his gun. The glass in the window of the office across the alley shattered with a tinkling sound. At almost the same instant, the guard's gun barked, but even as it did, the guard

pitched forward on his face. The bullet from his gun missed the agent at whom it had been aimed and ripped a hole in the wall an inch away from the agent's head.

The playful atmosphere in the office ceased suddenly. The three agents gathered about the twisting form of the guard, then they moved as one toward the shattered window and stared across the alley at the general and G-8 and the others clustered about the opening.

Suddenly, one cried, "The enemy! They are attacking! Come on, men!"

The man drew up the sash of the shattered window and climbed on the window ledge and poised there. A moment later, his body came charging across in a wild leap for the window opening. G-8 flung the other officers back with a cry of warning. At the same instant, he holstered his automatic and stepped back himself.

The agent landed on the general headquarters sill as lightly and skillfully as though he were an ape. Instantly, he sprang for G-8.

The Master Spy was ready for him. He measured him with a left and crossed with a smashing right that connected flush on the jaw of the agent, who reeled back several smashing blows, and again the insane agent reeled back. But the Master Spy was upon him, swinging with all he had. The agent's knees buckled and he went down in a heap.

A cry of warning came from the great general, and an insane, cackling laugh sounded behind the Master Spy. He swung around in time to see a second agent leaping for him. But the tall, broad-shouldered general was intercepting that move. His fists were flying like triphammers.

G-8 ducked a wild blow and sent in one of his own, straight for the agent's chin. The second crazed Intelligence officer crumpled, unconscious. As he fell, the third came leaping across the alley. Before G-8 could get in a blow, that third one had been knocked out by the other officers.

"Get some rope and tie them up before they come around," G-8 ordered.

Lesser officers scurried to carry out his orders, and the general looked down at the unconscious forms, shaking his head sadly. It was a very pitiful sight.

"Apparently," he said, "every agent in Intelligence headquarters has gone stark, raving mad. I'm going to order a special detachment of troops to go in there and clean house."

Already G-8 was at the second window, staring across into another office.

"No," he cracked, "don't do that, General. It would be too dangerous. The soldiers might not use discretion, and some of our agents might be killed. They're too valuable to lose."

AS he spoke, a cry came from the Intelligence office opposite that second window. G-8 had seen the janitor of the building—a small, meek man—enter. A tall, heavy-set agent was in view in the middle of the room. The window was closed, so G-8 couldn't hear what was said. The janitor seemed to be sane, though the other was not.

As the Master Spy spoke the last word, the powerful agent leaped for the janitor. The old fellow tried to spring back, but the Intelligence man had seized him by the throat and was dragging him into the room. They grappled there, then passed out of view.

But already the Master Spy had the window up, and before the great American general or any of the others could interpose, he was poised on the window ledge.

"Let me handle this, General!" he cracked.

He leaped across the alley and landed on the window ledge opposite. The window was unlocked and he shot it up without any trouble.

The big agent had acted with brutal swiftness. By the time G-8 got the window up and was in that second office, the meek little janitor had been knocked unconscious. Now the agent was tearing at his throat. He whirled as G-8 sprang for him.

Fists flew. One brutal blow from the insane agent crashed home between G-8's eyes, and his head spun. The force of the blow hurled him back against the opposite wall.

The mad agent was upon him, beating flailing blows with his fists. G-8 ducked to the side. He was forced to use every trick that he knew. Bobbing, ducking, running away and attacking again, he carried on the fight. Around and around the room he went, battling for his very life against a man who was a good thirty pounds heavier than he.

G-8 sent a left into the other's solar plexus and brought over a right that was aimed straight for the jaw. The big fellow stepped away at that instant, and instead of G-8's right connecting with the side of his jaw, it landed with terrific force behind the agent's ear. For a moment the big fellow lost his balance.

G-8 tore in like mad, following up his momentary advantage. He sent his fists pounding against the face of the other. The big fellow was covering up, trying to get away, but G-8 followed his every move. Then, with a right uppercut, he finished him, sent him reeling back on his heels to crumple on the floor.

Whirling to the desk in the corner, the Master Spy seized the telephone and called Le Bourget. Bull Martin answered.

"Listen," G-8 cracked. "I want you and Nippy to come down to Intelligence headquarters at once! Bring all the rope you can possibly find. We've got a bunch of lunatics down here, and we've got to tie them up before they do any damage."

Bull's voice came back:

"Nippy's gone out somewhere. Shall I wait for him or come down alone?"

"Better not wait," G-8 advised. "Hurry."

He slammed up the receiver, then went out into the corridors. There were silly, inane sounds coming from the various offices. Now and then a peal of mad laughter echoed through the halls.

One after another, G-8 locked the doors of the offices. He went from floor to floor, locking one office after another. The first floor he left until last.

Minutes later, when he had almost finished his work, he saw Bull coming through the front door, and noticed that the big fellow hesitated there as he entered. His hesitation, however, was only momentary. He came on down the corridor toward G-8 with several coils of light rope in his hands.

"You're just in time," G-8 told him. "If you like a fight, you'll have a lot of fun here."

He expected Bull to grin, but he didn't. The big fellow's eyes were wide and he looked a little bewildered.

"O.K.," he said in a halting voice.

G-8 looked at him sharply.

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded. "Are you all right?"

"Sure, I guess so," Bull told him. "I feel a little funny, but I'll be all right when I get my fists in somebody's face. Who's first?"

G-8 turned to the nearest office. He hadn't locked that door yet, and he peered inside, saw that the office was empty. They went on to the next one. There were two agents in there—men who glared at them and burst out in mad laughter.

"Come on, Bull," G-8 cried. "Let them have it!"

The two charged with flying fists, and Bull sent his adversary down with his first blow, then turned to help G-8. But the Master Spy didn't need his assistance. Bull was standing in the middle of the room, perspiration dripping from his face. He wiped his sweating brow with his hand.

"Something has gone wrong with you," G-8 charged. "You don't look right."

"I'm O.K.," Bull insisted. "Show me some more of these birds to knock out."

"All right," G-8 nodded, "but we've got to tie them up as we go along. Come on, tie their hands and feet behind them so they can't get loose when they come to."

"Yeah," Bull nodded absently.

As he bent down and went to work on the insane agent he had knocked out, he seemed quite normal again. For some time, G-8 and big Bull Martin went from one office to another.

Some of the agents fell easy prey to their blows, but with others they had a hard fight. This was particularly true when they reached the third floor and found four of the largest agents locked in one office together.

Bull had been acting more and more strangely, but his blows had lost none of their power.

Three of the agents in that room were already stretched out, after a tough fight, and G-8 was trying to finish off the fourth. Suddenly, he heard a bellow of rage and a wild, cackling laugh from big Bull Martin. He whirled to see the big fellow charging at him, fists upraised to strike, eyes bulging insanely, his iron jaw set.

G-8 suddenly realized the horrible truth. Big Bull Martin, like the others, had gone mad!

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEATH OF A MARTYR

NIPPY WESTON returned to the end hangar to find Bull Martin gone. He asked Battle, "Listen, didn't Bull say where he was going—about my coming along afterward?"

The manservant shook his head.

"No, sir, he didn't say anything. He just hurried out. I presume, sir, that you're meant to stay home and take care of details, or something of the kind."

"That would be my luck," Nippy complained. "Something hot happens in Paris and I'm supposed to stay home and lick my paws like an old hound dog!"

Battle smiled slightly.

"Well, sir, if I may say so," he ventured, "perhaps you might be down there with Mr. Bull now, if you hadn't wandered off."

The terrier ace nodded.

"Yes, I suppose that's right," he admitted.

He walked into the living room and back. The sound of a Hisso motor being started came to him from outside. He stepped to the door and looked out. Mechanics had been working on the three Spads, and they were checking over G-8's ship now. Nippy wandered out and spoke to them.

"Want me to test hop that crate when you get through?" he asked.

The mechanic sergeant nodded.

"Yes, sir, if you don't mind," he said. "I'd like to be sure that it's ready to go when G-8 gets back."

Nippy waited a few minutes until the mechanics were through, then he climbed into the cockpit, opened the throttle and sent the Master Spy's Spad tearing across the field. He climbed above Le Bourget in great circles, going higher and higher each time. Always watching the instruments and checking the controllability of the plane, he sent it through various intricate maneuvers to test its strength.

He was in the top of a loop when he first spotted the Fokker tearing at Le Bourget.

Instantly, he dropped out of the loop and went hurtling down.

There were several queer things about that Fokker. For one thing, it was flying low. Even now, it was barely skimming the top of the trees at the end of the field and heading straight for the tarmac in front of the end hangar.

But the queerest part of all was the arm of the pilot. It hung over one side, and from it was dangling another figure, red with blood. Now and then the dangling form struggled weakly.

The terrier ace sent his Spad tearing down in wild pursuit. He was leaning forward, glaring across his sights, and he tore nearer and nearer to the Fokker with its horrible cargo. Then he saw something that almost caused his heart to stop beating. It was no hand that was holding the blood-drenched body over the edge of the cockpit! It was an arm with a big hook on the end of it!

The Fokker now dived down within twenty feet of the tarmac. From what was left of the uniform, Nippy could tell that the man hanging from the hook was an American pilot. The Fokker pilot turned his head just before he reached the end hangar, and Nippy saw a ghastly face staring up at him. He stared at the horrible red eyes and the great, wide mouth with its fixed grin.

In the next instant, the pilot had shaken the bloody figure from his hook, and it fell limp and flopping to the tarmac.

Nippy tramped down on his triggers, and his sights were glued to that figure in the cockpit. He couldn't possibly miss. Then a sensation of baffled rage swept over him! His triggers were down, but the guns remained silent. Instantly, he saw that the gun belts had been taken out. He had no cartridges! Instinctively, he reached for his automatic, but he had left that behind in the apartment.

The Hun plane pulled up and over in a sharp chandelle, and he turned quickly to head off its flight. But the pilot with the ghastly face was too fast for him and sent his Fokker charging back toward the German side of the lines.

Nippy's first impulse was to follow him, but he knew that would be useless. He kicked over and brought his Spad down for a landing as close to that limp form as he could. Then he leaped from the cockpit and raced into the living room.

Snatching up the phone, he called several points along the Front and shouted the same order:

"There's a lone Fokker heading back across the lines! Knock that crate down if you have to use every ounce of ammunition you've got!"

When he had finished his last call, he ran out on the tarmac. Mechanics were already gathered about the ghastly form. Now the terrier ace recognized the dying pilot as one whom he and G-8 and Bull had known well.

"Wes—Wes Patrick!" he cried. "It's me, Nippy! Who is that bird? Where did he come from? What happened?"

The staring eyes of the dying man took on a more intelligent look for a moment. The mangled mouth opened wider, and Lieutenant Wesley Patrick was trying to speak. Nippy knelt to hear him.

"Har—" he gasped, and again, "Har—"

The muscles of his mouth had been torn so that he couldn't bring them together to utter the rest of the word he was trying to say. The terrier ace tried to revive him, but Patrick was sinking fast. At length he gave a weak, convulsed move and then slumped as death took possession of his body.

Nippy was staring down at him, trying to fathom the secret that the dead man held, when the English manservant called from the apartment door:

"Telephone for you, sir."

The terrier ace sprang to answer it.

"This is Captain Mortimer of Company B, 165th," a voice said. "That plane you spoke of just got through. We tried our best to knock it down but it escaped us."

"Thanks," Nippy said a little weakly, and hung up.

CHAPTER FIVE

A FIGHT FOR LIFE

A SICKENING feeling of horror rushed over G-8. The fourth agent that he had been trying to finish off was almost as large as Bull. G-8 knew

that he was hopelessly outclassed unless he could take these two insane adversaries one at a time. Together, they would knock him out and tear him apart. Bull's eyes had become wild and bloodshot with the glare of lunacy.

"I'm going to kill you!" he yelled.

The big fellow paused in his rush, as if to put dramatic emphasis to his actions. That pause gave G-8 the chance he needed. He leaped to the side of the room nearest the locked door. There would be no time to unfasten it and get out.

Furthermore, G-8 had no intention of doing that. He was merely using it as a trick—to make his two adversaries act according to his quickly formed plan.

Even as he sprang for the door, he pretended to fumble in his pocket for the key. That, too, was only a guise to throw Bull and the Intelligence man off the track. Both the big fellows fell hard, and a rasping peal of mad laughter left Bull Martin's contorted lips.

"No you don't!" he roared.

He sprang for the door to stop G-8 before the Master Spy could unlock it, but G-8 had anticipated this move and pulled his surprise trick. As the big fellow came at him, he turned in a swift, whirling move toward the other mad agent, who was coming in to help Bull.

G-8 and the Intelligence man met alone in the center of the room. Taken completely by surprise, the agent was hurled back by the flying fists of the Master Spy. Every blow that G-8 hurled at him had his whole force behind it. The insane one was trying to get away, trying to avoid those smashing blows of the Master Spy. G-8 knew he would have to finish him quickly, for he could hear Bull roaring behind him.

Like lightning, G-8 shot over a last measuring left, then swung his right with every ounce of strength that his steel muscles could command. That last blow went home to the side of the agent's jaw, and his head seemed to turn half around on his shoulders. His eyes glazed and his knees buckled.

He had only started down in a heap when the Master Spy made his next move. He had gauged Bull's mad lunge nicely. Now he ducked, at the instant that he knew Bull was making his leap. As he bent forward, he reached up behind him and

grasped the big fellow's head and neck. G-8's body flexed forward. With a quick, powerful movement, he sent the unsuspecting Bull flying over his back to crash on the limp, crumpled form of the mad agent.

But that was only a beginning. Bull was up before G-8 could pin him down—up and tearing in with greater rage than before. His great fists came flashing out, battering at the Master Spy with terrific force.

G-8 knew that if one of those blows struck him with full force, he was done for. At first he was forced to spend his efforts solely in guarding against those blows. Never had he seen Bull fight more furiously. A right grazed the Master Spy's ear and a left caught him on the shoulder. The force spun him half around, and for an instant sent him off his balance.



Bull suddenly discarded all caution and came in with great, flailing fists to finish him off. There was an opening for a fast hard right, and G-8 took it. His fist almost broke as it crashed between the eyes of the big fellow.

Bull staggered back. He was still on his feet but shaking his head dazedly. Like lightning, G-8 was upon him, hurling blows into his face. The big

fellow covered up, then lashed out again. Abruptly, his head seemed to clear, and this time he went stark, raving mad and came tearing in. Disregarding the Master Spy's blows, big Bull Martin forced him toward the opposite wall. Again G-8 was ducking and weaving, guarding desperately.

Suddenly, the opening for which he had been waiting, came. He let fly with that pile-driving right of his again. There was a smack like the crack of a pistol as his bruised fist connected with Bull's jaw. The big fellow rocked back on his heels and tottered there for an instant while G-8 threw in the finishing touch—a left and a right to the face that made Bull rock again. Suddenly, the starch went out of the big fellow. He flopped on all fours and gradually his form spread out on the floor. With a sigh, he lay still.

Panting desperately for breath, G-8 stared down at the big form and shook his head sadly. But that was only for an instant, then he snatched up lengths of rope and tied Bull securely. Next, he trussed up the other agent. When he was through, he stood up, squared his shoulders and took a deep breath.

FOR the first time since entering this office, he looked through the window. He realized that this room faced the alley next to general headquarters. Across the alley, he saw the general and some of his staff staring through another open window. They were cheering him.

"That's the greatest hand-to-hand fight I ever hope to see!" the general called. "We're coming right over!"

The Master Spy stepped to the window and threw up the sash.

"No," he called back, "don't let anybody into this building through the front door! Station guards outside at once and see that no one comes in!"

The general stared at him strangely.

"What do you mean?" he demanded. "What are you driving at?"

G-8 shook his head.

"I don't know," he admitted. "I'm just working on a hunch. But I think you can send for some troops now. They can help clean out the rest of this building and carry away the mad agents that

we've tied up. Remember, nobody comes in that front door. Tell them to use the rear entrance."

The general looked at him for a moment with a curious expression on his face, then he shook his head in a baffled sort of way.

"All right," he agreed. "Whatever you say, G-8. I'll have a detachment of troops here in five minutes."

G-8 met the troops at the rear entrance to Intelligence headquarters, and for some time he supervised the removal of the agents that he and Bull had bound up before the big fellow had gone mad. They were loaded into trucks and carried away to a special hospital. By the time they reached Bull to remove him, the big fellow was fully conscious again and raving like a maniac. One moment he thundered and threatened and the next he'd babble on like a silly child.

Then, when the work of removal was finished, G-8 left the building the same way that he had entered it—by leaping from window to window across the alley. There he called the medical major who was in charge of the hospital where the pitiful mental cases had been taken.

"I'd like a strict record kept of these cases," G-8 ordered. "And I'd like to have special care given to my assistant, Bull Martin. You'll recognize him when he arrives."

The major promised to do all he could. G-8 found the general studying him curiously as he hung up.

"G-8," he said, "if you have any ideas about this curse that's stricken Intelligence, for the love of heaven, let's have them. You know what it means to be without an Intelligence department!"

The Master Spy nodded.

"Indeed I do," he admitted. "it's not very pleasant to think about."

"Pleasant!" the general barked. "Confound it, man, we're *licked* without an Intelligence department."

"I'm afraid," G-8 admitted, "you're right. But as far as ideas for a solution are concerned, I haven't any at the moment. I'm sorry, General."

"You haven't any!" the general barked. "But you certainly have *some* ideas! What was your reason for insisting that no one enter the front door of the building?"

"Oh, that was just a hunch," G-8 explained. "I may be wrong, but here's the way it looked to me. Every one of those agents who went mad entered the building through the front door. We saw the janitor killed before our eyes. He was in the building with them, but he was sane. He came up from the basement to see what the fuss was all about. Janitors usually enter and leave by the rear door. I didn't enter through any door, but through a window here in the alley, and I *think* I'm still sane. But it was Bull Martin's entry that really gave me the hunch. He came in through the front door and later went mad."

The general's jaw dropped.

"Bull Martin went mad!" he repeated in a shocked voice.

"Yes," the Master Spy nodded. "Didn't you recognize him? He was the last man I knocked out."

"Good heavens!" the general gasped. "I never dreamed that was Bull. We couldn't see too clearly through the window." He frowned more deeply. "You say he went mad?"

"Yes," the Master Spy admitted. "He acted strangely when he came in—as though something had hit him just about the time he passed through the entrance. I noticed that he was growing worse, but I didn't really suspect he was going mad until he actually did."

"I'll have the entrance to the Intelligence building investigated at once," the general snapped, striding across the floor.

"I have another plan," G-8 countered, "that I think will be safer. My advice would be to close up the building entirely until something develops. I think we'll unravel this mystery before long."

Before the general could ask any more questions, he turned quickly, picked up the phone and called a number.

"I want to talk to A-1," he said, when he got an answer.

He hesitated, then a moment later, said, "Hello, A-1?.... This is G-8. Are you all right?"

"I'm feeling much better," A-1 answered. "I think I'll be fit to go down to headquarters after I've had a light lunch. I felt pretty badly this morning, though. Must have been something I'd eaten."

"You can be thankful," G-8 told him, "that you *did* eat something that kept you from coming down to headquarters. That's a mighty lucky break for you and Intelligence both, sir."

"I don't understand what you mean," A-1 answered.

"I'm coming over right away," G-8 told him, "and I'll tell you all about it then."

He hung up the receiver.

"A-1," the general said, "is chief of Intelligence."

G-8 nodded.

"Yes, of course," he admitted. "I was mighty glad to find out that he hadn't reported to his office this morning. At least we've got one sane member of Intelligence left. He didn't feel well and stayed at his quarters. Lucky thing."

The Master Spy strode toward the door.

"I'll let you know if anything of importance develops, General," he said.

Before the chief could satisfy his curiosity further, G-8 was gone.

CHAPTER SIX

R-1'S MISSION

G-8 FOUND the chief of Intelligence up, dressed, and resting quite comfortably when he reached his hotel suite. He was a man of medium build, quite ordinary-looking at first glance. His hair was gray at the sides, and there was something about the keenness of his eyes, when he looked straight at you, that hinted of a brilliant, quick mind. His face wore a troubled look.

"What's wrong at headquarters, G-8?" he demanded. "What you said over the telephone started me thinking. I haven't been able to get an answer from Intelligence."

The Master Spy told A-1 what had taken place and what he knew about it. The chief of Intelligence listened quietly until G-8 was through, then he sighed.

"It would seem," he admitted, "that we no longer have an Intelligence organization."

"Of course, we have a few agents left," G-8 reminded him. "There are those resident spies in Germany and Belgium. And we also have our crew of contact agents, who keep watch on the few known spies in Paris who are permitted to operate."

A-1 nodded.

"Yes," he admitted, "but that's a mere handful."

"There are enough to serve my purpose," G-8 said. "Just about enough."

A-1 sat silently, thinking for a moment, then he looked up slowly.

"I suppose," he said, "that the general staff wanted to investigate the front of the building, to see if they could learn what was causing this?"

G-8 nodded.

"Yes," he admitted. "At least, that was the general's idea. You can't blame him for that, since it's army tactics to go after something that you want. I'm afraid, however, we would have had a bunch of crazy staff officers on our hands before we got through. I've got another system that I think will work better."

"Good," A-1 nodded, and he sat back to listen.

"It's my hunch," the Master Spy explained, "that the cause of this insanity is known to at least one of the German agents here in Paris. Now, if we can round up all these agents and make them talk—"

"I trust that you have a way to make them talk?" A-1 interrupted.

"I think so," G-8 nodded. "Have you ever heard of *maritoc*?"

A-1 closed his eyes and thought for a moment, then he nodded slowly.

"Yes," he said, "the name is familiar. It's a sort of drug, isn't it? I can't remember at the moment where it comes from or just what effect it produces."

"It is a drug," G-8 assured him, "and it comes from the Malay peninsula. It's use is not commonly known, but a friend of mine brought me a very small quantity of it a while ago, and told me how to use it if I wanted to make someone talk."

"You mean, it's a drug that makes the patient tell everything he knows?" A-1 demanded.

G-8 shook his head.

"No," he said, "it's not quite as easy as that. It produces a condition in the patient similar to delirium, except that he becomes more talkative than in a real coma. You have to take your chances, then, of making some sense out of his delirious speech."

"How much of this drug have you?" A-1 asked.

"Enough to put about a dozen people in a trance," G-8 said.

"Good," the Intelligence chief nodded. "We've just about that many spies in Paris."

G-8 nodded.

"As soon as possible," he said, "I'll go back to Le Bourget and get my supply of *maritoc*. Meantime, you have ambulances call for the various German resident agents. Try not to frighten them. Let these agents suspect that they're being taken to a hospital by mistake."

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand," the Intelligence chief ventured.

"All right," G-8 said. "Suppose we use this as an example. Let's say the ambulance draws up before the house of Pierre Lebeaux. There will be two of our agents, dressed in white, accompanying the ambulance. They'll go up to Lebeaux's door and ask for him. When he comes, they'll explain in French that there has been a mad dog loose in the neighborhood and that he must go to the hospital to be inoculated against rabies. That will throw him off the track, so he won't be afraid he's being apprehended as a spy. It will also furnish an excuse for injecting the *maritoc* when he reaches the hospital. He may argue against going, but the attendants will gently force him into the ambulance, promising to bring him back as soon as the inoculation is finished."

"Excellent," the Intelligence chief nodded. "I'll see that your orders are carried out at once. You'll be at the hospital?"

"Yes," the Master Spy said. "I'll get there as soon as I can. Keep the agents separated so they won't see each other."

"Who," asked the chief, "is going to attend these German agents in their delirium and listen to what they say."

"I plan to have R-1 there as their nurse," G-8 said. "By the time they become delirious, I'll have them all moved into one ward, and R-1 will have charge of them. I'm not sure of this *maritoc*, and some of them may come around before they're supposed to. In that case, R-1 will just be a nurse taking care of them. I'll be at the hospital within a half hour."

The Master Spy drove swiftly to Le Bourget, and Nippy met him as he climbed out of the roadster. The terrier ace wore a worried look on his face.

"G-8," he said, "I've got something to show you."

He led the Master Spy across the storage end of the hangar to a place where a piece of old canvas covered something. Even before Nippy lifted the canvas, G-8 could see where blood had run out from under it.

"Look," the terrier ace said, disclosing the figure of Lieutenant Wesley Patrick.



G-8 bent down suddenly at recognition of the face.

"What happened to him?" he demanded.

Nippy shrugged.

"I don't know," he admitted. "I've just checked with his squadron, and they told me he went out on patrol early this morning."

"Yes, I know," G-8 said. "But how did he get here? And how—"

The terrier ace was covering up the dead form again. He turned to G-8.

"Let's go in the living room," he suggested. "The sight of poor Wes, ripped to shreds like that, sort of gets me."

G-8 followed him into the living room. There Nippy told him what had happened; of the German pilot with the ghastly face and the iron hook where his left hand should be; of his own futile attack upon the Hun ship.

G-8 was silent for a long moment after Nippy had finished. His eyes were riveted to the rug at his feet.

"I wonder," he mused, "if that ties up with this madness down at Intelligence headquarters."

"Say!" Nippy exploded. "Here I am raving on about my little troubles, and you look as if you'd been run through a wringer! Jumping Jupiter, what's happened to you?"

G-8 took a tiny, folded paper from the library table drawer and turned again to Nippy.



"Plenty," he said. "Bull's gone crazy—with the rest of the Intelligence agents. I had to knock him out."

"Bull!" Nippy stammered. "Gone crazy? Hey, listen, G-8, are you kidding me?"

"No," the Master Spy said soberly. "I wish, Nip, that I was kidding. I'm not."

"From the looks of you," Nippy ventured, "it wasn't any cinch to knock him out."

G-8 glanced at the mirror. His features were swollen in places, and there was a small cut under his left eye and one on his chin.

"I don't look as bad as I thought I did," he said.

"Well, listen," Nippy pleaded, "how is Bull? Is he going to be crazy for the rest of his life?"

"I don't know," G-8 admitted. "I'm going to call up now and find out how he is. I'm not expecting much change."

HE CALLED the major of the hospital where they had taken the mad agents, and learned that there had been no change in Bull's condition. He was still a raving maniac. A lump rose in the Master Spy's throat.

"No change yet," he told Nippy.

He called R-1's quarters, and the girl spy's musical voice answered the phone.

"R-1," the Master Spy said, "I've got an important job for you. I'll tell you about it when I see you at the *Rue des Chenes* hospital. Please get into your nurse's uniform and go there as quickly as possible."

"I'll be there in ten minutes," the girl promised. "I'm glad that you asked me to help you."

A few minutes later, G-8 was driving through the outskirts of Paris. He parked his car behind the hospital and went inside. He found that some of the German agents had already been brought in.

To one of the medical officers, he explained the use of *maritoc* and the method of injecting it.

"They must think," G-8 said, "that they're being inoculated against rabies."

"Very well," the officer agreed.

G-8 waited outside the room in which the inoculations were being given, and R-1 came in

presently and greeted him with a radiant smile. The two had worked together often, and each admired the other's ability as a spy.

"This," R-1 said, "is always a high spot in my life, G-8, when I can work with you on a case."

The Master Spy smiled back at her.

"I hope you'll still think so when we get through with this affair," he confessed.

He told her briefly what had taken place, of the drug injected into the agents.

"You'll be the nurse in charge of these eleven inoculated German agents," he said. "As each becomes delirious, he'll be brought into your ward. I'd like to have you handle it alone. You're not afraid, are you?"

R-1 shook her head.

"You know I'm not, G-8," she said.

"Get all the information you can," the Master Spy ordered. "When you've collected all possible dope, bring it to me at Le Bourget. You'd better have a pad and pencil for taking notes."

G-8 left the girl there to take care of her duties.

One by one the enemy agents were brought into R-1's ward, each of them babbling more or less incoherently. The girl spy moved from one cot to another. Now and then she stopped and talked to a semi-conscious patient, trying to lead him on in some babbling conversation that he had started. As the effect of the drug increased, the patient, strangely enough, seemed to talk more sensibly. Gradually, R-1 gleaned enough information to place all of them before a firing squad. But the particular information that she sought was not revealed.

Suddenly, she was drawn by the conversation of one of the younger German agents. He was quite dark, apparently of French descent, for he had worn the brilliant uniform of the Blue Devils. An outcry that he had uttered had brought her to his cot—an outcry that sounded triumphant:

"Insane! They shall all be insane! Already most of the Intelligence agents are insane, *und* next we move the little wireless beam to the entrance of general headquarters. We shall cause the general staff, with all the high commanding officers, to go insane! Then the way will be clear for *Herr*—"

He broke off and his breathing became labored.

"*Oui*," R-1 said, bending over him. "*Oui*, they shall all go insane from the wireless beam. That will be very good! And that will leave the way clear for *Herr*!"

She stopped to let him go on. His labored breathing subsided and he relaxed and lay motionless while the girl probed on, trying to get him to say more. His lips moved, uttered whispered words that she couldn't catch.

Suddenly, he cried out, "*Herr* Goulon, the Cripple of Hartsburg! G-8 shall be next, then his assistants! They shall all go crazy! Everyone of importance will—"

He broke off again, and his labored breathing continued for a long time. R-1, bending over him, tried vainly to get him talking once more. But the young Frenchman fell into a deep sleep.

R-1 slipped out of the ward, leaving her patients in charge of a medical officer, and took a taxi for Le Bourget. As they sped through the Paris streets, she glanced out of the rear window and her heart began pounding a little faster. A large car of French make was following.

It was hot and stuffy in the taxi, and R-1 lowered the windows for more air.

She ordered the driver to turn the next few corners and try to shake off their pursuers. He did this, but the other car continued to follow her. As they reached the outskirts of town, she saw the larger car shorten the distance between them. There was no possibility of running away, since the taxi in which she rode was a low-powered, sputtering affair.

She called to her driver, "Stay in the middle of the road! Don't let that car pass us!"

The driver tried to obey, but the road they were traveling was too wide to permit one taxi to block it. Suddenly, the other car drew alongside and a man peered out of the open window.

Suddenly, the man raised a staff, on the end of which was a metal ball, about three inches in diameter. The ball was not shiny, but a dull gunmetal in color.

All this happened in the instant that the car passed. The homely, swarthy face of the man vanished as he settled back in the seat, and the powerful car raced on.

But in that instant of passing, when the metal ball had appeared in the window, R-1 sensed something most unpleasant and very strange. Cold perspiration broke out upon her. It was as though some strange, unyielding power had hold of her—a power that she couldn't resist.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE AMBULANCE OF DEATH

THE girl spy tried to compose herself, to think clearly. Never before had such a strange sensation taken possession of her. She saw the big car draw away, then saw it turn left into a side road. Her mind cleared for a moment and she thought of her gun. Why hadn't she used that? She might have been able to shoot the swarthy one. Then her mind became muddled again.

They had nearly reached the turn that the larger car had taken when she leaned forward and spoke to the driver:

"Follow that car as closely as you can," she ordered.

The driver turned for a moment and looked back at her as if he wanted to ask, "Can a snail catch a greyhound?" But he simply nodded and said matter-of-factly, "*Oui, Mademoiselle.*"

The old taxi complained louder as he tried to get more speed out of it, and he made the turn into the side road. Already it was apparent that it would be impossible to catch that fleeing car. It was little more than a speck, far down between the poplar-guarded lane, leaving a cloud of dust behind it.

R-1 sleepily realized that it had vanished, but she didn't seem to care.

"I fear we can never catch that other car, *Mademoiselle*," the driver said, "but I will do my best."

"Yes," R-1 said a little hollowly, "do your best."

A strange feeling crept over the girl—a feeling that she should not see G-8 now. In the next moment she was trying to think what she had to tell him. Dimly she remembered a hospital and several delirious men on cots. One of the men had talked, but she couldn't remember what he had

said. Then she recalled having written down something, and absently, she opened her handbag. It contained a few personal effects, a folded slip of paper, a pencil and a thirty-two automatic.

She felt hot, as though she were going to faint, and her head began to ache. The car was completely out of sight, and except for a little wisp of dust which hung in the air over the road, there was no sign, even, that it had passed.

The taxi driver sent his car snorting on, away from Le Bourget. But R-1 didn't mind, for the cool air coming through the open windows helped clear her head. For long minutes they drove on. At length, she leaned forward.

"I think we may as well turn toward Le Bourget now," she said.

The driver took the next opportunity to follow her orders.

"Drive slowly," R-1 commanded. "I must have time to think."

THE swarthy man in the back of the big car leaned forward, after they had passed R-1's taxi, and spoke to the driver:

"Turn off the main road at the next opportunity, Gaston, and let's see what speed you can make with this car."

The driver, a small hatchet-faced Frenchman, spun the wheel and sent the car charging down the side road between the poplars. A little way farther on, he turned.

"Do you think the wireless beam will prove effective upon her, *Monsieur Poinceau*?" he asked.

The swarthy man chuckled.

"To be sure," he said. "I could see the change come over her face even as we passed."

He turned and looked out of the back window as they sped on. Through the dust, he could see the taxi dimly as it turned in the side road behind them.

"They're trying to follow us," he said. "That's very good. But do not take any chances. Put as much space between us as possible. We have some changes to make before we reach Le Bourget."

The big car sped on through a mass of side roads. They lost the taxi completely and turned back toward Le Bourget. In a spot where the road

became merely a trail through the thick woods, the driver brought the car to a stop.

"You think this place will do, *Monsieur Poinceau*?" he asked.

"I am quite sure of it, Gaston," the swarthy one nodded. "But we must act quickly."

"Even as he spoke, he was turning the cushions of the rear seat so that they made a bed along one side of the car. The rear of the car became a door, and he locked the side doors. With Gaston's help, he brought out two curtains made of heavy canvas. On each curtain was painted a large red cross. There were snap buttons on each side of the car, and they rapidly attached the canvas.

Monsieur Poinceau stood off and looked at the work when it was done, and he nodded with satisfaction.

"That's perfect, Gaston," he said. "No one will be able to tell this car from a special ambulance. And now for our white uniforms."

He brought out two white suits from the car and handed one to Gaston. The other he donned himself. As the two climbed into the front seat, they looked for all the world like two French ambulance attendants—a driver and an interne.

"No we go to Le Bourget as quickly as possible and wait," *Monsieur Poinceau* said.

Ten minutes later they entered the field and stopped, parking at the edge of the tarmac near the end hangar. From here they could command a good view of the field and the apartment of G-8 and his Battle Aces.

Monsieur Poinceau smiled at Gaston.

"Now," he said, "we shall have nothing to do but wait until we are called." He glanced at his wrist watch. "We should not have to wait more than ten or fifteen minutes at the most."

He lighted a cigarette and puffed at it, keeping his eyes glued to the dial of his watch.

G-8 NOTICED that ambulance a few minutes later, when he and Nippy brought their Spads in to land at Le Bourget. But even the Master Spy sensed nothing strange. It was quite common, in any airdrome, to find an ambulance sitting at the side of the tarmac, ready to rush to a crash at any

moment. They taxied their planes to the storage end of the last hangar and climbed out.

"Well, we certainly didn't see much this afternoon," Nippy ventured.

The Master Spy shook his head.

"No," he admitted, "It's funny, but I can't seem to find any other activity that actually ties up with this insanity affair."

"And you still think that walking through the front door does the trick?" Nippy demanded.

They had just reached the door to the apartment, and G-8 stopped almost mid-way in the entrance.

"Everything seems to point that way," he said, half to himself.

His keen eyes were scrutinizing the edge of the door casing before him.

"What are you looking for now?" Nippy wanted to know.

"I'm just wondering," G-8 admitted, "if they might have rigged up something here."

"You know, G-8," Nippy said earnestly, "sometimes, when you get working on one of these queer cases, you seem to go completely screwy."

"I feel pretty much like that now," the Master Spy admitted, smiling slightly.

"Yes, but you're going at things a little different in this case," the terrier ace pointed out. "Ordinarily, if you suspected that there was something haywire about the entrance to Intelligence headquarters, you'd go after it hammer and tongs. You'd have the whole front end of the building torn out before you got through."

"No," G-8 ventured, stepping forward and opening the door, "not if it were a case like this. I'm waiting to be sure."

They were in the living room now as Nippy asked, "But what are you going to do, leave that building closed for the duration of the war? Is that your plan?"

"Of course not," G-8 told him. "We'll go after it before long, probably. Meantime, I'm just waiting to see if this insanity is permanent or temporary. I've got a hunch that it isn't going to last."

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy cried, closing the door and lighting a cigarette. "That's the best news

I've heard in months. Then, if this insanity is only temporary, Bull will be O.K. pretty soon?"

"That's what I'm hoping," G-8 admitted, "but don't bet any money on it. So far, I'm only working on hunches."

There came the snort of a taxi out front. G-8 turned quickly to the door.

"I wonder if that can be R-1," he said.

He threw open the door and was there in time to help R-1 out of the cab. He studied her closely and a troubled look crossed his face.

"How are you feeling?" he asked.

The girl spy stared at him in a queer sort of way but didn't answer. He hurried her inside and closed the door.

At his first glimpse of her, Nippy blurted out, "Jumping Jupiter, R-1, what's happened to you?"

The girl nodded absently. Lines of strain showed in her lovely face. Her clear blue eyes were wide, as if with fear—something neither G-8 nor Nippy had ever seen before in R-1.

"Something strange happened on the way up," she said in a voice that didn't sound like her own.

G-8 helped her to a chair and took another a few feet away, directly in front of her.

"Yes?" he said gently.

For a moment the living room was deathly still, then R-1 sighed. She began speaking in a strange monotone.

"Along the main road from Paris a large car drew up beside the taxi. A Frenchman in the back seat leaned forward and he raised something like a cane with a queer gunmetal ball on the end of it. He pointed it at me for an instant as the car passed. It made me feel very queer. I couldn't remember things. I thought I was feeling better but—I guess—I've been getting—worse."

The Master Spy leaned forward, his casualness hiding the tense anxiety within him.

"You learned something from the delirious spies?" he asked.

R-1 hesitated, passed a hand over her brow and nodded rather absently.

"Yes," she admitted, "I learned something very important. See if—I can remember. There was something about a wireless—a wireless

machine that caused insanity. Those that passed through the entrance—"

She hesitated a moment, then went on: "—became insane."

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy cried. "You're right, G-8! A wireless machine! That's—"

G-8 motioned hurriedly to Nippy for silence. R-1 picked up her handbag.

"I can't remember—any more," she said. She hesitated, then said, "Wait!"

She opened her handbag and fumbled inside. Suddenly, her eyes riveted on something there and she stared insanely. Then she moved with astonishing speed. Instead of taking the note from her handbag, she whipped out the thirty-two automatic, flipped off the safety catch, and pulled the trigger.

CHAPTER EIGHT

R-1 VANISHES

AS quickly as R-1 had moved to draw her automatic and fire it, G-8 had moved just a little faster. With a cry of alarm, Nippy had leaped at the girl from the side, but the Master Spy had beaten him to it. He had been first to see the insane gleam suddenly appear in R-1's eyes. He had suspected the horrible truth then—that the girl had gone mad. He was not surprised when the gun flashed from her bag. As it came out, the Master Spy sprang to his feet, bringing the cushion from his overstuffed chair with him. He hurled the cushion at the gun even as it barked and spat flame.

R-1 tried to avoid the oncoming missile, but before she could fire again, G-8 had her by the wrist. The steel-jacketed bullet tore through the cushion and went slamming into the kitchen wall. Battle rushed through the swinging door into the living room.

"Oh, I say, look here," he cried. "Target practice is all right, but this is carrying it a bit too far!"

Then he stared at the struggle that was going on as Nippy and G-8 tried to quiet R-1. The girl was fighting, scratching, gouging like a cornered

wildcat. She screamed threats at Nippy and G-8 as they fought to hold her, each hanging onto one arm.

"Bring some of those new linen towels you've got," G-8 commanded.

Trembling, Battle ducked into the kitchen and reappeared with a bunch of linen dishtowels that hadn't been used.

Suddenly, R-1's body relaxed and she slumped in a faint. Tenderly, G-8 bound her wrists and ankles.

"Oh, I say," Battle pleaded, "that's too bad! It's a shame, sir! She's so beautiful, sir, so lovely. It's ghastly to think of her—"

"We'd better get her to the hospital," Nippy cut in. "There's an ambulance outside. I'll call it."

He ran out of the room, and in less than a minute he had the big ambulance drawn up in front of the end hangar. The two attendants, *Monsieur Poinceau* and *Gaston* disguised in white suits, were carrying in a stretcher that had been concealed in the roof of the car. Gently, R-1's limp form was lifted onto the stretcher and the two men in white, one at each end, picked up the handles.

The telephone jangled insistently. G-8 turned to it, hurriedly giving orders:

"Take her to the *Rue des Chenes* hospital in Paris. I'll arrange for special observation."

"*Oui, Monsieur*," the swarthy one bowed.

They hurried out to the ambulance, Nippy accompanying them, while G-8 picked up the receiver. The general's voice cracked over the wires to him.

"G-8?" he barked. "G.H.Q. has been struck with the insanity now! Three of my staff have already gone mad. I don't know about the rest as yet."

The Master Spy took a long breath.

"How are you feeling, General?" he demanded.

"So far I'm all right," the general answered.

"You haven't had any strange sensations or lapses of mind?"

"No, not the slightest," the general assured him.

"Then apparently you're going to be all right," G-8 said.

"Have you found out anything?" the general demanded anxiously.

"Yes," G-8 said. "Quite a few things. We know that some wireless apparatus, probably fastened near the entrance to the buildings, causes anyone who passes it to go insane. But don't look for it, do you understand, sir? Leave it alone. Order everybody out of the place. Have them climb through the windows. I wouldn't trust even the back entrance to the building. Climb out of the windows and get away as quickly as possible."

The general's voice became suddenly stern.

"G-8," he cracked, "I have never run from an enemy yet."

"Right," G-8 answered, "but you'd better run from this one if you don't want to go crazy. I'm—"

He broke off suddenly. From where he was standing, he could look through the window. He was watching the ambulance leave the field. Now, as he saw it reach the main road, it turned. But instead of heading toward Paris, it turned toward the Front.

"Sorry, I have to leave!" G-8 shouted.

He slammed up the receiver and spun around.

"Nippy! Hey, Nippy!" he yelled.

The terrier ace came bursting into the living room. "Hey, that ambulance is going in the wrong direction," Nippy chirped. "It's taking R-1 toward the Front!"

Already, G-8 had the terrier ace by the arm and was hurrying him along toward the storage end of the hangar.

"No time to lose," he cracked. "Get in."

G-8 pushed Nippy into the roadster, then leaped behind the wheel. With a roar, he sent the car charging out of the hangar and down the road in pursuit of the fake ambulance which was fast vanishing from view.

"Jumping Jupiter, I should have known!" Nippy choked. "I don't think that's an ambulance at all. I never saw one just like it before—but when I saw it standing on the field, just like the other ones, I thought—"

"Don't let it get you," G-8 told him. "It fooled me, too. I didn't stop to think. When R-1 went mad, we forgot everything else. But we've got to stop that ambulance. Get out your gun, Nip."

The speedometer needle had been wavering up above fifty; now it reached sixty, then hung at seventy. But still the high-powered ambulance kept drawing away from them. It had become but a speck, far, far down the road.

Nippy was leaning out around the windshield, his automatic held ready to fire if they should draw near enough.

Suddenly, the ambulance vanished.

"I saw it!" the terrier ace yelled. "It turned right on a side road."

The accelerator was already down to the floor and the needle was wavering at the seventy-five miles an hour mark. Not until G-8 was almost upon the turn did he slacken his speed, then he clamped down on his rear brakes and spun the wheel. There came a squeal from the rear tires as rubber was torn off. He skirted that turn expertly. They could see only a cloud of dust ahead, but they knew they had gained through G-8's expert driving. Nippy let out a yell!

"Hey, they're turning into that field!"

An instant later, G-8 shouted, "There's a ship in that field! It's a Salmson. The motor's turning over. Shoot at those tires when you get a chance!"

"Yeh," Nippy yelled, "but I can't see them in the dust, and I'm afraid of hitting R-1."

They charged on with the needle holding at seventy-five. At the field, G-8 sent the roadster careening over in a wild skid on the dirt road. He made the turn and shot into the field. But already the two white-clad figures had R-1 in the rear cockpit of the Salmson. The swarthy one was at the controls, while the other was in the rear with the girl.

The Salmson motor roared. And before G-8 and Nippy could get within pistol shot range, the Salmson was rising in the air, turning toward the battlefield. Without stopping, G-8 slammed the roadster into second, sent the car spinning around in a tight turn and raced back toward Le Bourget.

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy exploded, "They're gone! Beat us to it!"

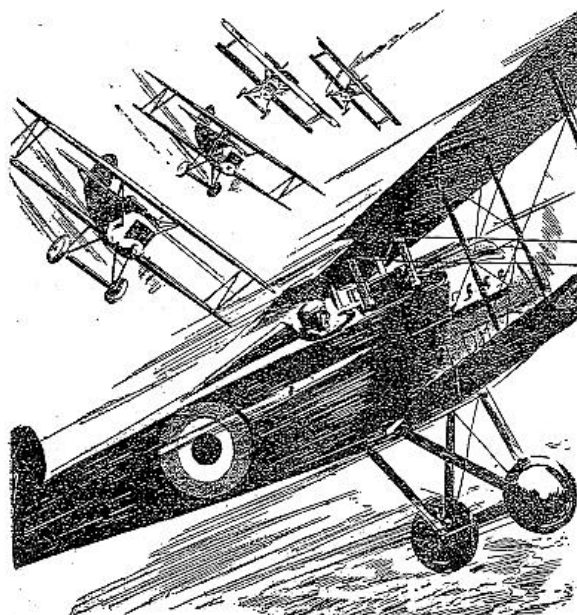
G-8 gripped the wheel more tightly. His jaw was clenched as he gave a short nod.

"Yes," he said. "If we ever worked fast in our lives, we've got to work fast now."

He sent the roadster racing back into the field and out on the tarmac where they had left their Spads.

"You stay here, Nip," G-8 cracked. "Something may come up that you will have to take care of. Quick, spin the prop for me!"

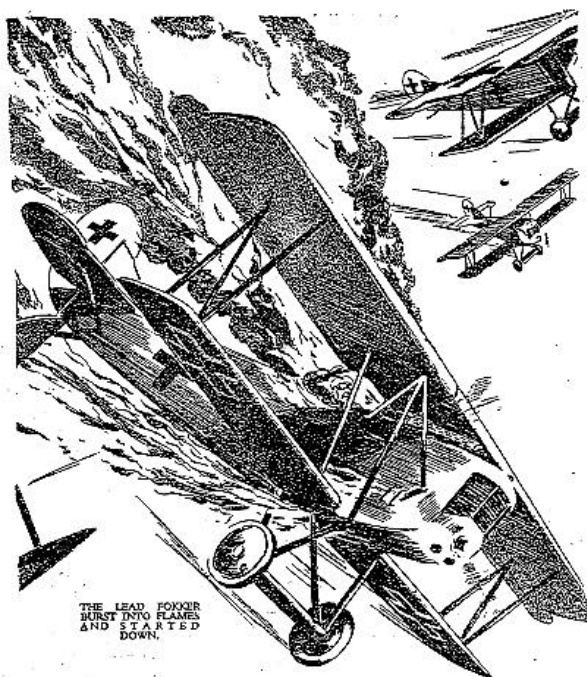
He stopped the car with a squeal of tires against the dry apron and leaped out. The terrier ace was already leaping for the propeller, turning it to suck in gas.



The Master Spy ran into the living room, took the folded paper from R-1's handbag, then came racing back to his ship. Not until he was well in the air and flying wide open along the course that the Salmson had taken, did he look at the notes that R-1 had made. He saw "*Herr Goulon, the Cripple of Hartsburg*," folded the paper and tucked it in his pocket, then he took out a map of the enemy country. He strained his eyes to try and catch sight of the Salmson, but as yet it was not in view.

G-8 remembered Hartsburg, but wasn't sure of its direction from Le Bourget. A moment later he located it on the map, charted an accurate compass course and headed straight for the town.

Minutes raced by. The Front, with its blasting guns erupted beneath him. Then, far ahead, he saw a winged speck that was probably the Salmson. That, too, was headed for Hartsburg. G-8 pushed the throttle for more speed, and waited.



G-8 was gaining on the Salmson, but Hartsburg lay so close that already the other plane was going down to land at the edge of the town. And to make matters worse, nine Fokkers came raining down on the Master Spy. It would be impossible now for him to carry out any plans that he might have had.

Unable to escape the fight, G-8 gripped his guns. He had the leader in his sights at long range. For a moment he held his fire, then tramped down on the triggers. His Vickers guns spoke their challenge, and the lead Fokker burst into flames.

G-8 caught another Boche in the hot path of his guns, but in a moment it was apparent that the Master Spy was doomed. These Huns could fight; were trained killers of long experience.

G-8 had not time to concentrate on any one plane. He was fighting for his very life. G-8 was trapped. He caught a swift glimpse of the Salmson, already landed in that field near Hartsburg, just as the German slugs found his Hisso. G-8's engine stopped with a groan, black smoke pouring out. Another moment and the Master Spy was going down in a wild spin.

CHAPTER NINE THE MASTER SPY AT WORK

G-8 HAD no way of knowing that he was being drawn into a trap by the crippled fiend, *Herr Goulon*. Neither did he suspect that midnight had been set as the hour of his execution. Yet, even had he known that, the Master Spy would scarcely have acted much differently than he did.

At the moment he went spinning down with his Hisso motor stalled, G-8 was concerned with two things.

First, Wesley Patrick had been shot down and captured in Germany. This fiend whom he realized now must be *Herr Goulon*, the Cripple of Hartsburg, mentioned in R-1's notes, had tortured young Patrick mercilessly. And now R-1, who was at least temporarily insane, would probably be given the same treatment.

G-8 was fighting his ship, aiming at a clearing he could barely make out, about two miles south of the field where the Salmson had landed. Fokkers were hovering above him, waiting for his crash.

The Master Spy waited for the last moment to level out. As he yanked back on the stick, wheels and tailskid touched together, and the plane rolled rapidly toward the small patch of woods ahead of him. G-8 realized his Spad was useless for a quick escape, since the Hun Spandaus had ripped the heart from the motor.

G-8 sent the ship crashing into the woods, where two large trees, one on either side, caught the wings and buckled them back. The fuselage and engine shot forward.

G-8 threw his arms up over his head to protect himself. He was thrown forward against the instrument board.

Fokkers came screaming at him again but the tops of the trees partially hid him from their view. The approaching darkness helped to shield him, too, and by the time the first staccato of the Spandaus sounded, the Master Spy was out of the cockpit and crouched under the engine.

German slugs clanked against the metal of the plane, thudded on the ground all about him. G-

8 waited there in momentary safety until the Fokker zoomed up again. Then he touched a light to the nearest piece of torn fabric and as the flames shot up, consuming the plane, he dashed away into the woods.

STANDING on the roof of the building which was his headquarters in Hartsburg, the crippled fiend watched as best he could, in the waning light of early evening, the dogfight which had taken place between G-8 and the Fokkers. Through powerful binoculars he had seen the Master Spy going down in that tight spin, had seen him fall below the level of the trees. But his demon eyes had caught a movement of the Spad that told him G-8 was bringing it out of the spin. Trained airman that he was, *Herr* Goulon knew that G-8 was about to land safely.

Moving with that peculiar limp of his, *Herr* Goulon hurried into the scuttlehole through which he had come out upon the roof, then descended to the lower floor. By telephone he sent out his orders:

"Have the woods two miles south of Hartsburg completely surrounded at once. Bring in the pilot of that Spad as soon as you have captured him."

Suddenly, his heart chilled a little and beat faster. Fear was gnawing at his soul.

"Have R-1, the girl spy, brought here to my headquarters," he commanded. "My house must be completely surrounded by soldiers to prevent her escape."

That last was a lie to hide his fear of the Master Spy. He had heard much about G-8's uncanny skill in avoiding capture before, and he feared a repetition of it now.

A few minutes after Goulon had finished telephoning, the guards arrived to surround his house. After that, a car drove up. Staring out of his window, *Herr* Goulon could see three persons on the rear seat. He recognized one as his agent, *Monsieur* Poinceau, another as Gaston. The third was the girl, R-1, tightly bound. The girl was conscious, but her eyes were a little wild.

Herr Goulon admitted them. The girl stared at him, then began to laugh hysterically as she noticed his horrible face.

The cripple glared at the sight of the nurse's uniform that she wore. His muscles tightened and

his heart beat faster. This girl was not only an assistant of the *verdammt* G-8, but also one of the American nurses who had helped to maim him for life. Hungrily, he hobbled nearer to her.

"*Ach, Gott!*" he gutturalled under his breath. "This one shall pay. She is very beautiful. It will be a pleasure to tear that lovely face to shreds with my iron hook."

But even at those words, R-1 didn't flinch. She had stopped her hysterical laughing and except for the rolling of her eyes, her expression was quite calm, as though she hadn't even understood what he said.

The blazing eyes of *Herr* Goulon turned to the swarthy *Monsieur* Poinceau.

"She will not be insane much longer?"

Monsieur Poinceau nodded.

"No, *mein Herr*," he said. "I gave her only a slight dose of the wireless beam."

Herr Goulon nodded.

"*Gut*," he said. "We shall wait until she is completely sane—until she can realize the full horror of my revenge. Then I shall visit her."

"I believe," said *Monsieur* Poinceau, "that she will become completely sane within a very few hours."

"*Gut*," *Herr* Goulon nodded. "Perhaps before midnight, before the hour I have set for the execution of the *verdammt* one, G-8."

BUT G-8, at that moment, had no intention of being killed. The Master Spy had made good time through the dark woods. There were times in the past, when G-8 had been in the same situation. He knew that it wouldn't be long before these woods would be completely surrounded. Darkness would help him, and he at least had his Colt automatic at his side. That, however, could be used only as a club, for a fired shot would bring half the German army down on his neck.

Suddenly, G-8 broke out of the woods and came to the edge of an open field. There he stopped.

A group of men were coming across that field, spread out fanwise and carrying flashlights that pierced the blackness as they swept on in long strides.

Immediately, G-8 looked about for a hiding place. But the forest, in this area, was quite clean of underbrush. He stared up into the trees. They, too, were free of lower branches. He moved back into the woods a little, searching frantically for enough foliage to conceal him.

Now the lights were coming nearer. The searchers had almost reached the edge of the woods. Suddenly, the Master Spy spotted a tree with a trunk that was about a foot in diameter and a lower branch that extended out sidewise and was quite thick with foliage.

Immediately, he began climbing the tree, shinnying up the trunk as he had climbed trees when he was younger. He reached the branch with the lights only fifty feet off. Noiselessly, he moved out to a crotch of the branch where the leaves would hide him. There he crouched like a panther ready to spring.

There was little talking among those guards as they came on. He heard one say in an authoritative voice:

"Spread out over a wider area. Search everywhere. Have your gun ready for instant action. Remember, you are searching for the *verdammte* one. He will kill without hesitation."

The nearest beam of light was traveling about the ground as its holder approached the tree. Hiding there in his leafy shield, G-8 got a glimpse of the fellow. He was a fairly blocky Hun of average height. He wore a private's cloth cap without any visor.

G-8 turned his eyes away as the light shone up into the trees. He tensed there, breathless, not daring to move as the light beam flashed about from one branch to another. It riveted on the branch where G-8 was poised, staved there momentarily, then moved back to the ground again directly beneath him.

The Hun was directly under him now, no other German close by. G-8 poised to attack. His automatic was held club fashion. He waited until the searcher took one more step, then the Master Spy sprang. Even before his feet hit the ground, he had brought the butt of his automatic down on the Hun's round head. The sound of the blow was cushioned somewhat by the German's felt hat.

With his other hand, the Master Spy caught the flashlight before it fell, and extinguished its

beam. He stood and listened. The other searchers were going on through the darkness, unaware that one of their comrades had dropped out.

Swiftly, noiselessly, G-8 returned to the body of the Hun. He was a heavy fellow, but G-8 managed to pick him up and carry him back toward the field. He skirted the edge of it, then laid the Boche down in a clump of alders.

Next, G-8 went quickly to work, changing his face to resemble that of the dead German private. He found by examining the record book that he was to be Private Hans Schumann.

With that knowledge, the Master Spy strode toward Hartsburg. For a long time he walked about the town establishing layouts of streets and buildings in his memory. Twice, as the night wore on, G-8 passed a large house that was heavily guarded by soldiers.

He located a private among the guards—one who was several feet removed from the others at the rear of the house.

"Is there something special going on here at this fine big house, *mein Herr*?" G-8 asked: "Perhaps a party or something of the kind?"

The private stared at him searchingly for a moment, then asked. "Do you not know of the Cripple of Hartsurg, *Herr* Goulon? This is his home."

G-8 shrugged.

"Is that so?" he remarked. "*Jawohl*, I have heard of him. I understand that he is going to win the war for the *Vaterland*, very soon now. That is very good."

The private sighed.

"*Jawohl*," he said. "That is the hope of us all, *nicht wahr*?"

"*Jawohl*, of course," G-8 nodded, "*aber* is his house always guarded like this?"

He noticed that the guards were coming closer from either side to listen. He had started the conversation, and he would have to stay and finish it.

"You see," G-8 added hastily, "I have just come to Hartsburg after a long time at the Front."

"Only tonight is the house being guarded," the guard told him. "We are supposed to stay here so that the American girl spy, whom *Herr* Goulon holds prisoner, does not escape."



G-8 widened his eyes significantly.

"Oh," he said. "I see. So this *Herr* Goulon likes the ladies, *nicht wahr?*"

"It is not that," the private told him. "I believe it has something to do with revenge against American women, particularly nurses."

A sergeant of the German guard was standing beside the private, facing G-8.

"Who are you to ask questions at this time?" he demanded.

"I am Private Hans Schumann," G-8 answered.

He presented his record book. The sergeant took a look at it, but couldn't see much in the darkness.

"*Und* I suppose," G-8 went on calmly, "that no one is permitted to go near the house. I thought perhaps it might be fun to try to peek through the windows."

The sergeant handed him back his record book.

"We have orders to keep everyone away," he said stiffly, "and that goes for you, too. No one will be allowed to enter the house tonight, except the searching party who finds the *verdammte* G-8."

"G-8?" the Master Spy breathed. "*Ach du Lieber*, is he on this side of the lines?"

He tried to appear a little scared.

The sergeant nodded his head, then.

"*Jawohl*," he said. "He was shot down in the woods south of Hartsburg. They are searching for him now."

"*Und* they will bring him here when they find him?"

"*Jawohl*," the sergeant said, "as quickly as possible. *Herr* Goulon is waiting." He showed signs of annoyance. "*Aber*, you must go away now," he said.

"*Jawohl*," the Master Spy nodded. "At once."

He turned and slipped off into the night. As he walked back toward the south end of town, through which he had come, his mind seized on a desperate plan. He realized two things; first, that this guard had not been set up about the house to keep R-1 from escaping. She was insane and would be heavily bound. Secondly, he knew that with all those guards about the place, it would be impossible for him to enter in any guise except as himself, the most hated American spy.

He walked out of town, across the fields and patches of woods, until he came to the place where he had left the body of Hans Schumann. There he exchanged the German clothing that he wore for his own American uniform. With his tiny make-up kit, he removed the make-up from his face. When he emerged from the alders, he was once more himself, G-8, the Master Spy.

He carried his service automatic in its holster by his side, knowing that it would be taken from him the instant that he was captured. But even then G-8 would be prepared for trouble. He must get in that house and get to R-1.

Keeping well in the shadows, he re-entered the town and went by way of a dark back street to the rear of *Herr* Goulon's house. He stepped up before the same private to whom he had talked before. In the darkness, the Boche soldiers didn't notice that he was wearing an American uniform.

"*Herr* Private," G-8 said, "I am about to bestow an honor upon you and your sergeant. Please call your sergeant at once."

The sergeant emerged from a clump of shrubbery, approaching hastily. Apparently, he had recognized the voice of the German private whom he had driven away before.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded. "What are you—"

Suddenly, he turned on his flashlight and ran the beam over G-8's figure.

"*Lieber Gott!*" he breathed.

CHAPTER TEN

CAPTURE

G-8 SMILED. "You seem surprised, Sergeant," he observed. "I understand *Herr* Goulon is looking for me."

The sergeant blinked. For a moment he was too astonished to draw his Luger. But the private at that instant had drawn his gun and covered G-8.

"You wear the uniform of an American captain," the sergeant said then. "*Ach du Lieber*, is this a joke?"

The Master Spy chuckled.

"No, I would hardly call it a joke," he confessed. "I am an American—an American spy known as G-8."

The light in the sergeant's hand wavered nervously. The private's gun shook a little at the mention of that name. But G-8 was smiling calmly.

"But how—how did you get here?" the sergeant demanded.

He had drawn out his Luger and reaching over, picked G-8's automatic from its holster.

The Master Spy shrugged.

"You are wasting words, Sergeant," he said. "Remember, *Herr* Goulon is waiting and anxious to see me." He bowed. "You and the *herr* private have the honor, if any, of taking me to him."

"*Jawohl*," the sergeant nodded.

He was still shaken by the surprise and shock.

"Come at once," he ordered. "March toward the back door of the office."

G-8 bowed, then stepped ahead into the ring of guards that had already formed. The sergeant and the private walked behind him with their guns trained on his back. Presently, in answer to the sergeant's knock, the door opened. A blocky German guard filled the entrance.

"*Was ist?*" he demanded.

"We have here," the sergeant announced, "the American spy for whom *Herr* Goulon is waiting."

The big guard's mouth dropped open, his eyes bulged as he stared at G-8 in the light.

"*Lieber Gott!*" he breathed. "It is G-8? You caught him?"

The sergeant nodded. "*Jawohl*," he said.

G-8 interposed with a suggestion:

"I think it would be well if the two men who captured me came in and told *Herr* Goulon how it was done. They should receive credit for it."

The big guard whipped out his gun and held it to G-8's stomach, then stepped back against the rear entrance wall.

"Come," he said, his voice shaking. The Master Spy stepped past him, then down the corridor into a small room. From there they passed on to others at the direction of the guard. G-8 was ordered to climb the stairs. Then he was taken hastily into a large room.

For the first time, G-8 rested his eyes on *Herr* Goulon. The distorted figure was repulsive, and the staring eyes blazed red.

"*Was ist?*" he demanded.

"*Herr* Goulon," the sergeant announced, "Private Henkel and I were on duty. We saw this man coming and stopped him. He has simply announced himself as G-8."

Herr Goulon's face muscles twisted; the misshapen flesh about his mouth curled in a hideous grin.

"You," he demanded, "are *Herr* G-8?"

The Master Spy smiled and bowed.

"At your service, *Herr* Goulon," he said.

Herr Goulon was stammering with both astonishment and fear.

"You—you!" he asked, "You have come here of your own free will?"

"*Jawohl*," the Master Spy nodded.

Herr Goulon hesitated a moment, then from his desk he took a small picture, compared it with the Master Spy.

"*LIEBER GOTT!*" he breathed. "You are G-8!" He chuckled, a rasping cackle that held no mirth. "Apparently," he said, "you did not know that when I set the trap for you, baited with the girl spy, R-1, I also set the time for your execution at midnight tonight. That is not far off."

"No," G-8 admitted, "I won't have to wait long, will I?"

Herr Goulon was studying him. "How can you be so calm when you know you have only one more hour to live?" he asked. "And how did you avoid the searchers that I sent to surround you?"

"The second question," G-8 told him, "is more to the point. I believe I understand quite clearly now. You set a trap for a man whom you realized knew something of me. That was my friend, Wesley Patrick. You tortured him until he told you the girl spy with whom I sometimes work. Then you made a guess that if you caught her I would come to look for her."

Herr Goulon frowned as much as the tight skin on his forehead would permit.

"I've heard you were capable of many things, G-8," he said, "but I did not know that you were also a mind reader."

"I have been charged with a great many things," G-8 smiled. "And you are still wondering, I suppose, how I escaped your searchers?"

Herr Goulon nodded.

"It was quite simple, I assure you," G-8 admitted. "So simple, in fact, that it was useless to send the guards. You see, *Herr* Goulon, I have peculiar ways of getting what I want."

Herr Goulon stiffened, his teeth clenched and a flood of hatred crossed his face.

"You are ready to die?" he demanded harshly.

Again the Master Spy smiled at him tauntingly.

"I believe so," he said coolly, "if you are."

Herr Goulon jerked upright in his chair. Fear showed plainly on his face.

"What do you mean by that?" he demanded.

The Master Spy shrugged.

"Usually I do not tell all I know," he said. "You say the time for my death is set for midnight?"

That is correct," *Herr* Goulon snapped.

"Then," G-8 announced, "if I die at midnight, you *Herr* Goulon, shall die before dawn. But I doubt that you and I shall meet in the same place after death."

Herr Goulon's eyes blazed red again with rage and his body twitched.

"Take him away instantly!" he yelled. "Lock him in the cell at the end of the hall. Place a guard over him to see that he has no chance of escape."

G-8 bowed.

"Thank you, *Herr* Goulon," he said. "I have been working hard and a little sleep will do me good. I trust the bunk in the cell is comfortable."

The Master Spy sat down on the narrow cot in the steel cell. A single guard stood on the other side of the heavy, steel-barred door. For a long time, G-8 pondered and planned. There was only a half hour left before midnight. Minutes dragged on. At fifteen minutes before twelve, G-8 spoke to his guard for the first time.

"You seem like an understanding sort of fellow," he said. "You know, of course, that I am sentenced to die a few minutes from now."

The guard gave a short nod. It was obvious that he didn't relish the job of attending a man about to die.

"*Jawohl*," he said huskily.

"I am a great lover of coffee," G-8 went on. "Would it be asking too much of you to get me some, so that I might enjoy one more drink of it before I die?"

The guard hesitated, then said, "I'll see what can be done."

He strode down the corridor and stopped at *Herr* Goulon's room. G-8 could see him talking there for a moment, before returning.

"You will have your cup of coffee," the guard said.

G-8 nodded his thanks.

At ten minutes before midnight, another German guard brought the coffee on a tray. He returned at once to a lower floor of the house.

G-8 raised the coffee to his lips. He moved it back and forth so that the aroma would ascend to his nostrils, then suddenly he turned to the guard outside the door.

"I am sorry," he said, "that you cannot drink with me. You look a bit drowsy."

"I have been on duty long hours already," the guard confessed.

"Then surely you should have some of this good coffee," G-8 offered. "Here." He passed the cup through the door. "Suppose you drink half of it

first, and then I'll drink the other half just to prove that there are no hard feelings between us, *nicht wahr?*"

The guard hesitated for a moment, then a slight smile crossed his face.

"In spite of the fact that you are the *verdammte* G-8," he said, "you have my great admiration, *mein Herr*. I am sure I could not die so calmly as you."

"You will drink with me, then?" G-8 asked.

The guard nodded.

"*Jawohl*," he said, taking the cup.

HERR Goulon was pacing the floor of his room when a knock sounded on his door. He went quickly and opened it. Before him stood the gaunt German *offizier*.

"I received your telephone message," he said.

Herr Goulon nodded.

"You remember my decree that the *verdammte* one, G-8, would die at midnight?"

The gaunt one bowed and stepped in. "*Jawohl*," he said.

"I have asked you to come and witness his death," Herr Goulon chuckled.

He had been watching the little clock on his desk for the last hour. Now he glanced at it again. The minute hand stood at three minutes before midnight.

"Come," he said. "It is nearly time."

He hobbled into the corridor.

"You have G-8 a prisoner?" the gaunt man demanded.

Herr Goulon nodded.

"*Jawohl*," he said. "You can see him in his cell at the end of the hall."

The gaunt *offizier* stared, then took a closer look at the cell.

"*Himmel!*" he gasped. "He is asleep on the cot!"

Herr Goulon stared, then tried to hide his surprise.

"*Jawohl*," he said. "He is the most astonishing example of self control. He said before they took him to the cell that he expected to get a little sleep before his execution." He turned to the guard by the door.

"How long has he been asleep?" he demanded.

"Ever since he drank the coffee that he requested," the guard answered. "It is possible that he may have placed a drug or sleeping potion in the coffee."

"*Lieber Gott!*" Herr Goulon exclaimed. "He may have taken poison. Open the cell! I must see if he is alive."

Herr Goulon stepped in quickly and felt the heartbeats of the figure on the cot. He nodded with satisfaction.

"He is alive all right," he said. "He has not cheated me completely." He shook G-8, turned him over on his back, but was unable to wake him. "He shall be executed, nevertheless," he rasped. "*Und* you shall see it, *mein Herr*."

The gaunt man bowed. "It will be a pleasure," he said.

Suddenly, as the three stepped from the cell, Herr Goulon's lips spread wide in a hideous grin.

"Someone else shall see the *verdammte* one die, too," he said. "It is the girl, R-1. She must be quite sane by now. I shall see that she is brought out to witness the execution."

After making sure that the cell door was locked again, Herr Goulon hobbled down the corridor and went to a cell on the first floor. R-1 lay on a cot, bound tightly. He called guards from outside.

"See that this woman is taken to the side of the house," he ordered.

Others were sent to carry G-8 to his execution, while the remaining guards lined up outside in firing squad formation.

R-1 was brought down, her eyes wide and staring. As she saw G-8 carried out into the beams of the searchlights that played against the wall, she cried out desperately, "G-8! G-8! They can't kill you! They mustn't!"

She set up a terrific struggle, but was powerless in the arms of the guards.

Then the figure of the Master Spy was held before the wall. At close range Herr Goulon lined up his firing squad, raised his arm in signal.

"Ready!" he rasped. "Take aim!"

Automatics and rifles were raised, aimed at the heart of the Master Spy.

Herr Goulon dropped his arm in final command:

"Fire!"

Eight guns burst forth. Bullets thudded into the heart of the body held against the wall. The two guards that had been supporting G-8 let his limp form drop.

Herr Goulon stepped up, drew his automatic. He held its muzzle against the Master Spy's temple, crowed gleefully. His fingers flexed on the trigger and the gun boomed. It was not necessary; and it was horrible to behold the blood that gushed over the ground.

CHAPTER ELEVEN THE DEVIL'S VENGEANCE

R-1, WHOSE senses had been restored so that she could witness this execution, suddenly became a raving, screaming hell-cat. She sobbed, kicked and scratched wildly, as her grief for G-8's death overcame her.

But the guards forced her back into the building, locked her in her steel cell again. Once inside, the girl spy broke into wild sobbing.

But that was not for long. R-1 was made of the same stuff as other great Intelligence agents. She straightened on the cot where she had fallen, wiped her eyes dry, and brushed back her hair. There was a war going on and she, as an important cog in the great Allied organization, must in some way try to carry on.

Desperately, she tried to think clearly. But her thoughts were not for herself or her escape. Rather, she must carry on in G-8's place, as much as was humanly possible, somehow she must learn the plans of *Herr* Goulon.

A stalwart guard stood in front of the barred steel cell door. She straightened as she heard someone coming down the corridor. It was another guard. As he reached the sentry, she heard the new man say:

"I have orders to relieve you, *mein herr*."

But the sentry had different ideas.

"*Nein*," he said, "I shall stay here. I have been on duty for only a short time. Do you think I want to give up my chance of seeing *Herr* Goulon wreak his vengeance on this *verdammte* American girl spy? I assure you I do not!"

The new guard smiled and nodded.

"*Jawohl*," he said, "but I don't believe you will miss anything. I understand he is going to wait until morning for his vengeance with the girl. Besides *Herr* Goulon has issued the order that I relieve you now. He wants to make sure that no guard falls asleep before this prison door."

"Do not worry," the first guard assured him. "I will not fall asleep. However, if it is the order of *Herr* Goulon, I go."

The new guard took up his post, and the footsteps of the other died away. R-1, watching, could see him leave by the front door. The new guard stood like a statue before the grating, his back turned to R-1. He stood rigid, while footsteps sounded in the front of the building.

Several men were coming. R-1 heard the unmistakable step of *Herr* Goulon. A moment later they came into view, turning down the corridor toward R-1's cage. *Herr* Goulon was accompanied by the two German guards who had taken the girl out to witness the execution.

The fiend, with his hooked hand dangling menacingly, stared through the grating at the girl. His face leered hideously.

He turned suddenly to the lone sentry, and with a movement swift as lightning, snatched out the guard's automatic.

"Who appointed you as guard over this girl?" he demanded.

The sentry turned slowly.

"*Bitte*, *Herr* Goulon," he said, "the sergeant told me that I was to relieve the old guard of his duties."

"There is some mistake," *Herr* Goulon rasped. "You are the same one that guarded G-8. You are too tender-hearted. You granted his wish for a cup of coffee. In that cup of coffee he put the drug that made him sleep; and cheated me out of the pleasure of having him suffer the pain of the bullets plowing into him."

The sentry bowed.

"*Bitte, Herr Goulon*, I am sorry," he apologized.

"It is too late now," the fiend cracked. "And I suppose that now you are sorry for this girl who is about to suffer!" *Herr Goulon* turned to the other guards. "Take him out of here and send him back to his commander!" the fiend shouted. "I want no soft-hearted fools here!"

R-1 saw the guards seize hold of her sentry, and march him down the corridor, where they shoved him out into the night.

When the guards returned, *Herr Goulon* had opened the cell door with his key.

R-1 steeled herself for what was to come; forced a smile of confidence on her face. She must play for time and learn all she could. Beyond that, she had no plan. *Herr Goulon* motioned to her.

"Come, *verdammt fraulein*," he rasped, then cackled with glee. "Do you know what I am going to do with you?"

It was difficult for R-1 to hold that smile as she stepped from the cell into the corridor.

"I presume," she said, "that I am to die. I am not afraid."

She flinched, and every muscle rebelled, as *Herr Goulon* took her by the arm.

"Mere death," the fiend assured her, "should be the least of your worries."

A sensation of horror came over R-1. With a sudden wrench, she broke *Herr Goulon's* hold and went dashing down the corridor. But the long, heavy skirts of her nurse's uniform tangled about her legs and slowed her speed. She had taken only a few strides when the guards had caught her and dragged her back.

They proceeded down the corridor, climbed the stairs to the second floor. *Herr Goulon* turned into his room and dismissed the two guards, then he locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

Standing in the center of the room, R-1 tried to keep calm; tried to reason out what G-8 would do if he were alive and in the same predicament. Again she smiled, but before she could speak, *Herr Goulon* turned. His mocking, cackling laugh came again.

"So you are not afraid to die?" he challenged. "And yet you try to break loose and escape."

The girl shook her head.

"That was only a momentary impulse," she countered.

"*Jawohl*," *Herr Goulon* barked. "*Und* naturally I know why. Because I am so horrible to look at—so repulsive! You think that I am some filthy dog, *nein*?"

"I am not in any position to make denials," R-1 said, trying to keep her voice steady. "I know that I am to die, even as G-8 died. Naturally, being an American Intelligence agent, I cannot help being curious." She looked steadily at the horrible cripple. "*Herr Goulon*," she lied, "you have my great admiration. You have captured and killed G-8, the greatest spy of all time. That is something that the most brilliant minds have failed to do."

A great lump rose in her throat, almost choked her. But she forced herself to continue:

"You are the greatest man living today. You possess the greatest brain of all. With your machine for causing insanity, you can rule the world if you wish."

For a moment, *Herr Goulon* was taken off guard. He smiled.

"*Danke schon, fraulein*," he said.

R-1 nodded in reply.

"You see," she said, "you not only possess the most brilliant mind in the world, but you are also a gentleman."

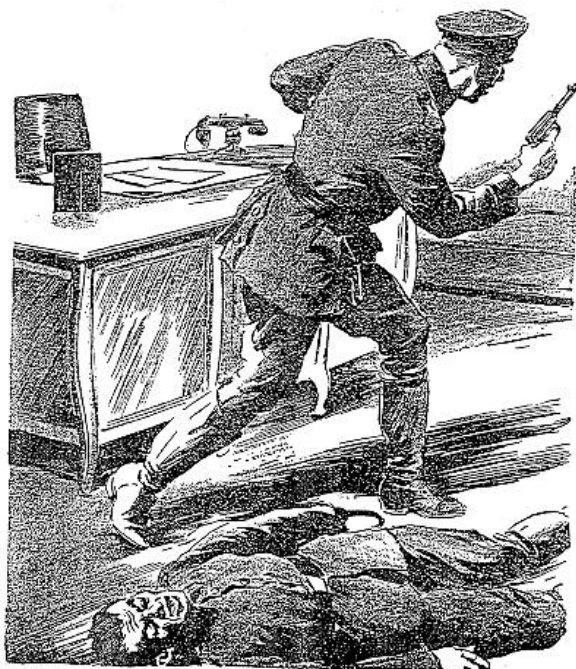
Herr Goulon's face changed instantly as R-1 hurried on:

"Oh, don't think, *Herr Goulon*, that because you are a gentleman that I expect to be spared. I admit that I am an American spy. I have been captured, and I deserve to die. As I told you before, I am not afraid. But I cannot help being curious—curious to learn how this machine of yours causes insanity."

Herr Goulon appeared to be about to answer. Then suddenly his eyes were red with hate.

"So," he barked, "you would try to learn the secret of my invention! You think you can escape and put a stop to the insanity!" He exploded in a cackling laugh, "That, my beautiful *fraulein*, shall not be. I have some other plans!"

R-1's mind was working feverishly. She tried to think of something that would calm *Herr Goulon*, but the more she thought, the more hopeless things became.



In sudden desperation, she whirled and started for the nearest window. As she passed the desk, she snatched up a book and hurled it through the window, hoping she'd be able to leap. There was a crash of glass as the pane shattered.

With a wild cry, *Herr Goulon* charged for her in a flying tackle. With one powerful hand on her shoulder, he spun her around.

"Now!" he screamed, "*verdammt fraulein*, now I shall have my revenge!"

R-1's clear blue eyes stared in transfixed horror at the hook on *Herr Goulon's* arm. It was coming straight for her face. She almost screamed in horror.



THE LUGER BARKED AND SPAT FLAME.

CHAPTER TWELVE CLAWS OF THE EAGLE

IN SPITE of her personal courage, R-1 was gripped with fear. A cry escaped her lips as she struggled in vain to keep that vicious hook from drawing closer to her face; to keep it from ripping her soft flesh to shreds.

The hook came closer and closer, and the hot breath of *Herr Goulon* was in her face. But then a crashing sound mingled with her screams. As though a battering ram had struck it, the locked door of *Herr Goulon's* room burst open. The hook stopped abruptly, inches from R-1's face. *Herr Goulon* spun around. The drawn skin of his face turned a ghastly white. He let go of the girl as he turned to meet his adversary. The guard who had once stood in front of R-1's cell came charging through the door. He was a whirlwind of action, and he lost no time in going to work on the fiend.

R-1 stood rigid as *Herr Goulon* squared himself, raising that deadly hook. But the fighting guard seemed oblivious to his danger. As the two met in the center of the room, the hook came down. With a movement as fast as lightning, the

guard stepped inside the blow. R-1 could not see exactly what happened. Things were moving too swiftly. But she did realize that the hooked arm of *Herr* Goulon had come down over the guard's shoulder, and that a stiff blow to the solar plexus knocked the wind out of the fiend. He recovered, however, with astonishing quickness, and in spite of his lame leg, ducked another fast blow that was aimed at his jaw. Again the hook rose. The guard's eyes were watching it.

R-1 could see that *Herr* Goulon was heavier, much more powerful than the guard. Steel muscles rippled under his clothing as he went into action. The hook was brought down again, but this time the guard stepped away with a movement so expert that it might have been made by a champion boxer.

The hook missed the guard's face by a fraction of an inch. The instant that it swept past, the guard came in again. His fists thudded against the jaw of *Herr* Goulon. The Boche fiend staggered back.

R-1 could hear the sound of heavy boots pounding on the stairs as other guards came running up to see what the commotion was about. The hook rose once more. This time the guard threw all caution to the winds—gambled everything on this last blow. He measured with his left, then crossed a terrific right to the jaw. The *Herr* Goulon dropped like a man who'd been shot. But even before he fell, the guard had snatched R-1's arm and had uttered one word: "Quick!"

The girl ran with him as he leaped across the room toward the open door. But instead of going through it, he sprang behind the door just as two guards rushed in. They were running too swiftly to look about.

The first dove past the door and across the room to the prostrate form of *Herr* Goulon. The other came charging in behind him. Both had Lugers held ready. As the second leaped in past the door, the guard with R-1 sprang from behind it, stuck his foot out and tripped the runner. As the running Hun fell, R-1's rescuer sprang for him. The guard's gun arm was caught and twisted. His Luger slipped from his fingers.

Then the other guard whirled, but the Luger in the hand of R-1's rescuer barked and spat flame.

Then R-1's protector leaped for the guard he had tripped, snatching away his gun. But the fallen

guard leaped to his feet, reached for the electric switch. An instant later, the place was plunged into darkness.

R-1's fingers gripped the handle of a Luger that was thrust there by her rescuer. More guards were running up the stairs. A Luger close by the girl spy spat flame again. There came a scream of pain from the guard who had turned out the lights. Then they were at the window and the rescuer was throwing up the sash.

Outside, in the dim illumination thrown by a street lamp, R-1 could see two guards running from the side of the house around to the front. The voice of her rescuer had changed now as he ordered:

"Quick! I'll lower you over the side and drop you, then I'll come right behind you."

A thrill of joy and hope welled up in R-1's heart.

Even as her rescuer lifted her over the edge of the window and prepared to let her drop, she breathed, "G-8! You are G-8?"

"Yes," answered the strong voice of the Master Spy. "Here we go."

The girl spy could hear the guards now as they reached the top of the stairs in the hall. A moment after she touched the ground, G-8, still disguised as a guard, dropped beside her and started running. With her hand in his, the girl spy was propelled along at a furious pace.

They darted across the lawn to the sidewalk, and there, running on their toes, moved as noiselessly and swiftly as possible. There was no time for questions now. They could hear the shouts of pursuing Germans behind them.

"*Ach, du Lieber,*" someone yelled, "they went that way, up the street!"

Instantly, G-8 changed his course. They ducked up an alley that brought them out on a back street much more dimly lighted than the one they had been traveling. At this hour in the early morning, it appeared deserted.

"G-8!" R-1 gasped when she could catch her breath, and they were some distance from their pursuers.

"No time to talk," the Master Spy said quickly. "We've got to get away from here."

Walking rapidly through the lighted spaces, and running in the shadows, they covered several

blocks until they found a car parked at the side of the street. It was an old hack, minus a starter, but the ignition was unlocked.

G-8 cranked the engine furiously. It sounded like a thrashing machine when it finally snorted into action. And not until he was in the driver's seat, and they were pulling out of town did the Master Spy speak. R-1 stared at him.

"You are really G-8," she breathed. "I can hardly believe it."

The Master Spy smiled.

"THAT was kind of a dirty trick to play on the guard," he said, "but at least he didn't feel any pain before the firing squad."

"I can't understand yet," the girl said, "how you accomplished it. I suppose you exchanged places with him by using your make-up kit. But how did you get out of the cell?"

"It's so simple," the Master Spy told her, "that it sounds almost silly. Ten minutes before I was to be shot, I asked the guard if he'd give me a cup of coffee. Can you imagine any American pleading for a cup of what these Germans call coffee," G-8 chuckled.

"A connoisseur of coffee," R-1 said, "would almost rather die than drink it."

"When he brought me the coffee," G-8 went on, "I dropped a little dope tablet in it. I persuaded him to drink with me. I passed him the cup first. About half a minute after he got the coffee down, the dope hit him and he keeled over right in front of the door where I could get at him. I took the key to the cell from his pocket, then, after I got him inside the cell, the transformation was quite simple."

"You saw the execution?" R-1 asked.

G-8 nodded.

"I had a pretty good hunch that *Herr* Goulon would take you down to see me shot," he said. "I thought there might be a chance of rescuing you then, but there were too many guards around to make a clean getaway."

"Besides, *Herr* Goulon slipped one over on me when he snatched the Luger out of my holster, after I exchanged places with your guard. I'll admit I didn't expect that."

He felt R-1 shudder.

"That experience," she said, alone with *Herr* Goulon when he was going to gouge me with that hook, was the most terrible thing I have ever had happen to me."

"It had me pretty well scared, too," G-8 confessed. "I was afraid I wouldn't be able to break down the door soon enough. But I think we're O.K. now. Nippy is going to meet us at a field a couple of miles away."

"Nippy!" R-1 gasped. "How did you let him know?"

"He was at the edge of the building," G-8 explained, "when the firing squad cut loose on what was supposed to be me. As soon as I saw the body fall before their shots, I hurried back into the building. It seems that everyone, including the operator, was out watching my execution. I just about had time in the wireless room to tell Nippy to come and get you."

R-1 was looking at the Master Spy admiringly.

"G-8," she said, "I don't know how you do it. After I thought you had been killed, I tried to carry on as I thought you would. I tried my best to get the same information out of *Herr* Goulon that you would seek, but he suspected me instantly. I didn't even get to first base."

G-8 smiled. "You just didn't have the breaks, R-1," he told her. "I seem to get more than my share of luck."

"Luck, nothing," the girl flared. "It's because you are the cleverest spy in the war."

G-8 chuckled. "I hope I can continue to keep everyone fooled," he said.

They drove on in silence until G-8 abruptly stopped the car beside a woods. There, in the darkest spot, G-8 parked the car, and they got out. He led R-1 through the patch of trees to the edge of a fairly large field. The girl spy turned to him.

"Are you going back with us?" she asked.

The Master Spy shook his head.

"No," he said, "I've got some things to take care of before I return. I've learned that *Herr* Goulon is holding a private conference in his room with some high commanders of the German army. I want to be in on that, if I can arrange it. I've learned also, that this wireless machine that causes insanity is only a small part of his plot to

win the war. He's got something that he believes is much more destructive. That's what he's going to talk over with these generals."

He glanced at his wrist watch.

"You'll need all the time you have," R-1 insisted.

"Yes," G-8 admitted, "I suppose I will. I'll return there soon as I see you safely on your way."

R-1 shook her head.

"Don't wait for that," she said. "Don't wait for anything. I'll be all right here, and Nippy will be along very soon. You'll need plenty of time to get into that conference room at ten o'clock."

The Master Spy hesitated.

"I think I have time to wait," he ventured.

But R-1 was insistent.

"No," she said, "you mustn't. I'll be perfectly all right. Besides, if Nippy lands here and takes off again, you won't want to be caught in the vicinity. You'll want to be far away with that stolen car."

"Car?" G-8 repeated with a smile. "That old wreck should be flattered. All right then, if you're sure you can manage it, I'll be getting back. Now be sure you wait here for Nippy. I got an answer from him, so I know he received the message. He'll be over as soon as he can."

For a moment, R-1 laid her hand lightly on the Master Spy's arm.

"You'll be careful, won't you, G-8?" she asked.

He smiled. "Don't worry," he assured her. "I'll be all right."

"Sometimes," R-1 said, "we all wish you were more afraid of things, G-8. You wouldn't take such terrible chances then."

With that, G-8 left her. He was bound on one of the most dangerous missions he had ever undertaken.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SENTINEL OF SATAN

G-8 REALIZED that his return to the headquarters of *Herr Goulon* would require the

utmost caution. He left the car hidden in a lane more than a mile outside of Hartsburg and walked on into the town, which was now completely quiet and empty.

The Master Spy had been forming his plans since leaving R-1. He knew that even to come near that guarded area without a proper excuse would mean being questioned, perhaps by *Herr Goulon* himself.

Keeping well in the shadows, he came within half a block of *Herr Goulon's* place, and there he waited for some time. He could see guards, now and then, walking their post. The sight struck him as rather funny, and he smiled, wondering if *Herr Goulon* even now suspected that G-8 was not dead. That was another one of the things he wanted to find out. But all else was of second consideration compared to that conference at ten o'clock the next morning. As yet, G-8 hadn't figured exactly how he was going to make it without causing suspicion.

Dawn was not more than two or three hours away. He knew that he must hurry, for operating in the dark would be much easier than in the light. And the awakening of the town would make matters still more difficult.

All seemed quiet there about the house of *Herr Goulon*. A guard with bayoneted rifle over his shoulder came walking toward the Master Spy slowly, as if he were on his way to patrol the adjoining block.

G-8 turned, and keeping in the shadows, slipped away swiftly. He reached the far corner of the block and stopped there, peering about. The sentry had stopped near the spot where G-8 had been hiding. He began to come back now.

The Master Spy could see very little activity from his present position, but he waited. Long minutes dragged on, and then, when he began to fear that dawn would arrive before a break would come, he heard the sound of boots striding along the paved sidewalk.

A moment later he tensed as he saw two guards coming from the direction of the house. Quickly, a plan took shape in his active brain. He hurried back and circled the next block. He moved with such speed that he contrived to be coming from the opposite direction when he met the two guards, who were apparently coming off duty. He paused as they were about to pass.

"*Bitte*," he said, "*mein herren*, could you tell me where *Machlenstrasse* is?"

G-8 had mentioned a street that he had seen in the south part of Hartsburg. The two guards were already walking in that direction, and it would give him an excuse to walk with them and engage them in conversation. At the same time, it would dispel any suspicion of G-8's real purpose, since they were walking away from *Herr Goulon's* place.

One guard hesitated, then the larger of the two nodded.

"*Jawohl*," he said. "I believe *Machlenstrasse* is in this direction. I remember seeing it near the outskirts of town. Come with us. We can show it to you when we pass it."

"*Danke schon*," G-8 smiled. He fell into step with them.

The Master Spy was still wearing the German uniform he had used as R-1's guard, but he had altered his facial features slightly. After he and the two guards had gone a few paces, he asked quite innocently:

"You two carry bayoneted rifles. You have perhaps just come off guard duty, *nicht wahr*?"

"*Jawohl*," the smaller one said. "*Und* what a night!"

G-8's eyes widened.

"There has been trouble where you were stationed?" he asked.

"Trouble!" the big fellow snorted. "*Ach du Lieber*, I should say so! We have been guarding the house of *Herr Goulon*. You have heard of him, of course?"

G-8 appeared to be thoughtful for a moment, then nodded.

"I believe so," he admitted. "He is supposed to be a great inventor, or something of the kind, *nicht wahr*? Is he the one whom they call the Cripple of Hartsburg?"

"That is correct," nodded the big guard. "But for a cripple, he can cause plenty of damage—although he narrowly escaped being killed, shortly after midnight."

"That is most interesting," G-8 said, "but of course he is still alive?"

"It would seem," said the smaller guard, "as though the words spoken by G-8, the *verdammte* one, before he died, almost came true. The one

they called the Master Spy predicted that if he died at midnight, *Herr Goulon* would die before dawn."

"*Ach du Lieber!*" G-8 gasped. "Do you mean they have actually captured this *verdammte* American spy?"

"Captured him!" the big guard snorted. "He is dead! At midnight he stood before the wall and was shot. This rifle"—he tapped the gun on his shoulder proudly—"helped to kill him."

"*Wunderbar!*" G-8 breathed. "But how was it that *Herr Goulon* was nearly killed after that?"

"We are not sure," the smaller man said. "You see, there was this girl spy who works with G-8. *Herr Goulon* was about to kill her when someone, dressed as the man who had been guarding her, rushed in and knocked *Herr Goulon* out. He got away with the girl before anyone could stop him."

"*Aber*, I thought," G-8 countered, "that you said this *verdammte* American spy was shot before that."

"*Herr Goulon* says that it must have been his big assistant, *Herr Martin*," the other guard spoke up. "He said that he was so big he couldn't fight against him."

G-8 smiled at the thought of *Goulon* giving that alibi. He changed the subject slightly when he spoke again.

"Are you two in the same company?" he asked.

"*Jawohl*," the big fellow answered. He mentioned the company and regiment.

"H'm," G-8 said. That sounds very familiar. It seems to me that I knew someone in that company not long ago. Let me see. Who is your commanding officer?"

"*Herr Leutnant Gulick*," the big Hun said. "Do you know him?"

G-8 paused for a moment, then shook his head.

"*Nein*," he said, "the name does not sound familiar. I wish I could think of the acquaintance who was sent to your outfit, but his name has slipped my mind for the moment."

They had already reached the southern section of town where the houses were more widely spaced. G-8 knew that within another block or two

they would come to *Machlenstrasse*. He must put his plan into effect before they got there.

They came to a corner, and the big guard stopped to read the street sign on a house built flush with the sidewalk.

"*Nein*," he said, "this is not it."

G-8 acted quickly. Already his Luger was in his hand, club fashion. As the big fellow looked at the sign, G-8 permitted him to step forward. He slipped behind him, and as the guard finished speaking and seemed about to move, G-8 struck with deadly accuracy and force.

The Luger butt thudded into the base of the big guard's skull. As he crumpled, the Master Spy leaped for the smaller guard. But the little German was very quick. G-8 missed his first blow, and as the little Hun ducked, he opened his mouth to cry out. G-8's left swished through the air in a terrific hook that spun the little Hun guard's head on his shoulders. As he tried to recover, G-8 brought down the Luger. Steel met skull bone with a hollow sound.

HE DRAGGED the two bodies into a dense growth of alders in a vacant lot on the next block, then picked up the bayoneted rifle of the big fellow and slung it across his shoulder.

There, in the protection of the alders, he took out his make-up kit and the record book which belonged to the man he was impersonating. With a special ink eradicator from the kit, he removed the name of the other and wrote in "Max Feldon, Corporal." The rest of the record would do.

With the gun carried at a military angle, the Master Spy strode down the street toward *Herr Goulon's* house. Guards already there were quick to stop him. He smiled at them in a friendly fashion.

"*Bitte*," he told them, "I wish to see the sergeant of the guard." When the guards hesitated, he added, "I have just been sent by *Herr Leutnant* Gulick, my commanding officer."

That name worked like magic. A moment later, the same sergeant whom G-8 had encountered earlier in the evening, when he had been arrested, came up to him. No look of recognition appeared on the sergeant's face as he scrutinized G-8 in the semi-darkness. The Master Spy presented his record book.

"I am Corporal Max Feldon," he announced. "My commanding officer, *Herr Leutnant* Gulick, sent me as an extra guard. I have just been transferred to his company."

Without the slightest hesitation, the sergeant nodded.

"*Jawohl*," he said, "we can use another guard. It will soon be daylight. Come."

G-8 had hoped to be stationed at the front entrance of *Herr Goulon's* house, but apparently this was not to be. The sergeant was leading him around to the rear of the place.

"Here," he said, "you stand guard over the rear gate."

G-8 took up his post. It was growing light in the east, and the keen brain of the Master Spy worked rapidly to figure out a means of entering that building without causing suspicion among the guards. It grew fully light, and the rising sun began to warm the chill morning.

The gate at the rear of the yard opened slowly, and G-8 spun around and dropped his rifle to bar the entrance of whoever might be coming. An elderly German, clad in an ill-fitting private's uniform, stopped. In his hands he held a bucket and a mop.

"Who are you?" G-8 demanded sternly.

"I am Private Ernst," the old man said. "I have come to do the cleaning."

G-8 spun around and stepped aside. "Come," he said. "I will go in with you to see if it is all right."

The old German marched ahead of him and G-8 followed. Private Ernst took a key from his pocket as they reached the rear door, placed it in the lock and turned it.

"You are given quite a bit of freedom around here, aren't you?" G-8 asked.

"I come so early," the old fellow explained, "that I use a key to get in. You see, at this hour, all the guards of *Herr Goulon* usually are asleep and *Herr Goulon* himself is securely locked in his private bedroom."

"I see," the Master Spy said.

He followed the old man in, saw that the door was locked behind them. Inside, the house was still. Old Private Ernst hesitated.

"May I go down into the basement now and get ready to do my cleaning?" he asked.

"*Jawohl*," G-8 nodded. "I guess it will be all right. You go right ahead and I'll take a look around."

He waited until the old man had reached the bottom of the cellar stairs, then he moved quietly through the lower corridor. He came to the steps that led to the second floor and climbed them.

The door to *Herr* Goulon's office was still shuttered. There was a dim light burning in the hall, and daylight was streaming in through the windows of *Herr* Goulon's headquarters.

G-8 stared about the interior. Except for the fact that the bodies had been removed, it was much as he had seen it when he left there. This, then, was to be the scene of the great conference that was to take place at ten.

There was another door at the side of the room, and G-8 walked softly to it and turned the latch silently. The door opened, disclosing a large closet. It was practically bare of clothing, except for an overcoat and a raincoat. A shelf over the top held many bottles of liquor.

Suddenly, as G-8 stood there, he heard footsteps. Someone was coming. He made an instant decision. This would be his hiding place for the conference. But he must stay in it from now on, until the conference was over. He stepped inside the closet, stood his gun in the corner, and closed the door noiselessly. Listening, he could hear the footsteps coming closer.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE MURDER CONFERENCE

THE sound of the steps ceased before the door of *Herr* Goulon's office. G-8 stood motionless, scarcely daring to breathe inside his hiding place. Then he heard the sound of a pail touching the floor, and he knew it was old Ernst coming to clean. For a long time he could hear the old man mopping up the office and straightening things. Then he left, and his footsteps died away down the corridor.

Time dragged on, and finally someone else entered the office. Perhaps this was *Herr* Goulon. G-8 had his Luger held ready in his hand and considered the feasibility of leaping out and killing the fiend. But as yet, he wasn't certain enough of the hook-up. If *Herr* Goulon were the only one who knew of his great scheme to overthrow the Allied cause, then it would be best that the demon with the hook die immediately. On the other hand, if there were accomplices of *Herr* Goulon who *also* knew the secret, then little could be gained by *Herr* Goulon's death.

The Master Spy decided it would be better to wait until he had heard the whole scheme of the fiendish cripple laid before the high commanders of the German army. Then, too, he would know what was planned and could combat it better.

The next sounds that came told him that *Herr* Goulon was not there. Instead, he heard two workmen moving about the office. They were there to replace the window that R-1 had broken and to fix the smashed door. For some time, the sound of repairs came to the Master Spy, then the workmen left.

More of the morning slipped by. G-8 glanced at the glowing dial of his wrist watch and saw that it was nearly ten o'clock. He could hear men coming up the stairs, then the door of the great private office opened and *Herr* Goulon's voice rasped out:

"Come right in here, your Excellencies. It will not take me long to convince you that I hold a secret which will end the war."

There was the scraping of chairs along the floor as the generals arranged themselves in comfortable positions. Others, apparently high officials, came in a little later and took their seats. *Herr* Goulon cleared his throat importantly.

"Your Excellencies," he began, "you already have seen the reports of what my special wave wireless machine has done to Intelligence and is doing now to other branches of the Allied service, particularly the Americans."

"*Jawohl*," boomed one of the German generals. "It is *wunderbar*. *Aber*, I am anxious to know just how much you can do with this. I understand that the insanity is not permanent."

"*Nein*," *Herr* Goulon admitted, "it is not permanent. That is not necessary. Already we have Allied Intelligence demoralized *und* for two

reasons. In the first place, all of their best agents have become insane. They are worse than useless. Also, there is this, of which you have no doubt heard. Last night at midnight, G-8, who was probably the greatest spy in the entire war, was shot by a firing squad.

There was a rumbling of voices as the high commanders spoke, some in surprise, and all with satisfaction.

"If the *verdammt* one is dead," one general said, "then I can see how your plan may succeed, *Herr Goulon*. You may proceed."

"*Danke schon*," *Herr Goulon* rasped. "You have learned, of course, how successfully my machine has worked out. I shall continue using it, but on a much larger scale."

One of the generals chuckled.

"Imagine," he said, "how helpless the enemy will be if you can drive whole divisions mad with your wireless machine."

"That," said *Herr Goulon*, "is but a small part of my plan. *Und* now I will tell you the most important of all."

G-8 tensed in his hiding place and pressed closer to the door of the closet so as not to miss a single word.

"Since the time that I was shot down—and since the moment of my escape from the *verdammt* American hospital in France where I believe I was purposely crippled—I have thought of nothing but revenge. My bitterness against the enemy focuses particularly upon American women, since it was the *verdammt* nurse who had charge of me that I blame most for my condition."

G-8 heard an uneasy movement of the others in the room, and *Herr Goulon's* voice rose to a fanatic pitch.

"If I could possibly do so, I would kill every woman in the United States!" he announced.

"*Ach du Lieber!*" one German general boomed. "But that would be practically murder. We are soldiers—soldiers who fight against men, *Herr Goulon*. I, for one, refuse to fight women."

"*Bitte*, Excellency," *Herr Goulon* rasped, "permit me to continue. I am certain that I can explain things to your satisfaction, *und* I am sure when I have finished that you will agree with me. I call my invention the Death Brood. I can explain it

quite simply. I have already invented a mother plane which is like a giant bomber. It has the longest flying range of any plane known up to now. You know, perhaps, about the special submarine that I have built with the aid of the government?"

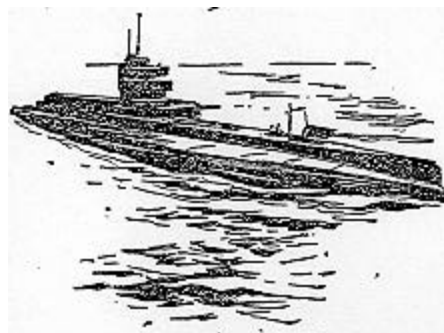
"*Jawohl*," said one German. "I have seen it. It is very strange. But you are not an airplane designer of note, *Herr Goulon*. How could you develop such a plane as you speak of?"

"Because," *Herr Goulon* chuckled, "I have gone at it from a different angle. You see, my invention does not consist merely of the giant mother plane, as I call it. There are also, on the top wing of this sea-going ship, six individual bombers which, when released, will be controlled by wireless. I have stolen the secret of that invention from the United States. At McCook field, the experimental station in Ohio, they have perfected such a plane on a smaller scale. You see, then, that if one of these wireless-controlled planes carries no pilot and only sufficient gasoline for it to reach its destination, it can carry a large cargo of high explosives. In this way, with smaller bombers attached to the larger ship, I have greatly increased the cruising radius of the entire unit."

"*Ach du Lieber!*" a general cried. "That is marvelous!"

"It is *wunderbar!*" called another.

"*Danke schon*," *Herr Goulon* nodded.



"*Und* now we get back to the submarine which I have mentioned. It is a giant affair, as you know, but can remain submerged for twenty-four hours—enough time for it to get far away from any danger zone. If you are agreeable, gentlemen, my crew and I will board the submarine tonight at six o'clock. The wings of my giant plane fold up, and the small bombers also fold, making it easy for them all to be stored within the great submarine. At six o'clock tonight, then, we leave Zeebrugge,

where the submarine and the planes now await me."

"*Aber*, one question at this point," a general ventured. "Suppose you are sighted by an enemy bomber as you leave by way of the North Sea. What is to stop them from blowing up the whole mechanism?"

A cackling chuckle came from Goulon.

"Only this," he said triumphantly. "I have had the submarine constructed so strongly, and with such heavy steel plate along the entire top surface, that it will be impossible for any aerial bombs to disturb it, even though a direct hit is made."

"Very well," one of the generals said. *Und* now you may tell us how you plan to use this submarine and your great ship."

"That is quite simple," *Herr* Goulon continued. "We will have many of the torpedo planes—the small bombers—stored in the submarine—enough for four attacks. Anyone of these torpedo ships will carry sufficient high explosive to completely destroy the largest building in the United States. You can imagine what six of them will do to a city, when properly directed. I have perfected the wireless control system to an almost unbelievable point. From a distance of five hundred miles, I can direct any one of the planes to any certain building in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, or Baltimore—those being the four points of attack which I have chosen. Tonight at six, we go out through the North Sea, completely submerged. After we have reached the open sea, we will head for a point five hundred miles off the New Jersey coast. There my sea-going mother plane will be hoisted out, the wings spread, the torpedo planes put in place and the first attack will be launched. New York City will be the focal point. When my large plane nears the eastern end of Long Island, the torpedo planes will be released and the giant mother plane will turn about and come back to the submarine for another load. We shall continue to do that until all four cities are thrown into complete panic. Hundreds and thousands of women, men and children will be killed and injured. Is it not an excellent idea?"

There came a lull, the G-8 heard one of the generals say, "*Jawohl*, from one standpoint it is an excellent idea. But I, for one, have never been in complete agreement with this ruthless warfare. I

still maintain that it is not necessary to kill innocent women and children."

Again there came a hush, then *Herr* Goulon's voice rasped out, "*Aber*, your Excellency, I said that I would explain, and now I will. You recall that months ago, when the *verdammt* Americans entered the war, we had nearly reached our objective. The *Vaterland* had almost won the war, then came the Americans with their silly propaganda *und* their millions of soldiers to bolster up the Allied forces. You know what has happened. We are desperate, our people are half starved. We lack some of the simplest necessities. But even now, as low as we are in supplies, if we could cause enough damage and death in the United States, it would mean that most of the American forces would be rushed home from France to protect their own land. That, your Excellencies, is why we must be so brutal."

There was a murmur of assent now among the German generals.

"You are all agreed," *Herr* Goulon cried, "that this is the proper course?"

"*Jawohl*," the high commanders chorused.

G-8 heard a chair scrape along the floor, and he guessed that *Herr* Goulon was getting up.

"Very well then," the crippled fiend cried. "The submarine leaves tonight at six from Zeebrugge. *Und* now, Excellencies, we drink a toast. On the shelf of that closet I have a selection of the finest liquors in all Germany. I give you your choice."

G-8 tensed, for he could hear the uneven step of *Herr* Goulon coming across the floor. The fiend was striding straight for the door of the closet where G-8 was hidden.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

TRAPPED

IN THAT second, many conflicting thoughts flashed through G-8's brain with startling speed. From what he had heard of the plans, the members of the crew of that submarine were already in possession of the secret invention of *Herr* Goulon. The giant mother plane was there, and the smaller

planes, too, were ready to be assembled. He didn't dare carry out his first impulse to shoot *Herr* Goulon as he opened the door and then make a dash for it himself. He must bide his time.

The Master Spy realized that his chances of getting away after he had killed *Herr* Goulon were good, but he would still have the giant submarine and its deadly cargo to deal with. Shooting the cripple would merely reveal his presence and would force him to abandon the plans that he had already formulated.

His only course lay in trying to hide behind the big raincoat that hung in the corner of the closet. Already he had slipped back to it and was drawing it around him, crouching so that it would cover all of his body except his German boots. He would have to take a chance on their showing. There was a good possibility, however, that in the dark corner of the closet, with *Herr* Goulon's attention focused on the bottles that lined the top shelf, the boots would not be noticed.

The latch of the door turned and G-8 heard it open just as he finished drawing the coat around him. He remained motionless, not daring to breathe.

"*Und* now, Excellencies," the voice of *Herr* Goulon rasped out, "we have—" He stopped, but only for an instant, then he went on, "I will read you the labels on the bottles so that you may take your choice."

The crippled fiend stood before the open door of the closet and sang out the name of one choice liquor after another, and the generals made their choices. *Herr* Goulon made several trips to bring all the bottles necessary from the shelf. All of this time, G-8 could not see him, for the heavy raincoat covered him completely and had blocked his vision.

When *Herr* Goulon had finished, he closed the door. Outside, the conversation continued, accompanied by the clink of glasses and the gurgling of liquor.

One thing worried the Master Spy now. It was that slight pause that *Herr* Goulon had made after he had first opened the closet door. Had he seen G-8's legs protruding from the bottom of the raincoat?

Minutes slipped by and the drinking and conversation went on. There were many toasts to

the Kaiser, to *Herr* Goulon, to the success of his expedition, and to the rapid finish of the war.

G-8 had about decided to stick it out, come what may. Other sounds came to him—sounds of men walking lightly about the room. But the conversation continued. It sounded to him as though the generals were preparing to leave. He heard the scraping of chairs.

"Very well," one general said, "we shall await news of your success, *Herr* Goulon."

"*Jawohl*," said another. "The best of luck."

G-8 heard them move toward the door of the great office that opened on the upper hall, then the noise faded. *Herr* Goulon's office seemed quiet and peaceful. G-8 considered stepping out from his hiding place in a few moments, if continued silence told him that *Herr* Goulon had also left.

Suddenly, without warning, the door of the closet burst open and a Hun gutturalled a command:

"There are a dozen guns trained on you! Come out from behind that raincoat, whoever you are!"

Instantly, the Master Spy realized that this was no bluff. He knew now what the light treading of feet and the moving of furniture had meant. *Herr* Goulon had seen his feet and had cleverly enough put off any warning move until later, when he himself was out of all danger.

"*Jawohl*," G-8 said as he rustled the raincoat. "I'll come out. I am very sorry. I am guilty of snooping."

He was trying desperately to find a place to hide the Luger that he held in his hand. If he were found with a drawn gun, then he could not pose as a German soldier just snooping about.

As he slipped out from behind the coat, he found an inside pocket and dropped the Luger in it.

The room was filled with nearly two squads of German soldiers. The desk had been moved over in the center of the room, directly in front of the closet. Over the top of that desk, three guns were trained on him. All about the room, in a semi-circle, other Hun guards covered him.

G-8 turned his head to see *Herr* Goulon standing in the doorway.

"Search him!" the fiend rasped.

The commander of the guards slipped behind G-8 and ran his hands swiftly over his clothing.

"He has no weapons," he said.

Now *Herr Goulon* stepped boldly into the room.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" he demanded.

The men, who had held their guns trained on him, relaxed. G-8 put on a show of fright.

"*Bitte, Herr Goulon*," he stammered, "I—I am Corporal Max Felden. You—you have heard how curiosity killed a cat. I am like the cat, *Herr Goulon*. My curiosity to learn things which I do not know has gotten me into much trouble."

"It has never got you into trouble like this," the fiend rasped. "Let me see your record book."

G-8 took out the record book that he had changed and handed it over. *Herr Goulon* took it, and holding it with his right hand and his hook, examined it.

"I shall investigate the authenticity of this at once," he said. "Of course, you heard me discussing my plans with the generals?"

G-8 nodded.

"*Jawohl*," he admitted. "I understood there was to be some sort of meeting. I came in here this morning, meaning no harm. You, *Herr Goulon*, have been my idol. I have always wanted to become a great inventor like you. To stand here alone in your private office for only a minute, this morning, gave me a thrill that you cannot understand. *Und* then, while I stood here, realizing that into this very office would come the great heads of the German army, it was like standing on hallowed ground. I noticed this closet, and I thought 'Why not hide here and overhear the voices of the great generals and *Herr Goulon*?' I told myself, 'Max, you are as loyal a German soldier as any, and surely there can be no harm in your hiding *und* being in touch for a moment with such important activity?'"

"But I have been found out. I have no excuses other than I have told you. My only wish is that the *Vaterland* may be victorious through your most clever plan. If you, in your great wisdom, feel that my death will aid this victory in any way, I stand before you as a martyr. I am ready to die, *Herr Goulon*. But if I am allowed to live, I will always remain your most faithful admirer."

G-8 clicked his heels and bowed stiffly from the waist in a dramatic salute. *Herr Goulon's* face seemed to soften for a moment. He hesitated a bit before he said:

"Go back to *Herr Leutnant* Gulick, your commander. Tell him that I wish you to be appointed as one of my personal guards."

G-8 clicked his heels and bowed again.

Suddenly, the sound of someone running up the stairs reached his ears. He tried not to notice the interruption.

"*Danke schon, Herr Goulon*," he said gratefully. "Rest assured that I will be ready to lay down my life for you at any—"

The running feet reached the upper hall and a lean, breathless German *leutnant* came charging into the room. His explosive words cut G-8 off.

"*Herr Goulon! Herr Goulon!*" he cried. "There has been a mistake, a horrible mistake! A thorough examination of the man who was shot at midnight has been made. He was not G-8! He was one of your own guards disguised as the *verdammte* one!"

Herr Goulon whirled around, and his eyes blazed at the Master Spy.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN DATE WITH DEATH

IN THAT moment, as G-8 stood alone, he realized that he was trapped—that his desperate attempt to save the situation had failed. Even before *Herr Goulon* spoke, the Master Spy could read his thoughts in his blazing red eyes.

G-8's only weapon was back in the inside pocket of the raincoat that hung in the closet.

The guards themselves sensed the change in *Herr Goulon's* attitude—seemed, in fact, to realize the truth as suddenly as the Cripple of Hartsburg. Their guns leaped up.

"You—you are G-8!" *Herr Goulon* screamed.

A look of fear flashed over his repulsive features the instant that he had uttered that name. He stepped back cautiously, as though he feared the Master Spy might leap for him.

"*Aber, Herr Goulon*," the Master Spy argued, "I have shown you my record book, *und* I insist that I am Corporal Max Felden. *Bitte*, take me to my commanding officer. Let him identify me. Already I have tried to prove myself loyal to you. Why should you suspect that I am—"

"Silence!" *Herr Goulon* roared. "There is no doubt of your identity in my mind. However, we shall take you to your commanding officer. I shall have you brought before *Herr Leutnant* Gulick for identification.

He turned to the sergeant of the guard and nodded.

"Take him with you," he commanded.

Guards formed on either side of G-8 and he was marched ahead. The Master Spy noticed that since his insistence that he was not G-8, they handled him more gently. He was hurried out of *Herr Goulon's* private office and down the stairs to the lower hall.

But before any of the guards reached the front door, it burst open and a tall, straight *offizier* stepped in. He was a young *leutnant* with flashing blue eyes and close-cropped hair. The guards brought up their guns in salute and the sergeant greeted him by name.

"*Ach, Herr Leutnant* Gulick," he said, "we were just bringing this prisoner to you for identification. He claims he is Corporal Max Felden, and that you are his commanding officer."

Those cold blue eyes of the German *leutnant* seemed to bore straight through G-8.

"Max Felden?" he repeated. "Corporal Max Felden! Let me see your record book."

"*Jawohl*," G-8 said, saluting with a sharp click of his heels.

He handed over the book. The *offizier* examined it for a moment.

A rasping voice from the top of the stairs called down, "*Was ist?*"

It was *Herr Goulon*.

"*Herr Leutnant* Gulick has just arrived," the sergeant called back. "He is trying to identify the prisoner now."

Herr Leutnant Gulick's brow furrowed and he shook his head.

"There is no one in my outfit named Max Felden," he barked. "Hold the prisoner securely. There is something wrong here."

Herr Goulon came hobbling down the stairs, and he glared triumphantly at G-8.

"Then you are the *verdammte* one!" he cried. "I thought so all along! You have not fooled me."

The Master Spy was thinking desperately.

"Don't you remember, *Herr Leutnant?*" he countered. "I arrived at your outfit last night. I was sent up on special assignment. I reported to your adjutant and he said I should come up here to go on guard duty."

Herr Leutnant Gulick shook his head vehemently.

"That is not true," he said. "I talked with my adjutant just before I left, less than a half hour ago. We have suffered many losses lately, and I ordered him to send for men to fill the gaps in our company. He told me that no new men had come in."

"This arguing is ridiculous!" *Herr Goulon* snapped. "Do not stand there like a bunch of fools. Take him outside. Come. We go to witness the real execution of G-8, the *verdammte* one. *Ach du Lieber*, I wish I had time to bring all the high officials in Germany to see this!"

He glared at the Master Spy.

"We will finish you as quickly as possible," he rasped. "Come."

He led the way and the guards, packing tightly about G-8, with drawn guns stuck in his sides, followed through the front door onto the narrow side lawn.

G-8 was trying frantically to figure out an escape.

Herr Goulon was taking no chances whatever, now that he had the Master Spy at his mercy. G-8 was led to the wall where, at midnight, the guard had died.

THE guards backed away and formed a semi-circular firing squad. *Herr Goulon* stood at one side. There was no bandage about the Master Spy's eyes, and as yet he was not bound. Nor did any guards hold him; he was permitted to stand alone against the wall.

There was only one possible chance left to him and that was a scant one. He must wait until

the signal to aim had been given and the order to fire was about to be delivered by *Herr* Goulon. At that moment he must pull his surprise. He must make a wild break for freedom.

Herr Goulon started to whip the firing squad into swift action. Within ten seconds or less, G-8 knew he would be dead unless he acted rapidly and successfully. The crippled fiend's rasping voice cracked out in the noonday air. He seemed to take an unholy pleasure in giving these orders himself.

"Ready!"

But something suddenly interrupted the death drama. There came a pitiful cry from the street, not ten yards from where G-8 was backed against the wall. It was the cry of an old woman in anguish.

"*Ach, mein boy, mein boy!*" she cried.

Turning, G-8 saw an old woman leaning heavily on a cane as she walked. She was dressed in heavy peasant garb, and her long and none too clean skirts swept the ground as she tried to hurry. Her face was lined with age and haggard with worry.

"Stop, stop!" she cried. "Do not shoot my boy!"

She was screaming now as she broke through the guard and reached *Herr* Goulon. A slight, bent old man came behind her as though he were trying to catch her and draw her back.

"*Mein knabbe, mein knabbe!*" the old woman wailed, dropping down on her knees before *Herr* Goulon. She kissed the hook where his left hand should be.

"Your boy?" *Herr* Goulon repeated. "Listen, *grossmudder*, this is not your boy. This is the *verdammte* one, G-8. He is the greatest enemy of the *Vaterland*. Be thankful that you have come in time to see him shot."

The old woman rose laboriously, stared at G-8, and shook her head a little dazedly as though her memory were playing tricks on her.

"It—it looks like my boy," she said haltingly. "*Jawohl*, it looks just like Otto. I must kiss him. I must speak to him before he dies. He cannot die again without his old mother bidding him good-bye."

By now, the old man had bowed before *Herr* Goulon.

"*Bitte, mein Herr*," he pleaded, "*mein frau* is a little crazy. You must excuse her. It was more than a year ago that our son, Otto, who was an Intelligence agent for the *Vaterland*, was killed before a firing squad like this. It has troubled her that she did not see Otto before he died. She thinks now, whenever she hears of a spy being shot, that it is our son. We were passing by when she noticed the firing squad."

"*Mein son, mein son!*" the old woman was moaning. "I must kiss him!"

The old lady tottered toward G-8 with one hand outstretched.

"*Ach*," she said, "*Otto, mein knabbe*."

She reached the Master Spy and, clutching him, began sobbing with her head on his chest. The Master Spy stood motionless for a moment or two, then he slowly put his arm around her and patted her shoulder comfortingly. To humor her, he said, "Do not be afraid, mother. I am ready to die."

That brought on a fit of weeping. A few minutes later, the old woman calmed somewhat and G-8 heard her say close to his ear, "G-8, here is a gun! I have one, and Nippy has another! When I turn from you and reach *Herr* Goulon, begin shooting at the firing squad."



Her words were scarcely audible, but G-8 caught them. He realized now that this was R-1, and that the little old peasant posing as her husband was Nippy.

He felt the handle of a Luger pressed into his fist as R-1 fell to sobbing wildly again. With her wide skirts shielding his movements, G-8 slipped the gun behind him.

A moment later, the girl spy reached up, delivered a tender, motherly kiss on his cheek, and then with bowed head, turned away.

Nippy was on the other side of *Herr* Goulon. When the old woman had approached the Master Spy, the guards had respectfully lowered their guns and hadn't raised them yet.

Abruptly, the signal came.



AT THE REFUDDLED HUNS.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN A DESPERATE PLAN

OUT of the tail of his eye, the Master Spy caught sight of Nippy whipping an automatic from under his peasant clothing. The terrier ace crashed it down on *Herr* Goulon's wrist, knocking his gun to the ground, and then began blazing away at the guards.

R-1 was pulling the trigger of her automatic as fast as she could, and G-8 whipped out his gun from behind him and began shooting from the hip.

Wild cries of alarm went up—cries that ended in gurgles of death. Members of the firing squad were falling like cut wheat.

G-8 was dashing after R-1 and Nippy as they sped for the street. He looked down at the prostrate body of *Herr* Goulon as he ran past.

The three of them reached the sidewalk safely, and every man that had made up that firing squad was stretched out on the lawn.

G-8 and R-1 and Nippy were running like mad down the street. They heard cries from behind them and raced into an alley that brought them out on another street.

They didn't have to run far. Nippy, in the lead, leaped into a car. G-8 helped R-1 up beside him and then climbed in himself. Men came running and shooting in hot pursuit, but the car moved swiftly away and through the outskirts of the town.

"Oh," R-1 breathed, "I'm glad we got there in time!"

G-8 smiled.

"Maybe you think I'm not," he said. "That was a wonderful job, R-1."

Nippy drew his lips down to hide his teeth and then, imitating an old man minus his uppers and lowers, he asked, "Hey, young fellow, how do you think I did, playing grandpa?"

G-8 chuckled.

"You were swell, too," he complimented. "You two certainly had me fooled. I was expecting to see a bunch of grandchildren come into sight any minute. But how did you know that—"

"We didn't know anything," R-1 interrupted breathlessly, "except that you told me you were going back for the conference at ten o'clock. Nippy landed a little while after you left me at the field, and I told him about it. It seemed to me that you might need some help, and Nippy agreed that we ought to hang around. We found an old peasant farmhouse about a mile from the field, and while the man and his wife were out in the barn milking, we slipped in and borrowed some of their clothes. It was really fun until we found out what awful trouble you were in. I was so afraid that I'd slip up somewhere."

"Slip up?" G-8 said. "Listen, R-1, you ought to be an actress."

"Were you in on the meeting?" the girl asked.

"Yes," the Master Spy said. He turned to Nippy. "What did you hear about Bull? Is he all right?"

"Yes," the terrier ace nodded. "That insanity wore off. The rest of them are better, too. The time it lasts seems to depend upon how much of a dose

you get. But in any case, it doesn't seem to be permanent. Bull's back at Le Bourget now, and he's probably worrying whether Battle is going to wait for us before he'll serve lunch."

Far down the first road they had taken, G-8 could make out a cloud of dust rising from a car in hot pursuit of them. Nippy already had their car wide open.

R-1 turned back and stared at their pursuers.

"They're gaining!" she cried.

"We haven't got much farther to go!" Nippy flung out above the roar of the engine. "About another mile and we're all set. If the Salmson doesn't let us down, we'll be O.K."

"You brought over a two-seater?" G-8 asked.

Nippy grinned.

"Sure," he said. "Think I'm the kind of a guy that goes calling for a girl on a bicycle built for one?"

The other car was gaining rapidly on them. Nippy stopped the car at the edge of the timber growth, where G-8 had brought R-1 the night before. The three ran through the patch of woods and came out on the field beyond.

Together, G-8 and Nippy pulled the Salmson out from under the trees where the terrier ace had hidden it. They heard the other car coming as G-8 stepped before the propeller. Nippy was in the front cockpit and R-1 was in the rear seat.

G-8 whirled the propeller again, again and again as the Huns were coming through the woods. When it seemed almost too late, the Salmson engine caught, snorted, and roared out.

The Master Spy ducked under the wing as the ship rolled ahead, then leaped up again in time to catch hold of the rear cockpit and pull himself aboard.

Again the Huns were shooting at them, but Nippy had sent the plane charging out on the field, down wind. The engine had warmed a little. He spun the ship about, headed into the wind, pushed the throttle wide open. The engine droned out and the Salmson picked up speed.

Running as fast as they could to cut the plane off, the Huns kept up a steady firing. But now G-8 and R-1 were spinning the turret guns in the rear cockpit. The Lewis twins began chattering, and the running Huns fell kicking. Slugs from other

German guns thudded through the fuselage and tail covering.

The great two-seater grew light and lifted reluctantly. When Nippy had full flying speed and a little altitude, he turned it about and sent it hedge-hopping back toward Le Bourget.

BULL and Battle gave them a royal welcome when they landed at their home field.

"Holy Herring!" Bull boomed. "I was worried about you three! I expected Nippy back with R-1 before daylight this morning."

"Did you get any breakfast?" Nippy grinned.

Bull nodded.

"Yes," he said. "I talked Battle into giving me something to eat along about nine o'clock. Holy Herring, though, there's got to be something done! If I'm left alone much more, I'll starve to death."

"Maybe we aren't glad to see you acting like yourself again, Bull," G-8 said as they entered the end hangar apartment.

The big fellow grinned sheepishly.

"I guess I was kind of screwy for a while," he admitted.

"For a while!" Nippy chirped. "You're screwy most of the time, you big ox! Don't flatter yourself."

"What I want to hear about," R-1 said, "is this conference you witnessed, G-8."

"That," said the Master Spy, "can wait until we have something to eat." He smiled at Battle, who looked in through the kitchen door. "How about something to eat?" he asked.

"It's on the fire, sir," the English manservant said. "I've been saving it for you. Mister Bull tried to persuade me to give him some lunch before, but I knew you'd be back soon."

"Boy," Nippy grinned, "you sure are an optimist, Battle. There was a minute or so when I thought none of us would ever get back."

The four famous flying spies ate hungrily for a time, and as Battle served the dessert, G-8 pushed back his plate.

"Well, to get to the conference," he said. "If you think this insanity machine that *Herr* Goulon invented is something, wait until you hear about his future plans. I'm afraid he's got something there."

He told them of the giant, specially-built submarine that lay hidden in the water at Zeebrugge; of the huge mother sea-plane and the smaller, radio-controlled bombers aboard; and of the plan to blow up New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore.

"I suppose," he said, "if *Herr* Goulon succeeds in that, he'll begin working on Boston and some of the larger cities to the north. If that doesn't do the trick, he'll take on Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Detroit and—"

He broke off as Battle set a generous piece of mince pie before him.

"There's no telling how far he'll go if his first ventures are successful," he added a moment later.

Big Bull Martin was shaking his head despairingly.

"Have you figured any way of stopping them?" he demanded. "I've been trying to, all the while you were talking, and I can't see any way."

"There's only one way that I can figure to put a stop to it," G-8 said, "and it's going to be a tough job. Bull, you and I and Nippy have got to be on board that submarine."

R-1 looked disappointed.

"Isn't there some way you can dress me up as a water boy or something, so I can help?" she asked.

G-8 smiled at her.

"R-1," he said, "I think you've done about enough already. I'm afraid you'll have to be content with staying back on this side and taking care of things."

"Have you figured how we're going to get on that submarine without being discovered?" Bull asked.

"Partially," G-8 admitted. "The three of us will fly a captured Rumpler that we have here at the field, and land as near to Zeebrugge as possible. We'll see how things develop after that. The submarine leaves at six o'clock tonight. We've got to find a way of being on it as part of the crew."

"What will we do then?" Nippy asked. "Help *Herr* Goulon and his buzzards launch the ships that are going to blow up those cities?"

"Hardly," G-8 countered. "As a matter of fact, our work should end before the submarine even gets out of the North Sea. We've got to destroy

the whole works—*Herr* Goulon, the submarine, planes, everything."

R-1 was suddenly pale and trembling.

"You mean," she demanded, "that you're going to deliberately blow up that submarine and commit suicide yourself to do it?"

G-8 shrugged.

"I haven't any intention of going to that extent," he said. "I'm hoping that we can get off, somehow. But after all, the main object is the destruction of that submarine. Our lives don't matter so much, balanced against the hundreds of thousands—perhaps even millions—of women and children back home who will be killed if we don't succeed."

The Master Spy had finished his mince pie, and now he lighted a cigarette and sat back. The others were silent. He rose and went into the living room and was walking toward the telephone when it rang.

"This is A-1," said a voice when he answered. "Is this you, G-8?"

"Yes," the Master Spy said. "Is everybody sane down at Intelligence now?"

"Everyone has come back pretty well," the old chief of Intelligence told him. "We found the wireless instrument in the doorway of the building. We put it out of commission right away. I don't think we'll have any more trouble here, but"—G-8 tensed for what was to come—"we're having plenty of trouble in other quarters. We've just received reports from the Front that the staffs of three divisional headquarters have gone insane. Also, a number of battalions in those various divisions have become mad. The men have turned on their comrades, and there has been a lot of killing."

"You know what to look for," G-8 told him.

"Yes," said the chief. "We're doing all we can, but I thought I'd let you know. Perhaps you would be able to suggest something else."

"That's the only solution I have for that menace," G-8 said. "I'll have to leave it up to you to take care of that situation, A-1. We've got something else to handle during the next few hours. Good luck, sir."

He hung up the phone and a moment later called another hangar well down the field.

"Will you have that German Rumpler two-seater ready to go at about three?" he requested. "We'll take off from the end hangar."

He hung up again and turned to R-1 and his Battle Aces.

"There's one thing I can't figure," Bull ventured. "Why can't we get a bunch of big bombers and blast this submarine as she pulls out of Zeebrugge harbor?"

G-8 shook his head.

"No, that wouldn't do any good," he said. "I learned that this submarine is built almost as heavily as a battleship—heavy enough to resist any kind of aerial bomb we have now. We've got to blow her up from the inside with her own high explosive to do the work. It's the only thing that will destroy her effectively."

He stretched and yawned.

"Personally," he said, "I could do with a little sleep, and I think the rest of you could, too. I'm going to turn in until three o'clock."

"That isn't much more than an hour away," R-1 pointed out.

"I know," G-8 admitted, "but that will do."

The Master Spy went into his room, and a few moments later he was sound asleep.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

HELL BENEATH THE SEA

A LITTLE before three o'clock that afternoon, G-8 was up and studying maps of the roads that led into Zeebrugge. At three, the Rumpler was warming outside the end hangar.

Dressed as German privates, Nippy, Bull, and G-8 went out to the captured ship. R-1 accompanied them to wish them luck. G-8 and Nippy took the rear cockpit of the Rumpler while Bull, being the heaviest, was assigned to the pilot's seat. At a few minutes after three, the Rumpler roared across Le Bourget field and took the air.

G-8 had arranged for a convoy. Three Spads flew above the Rumpler as it droned toward the front lines, but before it came within sight of the German trenches, the Allied convoy turned back.

On and over Germany G-8 and his Battle Aces sped. Again the Master Spy was studying a map of roads leading to the submarine base.

"How are we going to get on the sub?" Nippy asked.

"I have one plan in mind," G-8 admitted. "It may work and it may not. If it doesn't, then we'll have to bluff our way on."

"That sounds as though it's going to be a tough job," Bull barked through the tube that connected the two cockpits.

"We'll see when we get there," G-8 said.

One, two hours went by. Precious time was speeding on, but soon the Master Spy pointed down to a field he had chosen, two miles from the submarine base. Bull made an uneventful landing. There was no one about the meadow when they came down.

As they walked from the plane, G-8 was between his Battle Aces. He held the map in front of them and pointed out several lines with his finger.

"You see," he said, "this is where we are now. There is a road skirting this field which leads directly to the submarine base. I chose it for that reason."

"You mean, so we can get there quicker?" Bull demanded.

"Well, partly," G-8 confessed. "But there's another thing to be considered, too. If we can get there sooner by this road, then the members of the submarine crew are likely to use it for the same reason."

"Jumping Jupiter, I get it!" Nippy said suddenly. "You're going to try and catch a ride with some of the crew on their way to the base, right?"

The Master Spy nodded.

They reached the road and walked along it for perhaps a quarter of a mile.

"Hey," Bull sang out, "there's a car coming from behind us. It's going along pretty fast, too."

G-8 stepped out in the road and waved his arm. As the car approached, they saw that it was an open, seven-passenger affair with the top down. There were three German *offiziers* in it—two *leutnants* and a *kapitan*. The driver was a sergeant.

As the car slowed, the *offiziers* glared at the three privates who had stopped them.

"What is the meaning of stopping us?" the little *kapitan* demanded.

"We are part of the crew of *Herr* Goulon's submarine," G-8 explained. "If we do not catch a ride, we will probably be late for the departure at six o'clock. We are very sorry, but we recognized you"—he nodded to the *kapitan*—"as one of the *offiziers* on the submarine. We thought you would be willing to give us a lift."

The *kapitan* hesitated, then nodded resignedly.

"Very well," he said. "Climb in."

They lowered the two extra seats in the rear of the car and Nippy, Bull, and G-8 crowded on those. The sergeant put the car in gear and they sped on.

There were no wooded sections in this flat country near Zeebrugge. For the most part it was open, but a little farther on, G-8 could see a stretch where great trees lined the road on either side. He chose this as his point of execution.

He nudged Nippy, who sat next to him. In that same move, he whipped out his automatic. Before the *kapitan* and the *leutnant* in the back seat could realize what had happened, G-8 had placed the muzzle of his gun against the head of the *leutnant* in front of him and pulled the trigger. As the *leutnant* slumped, G-8 pushed him forward quickly, so that the blood would not soil his uniform.

There was a squeal of brakes, the car was slowing. The Master Spy's gun bellowed again, and a bullet crashed through the temple of the driver as he turned his head.

Nippy and Bull had the *kapitan* and *leutnant* held at bay in the back seat. Big Bull Martin raised his gun and brought it down on the large *leutnant's* skull.

Nippy and the *kapitan* were having it out in a wild battle as G-8 grabbed the wheel and pulled the emergency brake to halt the car at the side of the road. Nippy finally hammered home the butt of his gun.

They made quick changes there, the Master Spy acting as make-up man, with Nippy's assistance. Swiftly, the three faces were made over to resemble as closely as possible those of

the three *offiziers*. Nippy was the *kapitan*, because he resembled him most in build, and Bull Martin became the large *leutnant*. G-8 made himself up like the smaller *leutnant*.

The uniforms were not exact fits, and the faces could not be made exactly like the originals, but they would do, G-8 decided. After they had exchanged clothes, they dumped the bodies of the dead Germans in some brush at the side of the road. A little farther on, they washed off the blood that had been spattered on the uniforms. Then, with G-8 at the wheel, they sped on toward the submarine base.

The Z-13 was a huge affair—so large that it astonished even the Master Spy. It was a great, wide-bellied craft with thousands of cubic yards of storage space for planes.

They stopped their car a little distance from the docks and walked the rest of the way. It was nearly six when they reached the submarine.

Nippy swaggered importantly down the gangplank and G-8 and Bull fell in behind him. Guards snapped to attention as they passed.

They stood on the narrow deck for a time, taking stock of the situation. Members of the crew worked at a respectful distance. An *unter-offizier* stepped before Nippy and saluted.

"Everything is in readiness," he announced. "As soon as Herr Goulon arrives, we are prepared to leave."

The terrier ace gave a curt nod.

"Gut," he said.

The *unter-offizier* left.

Bull turned to Nippy.

"Hey, maybe we won't get off at all," he said. "Herr Goulon is supposed to be dead, isn't he?"

G-8 nodded.

"He was down when I last saw him," he said.

Nippy frowned suddenly.

"Hey, did you kill him, G-8?" he demanded.

The Master Spy shook his head.

"No," he said. "When I saw him lying there, not moving, I thought either you or R-1 had killed him."

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy whispered, "I didn't kill him. I didn't dare shoot at him for fear of hitting R-1, because she was standing close by. I just

knocked the gun out of his hand. By that time, things were getting so hectic that I had to let the guards and the firing squad have it as fast as I could—before they got us. I don't think R-1 killed him, either."

Suddenly Bull Martin tensed.

"Hey," he said, "is *that* guy a cripple? He walks with a limp. Look."

HE WAS pointing farther up the dock, where a great car had stopped. Herr Goulon had stepped from it and, accompanied by a guard on either side, was hobbling quite rapidly toward the submarine.

"Oh, oh!" Nippy choked.

Herr Goulon came on, swinging his hook as he shuffled along. He limped down the gangplank, red eyes searching the deck. The entire crew had lined up for inspection.

The crippled fiend's eyes fell on Nippy. He motioned to him. The terrier ace obeyed instantly, snapping up a salute to the Cripple of Hartsburg.

"Everything is in readiness?" Herr Goulon demanded.

Nippy bowed stiffly from the waist.

"Jawohl," he said.

"We leave at once," Herr Goulon snapped. "You have your course charted. We go."

"Jawohl," Nippy bowed.

He whirled to G-8 and Bull.

"Prepare to leave at once," he commanded.

G-8 and Bull saluted in unison. Bull's German wasn't so good, so the Master Spy turned and shouted the proper commands to the crew.

Herr Goulon hobbled to the main hatchway and disappeared down into the belly of the great craft. Men followed him, running to their posts.

G-8 and Nippy and Bull were the last ones to leave the deck. The sun was just setting over the North Sea as they went inside.

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy hissed in G-8's ear. "I sure hope we see that old sun again sometime."

G-8 made no answer.

The great engines of the submarine were already throbbing. The craft was vibrant with sound and movement. *Unter-offiziers* were shouting orders, and every member of the crew was at his

post. Now the submarine was moving out, submerging as it went toward the North Sea.

For more than an hour the craft moved on. G-8, Nippy, and Bull let the helmsman follow the course that had apparently been laid out. They felt the underwater craft roll slightly, now and then, as the course was quickly changed to dodge mines with which the Huns guarded their base.

When they were well on their way, the Master Spy approached the helmsman.

"You are following the course exactly?" G-8 asked.

The helmsman looked up from his chart and nodded.

"*Jawohl, herr Leutnant,*" he said matter-of-factly.

G-8 stood by him as they plowed on, and from his pocket he took a small but powerful magnet. He saw the compass in front of the pilot begin to swing around a little, saw the pilot make corrections with his controls until he brought the compass back where it should be.

The Master Spy hid the magnet behind some machinery close at hand, so that it would affect the compass. That would take the submerged submarine off its course, for G-8 had no intention of letting it reach the Atlantic Ocean.

On into the night they plowed through the North Sea. The Master Spy was making certain investigations of the craft's interior and of the high explosive in the small planes that were piled row on row, ready for quick assembly.

From time to time he went back, obviously to check the course that the pilot was supposed to be holding. Now and then he moved the magnet slowly. The course should lead up between Scotland and Norway, around the Orkney Islands, and thence into the great Atlantic. But instead of that, the submarine was following the direction chosen by the Master Spy. The pilot was unwittingly steering directly for one of the great British naval bases on the Scottish coast.

G-8 was keeping track of the time and he saw that they would soon be getting into dangerous waters mined by the British to protect their naval base.

Nippy, Bull, and G-8 were gathered in the room where the wireless-controlled planes filled with high explosives were stored. The members of

the crew stationed there had been sent out on a special errand.

"We'll blow her up any minute now," the Master Spy told his Battle Aces.

Bull stared at him.

"Just how are we going to work this thing?" he asked. "Can't we get out before she blows?"

The Master Spy nodded.

"I'm figuring on that now," he said. "Here's the plan. I don't know whether we can make it or not. I found a small pair of pontoons that will fit one of these little H.E. crates. If we can get those pontoons on one of the ships, empty the high explosives out of it and get it up on the water, we've got a chance."

"But I still don't know how we're going to blow this thing up," Bull argued.

"I've got a time fuse for that," the Master Spy told him. "It will give us about ten minutes to get away."

As he spoke, another voice snapped, "I heard your plan. Do not move, any of you. Do not reach for your guns or I will kill you!"

The three froze to the spot, and G-8 turned his head slowly. He saw a *leutnant* of the crew, a big, burly fellow, standing there with a Luger trained on them.

"I have been following you three," he cracked out, "*und* now I have you! Turn and march ahead of me into the central control room."

CHAPTER NINETEEN THUNDER IN THE NIGHT

THE Master Spy turned to obey the *leutnant's* orders. Nippy and Bull started to follow behind him. The space was very cramped in that hold, so that there was only an alleyway about two feet wide. That meant that they must brush very close to the *leutnant* who held the gun on them.

The Master Spy nodded.

"Gladly," he said. "It will be a pleasure to stand before *Herr* Goulon and prove to him that you have been making a fool of yourself. Do you realize

what this means, *Herr Leutnant*—suspecting your *kapitan* of being an impostor?"

Nippy swelled out his chest and tried to look more important than ever.

Neither of the Battle Aces knew what G-8 had in mind. It seemed to them that they were going directly before *Herr* Goulon. But that was not at all the Master Spy's intention.

The *leutnant* tried to back away to let them pass, but there was not room.

As the Master Spy came within three feet of him, he suddenly looked up among the ships to a point back of the *leutnant*. His eyes widened as if with fear and his jaw dropped.

"*Ach du Lieber!*" he exploded. "Look!"

His exclamation took the *leutnant* completely by surprise. Before he thought, he turned his head slightly to look behind him. That was the moment that G-8 went into action.

He sprang forward, and with his left hand clutched the *leutnant's* gun arm. His fingers bit deeply into vital nerve centers. With his right hand he grabbed the *leutnant's* wrist and gave his arm such a terrific wrench, that before the Hun could think to pull the trigger of his automatic, it had slipped from his paralyzed fingers and clattered to the steel floor.

The Hun opened his mouth to cry out, but G-8 struck him with a powerful uppercut that closed it and sent him reeling against the smaller planes.

Nippy, Bull, and G-8 were trying to reach the Hun at the same time. But already G-8's uppercut had sent him into deep slumber. He sagged, and Bull pushed him under the bottom tier of small fuselages.

G-8 spun around to face his Battle Aces.

"Now," he said, "we've got to work fast. There's no telling how many of the men suspect us. We've got to get this submarine up on the surface before we can release one of these crates. You stay here. I'll be back in a minute."

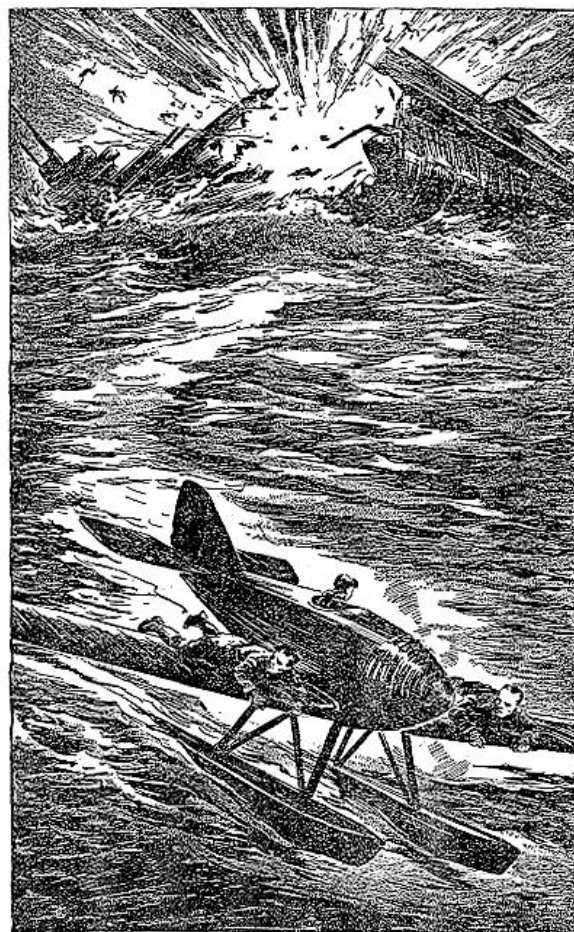
He went back to the crew at the controls.

"The *kapitan* has been studying the maps," he announced, "and he believes it best that we rise to the surface now. It has just been discovered that deep mines have been laid in this section to trap us. If we rise to the surface and slow our

speed for a time, we will probably be able to avoid them."

He had noticed the faintest hint of disagreement on the face of the pilot as he made that announcement, but the man nodded obediently.

As G-8 moved back to his compartment where the small wireless ships were located, he felt the submarine rising. The throbbing of the engines was lessening, too, indicating that the speed had been decreased according to his orders.



A DEAFENING EXPLOSION SOUNDED WHERE THE SUBMARINE HAD BEEN.

He closed the steel door and bolted it. They were now locked into the small ship storage compartment. Nippy and Bull were waiting for him. G-8 went swiftly to work.

"Come on," he said, "climb a ladder to the top. We've got to open this double hatch and get one of these ships out. As soon as we put on these pontoons, I'll open the hatch. We'll assemble the wings above deck."

A breath of cold North Sea air greeted him as he set the electric machinery in motion to open the great hatchway. He heard the swish of waves against the side of the submarine.

He went down in the hold again, as Nippy and Bull put on the pontoons, and busied himself in removing the high explosive with which the small ship was loaded. He rigged up a rudder, in place of the wireless control apparatus, so that the tail of the little monoplane could be steered.

"We won't be able to take off in this," he said. "It wouldn't lift two of us, let alone three. But I think if we can get it on the water, we can keep afloat in it and maybe propel it forward."

While Nippy and Bull raised the little craft up through the hatchway, G-8 chose another ship, opened some of the high explosive and attached the fuse and the cap.

He had just completed that task when a sharp, metallic pounding sounded on the door and the voice of *Herr* Goulon rasped out, "Open this door! Why is it locked?"

Again and again he pounded, more furiously now.

G-8 completed his work, attaching the fuse with lightning speed. *Herr* Goulon was screaming desperate threats on the other side of the door, and members of his crew had joined him and were also pounding on the portal.

Nippy and Bull had the small plane up on deck and nearly assembled when a cry from the next compartment reached G-8.

"Look, in the periscope! They have assembled one of the small planes. Quick, stop them!"

G-8 leaped up the ladder, two rungs at a time. The steel door was being bombarded with sledge hammers at the command of *Herr* Goulon. But the Master Spy didn't fear that nearly so much as the crew, who might come up through the main hatchway to stop them. He reached the top of the deck.

"Everything O.K.?" he cracked.

"Yes," Nippy called back, "if we can ever get this two-lung motorcycle engine started."

BULL was whirling the propeller like mad, and Nippy sat in the little compartment from which the

high explosive had been removed. G-8 spun around and raced along the top deck toward the main hatch. When he was only half there, he saw that it was opening.

In the light of the few stars that were out, he saw the end of an automatic sticking out of the opening. Instantly, he cut loose with his own automatic. There was a cry of pain, and the gun dropped from sight.

He sprang for the hatch and pressed it down. At that same instant, the little engine on the nose of the tiny ship sputtered and began to run.

"Come on!" Bull boomed. "They've broken down the door into the storage—"

That was as far as he got. G-8 leaped away from the main hatch and went dashing back toward the little craft. Already, Bull was pushing it off the deck into the water. The pontoons went down with a splash, were submerged, then rose again.

A shot cracked out from the hatch as a member of the crew raised it. Men were coming up the ladder from the storage room.

G-8 turned long enough to send his bullets thudding into the first two. There was wild confusion down there, but the shooting continued from the main hatch.

A bullet ripped through G-8's uniform and burned his side.

"Come on!" Nippy screamed.

Bull had leaped out and was lying across the left wing. G-8 dove for the other one. As he did so, a bullet pinged over his head and another one punctured the back of his German *offizier's* coat.

The little craft tipped dangerously, and Nippy opened the throttle and the engine sputtered. They went plowing out into the great waves of the North Sea.

Shots cracked out after them, and looking back, G-8 could see dimly the great hulk of the submarine lying at rest. Its forward motion had stopped altogether. He could see men swarming on the deck, and little pencils of flame darted out into the night as they emptied their Lugers in the general direction of the fleeing plane.

They were rapidly drawing away from the submarine, then they heard a cry of command. It was *Herr* Goulon.

"Start the submarine! Full speed ahead! Chase them! We can stop them! Wait; I begin shooting with the one-pounder.

A moment later there was the bark of the cannon, and a one-pound shell burst perilously close to the little ship and sent showers of icy water spraying over the three of them.

"Come on, you little puddle jumper, let's see some speed!" Nippy said desperately.

G-8 could see the submarine riding the top of the sea now, and making almost as much speed as they were.

Again the one-pounder barked out. That shot screamed over them and burst just ahead. The little raft tipped and wobbled like a chip on rough water.

Bull and G-8 were almost thrown from their perches on the wings, but somehow the little plane righted itself and they plowed on.

"That submarine is gaining on us!" Bull bellowed. "Holy Herring, they'll reach us about the time she blows! Let me drop off. You can make better time that way."

"Don't be a fool, Bull!" G-8 cracked above the sputtering engine. "If you drop off, I'll go, too. We'll see this through."

"Yes," Nippy chirped, "and then I'll die from lonesomeness."

Once more the one-pounder spoke, and the shell smacked a wave a short distance off to Bull's right. The little craft rocked convulsively. They could just make out the shoreline, far to the east. Suddenly, from that direction, a beam of light shot toward them.

"Look!" G-8 called. "They've heard the shots! That's a British cruiser coming this way! They've spotted us!"

"Sure," Bull groaned, "but that won't do us any good. We'll all probably get it together now, about the time that submarine—"

"Shut up!" G-8 cracked. Then, more gently, he said, "They don't know they're going to blow up."

He had just uttered those words when a deafening roar sounded back where the submarine had been. The night skies over the North Sea were lighted up by a series of flashes caused by that blinding explosion. The rumbling continued for

perhaps two or three seconds, then all was still except for the splashes as hunks of steel and human bodies from that submarine landed in the black water.

"Maybe they *didn't* know they were going to blow up," Nippy chirped, "but they certainly know it now, all right!"

Giant swells from the explosion heaved the little craft again, and rocked it so that at times G-8 and Bull had to hang on by their very fingernails. But they came up again each time.

The searchlight was drawing closer to them. In a few minutes, a long, sleek British destroyer steamed up beside them and took them aboard.

Later, when they had exchanged their wet clothing for dry uniforms, they sat in the commander's cabin, guests of the officers on board.

G-8 turned to the commander.

"I would like to send a wireless message if I may," he said.

The commander nodded and handed him pad and pencil, and he sent his report to headquarters.

Nippy Weston grinned.

"Well," he said, "I've done a lot of crazy things in my life, but that's the first time I ever put to sea in a motorcycle."

Big Bull Martin licked his lips. He addressed one of the officers.

"Say," he boomed, "I was just wondering. You fellows carry food on these cruisers, don't you?"

"I've been waiting for you to pull that one, you big ox," Nippy chirped. "You sure are fully recovered."

THE END



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