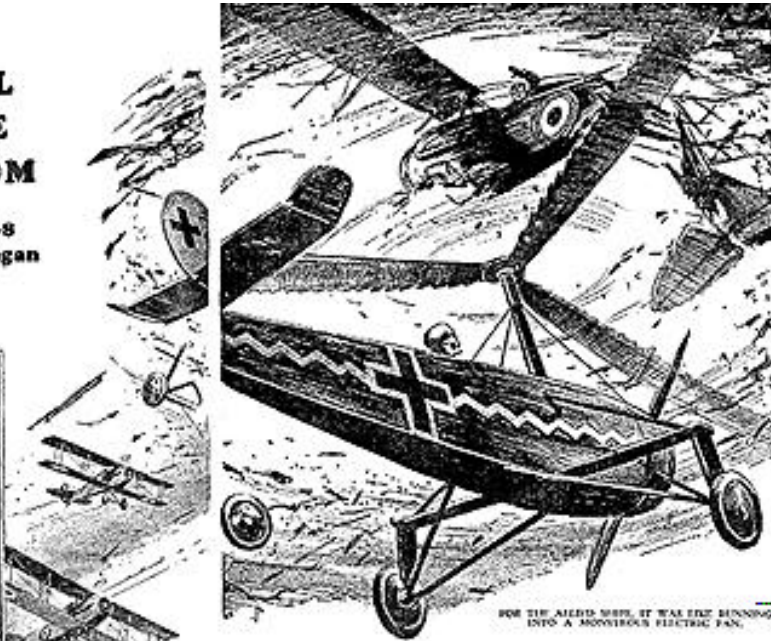


PATROL OF THE PHANTOM

By Robert J. Hogan

The Gray Ghosts of the Sky have bony hands and they do the killing of the Phantom! Herr Geist they called him, and his hands were quicker than the eye, and his methods even swifter than the guns of the Master Spy! It was Herr Geist who did the bidding of Koln, the Butcher, and lived to regret the service that he gave!

**PATROL
OF THE
PHANTOM**
As told by G-8
to Robert J. Hogan



CHAPTER ONE *Find the Phantom!*

THE long, low roadster raced at top speed toward Paris. G-8, the Master American flying spy, sat behind the wheel and sent the car charging into the outskirts of the French metropolis.

Beside him sat his two assistants. Little Nippy Weston, the terrier ace who laughed in the face of death, was in the middle, next to the Master Spy. On the outside sat big Bull Martin, former all-American halfback. Bull's rock-like jaw was set at a defiant angle. He leaned forward a little and his

eyes snapped as they followed the gleam of the headlights down the road.

"Holy Herring!" he grunted. "I don't believe it."

"You don't believe what, you big ox?" Nippy cracked.

Bull jerked his head around and stared at his little pal.

"Well, what have we been talking about? Why are we going to Intelligence headquarters in Paris?" he demanded. "I'm talking about what A-1 told G-8 over the telephone. Didn't he say they had just caught a bird down there who has more nerve than any man he ever saw? That's a lie—particularly if it's about a German agent. There isn't

anybody with more nerve in a tight spot than G-8."

The Master Spy smiled.

"I'm afraid, Bull," he ventured, "that you're prejudiced."

"Certainly, I'm prejudiced," Bull growled, "but it's the truth just the same. Believe me, I want to see this guy who's supposed to have more nerve than you!"

"We'll see him in a few minutes, if he's still at Intelligence headquarters," G-8 promised.

Presently, the Master Spy pulled the roadster up before the building which housed the American Intelligence. The three of them piled out and walked quickly inside. They turned right into the first office off the corridor.

There were three men in that room already. A-1, the chief of American Intelligence, sat behind his desk. Before him stood a member of the Yank military police, in khaki uniform. He was a big, raw-boned powerful fellow. Handcuffed to the Yank's wrist was another man. He was slim, of average height, and dressed in civilian clothes.

As G-8 and his Battle Aces came in, they heard the chief of Intelligence asking the M.P., "Have you searched the prisoner?"

"Yes, sir," the M.P. told him. "I've searched him and he hasn't any weapon on him, unless he's swallowed it."

A-1 nodded to G-8 and Nippy and Bull as they came into the room. For the first time, all three could plainly see the face of the prisoner. The flesh of his entire face was horribly scarred. His nose had been broken at some time in the past, and futile efforts had been made to straighten it. The prisoner's face was wrinkled in a nonchalant smile. There was nothing arrogant or boastful about it; it was merely self-confident, and if it had not been for the twisted features, his appearance would have been quite pleasant.

A-1 spoke to the prisoner.

"The military police tell me you've been showing considerable interest in the habits of G-8," he said.

The prisoner nodded without relaxing his smile.

"Yes," he said in English, tinged with a slight foreign accent, "that's true. In fact, I was sent over here purposely to learn what I could about G-8 and to meet him."

"Well," the Intelligence chief said. "you're

meeting him face to face now." He nodded to the Master Spy. "This is G-8."

The prisoner's smile broadened.

"It's a pleasure, I'm sure," he said.

G-8 found himself smiling back at the fellow.

"The feeling is mutual," he confessed. "May I ask who you are, and why you've taken such a great interest in me? Just where did you come from?"

The chief of Intelligence caught G-8's eye and gave a significant nod as if to say, "Listen closely. This is going to be good."

The prisoner nodded.

"With pleasure," he said. "I am a newly commissioned German agent, known in country as *Herr Geist*."

"Hey, wait a minute," Nippy cut in.

"Geist means 'ghost' in German, doesn't it?" Surprise was written on his face.

The prisoner smiled.

"That is correct," he said. He glanced at G-8. "May I go on?"

"By all means," the Master Spy encouraged.

"Very well. I do not care to disclose the name of the person who sent me here, or the place where he has his headquarters in Germany; but as I told you before, I have been commissioned to meet you here, on your own side of the lines. I have a message for you."

As he talked, the prisoner placed his free hand on the wrist that was handcuffed to the big M.P.

A-1 chuckled.

"I told you he had more nerve than anyone I'd ever seen, G-8," he said.

"Then," Bull cut in loyally, "you've never seen G-8 in action."

A-1 smiled.

"My apologies, G-8," he said. "Understand, whenever I make statements about anyone else, you're always excepted."

"That's better," Bull mumbled under his breath.

The Master Spy couldn't help admiring the calm bearing of *Herr Geist*.

"I'll take the message," he told him. "You've found me, and apparently there is nothing more to wait for."

Herr Geist nodded.

"Perhaps that is true," he said. "But I'm afraid you must wait a little longer. You see, I have decided that it would be better if we were to meet in private."

As he finished that statement, the German agent stood motionless for an instant. Then, moving with lightning speed, he swung his free right fist straight at the side of the big M.P. to whom he was handcuffed. The attack came so swiftly that it took even G-8 by surprise. Before anyone realized it, *Herr* Geist had slipped his wrist out of the handcuffs as the big M.P. reeled to the side of the room. In a flash, the German agent was gone through the door of the large office.

G-8 was the first to race after him.

Behind him, he heard A-1 bark, "Stop him! Stop that man!"

The M.P. was yelling angrily, "Why, that slippery little squirt, I'll—"

THEN the Master Spy was out in the night, following the slim, swift figure of *Herr* Geist as he dashed up the dark street. The dark clothing that the man wore almost hid him in the shadows. The fellow was drawing away from G-8; suddenly, he vanished.

Racing at top speed, G-8 came to the place where *Herr* Geist had disappeared and found himself at the entrance to a blind alley. Without slackening his speed, the Master Spy swerved and dashed up that alley.

Ahead in the blackness, he made out the moving figure of *Herr* Geist. There came a muffled clanking at the back of the alley, as of a heavy slab of metal being tipped over.

Nippy and Bull were somewhere behind G-8, but the Master Spy didn't intend to wait for them. Even before he reached the end of the alley, he recognized that clanking sound. It had been caused by *Herr* Geist lifting a cast iron manhole cover that opened into the sewers beneath Paris. He had dropped down into one of the stinking canals!

The manhole was still open when G-8 reached it. There was just room enough for him to slip through, and he dropped into the dark interior and paused for a minute. He could hear the sound of footsteps echoing along a shelf beside one of the narrow canals. That fact struck him instantly as strange, for up to the time that they had reached

the sewers, *Herr* Geist had run as silently as a cat. Now he was making a lot of noise, as though he wanted G-8 to know which way he had gone—as though he wanted the Master Spy to follow.

G-8 dashed on again. Behind, at the entrance to the sewers, he heard Bull's voice.

"Hey, I'm stuck!" the big fellow yelled. "I can't get through this hole!"

Then he heard the terrier ace crack, "Get out and let me go down, you big ox! You would block up the whole thing."

There were sounds of struggling.

"I can't get out," Bull grunted. "I'm stuck! Give me your hand."

G-8 passed beyond the sound of their voices, for he knew he must go on alone. *Herr* Geist was moving as easily through the black chambers of the sewers as though he could see in the dark as well as a cat. G-8 was forced to slow his speed and feel his way along, with one hand on the wall beside him. He came to a narrow canal that turned off to the right, and he could hear *Herr* Geist moving in that direction.

The scar-faced phantom was walking well ahead of G-8 now, keeping just out of reach. The chamber became narrower and narrower, and the stench grew more unbearable.

There was a scurrying sound in front of G-8. Something ran across his foot and he heard a giant rat splash into the water beside him.

G-8 traversed another lateral passage of the sewer and sensed that he was getting closer to *Herr* Geist. He moved on tiptoe in the hope of sneaking up on him, and his head brushed against the low ceiling. He groped about to feel his way and found that the roof of the canal was becoming lower, and that he would be forced to move in a bent position. A hundred feet on, the space became so restricted that the Master Spy was compelled to crawl on his hands and knees.

Still he could hear *Herr* Geist ahead of him. His head bumped against the stone ceiling, even as he crawled. Far back in the sewers he could hear Nippy calling, his voice echoing through the stench filled chambers. The echo was weird.

The Master Spy was crawling, now, almost flat on his belly, groping his way along. He stopped to listen, but he heard no sound from *Herr* Geist. He moved a few feet farther, then something suddenly touched his outstretched hand. His fingers closed and there was a rustling of paper.

He recognized the shape of the object in his hand. It was a thin, sealed envelope.

Frantically, the Master Spy groped about for *Herr Geist*, whom, he decided, must be there somewhere—must have put the envelope in his hand. He could feel nothing about him but the blank walls. He moved a few feet farther on and found that the passage ended abruptly.

Again he heard Nippy's voice echoing through the chambers far behind. "G-8! G-8! Where are you?"

Once more the Master Spy made a thorough inspection of the end of that tunnel. He found that the stream of sewage beside him flowed through a narrow opening in the wall—an opening that was too small for him to crawl through. How had *Herr Geist*, if he was a normal human being, crawled through that hole?

With the envelope tightly clutched in his hand he tried to turn, but he found the passage was too narrow. He began crawling backward until he reached a wider point, then he turned and retraced his steps, guided by Nippy's voice.

"Did you get him?" the terrier ace demanded when they met.

G-8 shook his head.

"No," he confessed. "He's gone—although I don't know where or how. But I've got the message."

He let Nippy feel the sealed envelope as they walked back to the opening of the sewer. Bull, who was waiting above, helped them up.

"Come on," the Master Spy said. "We're going to Intelligence headquarters and see what's in this envelope."

CHAPTER TWO

A Strange Warning

THE three hurried to the office of the chief of Intelligence. A-1 was there waiting for them to return. "Did you get him?" he demanded.

"No," G-8 told him. "To tell the truth, I haven't the slightest idea where he went. But before he vanished he put this in my hand."

A-1 looked a little bewildered as he stared at

the Master Spy.

"You mean," he demanded, "you were so close that he put this letter in your hand—and you couldn't catch him?"

The Master Spy nodded.

"I'm afraid that's it," he said. "It was at the end of a long passage. So far as I could find out, the passage was closed completely."

A-1 said, "Well, it looks as if Mr. Geist is running true to his name. I never saw anyone slip a handcuff so easily in my life."

"Nor I," G-8 agreed.

The Master Spy had already torn open the envelope and was unfolding a slip of paper. The chief of Intelligence leaped to his feet and the four of them read the handwriting that was scrawled across the paper:

Warning!

Unless the combined air forces of the Allies agree at once to ground their planes, both pilots and equipment will be carved into slices. If you wish proof of this, continue your flying activities.

Nippy Weston exploded in derisive laughter.

"Jumping Jupiter!" he cracked. "Anybody would think that Battle wrote that note and got his Yankee slang mixed up."

Bull Martin was grinning, too.

"Yeh," he cut in, "the bird who wrote that didn't mean they would be carved in slices—he meant they would be cut in ribbons."

The Master Spy stared down at the message without uttering a word. He held up the note and studied the writing, reading it over again.

The chief of Intelligence nodded.

"Yes," he said, "that's obviously what they mean—that they're going to cut us to ribbons. In other words, they're going to annihilate the combined air forces of the Allies. So they want us to ground our ships and surrender, do they?"

"I'm just wondering," G-8 said. "Personally, I don't think they've made any mistake in the wording of the note, although that's just a guess at present."

"Great Scott!" A-1 exploded. "You don't mean that whoever wrote this note is trying to make us believe that our planes and pilots are going to be actually cut up in slices?"

Nippy cut in with another laugh.

"It sounds like a lot of baloney to me," he said. "And no matter how thin you slice it, it's still going to be baloney."

The Master Spy shook his head.

"I hope you're right! Nip," he confessed, "but I'm afraid you're going to be proven wrong, when we find out what's behind this."

The eyes of the chief narrowed on G-8.

"Apparently you've got something on which you're basing your opinion," he said. "Do you mind telling us what it is?"

"Let's go over this situation," G-8 suggested. "The only man we've contacted so far, in connection with this note is that scar-faced phantom who calls himself *Herr Geist*. Don't misunderstand me; I'm not basing my opinion of him simply on the fact that he escaped from me and I couldn't catch him. You all saw him stand here in this office, handcuffed to an M.P. almost twice as heavy as himself. He gave that M. P. a beautiful straight right to the body and almost knocked him off his feet. And before the smoke was cleared and any of us realized what was going on, *Herr Geist* had slipped off the handcuffs and was gone. He ran faster than anyone I've ever trailed. He has an abundance of nerve and self-assurance."

"I've already sent out the alarm," A-1 said. "He can't remain at liberty long, not with such a distinguishing mark as that scarred face."

"That's probably true," G-8 admitted. "The chances are he'll be caught eventually, but how long we'll be able to hold him after we catch him is something else again. If he's smooth enough to slip out of a handcuff and escape before our very eyes, there's no telling what he can get away with."

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy exclaimed. "I just thought of something! This fellow said they call him *Herr Geist* in Germany. He sounds and acts like a magician."

"You ought to know. Nippy," Bull cut in, "being a magician yourself."

"Thanks for the compliment," the terrier ace grinned at his big friend.

"It begins to look as though you'll have to dig down into your bag of tricks and figure out some way of outwitting this *Herr Geist*," G-8 told him.

"I haven't had a chance to use my magic lately," Nippy admitted. "I guess you're right. Well, anyway, I was going to say I'll bet this bird, *Herr*

Geist, is an escape artist. He's a regular Houdini, who can get out of anywhere. You know the tricks; they chain a man all up and put a padlock on him, shut him up in a box and nail the lid on. Then they drop him in a swimming pool and in less than a minute he's out of the thing." The chief of Intelligence uttered a low whistle.

"Phew!" he said. "By Jove, you're right, Weston. He acts exactly like that type of man."

"Besides that," G-8 went on, "he's apparently a master showman."

"Yes," A-1 smiled, "that's very obvious. He certainly put on a good enough show to make a monkey out of you, G-8."

"I'll admit that without any excuses," the Master Spy said. "This *Herr Geist* took me over—hook, line, and sinker."

"He's got to be mighty clever to do that," Bull said.

"I guess we all admit then," G-8 went on, "that *Herr Geist* is a very clever fellow." He pointed to the note. "The scrawled writing on this note is confusing. It was either written this way to disguise the handwriting, or it was penned by a person who can't write very well."

Bull took another look at the note.

"It looks to me," he confessed, "as though some kid had written it.!"

The Master Spy shook his head.

"No," he said. "I don't think that's it. Look at the various letters! the *a*'s for instance. No two of them are the same. And that goes for all the other letters, too. The average person can't make his letters much different from each other. And if he could, what would be the object? The point is, this is a message, supposedly sent to us from some German behind the enemy lines. He used *Herr Geist* as a messenger and intended that we be impressed by his cleverness. In that case, there's absolutely no reason why *Herr Geist*'s boss should disguise his handwriting."

"It might be," the chief of Intelligence suggested, "that someone we know has written this note and has disguised the writing so we wouldn't recognize it."

The Master Spy smiled.

"All right, A-1," he said, "we'll work on your theory for a minute. Suppose you take a slip of paper and a pencil, and copy the first line of this message—with the idea that you're going to disguise your writing so we can't tell who wrote it."

A-1 nodded.

"Very well," he said. "I'll take that challenge. Give me the note."

The Master Spy laid the note before him and A-1 went to work. Two, three minutes passed as the chief of Intelligence labored with Nippy, Bull, and G-8 watching him. Then he pushed the paper back to G-8 and smiled.

"I'm afraid you've got me," he admitted. "I get what you mean now. In spite of myself, I've made the *a*'s almost identical. And although the handwriting doesn't resemble mine, a handwriting expert could pick it out and identify it as mine."

G-8 nodded at the Intelligence man. "That's exactly what I was driving at," he said. "So let's discard the idea that the message was written in this way to disguise the handwriting. Let's go back to my theory that the man who wrote this message has just learned to write—let us say with his left hand. Here, try it."

He handed each of them a slip of paper and a pencil.

"Now, all of you copy down the first line of the message, writing with your left hand," he ordered.

The three bent over and began struggling to write the characters with their left hands.

"You think of the cutest tricks," the terrier ace chirped, when he was half done. "If anybody can read this stuff they're good."

When they had finished, G-8 compared the three papers with the original note. A-1 looked down at them and smiled.

"G-8," he said, "you're a wonder, and so is this *Herr Geist* for escaping from you. We've all written left-handed, and the scrawling in each case does somewhat resemble the original note. As you say, the same letters are formed differently. For instance, each one of my *a*'s is written differently when I use my left hand. And my *t*'s, too, are quite different. And the *s*'s and *l*'s are as different in construction as though different people had written them."

"Sure," G-8 smiled, "that's because you've never practiced writing with your left hand, and therefore you haven't built up any regularity of style in making the letters. My theory is this: the one who wrote this note was, shall we say, naturally right-handed, but because of some recent injury to his right hand, he has been forced to start writing left-handed—and he wrote the note that way."

"You're right," A-1 nodded.

"Sure," Bull admitted. "So what?"

"Don't be silly, you big ox," Nippy cracked. "All G-8 has to do now is take a census of Germany and find a right-handed guy with his arm in a sling."

The Master Spy smiled tolerantly.

"I'm not so sure it will be even as easy as that," he said. "I've simply tried to prove these things to you and to myself—to bear out the fact that this is no idle warning. In the first place, as I said before, this *Herr Geist* is a very clever article. He was sent over here to impress us with that fact, and I think he certainly accomplished that much, all right. The Germans know they can't scare us with mere idle threats, and I'm afraid there's something pretty deadly behind this. They mean business, and unless my guess is completely wrong, they mean literally what they say about slicing up our pilots and planes."

"Do you mean," A-1 demanded, "that you believe they've got some device that will carve up men and planes in the air?"

The Master Spy nodded.

"I'm afraid of something of that nature, and—"

He broke off, as from outside the building there came the cry of an excited Frenchman.

CHAPTER THREE

The Ghost Glides On

"MON DIEU! The war is won! France is saved! My nephew has just completed an important invention." The Frenchman seemed to be having an argument with the guards at the front of the building. His voice was loud enough to be heard a block or so away.

"*Mais, monsieur*, I insist upon seeing the chief of Intelligence at once. Then I will go to the generals and tell them what my nephew has done."

There was a low-voiced response from one of the guards, then the Frenchman cried out, "But monsieur, you do not understand! It is of the greatest importance! My nephew has invented a new airplane! It is perfected! It will rise straight up from the ground—go anywhere, do anything! I tell

you, it is marvelous!"

G-8 sprang out into the hall and barked an order:

"Stop that Frenchman from talking so loud and bring him in here."

Immediately, a guard ushered the Frenchman in. He was a man about fifty years old—small, wiry, excitable.

"Don't say another word," G-8 ordered. "until I tell you to." He took him into the office of A-1 and closed the door. "Now," he said, "how many people have you told about this invention?"

"Ah, monsieur—" the Frenchman began.

G-8 tapped him on the shoulder.

"Not so loud," he said. "Calm yourself."

"*Mais, monsieur,*" the Frenchman breathed, "you do not understand; I am so overjoyed! My nephew has made this new airplane, like a wind mill, that goes straight up and down. By tilting the blades, it can go anywhere. It is marvelous, is it not?"

"No doubt," G-8 said tensely. "How many people have you told about it?"

The Frenchman shrugged and gesticulated.

"I have told all of my friends, everyone I saw!" he said. "It will mean the winning of the war for France. And to think that my nephew, whom we thought could do nothing more for France, has been successful. He—"

The Master Spy motioned him to a chair.

"What's your name, *monsieur*?" he asked.

"I am *Monsieur* Marquette, and my nephew is Pierre Marquette," the Frenchman told him with a proud smile. "Pierre Marquette, the French ace?" Nippy cut in.

Monsieur Marquette beamed.

"*Oui, monsieur,*" he said. "He is the same. He had twenty-one enemy planes to his credit when he was shot down and injured so that they will not permit him to fly again. And he is still only a boy. He has been working on this invention ever since he got out of the hospital. And now he has a model that will rise straight up. It has a device like a windmill set up on top of the airplane body—what we call the fuselage."

"Can we see it work?" G-8 asked.

"*Mais Oui,* of course," Marquette nodded. "You can see it now, if you will come with me. I have to see the chief of Intelligence. Which one is

he?"

The Master Spy nodded to A-1, behind the desk, and the chief in turn introduced the others.

Monsieur Marquette's eyes popped incredulously as he stared at the Master Spy.

"Ah," he said, "*Monsieur,* I have heard much of you. You are *merveilleux*. You, too, are helping so much to win the war."

"Thanks," G-8 nodded. "Where does your nephew live?"

"He has a small place just outside of Paris, on the road to Le Bourget," Marquette answered. "You are ready?"

"Yes," G-8 said. "We're ready." He turned to A-1. "Suppose you take *Monsieur* Marquette in your car and lead the way. We'll follow in the roadster."

The chief of Intelligence nodded.

"Very well," he said. "I would like very much to inspect this invention myself, but I can't see why there's any rush."

"Perhaps I'm wrong," G-8 admitted, "but if *Monsieur* Marquette has broadcast the news as widely as he says he has, I think we'll have to hurry to get there before some of the German agents." He turned to the Frenchman. "Does anyone live with your nephew?"

Marquette shook his head quickly.

"*Non, monsieur,*" he answered. "Pierre lives alone, so that he can work on his invention without being bothered."

"That's all the more reason, then, why we should hurry," G-8 said.

They drove at top speed to the outskirts of Paris. The car ahead, which A-1 was driving, turned in at a small cottage. G-8 followed, and they went on to the old barn behind the house. Lights showed through the cracks in the door. The two cars stopped and they got out. Dim light from inside of the barn sprayed out upon the driveway as the door was opened.

When they were all inside, *Monsieur* Marquette introduced them to his nephew, Pierre. G-8 remembered seeing the French ace before. He appeared to be a lad of perhaps seventeen or eighteen, wiry and slight of build, like his uncle. He moved about with the aid of a false leg, in place of the one he had lost. He smiled with pride as they



mentioned his invention.

"You have come to see my invention?" he asked.

"My uncle said he was going to bring the chief of Intelligence and some of the other high ranking officers of the Allied forces to inspect it, but I did not dream that you would be among them, *Monsieur* G-8. It is an honor, indeed."

"Thanks," the Master Spy nodded. "You haven't been bothered by anyone since your uncle left?"

Pierre Marquette's eyes widened.

"*Non*, of course not," he said. "Why should I be bothered by anyone?"

"You know there are plenty of German agents who would like very much to steal an invention such as you have," G-8 warned.

Pierre shrugged.

"Oh, yes," he said, "but they wouldn't think that I have anything of importance here in this old barn."

"Let us hope not," the Master Spy said sincerely. "Now let's see your model at work."

"By all means," young Marquette nodded.

He stepped aside and pointed to a strange-looking contraption standing on the floor. It was a model about three feet long, with a stubby fuselage somewhat similar to that of the average pursuit plane. It had a landing gear with little rubber wheels, and there was a cockpit with a dummy pilot in it. Just in front of the pilot's cockpit was a short, stubby mast, and on the top of that was fastened a large, three-bladed propeller.

G-8 and the others inspected the machine curiously. The blades of the lifting propeller were like narrow airplane wings.

"You see," the young French ace explained, "my first invention was on the order of a great parachute that could be released and let down the entire airplane and pilot. Then I said to myself, 'Why not put wings up above which would go around and lift the entire airplane?' These three wings, I figured, would do the trick. I experimented with several models before I found the proper wing curve. This wing curve is of my own design"—he

lowered his voice—"and it is a secret."

"Keep it a secret," G-8 advised.

Pierre Marquette smiled.

"Never fear, G-8," he said. "I will keep it a secret. It is that secret of the wing curve that makes my plane so efficient. Now I will show you how this plane will rise straight up and go down again in the same way."

He began to wind the blades, and G-8 saw now that he had rubber bands fastened from the tail to a small gear at the bottom of the mast to which the blades were fastened. Pierre wound those rubber bands until they were tight.

"Now," he said, "if you gentlemen will step back, I will make my demonstration."

He let go of the machine. The blades began to turn, faster and faster. With astonishing speed, the helicopter plane rose straight up toward the ceiling of the barn, then gradually the power of the rubber bands lessened and the plane settled down to land in almost the same spot from which it had taken off.

Pierre and his uncle beamed proudly.

"It is a great success," *Monsieur* Marquette said.

"*Oui*," Pierre nodded. "You have seen the demonstration. You have seen that it is possible. I have worked out the weight of this model plane so that it is correct in every detail."

"That's all right," G-8 said, "for going straight up and straight down."

"Yeh," Nippy cut in. "You might use it for elevator service to a captive balloon, but how do you go places in it?"

Pierre Marquette looked a little annoyed.

"I will show you that also," he said. "Here on the nose is a propeller hub. I will place a small propeller on it now and you shall see, when I set my controls, how it works."

He slipped the small propeller on the nose, wound up both the large lifting blades and the small propeller, set the tail fins at the proper angle, and let it go. The little machine rose straight up for perhaps two feet, then it began to move forward. The men watched in amazement as it flew in a circle, twice, about the interior of the barn. Then lazily, it settled down again and landed on its wheels and skid.

The Master Spy shook his head.

"I'm afraid, Marquette," he said, "that you've

got something here."

Young Marquette's eyes widened.

"You are afraid, Monsieur," he asked. "*Mon Dieu*, what do you mean?"

"I am afraid," the Master Spy told him, "that you have something here which the enemy would like very much to steal."

He turned to A-1. "I would advise placing two agents to guard this house and barn as soon as possible," he said. "I'll move my car out of the way so you can return to Paris and send them. Nippy, Bull, and I will wait until they get here."

In less than a half hour, two Intelligence agents were on the job.

G-8 turned to Pierre Marquette in a last warning.

"Watch particularly," he cautioned, "for a slim man with a scarred face."

He and his Battle Aces went out to the roadster and left for Le Bourget.

"Holy Herring!" Bull exploded when they were in the living room, "I can't see why you're so worked up about this business, G-8."

The Master Spy smiled tolerantly.

"I'll have to confess that I can't tell you that myself, Bull," he said. "I guess it's just sort of a hunch or a feeling that I have. I don't particularly like the invention of Marquette coming at this time."

"Well, if you mean that it's got something to do with *Herr* Geist and that warning message, I sure can't see the connection." Bull argued.

G-8 smoked in silence until his cigarette was gone, then he said, "Have either of you ever thought of, let us say, an invention that would be an improvement on something in a certain line and then find out that somebody else had already thought of it a month or so before?"

"I have," Nippy chirped. "When I was a kid and automobiles were young, my father had a pretty good car, but you had to crank it. There was a compression button on the electric switch that you could push after you'd turned on the switch. And sometimes the engine would catch and start up itself from the gas that was already in the cylinders. But it only worked about twenty per cent of the time; the rest of the time you had to crank the thing. Well, I figured out that it ought to have a storage battery and an electric starter to turn the engine. I told my father about it and he thought it was a swell idea. He was going to have the thing

patented for me, but when he had a search made at the patent office, we found out that somebody else had thought of the same idea—just before I had—and they'd already applied for a patent."

The Master Spy shrugged.

"Well," he said, "Pierre Marquette has thought of this plane, which apparently he can lift straight off the ground and let down easily again. Don't you think it's possible that someone may have thought of this same idea in another part of Europe—say in Germany?"

"Sure," Bull agreed, "anywhere. But what's that to get excited about?"

The Master Spy was about to answer when the sound of a car engine came to them and grew louder. The car stopped in front of the door of the end hangar.

"I wonder who this is," G-8 said.

As the Master Spy reached the door and threw it open, he saw Pierre Marquette standing there. A streak of blood marked the left side of his face.

"*Monsieur* G-8!" he cried. "It's gone! The man with the scarred face—"

CHAPTER FOUR

The Face at the Window

THE Master Spy seemed to be the calmest of the group. He helped Pierre Marquette to a chair. "Get some water, Nippy," he ordered. "It seems we have some work cut out for us here. Make it fast."

The terrier ace came back a moment later with a basin of water and a towel. With it, G-8 treated the bleeding wound on Marquette's head. It was a nasty gash.

"Just take it easy," he advised, "until I'm through, then you can tell me all about it."

When he had bandaged the head of the French ace, he placed a cigarette between his lips, lighted it, and nodded.

"All right, Pierre," he said. "Go ahead. Tell us what happened."

"It was not long after you left," young Marquette said. "The two Intelligence agents whom

you left to guard my place were there. We were still in the barn and I was demonstrating the features of my model to them. The man you warned me against must have come in very silently, for none of us heard him. The two agents were standing with their backs toward the door, watching my model fly. Suddenly, somebody behind them began shooting. We hadn't heard him come in. I turned in time to see one of the agents fall with three bullets in him. The other was just raising his gun, but he didn't have a chance. He collapsed there on the floor beside the other one. The attack came so swiftly that I was not prepared. With my false leg I can not move fast. I remember that you had warned me against a man with scars on his face, and I was sure this was the one. I tried to get at the gun which the second agent had dropped, but the slim man in black with the scarred face moved as quickly as though he were a panther. I saw he was going to strike me over the head with the butt of his gun, which I supposed was empty. I tried to duck, but I didn't move fast enough, and everything seemed to blow up inside my brain. When I regained consciousness, I was lying on the floor with the two Intelligence officers.

My model plane was gone. I came to you, *Monsieurs* quickly as I could."

G-8 gave a short nod and strode to the phone. He called up aerial headquarters and snapped an order.

"Have every plane equipped with flares and ready to take off at a second's notice. Watch for a plane that will be flying over the lines at any moment. Follow it and shoot it down at all costs."

He hung up and turned to Pierre Marquette.

"Have your papers and drawings of the model?" he asked. "Could you make another model like the one that was stolen?"

The young French ace hesitated.

"I could build another model like it, Monsieur," he admitted, "but there are no papers or drawings. I made no plans of the ship, for fear they would be stolen."

G-8 frowned.

"But I thought you weren't particularly worried about the German government stealing your stuff."

Pierre Marquette shook his head.

"I wasn't worried about that, Monsieur," he confessed. "The main reason I didn't make any drawings for my invention or lay out any specifications was that I feared someone might be

dishonest enough to steal my invention and get the credit for it. I didn't believe they would dare steal the model. But if I had written the specifications down, they might have stolen those and claimed that they had worked out the invention themselves, and thus get credit for it. If you will take pencil and paper now, Monsieur, I will give you those specifications. I am sure I can trust you."



G-8 sat down at the library table with pencil and paper. He nodded.

"All right," he said. "I'm ready when you are."

Pierre Marquette opened his mouth to speak, but only a choked cry left his lips. G-8 whirled. Marquette was standing there, staring fixedly at the nearest window. The Master Spy's eyes shifted to it immediately. He saw a face there—the scarred face of *Herr Geist*!

But that was only for an instant. In the twinkling of an eye, a gun bellowed from outside. The window glass shattered and Pierre Marquette fell with a bullet hole squarely between his eyes.

G-8 HAD already grabbed for his gun, but the face was gone from the window pane. He dashed for the door, with Nippy and Bull close behind. Bull barked out a warning:

"Look out, G-8! He's liable to pepper you as you come out of the apartment!" The Master Spy

flung the door open wide, and bending low, charged out into the darkness, away from the stream of light that filtered out through the open doorway. He ran out into the darkness and stopped to listen. He hoped to hear the sound of running footsteps, and thus learn in what direction the scar-faced phantom had gone. But except for the idling of a plane motor that the mechanics were testing far down the tarmac, and the constant, far-off rumble of guns at the Front, the night was still.

Nippy and Bull came dashing around the corner.

"Where did he go?" Bull demanded.

The Master Spy shook his head.

"I don't know," he said in a low voice. "He just dropped out of sight."

They waited a few minutes longer, standing there in the pitch dark, then they returned to the living room where Pierre Marquette's body lay stretched out on the floor, his head resting in a pool of blood. G-8 stared down at the corpse and shook his head.

"He's dead," he said. "There's no doubt of that."

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy breathed. "That's shooting! I never saw a bird operate a gun so fast and so accurately in my life."

"Right," Bull nodded, "and even at that, he had to shoot through a pane of glass. You'd think that might deflect the bullet a little."

G-8 strode to the telephone, called the hospital, and ordered an ambulance sent down to take the body away. When he had finished, he went to the door which opened into the storage end of the hangar. He called his mechanic and ordered him to replace the broken pane of glass at once.

Slowly, he paced across the living room several times. Bull Martin straddled his favorite chair, his arms on the backrest. Suddenly, he shivered a little. Nippy stared at him.

"What's the matter, Bull?" he asked. "Have you got a chill?"

"Maybe," the big fellow said. "It gives me the creeps to think of a guy as smooth as this *Herr Geist* wandering around loose. I wonder which one of us will be next."

"Next for what?" the terrier ace demanded.

"Next to get shot, you dumb squirt!" Bull cracked. "I wouldn't be a bit surprised to see that bird come walking through the side of the building

like a ghost, true to his name."

G-8 continued his slow, thoughtful pacing. The mechanic came in to measure the window for a new pane of glass and went out again, merely glancing at the corpse on the floor. The loyal mechanics of G-8 and his Battle Aces were used to seeing strange sights in the apartment without making any comment on them.

Soon the ambulance drew up before the door and the body was carried out. The blood was wiped up so that there was only a reddish stain on the rug to join the other stains already there.

A few minutes later, the mechanic came back, knocked out the broken pane of glass and replaced it with a new one. When he was gone, G-8 turned to Nippy.

"Do you remember just how loud Pierre Marquette was talking, just before he died?" he asked.

The terrier ace thought for a moment, then nodded.

"I think so," he said. "He was speaking in just an ordinary tone of voice."

"All right," the Master Spy nodded. "I'm going to stand outside the window that's just been replaced. I want you two to stand in the exact positions Pierre Marquette and I were in when he was shot. You talk to Bull in the same tone that Pierre was using. I want to see if *Herr Geist* could have heard what he said."

The Master Spy went outside, closed the door, and stepped to the window. Through it, he saw Nippy and Bull plainly. The terrier ace was in the same spot where the young French ace had stood, and he was talking to Bull. G-8 could tell that because he could see Nippy's lips moving. But he could hear nothing except a low monotone, the words of which were indistinguishable.

The Master Spy returned to the living room and closed the door, nodding with satisfaction.

"I don't think *Herr Geist* could hear what Marquette was saying," G-8 stated.

"So what?" Bull demanded.

The Master Spy smiled.

"Let's go to bed," he suggested.

Without further comment, they turned in for the night. Battle, the English manservant and master of makeup, had already retired. G-8 made the rounds of the doors and windows and saw that they were all securely locked.

For a long time, G-8 lay sleepless, thinking things over, trying to formulate plans. Finally, slumber overtook him. When he awoke, the light of day was streaming in through the windows of his room, and he moved restlessly. One hand came up to the pillow beside his face. Suddenly, he froze as his hand touched something. There was a rustling of paper, and slowly, he raised on one elbow. He stared at a slip of paper that was pinned to his pillow. This time, the message was written plainly in an even hand.

G-8:

Do not think you are spared because you are feared. Your time for death will come shortly!

Herr Geist.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Trap for Terror

CALMLY, the Master Spy slipped out of bed. He shaved, took a shower, and dressed slowly; he could think better that way. He heard Nippy and Bull stirring about in their quarters, then suddenly, from the living room, came a cry from Battle.

"Oh, I say, what's been going on here?" the manservant asked.

The Master Spy pulled on his boots leisurely. Through his door, which was partly open, he called to the manservant.

"What's the matter, has the place been turned upside down?"

"Oh, definitely, sir!" Battle answered. "Have you seen it, sir?"

"No, I haven't been out of my room this morning," G-8 said.

"You haven't been out of your room, sir!" Battle exclaimed. He pushed open G-8's door and stood there, staring at the Master Spy in amazement. "But I say, sir, how did you know that the room had been disturbed?"

"I found out when I woke up that somebody had been in the apartment," G-8 explained. "I have

a pretty good hunch what he was looking for."

"Oh, but I say, sir!" Battle gasped. "You mean you knew he was coming and did nothing to stop him?"

"I don't know whether anything *could* have stopped him," G-8 said. "This fellow is a pretty smooth article."

"Hey, what's all the excitement?" Nippy cracked, coming into the living room. "Jumping Jupiter, it looks as though a cyclone had struck this place! All the cushions are out of the chairs, the rug's been pulled up and somebody has gone through the drawer in the library table, and—" He paused, looking about. "Holy *Herring*." Bull broke in. "Maybe he got your book of resident spies, G-8."

The Master Spy was in the living room, surveying the ransacked place. As Nippy had said nothing there had been left untouched. Bull turned and strode back to his sleeping quarters.

"Holy *Herring*!" he boomed. "Whoever he was, he went through the drawers of my dresser. The things aren't at all as I left them."

G-8 smiled.

"The phantom has been through everything," he said.

The terrier ace and Bull Martin stared at him with puzzled expressions.

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy cracked. "You look as if you're tickled pink about all this. What's the idea?"

"I am mighty pleased over it," G-8 confessed, "because it proves something to me. It proves definitely that *Herr Geist* didn't hear anything that Pierre Marquette said before he died."

Bull Martin shook his head.

"I don't get it at all," he admitted. "Besides, how do you know it was he who was in here looking around?"

G-8 handed him the note that he had found on his pillow.

"He made an official announcement," he grinned. "I found this about six inches from my head when I awoke this morning."

"And you didn't hear him last night?" Nippy demanded.

"I must have been aware of *something* going on," G-8 said, "because I remember vaguely being restless in my sleep. But there wasn't enough noise to wake me."

"I didn't hear it either," Bull admitted. "I slept

like a log."

"You would," Nippy cracked.

"Well, I notice that you didn't wake up and capture the burglar," Bull flung back at him.

The Battle Aces finished reading the note.

"It looks as if your turn comes next, G-8," Bull said.

"According to the note, it does," the Master Spy smiled. "But I think he's going to wait just a little longer. You see, I don't believe *Herr Geist* is quite sure of one thing—and he wants to be sure of it before he kills me."

Battle cleared his throat.

"May I ask, sir," he said, "what the ghostly fellow, as you call him, isn't certain of?"

"Sure, Battle," G-8 said. "I'll tell all of you." He turned to Nippy and Bull. "This proves that *Herr Geist* didn't hear what Pierre Marquette said to us before he died. Do you remember what it was that Pierre said?"

Nippy and Bull thought for a moment.

"Well, sure," the terrier ace said, "he was about to tell you his specifications and plans, and you were going to write them down."

"Exactly," the Master Spy nodded. "Pierre Marquette told us before he died that he had written down no plans or drawings, but had kept them entirely in his head."

"Sure," Nippy admitted, "but *Herr Geist* has already stolen the model. He can get all the dope by taking measurements of it, probably."

"Apparently," G-8 said, "he figures that there are certain secret plans and specifications that would tell him a lot more than the model itself. I believe that he figures Pierre Marquette brought those plans with him last night, so he killed him to make sure that he would leave them here. After Marquette was dead, I don't think *Herr Geist* went very far away. He knew we didn't go out of the place, so naturally, he thought the plans, if Marquette had brought them, must still be here."

"Oh, I get it," Bull cut in. "So this Geist bird came back to steal those plans from us if he could find them?"

"Yes," G-8 said. "But he didn't find them, because there aren't any. And I'm banking on the fact that he still isn't sure about them—that he still thinks they're here. I'm going to work on that basis from now on."

"How?" Bull demanded.

G-8 smiled.

"I'm going to lay a little trap for *Herr Geist*," he said.

Nippy chuckled.

"If you want to know any secret of magic," he said, "I can help you out."

"I don't expect I'll need that kind of help," G-8 said. "This, I think, will be quite simple. I'm going down and make another call at Intelligence headquarters this morning." He turned to Battle.

"We'll have breakfast as soon as it's ready," he announced, "but I'll eat lunch in Paris. Nippy and Bull will be here."

THE steaming breakfast of buckwheat cakes, sausages, and real maple syrup took their minds off the war to some extent. When they were done, G-8 climbed into the long, low roadster and drove slowly into Paris. He went once more into the office of A-1, chief of Intelligence, and told him what had happened.

When he had finished, he announced, "I have a little plan, A-1, which I think will work if you'll give me a bit of help."

A-1 nodded gravely.

"I certainly hope *something* will work," he said. "We can't seem to find a trace of this *Herr Geist*. I've had half the agents working on the case."

"He's mighty smooth," G-8 admitted. "But I think we'll catch him at his own game before we're through. Of course, you know Intelligence has spotted certain men in Paris who are suspected of being German resident spies."

"Yes, of course," A-1 nodded. "We don't put them before a firing squad, because if we let them alone, they often lead us to more dangerous enemy operatives."

"Right," G-8 said. "Now here's what I'm wondering. Do you know two of these resident spies who might happen to meet for lunch every day at the same cafe? If you knew of such a pair, they'd come in mighty handy."

A-1 thought for a moment.

"Yes," he said, "I think I can name two of them. There's a fellow known as *Monsieur Marchant* who lives in a little house on Rue du Chen. He's a short, stocky fellow—locks very French. He is, I should say, about fifty years old. Every day he has lunch with a thin, gray-haired man known as *Monsieur Perieux*. Perieux is

somewhat taller than Marchant and younger—perhaps thirty-five or forty. He walks with a limp. I believe his story is that he was injured in the French Army and so is no longer fit for service. They eat together every day at the Cafe L'Avion. You must know the place. The wife of a French aviator runs it. The walls are decorated in the aviation style, with planes, propellers and such things."

G-8 nodded.

"I've been there with some of the other pilots," he said. "They have very good food."

"These two resident spies sit at a table next to the northeast corner of the cafe," A-1 went on. "It's a very good position; they can listen to all the conversation among the flying men. However, the proprietress knows their real identity, and she sees to it that they hear only the information which we *want* to leak out."

He smiled.

"We have been able to pull some rather clever tricks that way, by letting the enemy think that certain things are about to happen at the Front."

"Fine," G-8 commended. "I know Madame Fuchet, who operates the place, very well. I'm acquainted with her husband also. He is a very good pursuit pilot."

He reached for the telephone on A-1's desk and called the proprietress of the Cafe L'Avion.

"This is G-8 speaking," he said. "I'm planning to have a guest for lunch. Will you reserve the corner table—next to the one which is occupied by *Monsieur Marchant* and *Monsieur Perieux*?"

"*Oui, Monsieur*," Madame Fuchet answered. "It will be a pleasure and an honor. I will attend to it immediately."

"Thank you," G-8 said.

He hung up and turned to the Intelligence chief.

"Now A-1," he said, "I want to have lunch with the assistant Air Minister of France."

A-1 stared at him incredulously.

"And sit next to those resident spies?" he demanded. "Do you dare take a chance like that?"

G-8 smiled.

"Certainly," he said. "They wouldn't dare shoot him, under the circumstances. And when they overhear my conversation, they'll at least wait until tonight—when I have dinner with the Air Minister

himself."

A look of absolute consternation flashed across the Intelligence chief's face.

"Great Scott, G-8, do you realize what you're saying?" he demanded.

The Master Spy laughed.

"Don't worry," he said. "I rather doubt that anyone will be wounded severely. And that reminds me, I want to get a picture of the Air Minister, after lunch."

G-8 nodded toward the telephone.

"Call up the Air Ministry now and arrange the luncheon date, will you please?" he asked.

A-1 reached for the telephone, then hesitated. He shook his head in indecision.

"G-8, you're taking an awful chance with the Air Minister's assistant, and then with the Air Minister himself," he said. "Are you sure this thing is going to work out all right?"

"Positive," the Master Spy assured him.

A-1 shrugged.

"Very well," he said. "But it looks to me as though you're getting in pretty deep."

A-1 made the appointment for G-8. "This will help, too," G-8 cut in. "Ask the assistant to bring along a photograph of the Air Minister."

"Yes," A-1 nodded. Then, over the phone, he said, "if you please, will you bring a photograph of your chief Yes, that's right. G-8 would like a good photograph of the Air Minister himself . . . Thank you."

He hung up and sighed.

"Well, G-8," he said, "I've done my part. Now it's up to you. I don't know what you're aiming at, but I hope it's good."

"I hope so, too," the Master Spy confessed.

AT NOON he had to wait only a few minutes for the assistant to the French Air Minister to meet him at the corner table. In that time, he had a good opportunity to look over the interior of the cafe. Several tables were occupied by pilots of different Allied nations. At the table next to G-8, near enough for him to touch, he recognized Jacques Marchant, the chunky, French-appearing spy. Across the table from him was the leaner, younger *Monsieur Perieux*. They had apparently come in a few minutes before the Master Spy. They had both glanced at him as he took the table next to them,

and G-8 thought he detected a light of recognition on both their faces.

Monsieur Toulon, the assistant to the Air Minister, was a tall, graceful, dark-haired Frenchman of diplomatic bearing. He came directly to G-8's table, and the Master Spy stood up to shake hands with him. In a low voice, he said, "Permit me to introduce myself, *Monsieur* Toulon. I am G-8. And how is everything in the Air Ministry?"

The Master Spy had spoken in a low voice, which could just be heard by the two at the next table. Even before he spoke, he sensed that they were listening, having taken note of *Monsieur* Toulon as he entered.

"Everything is going very well in the Air Ministry," Toulon said in a hushed voice.

"And how is your chief, the Air Minister, *Monsieur* Duchamp?"

"He is very well, thank you," *Monsieur* Toulon nodded.

They sat down and ordered food. They talked about current trifles of the war. G-8 took a small slip of paper from his pocket. On it, he had written:

Pass the photograph of Monsieur Duchamp under the table to me.

With the paper palmed in his hand, he picked up the salt shaker and said in a low voice, "May I pass you the salt, *Monsieur*,"

He handed it over, with the paper on the side of the shaker opposite the two at the next table. *Monsieur* Toulon took it and a moment later, under the guise of wiping his mouth with his napkin, he read the note. Later, during the course of the lunch, he handed the photograph under the table and G-8 slipped it into his pocket.

As they finished dessert and lighted cigarettes, G-8 said, "And now, *Monsieur* Toulon, we come to the point of our, meeting.

The Master Spy tried to make his voice sound confidential, and yet it was loud enough for the two at the next table to catch.

"You have heard, no doubt, *Monsieur* Toulon," he continued, "of Pierre Marquette's invention of the helicopter?"

Toulon nodded.

"*Oui*," he said. "I did not see the model work before it was stolen, but I understand that it was

very wonderful."

G-8 nodded.

"I have come to tell you that before Pierre Marquette was killed, he left certain papers, plans, and specifications with me. All his secrets are contained in them. Tonight I would like to call upon the Air Minister and bring them to him, but I've decided to have dinner with him here and give him the plans then. I think it will be much safer that way." He smiled. "Doing things in the least suspicious way arouses the least suspicion," he said.

"*Oui*, of course," *Monsieur* Toulon nodded.

"Then will you arrange with your chief, *Monsieur* Duchamp, to meet me here at seven, at this table? I will hand the secret papers over to him at that time, so that France will be able to make use of them and keep them from falling into enemy hands."

Monsieur Toulon's face flushed for a moment, but he nodded.

"I will arrange the dinner engagement, *Monsieur*," he said. "You may leave that up to me."

"Thank you," the Master Spy said. "And now may I take you wherever you are going?"

G-8 paid the check. They pushed back their chairs and without a backward glance at the two at the neighboring table, left the Cafe L'Avion.

Outside, G-8 ushered the Air Minister's assistant into his roadster and they rolled away through the heart of Paris.

"Now that we're alone, *Monsieur* G-8," Toulon said, "I am prompted to question the wisdom of your meeting with the Air Minister tonight."

G-8 smiled.

"I was about to tell you that," he said. "Forget everything I told you in the cafe. I don't intend to meet the Air Minister at all. But that's a secret that we both must keep to ourselves. You need say nothing to the Air Minister at all about it."

Monsieur Toulon looked astonished.

"*Mais, Monsieur*, I do not understand," he protested.

"Someone else will be there in his place," G-8 explained. "That's what I wanted the photograph for. *Monsieur* Duchamp is a small, wiry man. I think I can arrange a duplicate quite easily."

Toulon smiled.

"Oh, I see. Someone else will take his place. You wanted someone in the restaurant to hear you

say that the meeting would take place at seven o'clock tonight, is that it?"

"I think," the Master Spy smiled, "you would make a very good detective, *Monsieur* Toulon. Thank you for your cooperation."

He dropped him off at the Air Ministry and sped back to Le Bourget.

He called Battle from the kitchen and showed him the photograph of the Air Minister, *Monsieur* Duchamp.

"Battle," he said, "do you think you can make Nippy look like this fellow?"

The manservant stared at the picture, then beamed and nodded his head. "Oh, quite, sir," he said confidently. "When shall I begin?"

"About six o'clock," G-8 told him.

"Hey, what is all this?" the terrier ace demanded.

The Master Spy grinned at the little fellow.

"Tonight," he said, "you and I are going to eat at the Cafe L'Avion—and you're going to be the Air Minister of France."

"Huh," Nippy grunted. "I'd rather be a buck private in the American Army, but if you say so—"

"That's the plan," G-8 continued. "I'm taking you down to the Cafe L'Avion to be shot."

The telephone bell rang and G-8 rushed to answer it. An excited voice came to him from the other end. G-8 caught some of the message and stiffened.

"Wait a minute," he said. "Say that again and say it more slowly. I didn't get it all."

CHAPTER SIX

Cloud Murder

THE Master Spy tensed as he heard the message repeated. Nippy and Bull, sensing the sudden change in his attitude, stepped nearer to him and waited. G-8 shot questions into the mouthpiece and waited for the answers.

"Thanks," he said finally. "I'll be right up."

He hung up and turned to his Battle Aces, his lips drawn in a thin, straight line. He gave a short nod.

"It's happened," he said. "As I suspected, that message wasn't any fake."

"What do you mean?" Bull demanded. "The message that was pinned to your pillow?"

"No, of course not," the Master Spy said. "The one that was slipped into my hand when I was down in the sewers. That call came from an Infantry major at the Front. He tells me that a plane, supposed to be an Allied Spad, has just come sprinkling down to earth back of our lines."

"Sprinkling!" Bull boomed. "Holy Herring, don't tell me it's been raining plane parts up there!"

"It seems so," G-8 confessed. "I'm going up to investigate it as soon as I can get there."

"Then we're going with you," Bull boomed.

"All right," G-8 nodded. "Come on."

The three climbed into the roadster and sped toward the front lines. At first, the roads were good, then they grew worse where shells had blasted great holes in the highway. At times they were forced to turn out into the fields, and twice Nippy and Bull had to get out and push the roadster through the mud. At length they reached the sector from which the Infantry officer had called.

To the first officer he met, G-8 said, "I'm trying to find Major Summers. Could you tell me where I could locate him?"

The lieutenant saluted.

"Yes," he said, "you're G-8, I believe. He's been expecting you."

They walked for more than a mile, past Artillery gun placements, then into the end of a communicating trench, and began moving up toward the second line of defense. There, in an unusually large dugout which apparently served as regimental headquarters, they found the major.

He was a big, broad-shouldered fellow. His face was grave as he pointed to an array of plane parts and fragments of a human body which were spread out on the floor. It was a gruesome sight.

"At first," he said, "we figured some plane had exploded up above the cloud banks that have been hanging over us all day. Of course we couldn't hear the explosion because of the constant noise about us. The first report I got was when one of my men came in to inform me that there were strange objects dropping down out of the clouds. I went out

to see for myself. There were plane parts of every description; some floating down, some dropping—depending upon whether they were parts of a wing or an engine. One of the parts fell near enough so that I could reach it without getting out of the trench. There it is. It's a horrible-looking mess, isn't it?"

He pointed to a bloody mass of flesh.

"We've had two of the medical officers in to look at it. It's a human shoulder, sliced off as though it had been cut by a buzz saw. And there"—he pointed to another ghastly exhibit—"is part of his arm."

"Holy Herring!" Bull gasped. "The whole thing looks as if the plane and the man had been run through a meat chopper."

G-8 shook his head.

"No, it doesn't look like that to me, Bull. It looks more as though they had been run through a meat slicer."

"I've had the men bring in as many parts as they could find," Major Summers told them. "Of course, we haven't got anywhere near the entire plane. The whole thing was sprinkled over too wide an area. But we've got enough here to make me realize that something mighty nasty is at work up there."

"Did you hear the sound of any other plane?" Gas asked.

The Major shook his head

"No, and I haven't been able to locate anybody who did," he said. "Too noisy down here for that."

"And of course," G-8 said, "the clouds hid from view any combat that took place up there."

"Yes," Major Summers nodded.

G-8, Nippy, and Bull were all examining the portions of the plane that were lying on the floor. There was one section of a wing tip, and the fabric, wood spars, and even the brace wires had been sliced off as neatly as though a rotary saw had severed it from the rest of the plane.

The door opened and a corporal entered, carrying another section of wing.

"I just picked this up, sir," he announced. "I found it in a shell hole between here and the front line trench."

It was another section of wing, somewhat mutilated, about two feet wide. G-8 took the wing section from the corporal and placed it next to the

tip that was already on the floor.

"Look here," he said, "this fits perfectly, just like two pieces of a puzzle."

"Jumping Jupiter, it looks as if this ship ran into a monstrous electric fan, with saw-toothed edges on each blade," Nippy ventured.

"That's what occurred to me," Major Summers agreed. "I was with one of the first American outfits to reach the Front. I've been up here as long as any of them—too long—but I've never seen anything so ghastly as this."

The Master Spy turned from his inspection of the parts and faced the major.

Glancing at his wrist watch, he said, "We have an important appointment, and it's a long drive back. We'll have to be starting at once. Keep me posted on any further developments, will you, Major."

"I most certainly will," Summers promised.

HE SALUTED, then he and his Battle Aces left the dugout and made their way back to the car. They were silent until they were well on their way toward Le Bourget.

"Well," Nippy said, "I guess the Heinie who wrote that note with his left hand wasn't fooling, was he, G-8?"

"Hardly," the Master Spy admitted. "I was afraid of it all along."

"Yeh," Bull snorted, "but how can they do such a thing—carving up a whole plane and a man? It's impossible! It's unbelievable!"

Nippy grinned.

"That's what you think," he said. "You wouldn't believe anything if you saw it sitting in front of you, you big ox. You saw those plane parts; you saw how they were cut apart and—well, you remind me of the fellow that was arrested and locked up in jail. He got hold of his attorney and told him to come down. The attorney was indignant when he got there and stood outside the bars and said to his client, 'Why this is impossible! They can't do this to you, locking you up like this!' And the gent behind the bars said, 'No? Well here I am.'"

The Master Spy appeared deep in thought, so the two Battle Aces stopped their bantering and fell silent again. It was a long drive from the Front to Le Bourget. Now and then G-8 checked the time by his wrist watch and pushed on more swiftly. It was nearly six o'clock when they rolled into the end

hangar and stepped into their apartment. The Master Spy eyed Battle.

"You've got everything ready?" he asked.

"You mean dinner, sir?" the man servant asked. "I thought you and Mr. Nippy were going out tonight for dinner, so I prepared only for Mr. Bull."

"No, no!" G-8 said quickly. "I mean the clothing and the make-up for Nippy. Remember, he's going to be the Air Minister. You've got the photograph of him."

"Oh, yes, sir," Battle nodded. "So I have, sir. I'll attend to it at once."

"Hurry." G-8 said. "We want to be sure of being there on time."

Nippy stripped off his clothes and seated himself in the big chair, where Battle usually made up G-8 for his dangerous excursions into Germany. With his big make-up kit laid out on the table beside him, Battle went to work. Now and then he glanced at the photograph of the Air Minister for reference.

While Battle worked, G-8 made a few changes of his own. He took off his boots and the gray wool socks that he usually wore and replaced them with thin black socks and black, rubber-soled tennis shoes.

He turned to Bull Martin.

"I would like to borrow a pair of your boots, Bull," he said.

Nippy looked up from his chair.

"My, Grandpa Bull, what big feet you must have," he cracked. "G-8's going to get inside of them—when he's already got a pair of sneakers on."

"It takes a *man* to wear my boots," Bull retorted.

"Don't worry," the terrier ace said. "A man will be wearing them tonight—for the first time."

Bull brought out a spare pair of his boots and handed them to the Master Spy. G-8 slipped his feet into them, tennis shoes and all. He wiggled his toes about and walked back and forth the length of the room.

"These will work fine," he said. "Moreover, they're still big enough so that I can get them off quite easily if I want to."

In an astonishingly short time, Battle had finished. He had trimmed Nippy's hair to correspond with that of the Air Minister and had dyed it the same color.

G-8 scrutinized the photograph and shifted his eyes to the terrier ace's made up face. He smiled with satisfaction.

"That's perfect, Battle," he said. The manservant beamed.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "I think it's rather a neat job myself."

"Now for the suit," G-8 said. "Do you have a civilian suit that would be proper for the Air Minister to wear at dinner?"

"I believe so, sir," Battle nodded.

He chose the proper clothing from the wardrobe and brought it out for the terrier ace to put on.

"Just a minute," the Master Spy said. "I think we both need filling out a little bit. I've got a couple of padded jackets for us to wear."

From the rear of the car, he brought out two heavy, quilted vests. He helped Nippy into one and put on the other himself.

"What's the idea of those?" Bull demanded. "Do you want to look like a couple of fat guys?"

"It will be just as well if we look a little huskier than we really are," G-8 said, smiling a little secretively.

Nippy shrugged.

"O.K., whatever you say, chief," he said.

The terrier ace put on the rest of his clothing and surveyed himself in the mirror.

"How do I look?" he asked.

"Fine," the Master Spy nodded. "Come on. We've just got time to make it."

Together, they drove into Paris. At a certain corner, G-8 drew up behind a waiting taxi. A middle-aged man in civilian clothes alighted from the cab as they stopped and stepped to the side of the roadster.

"I'm G-8," the Master Spy announced. "You have the papers with you?"

The man nodded.

"Yes," he said, "we did our best to make the drawings and specifications according to your description of the helicopter."

"Good," G-8 said. "Thanks."

He tucked the papers into an inner pocket of his coat and they drove on.

"Who's that bird?" Nippy demanded.

"He's from our engineering department," G-8

explained. "I had him draw up some plans and specifications from my description of Marquette's model plane. You see, at dinner tonight I'm to hand these papers over to you, and unless I'm very much mistaken, somebody will try to snatch them out of my hand and run. When that happens, turn around and face him. Don't sit sidewise to him. Perhaps you'll see why later. If you make any move, leap to your feet but don't make any real effort to stop him."

"I don't get all of this," Nippy complained.

"You will," G-8 promised. "I want you to act just as though you really were the Air Minister of France. Here we are."

He drew up behind a large limousine.

"You'll ride the rest of the way in this car," he said. "I've arranged for the driver to take you to the Cafe L'Avion."

"Jumping Jupiter!" the terrier ace said as he climbed out of the roadster. "I feel as though I were getting initiated into some secret order, or something."

G-8 smiled.

"You're getting initiated into the order of saviors of your country," he said. "Remember now, I'll be waiting for you when you get to the cafe. Come in and look around. I'll motion to you from my table. You will come over and shake hands and then we'll have dinner and go to work on this proposition."

He left Nippy to follow him in the limousine and drove on in the roadster. He parked his car outside and stepped to the curb.

Dusk had settled over the city, but he could make out the figure of a slim, wiry man dressed all in black standing near the entrance of the cafe. G-8 didn't look directly at him, but he could see that a long, black beard covered a good share of the fellow's face. But in spite of that camouflage, the Master Spy recognized him instantly as *Herr Geist*, the scar-faced phantom.



CHAPTER SEVEN

The Phantom Takes the Bait

THE Master Spy passed him without apparent notice and entered the cafe. Madame Fuchet met him as he hesitated inside. "Good evening, Monsieur," she said. "I have your table reserved. Come this way, please."

She led him to the same table in the corner where he had eaten lunch with the assistant Air Minister. G-8 sat down and lighted a cigarette. The table next to him was occupied by the same two resident spies, *Monsieur Marchant* and *Monsieur Perieux*. He thought they acted a little nervous now.

Across the aisle from G-8 was an empty table with a card saying that it was reserved. From there one could command a close view of G-8's table.

Two, three minutes passed. Presently there was a stir at the entrance of the cafe, and glancing in that direction, G-8 saw Nippy in his disguise as the Air Minister. Madame Fuchet hurried over and curtsied to him. She smiled; "Ah, *Monsieur Duchamp*, it is indeed an honor to have you as a guest at my cafe."

The terrier ace bowed formally, took the extended hand of Madame Fuchet and kissed it

with an excellent display of French gentility.

"Thank you, Madame," he said. "I am pleased to be here."

"Come this way, *s'il vous plait*," Madame Fuchet said.

G-8 rose as Nippy was ushered to his table. They bowed to each other and shook hands.

In a voice that was plainly audible to those at the next table, G-8 said, "Ah, *Monsieur* Duchamp, it is indeed an honor to dine with you tonight. I was afraid something of great importance would come up and prevent you from meeting me."

As they sat down, he made the identity of his companion absolutely definite to the two German spies at the next table.

"This, *Monsieur* Duchamp, is a great occasion for me," he said. "It is not often that a mere American captain has the honor of entertaining the Air Minister of France."

He said it in a low voice, but he was positive that the two at the next table could hear him.

Several of the other tables were occupied by groups of French, British, and American pilots. Suddenly, G-8 was aware that someone else had entered the cafe. He shot a quick glance toward the door. Now he saw the slim, bearded figure standing there, the man whom he had recognized outside as *Herr* Geist.

Madame Fuchet was nodding and ushering the black-bearded man to the reserved table across the aisle from G-8 and the terrier ace. The Master Spy smiled and winked his off eye at Nippy to signal him that everything was working perfectly.

With the bearded figure at the table across the aisle and the two German spies sitting at the next table, Nippy and G-8 were cut off from the door. They ordered a light dinner, and G-8 led the conversation, talking about various incidents that would be interesting to the Air Minister. Nippy carried on with him, affecting a good imitation of a French accent. They both spoke in low tones, now, for there was no necessity that those at the next table hear what they said.

When the meal was finished, they lighted cigarettes. The cloth that covered the table was long and hung down almost to the floor at the sides, hiding their feet. G-8 found the toe of one of Nippy's boots and began tapping out a message:

Don't look now but the fellow with the black beard just across the aisle is *Herr* Geist.

For an instant, Nippy stiffened just a little,

then, as he talked on about something else, he tapped out an answer on the toe of G-8's boot:

What are you waiting for? You've been after that guy; now you can get him.

G-8 tapped back:

I don't want to get him. I'm saving him for future use. If I were to place him under arrest or kill him here the plans that I have made would be ruined.

Nippy looked puzzled and shrugged, then straightened as if it were time to go. G-8 nodded.

"And now, *Monsieur* Duchamp" he said, raising his voice just enough to carry to the next table, "we come to the point of our meeting. I have brought with me the plans and specifications of the helicopter invented by Pierre Marquette."

"That," said Nippy, "is most encouraging. I was highly pleased when I heard that the plans had been saved when the model was stolen."

G-8 plunged his hand into his coat.

"So now, *Monsieur* Duchamp," he said, "I give them to you for safe keeping, for France and the other Allied nations."

Out of the tail of his eye, the Master Spy could see *Herr* Geist shifting his position at the table so he could rise quickly. The Master Spy brought the papers out into plain view and handed them across the table to Nippy.

Suddenly, the lithe figure with the false black beard moved with lightning speed. He leaped to his feet and sprang with cat-like swiftness to the table in the corner. His left hand shot out and snatched the papers from the Master Spy.

G-8 whirled around to face him and Nippy did the same. In the other hand, *Herr* Geist held a small automatic. He pointed it at G-8's heart.

The gun exploded three times, then *Herr* Geist swung the gun on the terrier ace. Nippy only had time to half rise to his feet. The little gun barked again, four times. G-8 was crumpling to the floor; Nippy did the same. Before the people in the cafe realized what was going on, *Herr* Geist sprang for the door and was gone.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Night Ride

THE other two German spies who had occupied the next table left hurriedly in the wake of *Herr Geist*, shouting, "Stop! Stop!" in order to make the people in the restaurant think they were pursuing him. They vanished just behind *Herr Geist*.

G-8 leaped to his feet and helped Nippy up.

"Are you all right?" he demanded.

The terrier ace nodded.

"Yeh," he said, "but I was afraid maybe those bullet-proof vests you dressed us in weren't going to take it."

"They took it, all right," G-8 nodded. "But come on. We haven't got a second to lose."

As he talked, he was kicking off Bull Martin's boots. Running in his rubber-soled black tennis shoes, he rushed the terrier ace toward the door. Others were leaping up from their tables.

"Get out of the way," G-8 cried.

Before he reached the door, he cracked an order to Nippy who was beside him.

"Jump in the roadster and drive like the devil! You've got to catch up to the car that *Herr Geist* will be driving. He'll have to turn his lights on for fear of the *gendarmes* stopping him."

"And where are you going to be?" Nippy demanded, climbing into the roadster.

"Right here on the front bumper," G-8 told him. "I've got to get on the back end of *Herr Geist*'s car. Look, there he goes!"

The Master Spy pointed to a red tail light that was growing dim, halfway down the block. *Herr Geist*'s car was skimming along in second, picking up speed rapidly.

"Drive without lights!" G-8 cracked as he leaped for the front bumper and crouched between the two headlights of the roadster.

The motor started with a roar.

"After I get on that spare tire of *Geist*'s car you drop behind and pretend that he's thrown you off the track," the Master Spy ordered.

"Right," Nippy sang back.

They raced down the street as the car ahead vanished around the corner. The powerful engine of G-8's roadster roared out in the night as Nippy sent it tearing in hot pursuit. They took the turn skidding, and already they had gained on that

fleeing sedan that *Herr Geist* drove. Two blocks farther on, *Herr Geist* turned left. Evidently he was trying to prevent any pursuit.

G-8 wondered if it was possible for *Herr Geist* to look back and see the roadster following in the dimly-lighted street. Suddenly, as the scar-faced phantom turned the next corner, the Master Spy saw the sedan's tail light go out. He was taking the chance of driving without lights.

The big roadster careened and skidded on the second turn. On they raced, dashing around corners and down dark back streets and gaining at every block. After the fifth turn, when *Herr Geist* had almost doubled back on himself, the phantom turned on his lights again.

At the speed that both cars were traveling, it would be most dangerous to take time even for a short glance backward. G-8 decided now that *Herr Geist* didn't know he was being followed. Even if he did look, there wasn't much chance that he would see the roadster behind him.

The streets through which they were racing were very dark.

The Master Spy, on the front bumper, was coming closer and closer to the rear of the sedan. He could just make out the black spare tire and the rear bumper behind it. Twenty feet separated the two cars, now fifteen, now ten. The Master Spy crouched, ready to spring. He realized he must not land with all his weight at once on the rear of the car; if he did, *Herr Geist* would know that an additional load had attached itself to the car suddenly.

The bumpers were only three feet away. G-8 reached out, grabbed the spare tire, stepped with one foot from his bumper to that of the sedan. Then, still in a crouched position below the level of the rear window of *Herr Geist*'s sedan, he drew himself onto the fleeing car.

Nippy slowed his speed and permitted *Herr Geist* to go on, although the terrier ace was still following him. G-8 saw the roadster lag behind so that almost a block separated them.

Herr Geist swung around a corner to the right. A few seconds later, Nippy had his headlights on and was turning the corner. Suddenly, *Herr Geist*'s lights went off again. The scar-faced German agent had suddenly realized that he was being followed once more. He increased his speed to the maximum that the car would do. Nippy was dropping farther and farther behind. *Herr Geist* made another turn to the left, then, in a short block,

yanked around to the right again. He made several turns after that, and when Nippy's headlights showed no more behind him, he slowed his speed a little, turned on his own lights, and began driving toward the outskirts of Paris at a moderate rate of speed.

G-8 crouched in a more comfortable position on the bumper and hung on. At length, the sedan turned out onto a country road. Now and then they passed a farm house, and they drove for perhaps ten miles. Finally, *Herr Geist* switched off the headlights and turned off the road into a field.

Peering around the corner of the car, G-8 could just see the shadowy outline of a plane standing there on the field. It was, he decided, large enough to be a two-place job. As he came closer, he recognized it as a Salmson two-seater.

Herr Geist shut off the engine of the car. Even now no lights showed. G-8 was thankful for this. The scar-faced German agent spoke in a low tone.

"I am *Herr Geist*," he said.

"Good," came the answer from someone standing near the plane. "You are ready to leave at once?"

"As quickly as possible," *Herr Geist* said.

G-8 dropped off the rear of the car. He was glad now that he wore rubber-soled tennis shoes, for he could walk so silently that they couldn't hear him. Neither of the two apparently had any idea that the Master Spy was there. Their backs were turned toward him. He slipped silently around the tail of the plane and gained the shadow of the lower wing. Under cover of the wing, he made his way to the landing gear.

He managed to crouch there among the wires and braces as he heard the pilot say to *Herr Geist*, "You will ride in the rear seat. I will fly from in front. The motor is already primed and ready to go and the switch is on. I will turn the propeller."

"Good," *Herr Geist* answered.

THE Master Spy felt the plane move a little as *Herr Geist* climbed into the rear cockpit. The pilot had stepped to the propeller, and G-8 could just see his shadow as he pulled the prop through with a quick jerk. The motor caught and roared out. Quickly, the pilot ran around the edge of the wing and climbed into his cockpit. The engine droned on for two or three minutes. When the pilot was satisfied that the motor was sufficiently warmed, he sent it roaring out across the field. Slowly, the ship

lifted, climbed, and headed toward the Front.

Higher and higher they climbed until the temperature turned bitter cold and G-8's hands began to grow numb. Moreover, the slap of the slipstream was wicked as it lashed against his body. Oil leaked from the bottom of the motor and sprayed into his face. With one hand he smeared it over his features in the hope that if he were caught on the German side and *Herr Geist* saw him, he wouldn't recognize him.

Flames from great artillery guns far below appeared like tiny pinpoints of light, flashing out and dying away again. He tried to figure out exactly where they were going in Germany, but the plane was flying very high and the night was dark. Besides, the earth was hidden by clouds. There was nothing for the Master Spy to do but hang on and wait until his time should come.

When it seemed that he could hold on no longer because of the numbness of his hands, he realized that the plane was going down at half throttle. The wind wasn't cutting into him so much now, and the temperature was rising. A few minutes later, with the motor throttled back to idling, they landed smoothly in a field.

It was apparent that this was a German airdrome. G-8 could see the shadowy outline of hangars along one side of the field. However, the place was dark. No lights shone from the barracks or any of the hangars. He heard the sound of running feet as Huns came out to meet them. The pilot was taxiing toward the hangar, then the sound of the motor ceased.

G-8 could tell by the movement of the plane that *Herr Geist* and the pilot were climbing out. Still he remained in his hiding place. He heard the voice of the scar-faced phantom say, "I am *Herr Geist*. I have important papers which I must take to *Herr Koln* at once."

"*Jawohl*," said a German *offizier*. "A car is waiting."

They strode off together, and as they left, G-8 slipped from the landing gear and crawled out under the lower right wing. He must follow *Herr Geist* at all costs! In the darkness he could see no one close to him, so he rose from his crouched position under the wing. The Huns who had gathered about the plane seemed to have melted away.

G-8 stepped out, trusting the darkness to hide his American uniform. He heard the door of a car slam hard, heard a car engine start, and knew that

Herr Geist was leaving. Headlights began to move across the field.

The Master Spy had taken only ten or twelve steps from the end of the wing when he heard a sound behind him.

A German voice cracked out, "Who are you? What were you doing, hiding under the wing of the plane?"

G-8 spun around.

CHAPTER NINE

A Close Call

AS HE turned on the German, G-8 pretended to wobble on shaky legs as though he were almost completely exhausted. He began panting for breath.

"*Mein Herr!*" he gasped. "I must see the *Hauptmann* at once. It is of the greatest importance."

The Hun advanced, took him by the arm as he pretended to fall. G-8 was relieved to note that the German had not drawn his gun.

"*Jawohl, mein Herr,*" the Hun said. "Who are you and where did you come from?"

"I must wait until I see the *Hauptmann,*" G-8 said. "I will explain everything to him."

The German stared at him in the darkness, saw the double gold bars on each shoulder.

"*Was ist?*" he gasped. "You are wearing the uniform of an American captain"

"*Jawohl,*" G-8 nodded. "But hurry. There is no time to lose! Take me to your *Hauptmann* at once."

The German led him hastily toward a group of Huns that the Master Spy could see gathered in front of one of the hangars.

"*Herr Hauptmann, Herr Hauptmann!*" the German sang out.

A large, barrel-chested fellow stepped out from the others. He stared at them in the darkness.

"This man is dressed in the uniform of an American captain, *Herr Hauptmann von Duzen,*" the German told him. "I caught him coming out from under the wing of the plane."

"*Jawohl,*" G-8 agreed. "Now listen closely, *Herr Hauptmann.* I am a German agent. There has been some mistake. I heard that this plane was to bring over an Allied spy and drop him on this side of the lines. I have gained some important information on the other side. It is necessary for me to get to my Intelligence chief at once. Will you get a car for me?"

The *Hauptmann* stared at him more closely

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I am known as number Sixty-Three of the German Intelligence," G-8 said. "Quickly, I beg of you! You can see I have not even had time to change my American clothing. I rode over on this plane on the landing gear. Then, when I saw it land here at the airdrome, I knew there must be some mistake. I realized that no Allied spy would dare land here at one of our airdromes. *Bitte, macht schnell!*"

Apparently convinced, *Hauptmann von Duzen* spun around and bellowed to his men, "Bring up a car at once. I must drive our agent to Intelligence headquarters."

Almost immediately, the roar of a car engine sounded as someone started it in the hangar. Men parted as the automobile came out on the tarmac and drove up toward G-8 and the *Hauptmann*

"You are quite exhausted, *mein Herr,*" the *Hauptmann* said. "I will drive you myself."

"That," the Master Spy said, "will not be necessary." He saw the hesitancy on part of the *Hauptmann* and shrugged. "But it will be very kind of you," he finished.

The *Hauptmann* took him by the arm and rushed him to the car. With the *Hauptmann* at the wheel, they tore off through the night.

"Have you any special place to go, *Herr 63,* or do you wish to be taken to the nearest Intelligence department office?" the *Hauptmann* asked.

"I'll show you the way," G-8 told him.

He had noticed which road *Herr Geist* had taken. Now he pointed in that direction.

"Turn this way," he ordered.

The *Hauptmann* obeyed and they sped on.

"Faster, faster," G-8 encouraged.

The road was winding, and for some time they didn't come near enough to see *Herr Geist's* tail light. Then at length, far ahead, G-8 caught the red gleam.

"That," said the *Hauptmann,* "must be the car

Herr Geist took. We're catching up to him."

G-8 turned to him.

"*Herr Geist!*" he repeated. "A*ch*, do you mean to tell me that *Herr Geist* was in that plane?"

"*Jawohl!*" the *Hauptmann* smiled, "didn't you hear his name mentioned?"

"I was half frozen and very tired from hanging on," G-8 explained. "Once I almost slipped off the landing gear. It was a very perilous journey. It seems I was only about half conscious when we landed, so that was *Herr Geist* who was brought over in the plane—instead of an Allied spy, as I first suspected. I guess, as you might say, *Herr Hauptmann*, the joke is on me, right?"

"It would seem so," von Duzen chuckled.

AS THEY raced on, drawing nearer and nearer to the tail light of *Herr Geist*'s car, G-8 was fumbling under his seat. At length his fingers touched a heavy tire tool. He brought it out, being careful not to make any move that would arouse the *Hauptmann*'s suspicion. Von Duzen's attention was centered on the road ahead.

Suddenly, the Master Spy moved with the speed of a cat. He whirled, brought the iron up and struck with it, aiming at the head of the *Hauptmann*. As he delivered the blow with one hand, he grabbed the wheel with the other so that the car would not swerve off the road.

Von Duzen stiffened in his seat from the shock, then his body went limp. As he relaxed, the pressure of his foot on the accelerator lessened and the car slowed. *Herr Geist*, up ahead, seemed to be increasing his speed as the headlights of G-8's car drew closer.

Without stopping the car, G-8 managed to steer with one hand while with the other he rolled the body of the *Hauptmann* over into the rear of the car. That done, he slid in behind the wheel and tramped on the foot accelerator. The car dashed forward in a new burst of speed. But in that half minute or more, *Herr Geist* had gained a good lead on the Master Spy.

G-8 saw the lights of a town ahead, and suddenly he lost *Herr Geist*'s tail light. A moment later, he reached the turn in the road where it had disappeared, then he saw *Herr Geist* speeding on into the town.

There were other cars and horse-drawn vehicles in the street, and *Herr Geist* had slowed his speed and was winding through them. A few

street lights glowed dimly.

G-8 sped past a line of trucks. There were more up ahead, and suddenly the moving line of traffic stopped, blocking the street. The Master Spy swung up on the sidewalk, intending to turn around. There were several German soldiers along the street. An *offizier* sprang toward him.

"Wait!" he demanded. "*Was ist?* What is your hurry?"

In the dim light of the street lamp, there was no doubt that the German could see G-8's Yank uniform.

"*Himmel!*" the *offizier* barked "Who are you?"

With that, he leaped onto the running board of G-8's car and whipped out his Luger.

"Don't be a *dummkopf!*" G-8 spat at him.

"A *dummkopf!*" the *offizier* barked. "Perhaps I am a *dummkopf*, but why are you wearing an American officer's uniform?"

"I am a German agent-returning from France," G-8 cracked out. "I must get to the nearest Intelligence headquarters at once. The road is blocked and I am going to turn around. Hang on and show me where the nearest Intelligence department office is. There isn't a moment to lose!"

The German *offizier* stared at him. He dropped the Luger into his holster again.

"Very well," he said. "Drive on."

As they backed around, the *offizier* peered into the rear seat of the car.

"A*ch*, what is the meaning of this?" he demanded. "There is a *Hauptmann* lying on the floor back here!"

He scrutinized the body closely. G-8 had backed out into the street and was ready to send the car charging in the other direction. Soldiers from the sidewalk had sensed the excitement and were drawing in closer. With all his might, the Master Spy raised the heavy tire iron and struck at the Hun *offizier*.

CHAPTER TEN *Madman's Mansion*

NOT more than ten miles from the spot where G-8 was trying to fight his way out of a desperate situation, there loomed a great, old factory, rebuilt and remodeled for the special purpose to which it was now dedicated. Branches of the great trees which stood on either side of the building extended over the roof, hiding it from aerial view. That was the main reason why *Herr Koln*, the man responsible for the rebuilding of the factory, had chosen it for his work. The factory was located at the bottom of a low, heavily-wooded mountain.

At the moment, *Herr Koln* was in the engineering department of the factory. Several draftsmen were seated at their boards, each waiting with compass and sharpened pencil to set down certain dimensions and figures and draw them out in detail as the numbers were called off to them.

Herr Koln was a big man with cruel, menacing eyes. His face was scarred, much like that of *Herr Geist*, as though at some previous time it had been cut to ribbons. He wore a high ranking *offizier's* uniform. His right hand was gone, and in its place, at the moment, a cuff-like socket was strapped firmly to the stub. From it extended a hook, with which *Herr Koln* could catch hold of things and carry them. Certain blood stains on the hook testified to the fact that it had been used for gouging, as well.

At his side, fastened to his belt, were two other sockets like the one he now wore. But neither of these had a hook. From one socket, a sharp, glistening sword protruded; from the other socket hung an ugly-looking whip made of three lashes, each of which was weighted at the end with small lead pellets.

Herr Koln was tense and anxious, now, as he looked over the shoulder of his chief engineer, *Herr Doktor Schmidt*. The latter was a meek-looking man with small, flashing eyes that gleamed through his glasses. Before him stood the model of *Pierre Marquette's* plane. *Herr Doktor Schmidt's* small hands worked with lightning speed as he took accurate, minute measurements with calipers and scales. After he had made each measurement twice to be sure that it was correct, he sang out that measurement and the position of it on the model to the waiting draftsmen. They, in turn, recorded the figures at the sides of their drawings.

Herr Koln waited impatiently while this process went on. When *Herr Doktor Schmidt* had

finished, he looked up and smiled at *Herr Koln*.

"You are finished, *Herr Doktor?*" *Herr Koln* demanded in a deep, jerky voice.

"I believe we have completed the measurements," *Herr Doktor Schmidt* nodded.

"You are sure you have made no mistake?"

"I am positive," the doctor said. "I have checked everything over twice."

"Then we can begin manufacture on the new model at once. It is apparent that this craft has certain improvements which will give our own machine far greater efficiency, *nicht wahr?*"

Herr Doktor Schmidt nodded.

"I am positive of it," he said.

Herr Koln whirled to the draftsmen.

"*Macht schnell!*" he ordered. "The last man to finish his drawing will receive three strokes of my whip across the face."

Herr Doktor Schmidt gave a sudden start.

"*Aber, Herr Koln,*" he warned, "you cannot do that. They will make mistakes, and that will be very costly both in time and money."

Herr Koln turned on him.

"*Herr Doktor,* I need not tell you that I am in command here," he barked. "If you fear mistakes, I have a way of settling that."

He bellowed to the now jittery draftsmen, "Every man who makes a mistake on his drawing will receive ten lashes across the face from my whip."

Herr Koln stood with feet wide apart, staring at the half dozen draftsmen. He unstrapped the socket which held the hook and hung it in its place on his belt. Taking the socket with the three whip lashes, he strapped that onto his arm. He waited impatiently.



THE WEIGHTED THONGS STRUCK DEEP INTO THE FLESH.

Pencils flew on the drafting boards. The draftsman on the right was first to finish. Hastily, he checked over his plans, glanced at the others and saw he had time to spare. He removed the thumb tacks that held the sheet of drawing paper on the board.

"I am finished, *Herr Koln*," he announced.

"Take it to the blue-print room at once," *Herr Koln* thundered.

As he spoke, another one of the draftsmen leaped up.

"*Und* I am finished, *Herr Koln*," he said.

A third and a fourth came to him with their drawings. The two who were left worked furiously. One of them leaped up a moment later, snatching his paper from the board.

"*Ach*, I am done," he said.

The other labored on. He was a young German, small and delicately featured. *Herr Koln* stepped up behind him. He drew back his whip and lashed out. The weighted thongs struck deeply into the cheek of the last draftsman.

The young German jerked up and blood gushed from his face. As he sat there rigid, *Herr Koln* struck a second and third time. The draftsman turned his head.

"I have received my full punishment, *Herr Koln*?" he asked.

"*Nein*," *Herr Koln* spat. "I give you one more for good measure."

He struck him again. The lash bent around the draftsman's bloody face and sank deeply into his other cheek.

"*Und* now, *Herr Koln*," the draftsman begged,

"may I go on with my work?"

"*Jawohl*," *Herr Koln* snapped, "if you think it will do you any good."

Wet blue-prints of the first drawing were being brought in. *Herr Doktor Schmidt* pushed back the model and scrutinized the prints, taking certain accurate measurements. Then the last draftsman finished. He handed his drawing, not to *Herr Koln*, but to *Herr Doktor Schmidt*.

At that moment an *offizier* opened the door of the engineering department.

"*Herr Koln*," he announced, "I have a new group of workmen for you."

Herr Koln nodded.

"*Gut*," he said.

HE STRODE into the outer office. The *offizier* pointed to a half-dozen scared, white-faced Germans. One wore the uniform of an *unter-offizier*, the rest were privates.

"A new batch of deserters for you, *mein Herr*," the *offizier* said. "It is a very clever idea to force deserters to do your work, for they are no expense, except for their food. *Und* I dare say they receive punishment enough, here."

Herr Koln laughed harshly as he dangled the whip that hung from his arm socket.

"They receive punishment, all right," he said. He jerked his head toward a rear door. "Take them into the factory," he ordered.

He raised his voice in a bellowing call:

"*Herr Hurtz!*"

The door opened, and a thick-necked bull of a fellow with bulging muscles and iron jaw stared at them through small, close-set pig eyes.

"*Was ist, Herr Koln?*" he mumbled.

Herr Koln jerked his head toward the six men.

"Six more deserters," he said.

Herr Hurtz nodded and eyed the six men in a most unfriendly manner.

"Come in," he boomed.

The men marched toward him. He grabbed the first by the nape of the neck and pushed him on into the factory.

"Faster!" he snapped. "This is no rest camp."

After the door closed behind the last one, *Herr Koln* turned back to the engineering room. He stood over *Herr Doktor Schmidt* once more.

"Well?" he demanded.

The little engineer looked up.

"That which I warned you against has happened," he said. "Only one of the draftsmen took time enough to make his drawing right. And that was the last one—whom you whipped. His drawing is the only one that is perfect. The rest of them have errors, some of them very bad."

"*Himmel!*" Herr Koln spat.

He glared at the five draftsmen who stood lined up before him. The last one was washing the blood from the wounds on his cheeks, over at the hand basin.

"*Eine minute, bitte,*" Herr Doktor Schmidt interposed. "Herr Koln, if I may say so, I believe you owe the sixth draftsman an apology."

"I have no time for apologies," Herr Koln snapped, glaring at the five shaky draftsmen before him. "Tell him yourself that I apologize, if it will make him feel any better. And as for you, you *dummkopfs*—"

He raised his whip, struck at the face of the first draftsman. As he drew back for another stroke, the door opened. A thin man dressed in black, with a scarred face, stood in the doorway. He had appeared without a sound. Herr Koln turned and stared at him, dropping his whip.

"Herr Geist!" he cried. "You have come! You brought the papers about which you sent me the wireless message?"

Herr Geist stepped inside, closed the door, and strode across the room as silently as a shadow.

"*Jawohl, Herr Koln,*" he said. "It took a little engineering and a little shooting, but I got them. I believe everything is here in detail."

From his inside coat pocket, he took a bulging envelope and handed it to Herr Koln.

"*Gut gemacht,*" Herr Koln commended, handing the envelope, which had already been torn open, over to Herr Doktor Schmidt. The little doctor took out the papers and began inspecting them.

"*Ach,*" he said, "this is strange."

"*Was ist los?*" Herr Koln demanded tensely.

Herr Doktor Schmidt didn't answer immediately. He took calipers and a scale and began going over some of the drawings. At length he looked up.

"Herr Koln and Herr Geist," he said, "I am

afraid there is something wrong here."

He turned to Herr Geist.

"Where did you get these papers and how?" he asked.

"You have both heard of G-8," Herr Geist said.

"*Jawohl,*" Herr Koln spat. "Who has not heard of him?"

"I received word through two of our resident spies in Paris that Pierre Marquette had left these papers with G-8," Herr Geist explained. "I made a search of his apartment at night, but I could not find them. Then I learned that he was to meet the French Air Minister, *Monsieur Duchamp,* at the Cafe L'Avion and hand over the papers to him. I was on hand, sitting at the next table, when G-8 gave him the papers. I shot them both, snatched up the papers and brought them here directly."

"Are you sure you killed them?" Herr Koln demanded.

"They both fell to the floor," Herr Geist nodded.

Herr Koln turned to the doctor.

"Then what is wrong, Herr Doktor?" he demanded.

"There is," Herr Doktor Schmidt said, "only a certain similarity between these drawings and the model. Herr Geist, not being an engineer, would not notice that fact. But to me they are very elementary. And as far as detail is concerned, they are merely vague drawings of this model and bear no important detail concerning it. I would even go so far as to say that if these drawings and specifications were followed, the machine built from them would not even fly."

"*Lieber Gott!*" Herr Koln roared. "We have been tricked!"

Herr Doktor Schmidt nodded.

"*Jawohl,*" he said, "that is my belief."

Herr Geist looked a little dazed for a moment. His scarred face showed much concern.

"You believe," he said, "that these papers were used merely for a blind, so that someone could follow me?"

"Someone!" Herr Koln spat. "That someone would be G-8."

"But I told you I shot him," Herr Geist insisted. "I saw him fall to the floor."

"Where did you shoot him, in the head?" Herr Koln demanded.

"*Nein*," *Herr Geist* told him. "I aimed at both their hearts and I put several bullets into each one. I even saw the bullet holes in their clothing."

"Are you sure," *Herr Doktor Schmidt* asked, with a cunning gleam in his eyes, "that they were not wearing bullet-proof vests? Are you sure that G-8 did not jump up after you had gone out and—"

The telephone bell rang and the doctor broke off to answer it. He talked and listened for a few moments, then he hung up.

"*Jawohl*," he said, "it is very apparent that you have been followed, *Herr Geist*. The field at which the plane landed has just called to see if anyone besides yourself arrived here. After you left the field, they found a man wearing an American uniform. He had been riding on the landing gear of your plane. He claimed he was a German agent, and the commander of the field started out to take him to the nearest Intelligence headquarters. So far, neither of them has been heard from."

Herr Koln whirled on the scar-faced man.

"You *verdammter hund!*" he spat. "You *dummkopf!*"

He lashed out with his whip. All three of the thongs struck *Herr Geist* across the left cheek, cutting gashes in the flesh. Then *Herr Koln* rushed past him into the outer office, bellowing orders.

"Comb the entire section for the *verdammte* one! Hold anyone of whom you are the least bit suspicious. Have the factory completely surrounded by hidden guards. G-8 is in Germany!"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Hunt

THE *offizier* on the running board of G-8's car had just shouted, "*Ach*, what is the meaning of this? There is a *hauptmann* lying on the floor back here!" As he uttered those words, he was bent over, his head and shoulders lowered toward the back seat.

As G-8 spun the wheel to swing the car about in the street, he whirled around. Using the heavy tire iron, he struck at the Hun. His blow was well timed, but the jolting of the car made it difficult for

him to take accurate aim in the dimly lighted street. The blow descended, but instead of striking the *offizier* on the side of the head as the Master Spy had intended, it missed and landed with telling force on the Hun's shoulder.

G-8 heard a cry from the *offizier*, then he was forced to turn for a moment, for the car was racing down the street. He must, above all things, be careful not to collide with one of those trucks which were approaching.

He spun around and struck again, just as the Hun was raising his Luger. This time the blow landed squarely on the *offizier's* head. G-8 swerved the car to miss a truck that had lumbered out of line. As he dodged past it, the *offizier* slumped, lurched, and fell backward to the pavement. A cry of warning went up all along the street.

"Stop him! Stop him! Stop that *Amerikaner!*"

A half-dozen guns barked in the night, and one bullet hissed by G-8's ear and crashed through the windshield, showering him with glass. Another ripped through the shoulder of his Yank uniform. He felt two slugs bury themselves in the back of his bulletproof vest, and the shock threw him forward against the wheel.

Suddenly, another truck darted out of the line that had formed on the other side of the street, blocking off G-8's passage. The Master Spy spun his wheel and sent the car careening up on the narrow sidewalk, crumpling a fender as he squeezed by a lamp post.

Another truck shot out into his path. All along the line, men were yelling to others ahead to stop the maniac with the wildly plunging car. Now G-8's escape was completely cut off. He jammed down the brakes, and with a squeal of rubber the car slowed. Before it had stopped, G-8 had leaped from behind the wheel.

The street on that side offered no means of escape, for the houses were built wall to wall, and he could find no alleys between them.

Men were running toward him from every direction, firing as they came. Two slugs slammed into his bullet proof vest as the Master Spy charged for the door of the nearest house. A dim light shone through the front window.

G-8 reached the door in two great bounds. His outstretched hands caught hold of the latch and gave it a jerk, and at the same time he sent his

body slamming against the heavy door. The latch worked, and the door burst open before him. His headlong plunge nearly threw him off balance as he dove through.

As always, G-8 had complete presence of mind. In spite of his desperate head-long flight, he took a moment to lock the door from the inside. That would hold up his pursuers for a half minute or so.

The Master Spy heard the voice of an old woman call from a front room, "*Ach, was ist?*"

G-8 was already racing down the hall toward the rear of the house. He passed through the little dining room into the kitchen and then to the back door. He found it locked from the inside. He slid back the bolt, threw open the door and raced out into the rear yard.

It was very dark there, but in the reflected light from other houses he could make out a high board fence separating that yard from the one adjoining it. Already he could hear the voices of his pursuers and the thud of their feet as they raced through the house in hot pursuit. They had apparently broken down the door in one swift attack and were no more than fifty feet behind him.

With the easy grace of an athlete, G-8 placed his hands on top of the board fence and vaulted over, landing softly on the other side just as the first Hun charged through the back door of the house.

IN THE next yard, the Master Spy could see only one means of escape open to him. There was a narrow alleyway that led up along the side of the house. He dived into it, but he had only gone ten feet when he realized that he was wrong. It was a blind alley, used only for ventilation and light purposes.

A flashlight beam darted out, piercing the blackness. The Master Spy still had the heavy tire iron in his hand. There was a window above him, just shoulder high, and he jabbed the flattened end of the tire iron under the window. Using it like a pinch bar, he jerked down on it. There was a screech and a crackle of screws being torn out of the wood as he gave the window a terrific wrench upward. The lock of the window burst apart and the sash flew up. It was open! The Master Spy leaped into the opening and through the house into the next street just as the Huns came. A truck had just rumbled by, carrying a load covered by a great tarpaulin. G-8 dashed for it as it passed. He caught

up with it and was drawing himself under the back of the truck when the first of the pursuing Huns came racing out into the street.

Flashlight beams darted about, and the Master Spy was struggling to draw himself up under the tarpaulin before those lights could catch him. But suddenly, one of the beams riveted on him. There was a blast of Luger fire, and bullets spat into the cargo that the truck was carrying. He felt one slam into his bulletproof vest. Now the men were running after the truck, yelling, "Stop, stop! Driver, stop that truck!"

They fired again and again, but the truck lumbered on. G-8 drew himself up under the tarpaulin, over a load of packing cases, toward the driver's seat. He could hear the Germans gaining on the slowly moving truck.

"Driver, driver, stop that truck!" they yelled.

An *offizier* in the lead bellowed out, "Stop, you *dummkopf!*"

He had a voice like a fog horn.

"I command you to stop that truck!" he yelled.

G-8 had almost reached the front of the truck, still wriggling under the tarpaulin. The truck started to slow and finally came to a stop. He crawled out from the front end of the tarpaulin, just as the driver pulled on the emergency brake and stepped down from the seat. The Master Spy loomed above him. With one foot he lashed out, caught the driver squarely on the side of the face and hurled him to the ground.

Huns were running up beside the truck. G-8 had only a split second to drop behind the wheel, shove the truck into low gear, release the emergency brake and step on the throttle. One Hun, gun in hand, sprang for the short running board beside the driver's seat. His gun exploded full in G-8's side, but the bulletproof vest stopped the slugs.

The truck shot ahead with a sudden lurch and the German lost his balance and tumbled to the pavement. G-8 sent the machine charging on down the street with the motor wide open. At best his progress was slow, for the truck was heavily loaded. The body was so large that he couldn't see directly in back of him, but he was sure that he was gaining on the pursuing Germans.

He had gone several blocks and was nearing the outskirts of town when he looked in the rear view mirror. He saw that headlights were swiftly gaining on him from behind. Some of the running Huns had apparently picked up a car and were

tearing after him. It wouldn't be long now.

He pushed with all his might on the accelerator to get more speed, but the truck lumbered on slowly. The car was gaining on him rapidly as he passed the outer edge of town. The road wound through a dense patch of woods which grew thicker as he went on. On the right were open fields. The highway narrowed, and G-8 knew that if he kept the truck in the middle of the road, the pursuing car could not pass.

The road widened again and he saw the lights of the car coming rapidly. It swung and began to pass on the side of the truck opposite the driver's seat. G-8 swung to that side to cut them off and the truck crashed into the car. He heard the brakes squeal as it plowed into the ditch on the left side of the road. G-8 realized that the truck had outlived its usefulness to him and decided to leave it. Without slackening the speed, he leaped from the driver's seat and hit the road, running.

As he dashed for the woods, he found that he was in the lights of the ditched car. There came a cry from the Huns, and he saw that they were getting out, racing after him. As the Master Spy reached the woods, they were not fifty feet behind him, shooting as they ran.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Refuge from the Pack

THE Master Spy ran headlong into the blackness of the forest. He heard the uncontrolled truck crash through a guard rail of a bridge farther on, heard it plow into a stream.

Flashlight beams illuminated the woods as the Huns pursued him, going deeper and deeper into the forest. G-8 was gaining on them, but one light seemed to hold him. He dashed around tree trunks and tried to shake off his pursuer, but the fellow clung to his trail tenaciously. Again and again shots echoed through the woods.

Then the Master Spy heard someone bellow out, "Wait, I have a plan!"

It was one of the *offiziers*. G-8's closest pursuer fell back, apparently winded. That fact spurred the Master Spy on to greater speed. He didn't know exactly where he was or how far this path of woods extended.

He heard the same *offizier* call out, "I am going back. Keep after him!"

As G-8 ran on he heard the motor of the car start up again, and he knew the German was going back for help. Soon the entire woods would be surrounded. He changed his course so that he could make a great circle and come back on the highway, farther on.

The Huns' flashlights had lost him, but he could see the winking beams now and then and he knew that they were spreading out over a much wider area.

The forest became deathly still and all lights went out. Having lost him, the Huns were stopping, trying to pick up his trail again by listening for any sounds he might make while rushing through the woods.

G-8 slowed his pace and picked his way gingerly, making no more sound in his movements than his pursuers. In this Manner he walked for quite a time. Now and then he stopped to listen and heard cars far off through the woods. They were coming up with more German troops.

He had completed almost half of his circle when he saw, directly ahead of him, lights winking through the trees. He turned back in the opposite direction and moved on faster, knowing full well that now the woods were completely surrounded and that he couldn't get out. He must find some way of escape other than that which he had first planned.

He thought of climbing one of the trees in the hope that the Germans would pass under him. But with every plan of escape that came to him, there loomed always the fact that he was still wearing an American captain's uniform. He must certainly change that before dawn if he were to escape and carry on his work.

He found, as he moved through the woods, that the ground sloped upward ahead of him. The slope grew steeper and steeper as he mounted it. There was no telling at what moment lights would appear from above and the encircling Germans would spot him. He quickened his steps, almost losing the lights that were behind him.

After the Master Spy had climbed for a time, being constantly on the alert for the first wink of a

light ahead of him, the ground began sloping off level again. This meant that he had reached the top of the hill. Like a hunted beast he hurried on, and the trees about him began to thin out. He could see the stars through gaps between the branches.

Suddenly, something loomed ahead. It was a great, black, shadowy, irregular structure. He came closer to it, recognized it as the remains of a tumbled-down castle which rambled around over a wide area. At one end, part of the tower was left. At the other end, the roof had caved in and only portions of the thick stone wall were standing.

He went inside through what had been the great main entrance to the castle. He stumbled over the fallen, rotted door and low heaps of debris.

Another plan had occurred to the Master Spy now, and it did not concern merely his escape. He stepped outside again to make sure no lights had arrived on the scene. Then he took out his tiny makeup kit, with its mirror cover and a very small flashlight bulb. He lighted the bulb and in the dim light that it gave, looked about him.

Beyond, part of the castle was still standing fairly intact. He went into one of the rooms. The ceiling was formed of huge timbers that crossed some ten feet above the littered floor. The next room was similar in construction, but it was smaller and the partition walls were still in good shape.

G-8 went out to what had once been the great reception hall. From the bottom of the stairs that led up into one of the towers, he tore off a solid oak post that had served as the base of the stair rail. This would make a good club, he decided.

SUDDENLY, he tensed as from outside there came the sounds of approaching men. He saw the gleam of a light, and with the club in his hand, he went back to the smaller room. There he climbed onto the high ledge of a window, and from there pulled himself out on the broadest of the timbers that stretched overhead. The timbers formed a solid network that supported the roof of that wing. He flattened himself out across the beam and waited.

He heard the first of the searching Huns to enter the castle, heard a bellowing command, "Surround this place at once! He may be hiding in one of the rooms."

Through the breaks in the walls, the Master Spy saw lights darting about and knew that the

Huns were entering. Through the door he could see the lights swing about, growing brighter as the Germans approached his hiding place.

Here, as in the forest, they were making a slow, thorough search, scrutinizing every possible nook or corner where he might hide. He heard them moving debris to be sure that no one was concealed under the piles of beams and stones and collapsed roof.

He heard the same commanding voice call out, "*Herr Leutnant*, go into that little room to the right and search it thoroughly "

"*Jawohl, Herr Hauptmann*," a voice near the door answered.

This was the moment for which G-8 had been waiting. A young German *leutnant* appeared behind a flashlight which pierced the gloomy room with its beam.

The voice of that *leutnant* was stamped indelibly on G-8's brain. He must remember that tone for future use. The *leutnant* stepped into the little room. Holding his club ready, the Master Spy poised for the blow.

The *leutnant* advanced. He seemed to have no interest in the beams over his head. In one corner was a pile of stones and rotted lumber where the corner of the room had caved in. The rest of the room was fairly well preserved, with only loose stones and scattered pieces of wood littering the floor.

The *leutnant* stepped over to the pile of debris in the corner and began poking at it. Then he came back. For a moment he stood beneath the Master Spy, flashing his light about, almost within reach of the club that G-8 held ready. The Master Spy remained motionless, not even breathing.

The *leutnant* stepped forward as if he were going to walk to the door and leave the room. He was within range of G-8's club, now. The Master Spy swung the oak post with all his might, caught the *leutnant* a thudding blow on the back of the head. The sound of that blow echoed through the vaulted room. The *leutnant's* Luger and flashlight fell to the floor.

At that sound, the bellowing voice of the *Hauptmann* demanded from outside, "Did you find anything in there, *Herr Hauptmann*!"

G-8 answered immediately, in an excellent imitation of the *leutnant's* voice, "*Nein, Herr Hauptmann*. There is no one here. I have a pile of rubbish to sort over and then I will be out."

"Very well," the *Hauptmann* called back. "Be sure you search thoroughly."

The Master Spy swung his legs down from the beam and dropped to the floor beside the body of the *leutnant*. Quickly, he picked up the limp form and dragged it to a corner of the room. With lightning speed, he stripped off his Yank uniform. Then he took off the *leutnant's* uniform and put it on himself.

He had just fitted the cap to his head—fortunately it was a good fit—when the *Hauptmann* bellowed out, "Are you nearly through, *Herr Leutnant*?"

There was no time for make-up now.

"*Jawohl*," the Master Spy answered in the voice of the *leutnant*.

He might, he decided, get away with the deception since he was wearing a German uniform. He pulled his cap down over his eyes and stepped through the door, keeping his head lowered.

He saw the *Hauptmann* standing in the middle of the debris-strewn reception hall, directing the search. He was at least twenty feet away.

G-8 held the *leutnant's* Luger and flashlight. He turned the light beam directly in the *Hauptmann's* face, in order to blind him somewhat.

"Where do you wish me to search now, *Herr Hauptmann*?" he asked.

"Go in the tower and make sure that no one is hiding there," the *Hauptmann* ordered.

G-8 clicked his heels and answered, "*Jawohl*, *Herr Hauptmann*."

He was glad to turn his back on him and hurry up the stairs into what remained of the tower. There he took out his little make-up kit. He felt safe in leaving on his flashlight, and in its illumination he began making his features over to resemble those of the *leutnant* whom he had knocked down with the club. He worked with all possible haste, knowing that soon he would be called again by the *Hauptmann*.

He was only about half finished when the *Hauptmann* bellowed up the stairs, "Are you all right?"

"*Jawohl*," G-8 answered in the *leutnant's* voice. "I have nearly finished my search."

"Be sure you cover everything," the *Hauptmann* ordered, "and come down as soon as you are finished."

G-8 worked on for two or three minutes, making up his face as well as he could by memory, and kicking debris about with his feet so that the *Hauptmann* would hear the sound of it and think he was searching. When he had done everything he could to his face without actually having the *leutnant* as a model, he closed his make-up kit, fitted it into its secret hiding place under his armpit, and started down the stairs. He must take the chance.

The *Hauptmann* was waiting about ten feet from the bottom of the stairs. G-8 shone his flashlight into his face again.

"There is no one there, *Herr Hauptmann*," he said. "I am sure; I have made a thorough search."

The *Hauptmann* cursed softly under his breath. Others gathered about.

"Every corner in this castle has been searched," the *Hauptmann* announced. "We will move on now through the woods."

The lights from the various electric torches illuminated the place weirdly. G-8 kept to the shadows as much as possible, and let the others pass out first. He followed ahead of the *Hauptmann* with his hat still pulled well down over his eyes. They were out in the night once more.

"Spread out!" the *Hauptmann* ordered. "Spread out ten feet apart and we move on down the mountain."

As the men spread out, the Master Spy dropped behind. He was sure the *Hauptmann* had not seen him, for the *offizier* was out in the lead. G-8 stayed there while the men spaced themselves at ten-foot intervals and went on perhaps a hundred feet to start down the hill. Then the Master Spy turned and softly made his way back into the ruined castle.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Fox Joins the Hounds

HE GROPED his way through the darkness until he reached the little room where the body of the *leutnant* lay in a corner. He took out his make-up kit and went to work immediately, perfecting the make-up he had already put on. He found that he had done a fairly good job, but there were little

things here and there to be improved. There was a mole on the right cheek of the *leutnant* that he had missed, and the shape of the nose was a little off.

G-8 worked rapidly, for there was no time to lose. As soon as he had finished, he put away his make-up kit and started back in pursuit of the searching Germans.

He took out the *leutnant's* record book and found that from now on he was *Leutnant* Lenz. He memorized the entire contents of the book for future need.

He made rapid progress through the woods, and at the bottom of the mountain he sighted the glowing lights ahead of him. Most spies, brave though they were, would have taken this opportunity for escape, but G-8 deliberately joined the enemy and took his place in their ranks as they moved on. He edged in between two German searchers, who were moving at a slightly wider interval than the prescribed ten feet, and snapped on his flashlight as he moved along with them. The Hun on his left turned suddenly and shifted his flashlight so that the beam fell full on G-8's face.

"*Bitte, Herr Leutnant* Lenz," he said, "I did not know it was you."

"I fell out of line a few minutes ago," G-8 explained. "There was a clump of bushes that I remembered I had not searched."

"You found nothing?" the other asked.

"*Nein*, nothing," G-8 said. "They have located the *verdammter kerl!*"

"Not so far as I know," came the answer.

They went on into the woods. The entire line of men was walking slowly, searching every tree top, every bush and every crevice in the rock formations.

After nearly an hour, the Master Spy saw lights approaching from ahead, blinking through the trees. He knew that the circle of men that had surrounded the forest had finally come together. The lights grew brighter.

The *Hauptmann* of G-8's detachment bellowed out from farther along, "You have found nothing?"

An *offizier* on the other line answered, "*Nein*. We have found no one and we have searched everywhere. He cannot be here in the woods, now that we two lines have met."

The Germans were gathering together, but G-8 remained on the outskirts of the crowd and listened.

"*Himme!*" the *Hauptmann* spat. "He has escaped us."

"But how could he?" another *offizier* argued. "He surely didn't have time to get out of the woods before I went to town and returned with the troops."

G-8 realized now that this *offizier* must have been one of the Germans in the car that had pursued the truck. There was a babble of voices as everyone talked at once, offering suggestions on what to do. For ten minutes they talked, but no one seemed to have a satisfactory solution to the problem.

At length, the *Hauptmann* boomed out, "Well, there is nothing else for us to do but go back to town. I wonder who this *Amerikaner* could be."

"Whoever he was," another *offizier* ventured, "he was very clever."

"I have heard it mentioned," another said, "that he was, in all probability, the *verdammter kerl*, G-8."

A hushed silence fell over the group, then the *Hauptmann* cried out, "No wonder we could not find him! They say he is the cleverest spy that ever lived. He is like a ghost or a phantom! I have heard that he has actually vanished through a solid stone wall."

G-8 smiled a little to himself. It was funny how human beings would enlarge on a story:

"Come," the *Hauptmann* barked, "we may as well go back to town, then."

The group that G-8 was with turned and started up the mountain once more. Later, they found the cars, which had brought the troops, strung along a road on the other side of the mountain. In groups of fours and fives they climbed into the vehicles and started the trip. There were three privates and a corporal in the car that the Master Spy chose. G-8 sat in the front seat with the corporal, who was driving, and the three privates took the back seat. G-8 tried to keep an ear on their conversation, but he could hear nothing that would enlighten him on certain things he wished to know.

As they raced through the outskirts of the same town where G-8 had nearly been captured, the corporal turned to him and asked, "Do you wish to be dropped off at the *offiziers'* club, *Herr Leutnant!*"

G-8 nodded.

"*Bitte*," he answered.

The car drove down the main street and

stopped before a large house. In the light of the street lamp that stood before the entrance, G-8 saw several *offiziers* lounging about.

"*Danke*," he said to the corporal as he got out.

HE WALKED across the sidewalk and went into the building. In the room on the right, which had been the living room of the house, a bar was set up along the back wall. There were tables and comfortable chairs and lounges. German officers of various ranks sat about, drinking, eating, and talking.

A lean German *leutnant*, wearing glasses, left the bar as G-8 entered and came toward him. The Master Spy could see that he was a bit, over-elated from drink.

"*Wie gehts, Herr Leutnant Lenz?*" the German said

"*Guten abend*" G-8 said. "*Wie gehts?*"

The *leutnant* laughed.

"Very fine," he said. "Come, have a drink."

G-8 shrugged.

"One, perhaps," he said.

He stepped to the bar with the Hun and ordered a glass of light wine. The Master Spy was most careful to imitate as well as he could the voice of *Herr Leutnant Lenz*. So far as he could tell, the half-inebriated *leutnant* didn't distinguish him from the genuine *Leutnant Lenz*.

The *leutnant* ordered another drink of cognac, and clicking glasses with G-8, proposed a toast to the quick finish of the Allied Air Force. The Master Spy had noticed that this *leutnant* wore the insignia of an Air Force *offizier* on his uniform.

"*Jawohl*," he said. "*Und* to a quick ending of the war."

G-8 looked at the other for a moment, then asked, "You were not in the search for the *verdammter kerl* in the woods?"

The other's eyes widened, then he laughed.

"Of course not, *Herr Leutnant*," he said. "Don't you remember? You were drawn, but I was not."

The Master Spy smiled, nodding.

"To be sure," he said. "It had slipped my mind."

The other's eyes gleamed.

"Did you find him?" he asked.

"*Nein*," G-8 said, shaking his head. "We found no trace of him."

The *leutnant* made a clicking sound.

"*Ach*," he said, "that is too bad."

The inebriated *leutnant* looked very sorrowful after he had drained his drink, then his face lighted.

"But he will be captured," he said. "Do not be afraid of that."

"You think so," G-8 encouraged.

The other shrugged.

"Of course," he said. He lowered his voice and leaned heavily on the bar toward G-8. "Listen," he said, "I heard tonight that *Herr Koln* has set a trap for him. Of course, you know this *verdammter kerl*, whoever he is, has come over for one purpose—to get information concerning *Herr Koln* and the clearer, slashing, windmill plane that he is perfecting."

"I thought he already had it perfected," G-8 ventured.

The other nodded with a smile. "He will, soon," he whispered. "You know about the model that was stolen from the French inventor?"

"Yes," G-8 nodded. "I heard about it."

"That was a good joke on the Allied Air Force," the *leutnant* went on. "They thought they would stop that plane from coming over the lines. They did not know that one of our agents took the model from *Herr Geist* and carried it over to *Herr Koln*—in one of those very planes that went out to stop *Herr Geist's!*"

G-8 chuckled.

"*Jawohl*," he said, "that was very good. *Und* you say *Herr Koln* has a trap laid for this American spy?"

"*Jawohl*," the *leutnant* laughed. "It is a good trap, too."

G-8 leaned toward him confidentially.

"How is he going to do it?" he asked in a whisper.

"You know where *Herr Koln's* factory is hidden—beneath the trees about ten miles north of town?" the *leutnant* said.

"*Jawohl*," the Master Spy nodded.

"He has the place surrounded by guards," the other hissed. "They are all hidden so that the *verdammter kerl* can slip through them. When he has passed their lines, they can capture him or shoot him if he tries to escape."

G-8 chuckled again.

"That would be very good," he said. "I would

like to see it."

"So would I," the *leutnant* admitted. "It would be very funny."

He laughed hoarsely.

"Here, have another drink," he urged.

G-8 shrugged.

"Very well," he said. "One more."

He pushed his half empty glass across the bar and the barmaid refilled it. They toasted the quick close of the war, toasted *Herr Koln* as a great inventor.

Lurching drunkenly, now, after downing another long shot of cognac, the *leutnant* said a little thickly, "I heard some thing else, *mein freund*." He was whispering once more. "*Rittmeister* von Staub, he is a lucky one. You know him, of course? He is commander of the thirty-fifth *jadgstaffel*"

G-8 nodded instantly.

"*Jawohl*, to be sure," he said. "What about him?"

"I heard that he is to arrive early in the morning at the office of General von Reichberg."

"You mean, His Excellency, General von Reichberg—one of the high commanders of the Imperial Air Force?" G-8 asked

"*Jawohl*, the same," the *leutnant* nodded. "I understand that the *Rittmeister* von Staub is then receiving his commission to work with *Herr Koln*. And General von Reichberg is to raise him to the rank of major."

G-8 shrugged.

"Von Staub is a good man," he said.

"*Jawohl*," the *leutnant* admitted.

In his own mind, G-8 was recalling the location of the 35th *jadgstaffel*. He also knew where the offices of General von Reichberg were located. He shrugged and straightened.

"Well, *mein freund*," he said, "I must go now. It is getting late. I have some things to attend to, then I must get some sleep."

The other chuckled.

"*Ach, nein!* Not for me! We can sleep when we can do nothing else."

"Suit yourself," G-8 smiled. "*Gut nacht*"

He turned and went into another part of the *offizier's* club. At the registration desk in the room across the hall, he stopped. A German of about thirty, with one arm off at the shoulder, smiled at

him.

"What can I do for you, *Herr Leutnant*" he asked.

"I would like to see a map of the Beauville area," G-8 said.

The clerk turned, pulled out a drawer of the desk, and sorted over a number of maps. He handed one to G-8.

"I think perhaps that one will give you what you want," he said.

G-8 nonchalantly spread it out on the desk. He noted the location of the field of the 35th *jadgstaffel*, at the edge of Beauville, then he found the town of Konighofen, about ten miles to the north. There, he knew, the headquarters of General von Reichberg were located. A road ran from Beauville past the 35th *jadgstaffel*, directly to Konighofen. On that road he would put his plan into action.

He thanked the desk clerk and went out into the night. A large number of staff cars were parked on either side of the street. G-8 selected one of the cars farthest away from the club and finding the key in the switch, started the motor.

Driving it around the block, he stopped at the rear of the *offiziers'* club and got out. As he had hoped, there were garbage cans there, and several barrels full of empty bottles. He lifted a barrel full of bottles into the rear of the car and drove toward the field of the 35th *jadgstaffel*

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Cuts and Glass

THE field of the 35th *jadgstaffel* was some distance away. He knew he wouldn't be able to reach it much before dawn. That would be timing it quite nicely, according to the plans that he had made. He knew that, in all probability, the car bearing *Rittmeister* von Staub would be about the first car to leave the airdrome of the 35th. There might be a truck or two, perhaps, but like most of the trucks they would be equipped with hard rubber tires. It was fairly safe to wager, then, that his plan of trapping *Rittmeister* von Staub would work well.

A half hour before dawn the Master Spy reached Beauville, and from there he drove slowly past the airdrome of the 35th *jadgstaffel*. There was some little activity on the field. He could see lights blinking about in the darkness. Mechanics were getting out the ships and checking them over, preparatory to sending them on morning patrol. As he drove on a little farther, it began to grow light in the east.

The road ran straight for nearly a mile beyond the field and then made a gradual turn to the left. There were open fields on either side. He stopped the car around the turn, then climbed over into the rear seat. He began picking bottles from the barrel and hurling them to the road.

He saw no houses in either direction; that and the presence of the turn was the main reason he had chosen the spot. *Rittmeister* von Staub would, in all probability, be driving pretty fast as he rounded the turn. He would be anxious to get to his new assignment.

One after another G-8 crashed the bottles on the road until the hard-surfaced highway was completely covered from ditch to ditch with jagged, sharp pieces of glass. When he had broken the last bottle, he lifted the barrel and carried it behind a little clump of brush that skirted the road. He went back and scrutinized the broken glass, smiled with satisfaction as he thought of what would happen when the four pneumatic tires rolled over those sharp bits of broken bottles.

Getting back into his car, the Master Spy drove it on for perhaps a hundred and fifty feet. He stopped well off the road, took out the tools from under the rear seat and spread them on the ground beside one of the rear tires. He placed the jack under that tire and raised the wheel off the ground. Taking out his jackknife, he made a couple of jagged cuts in both rear tires. They were deep enough to show plainly, but not of sufficient depth to cut the inner tubes.

Two or three minutes after he had finished his work, he heard the sound of a motor. At first he couldn't tell whether it was a truck or a passenger car. Soon the sound grew louder and the big nose and body of a truck rounded the turn, and bore down on the broken glass. There was no slackening of speed; the driver pushed his truck on through.

G-8 glanced at the big vehicle, saw that it had hard rubber tires. He smiled with satisfaction. He had a hammer in one hand and a tire iron in the other, and as the truck approached him, he was

pounding industriously on the tire rim. He paid no attention to the driver or the truck, even as it came within twenty feet of him and slowed.

He heard someone call out, "Can we give you a hand?"

He turned and saw that there was an *unter-offizier* on the seat beside the driver of the empty truck. G-8 shook his head.

"No, thanks," he declined. "I have it nearly fixed."

The *offizier* chuckled.

"You should have solid tires like us," he said, "then you would not get flats."

The Master Spy grinned a little sheepishly.

"*Jawohl*," he admitted, "you are right."

The truck rumbled on and the *unter-offizier*, looking back, saw G-8 pounding away again on the tire rim. When the truck had passed from view, the Master Spy pressed a match stick down into the tire valve to let out some air, then he took the hand pump, which was lying on the ground, and screwed the end of the hose onto the valve cap. That done, he lighted a cigarette and waited.

Five, ten minutes passed. Far off toward the airdrome he heard the drone of warming Mercedes engines. Von Staub's aces were getting ready to take off on the morning flight. That meant that mess was about over. Any minute *Rittmeister* van Staub's car should be coming along.

He waited a few minutes longer, then, above the roar of warming engines, the sound of another motor came to him. He recognized the motor as that of a fast touring car.

The Master Spy heard the motor slow a little for the turn. Placing his feet at the base of the tire pump, he grasped the handles and began pumping up and down quite leisurely. Out of the tail of his eye, he saw the car rounding the turn at a fast clip. It was a staff car of the same type and make that he had taken from in front of the *offiziers'* club—an open touring car with the top down.

The rear seat was empty. Two figures loomed behind the windshield, both appearing to be of moderate size and build, so far as G-8 could tell from where he stood. Immediately the Master Spy turned his full attention to pumping the tire. Suddenly, as the driver saw the glass, there came a squeal of brakes as he tried to stop in time. But the German staff car rolled on through the broken bottles.

THE Master Spy heard an angry hissing sound as at least two of the tires began to go flat. The car swerved to the side of the road and stopped less than fifty feet behind the Master Spy's motor. The German *offizier* dressed in the uniform of a *Rittmeister* threw open the front door and leaped out.

"*Himmel!*" he bellowed as he stared at the two punctured front tires.

From where he stood G-8 couldn't get a good look at the rear tires, but he thought the left one was going down. He could still hear air hissing out. The *Rittmeister* turned on his driver in a rage.

"You *dummkopf!*" he barked. "Couldn't you see that glass? *Ach du Lieber*, how can I get to my appointment in time?"

For the first time, G-8 stopped pumping and turned. The *Rittmeister* was striding toward him. G-8 saluted.

"What is the meaning of this?" the *Rittmeister* demanded. "Who put that broken glass in the road?"

G-8 looked angry as he replied, "That's what I would like to know, *Herr Rittmeister*. I came here in the darkness. The lights on my car are not very good, and I could not see the glass plainly. I had run through it before I realized my mistake. Look, both of my tires are badly cut and have gone flat. "But"—he shrugged—"I have been working for over an hour to fix them. A few more strokes on the pump and I think I will have this last tire hard enough."

"I would like to catch the *dummkopf* by the ears who did this," the *Rittmeister* snorted.

"*Und* so would I," G-8 admitted. "I suppose someone got drunk last night and thought this would be a funny joke "

"*Himmel*, he must have been awfully drunk to do a thing like this," the *Rittmeister* grumbled.

"I say," G-8 nodded, "that there is too much drinking going on in the Kaiser's army. Our men do too many harmful things when they are drunk."

"You are right," the *Rittmeister* agreed.

He passed down the road a few steps, glanced at his wrist watch and came back. G-8 grabbed the handle of the pump and began working it again.

"You say you have your last tire almost fixed?" the *Rittmeister* demanded.

"*Jawohl, Herr Rittmeister*," G-8 nodded. He kicked at the tire he was pumping. "See what you think of it," he said. "Is it hard enough?"

The *Rittmeister* kicked at it with the toe of his glistening boot.

"I think that ought to do," he said. "Imagine such a thing happening to me at this time! I have a most important appointment with General von Reichberg at his offices in Konighofen, within an hour. I wanted to be there in plenty of time so I would not keep him waiting, and now I have three flat tires on my car. It will take my driver at least an hour and a half to fix them. And I am not even sure that the car is equipped with sufficient repair supplies."

Deliberately, G-8 bent down and unscrewed the cap of the pump hose from the valve stem and began collecting his tools, then he turned to the *Rittmeister*.

"You are *Rittmeister* von Staub, *nicht wahr?*" he asked.

Von Staub looked more closely at him.

"*Jawohl*," he said. "Do I know you?"

"Probably not, *Herr Rittmeister*," G-8 told him. "I am *Leutnant* Lenz. I heard you were being raised to a very important post. Please accept my sincere congratulations."

For the first time, *Rittmeister* von Staub appeared friendly. He smiled now.

"*Danke schon, Herr Leutnant*," he said. "I am very proud of my appointment."

"I, too, am going to Konighofen," G-8 said. "Suppose I give you a lift? I will be glad to drop you off at the offices of his Excellency, General von Reichberg. Your driver can make repairs on the tires and pick you up in Konighofen when he has finished."

"*Danke schon*," the *Rittmeister* said again. "I will be very glad to accept your offer. It is indeed fortunate that I found you here."

"*Und*," G-8 smiled, "it is an honor, *Herr Rittmeister* von Staub, to have the opportunity of driving you to your destination."

He dropped the tire tool and the jack on the floor in front of the driver's seat.

Rittmeister von Staub called to his driver, "Finish your repairs, then call for me at the offices of General von Reichberg."

The driver snapped up a salute and answered, "*Jawohl, Herr Rittmeister*."

The Master Spy held the door open, and the *Rittmeister* strode up and climbed in. G-8 slammed the door shut and walked around to the other side of the car. Climbing into the driver's seat, he started the engine and set the car in motion.

As the two men had stood facing each other for a moment, G-8 had made a study of the *Rittmeister*—of the shape of his head, his build, his features. He had a slightly longer face than the Master Spy; his head was about the same shape; he was perhaps an inch taller, and well built. G-8 glanced at him again. Yes, he could become *Rittmeister* von Staub quite conveniently.

The car was beginning to gain speed. It was broad daylight, although clouds in the east obscured the sun. The car wound about another turn in the road and then another, completely hiding the *Rittmeister's* car and his driver, who was working busily on the tires.

"From what I have heard," G-8 said, you are going to be granted a most important commission, *Herr Rittmeister*." He lowered his voice to a confidential tone. "I have even heard that the annihilation of the Allied Air Force may rest almost entirely in your hands."

The *Rittmeister* stuck out his chest a little farther and smiled.

"I would not go quite so far as to say that," he said modestly. "I am to work with *Herr Koln* as aerial adviser, that is true."

G-8 looked at him admiringly.

"If the war ends quickly, *Herr Rittmeister*," he said, "you will be celebrated as the *Vaterland's* greatest hero."

"That is not so important," von Staub said. "The thing I must do is perform my work to the best of my ability."

"*Und* I am sure you will," G-8 assured him.

They were coming to a patch of wood through which the road wound. This would be the place. G-8 dropped one hand from the wheel and leaned forward slightly to pick up the heavy tire hammer. His fingers touched the handle, but his eyes were riveted on a spot far down the road. Suddenly, he gave a start.

"What is that, *Herr Rittmeister*?" he asked.

"What is what?" von Staub demanded. "I see nothing except the road."

"That figure far down the road," G-8 said. "I thought I saw a man come out of the woods and drop down in the ditch." He nodded straight ahead.

"Just before that next turn, *Herr Rittmeister*. Perhaps it is the *verdammte* spy we have been looking for."

The *Rittmeister* was leaning forward, straining his eyes to see the figure—which G-8 had not seen at all.

They were passing through the center of the patch of woods. G-8's hand tightened over the handle of the hammer.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Promotion In Peril

WITH lightning speed, the Master Spy brought the hammer up from the floor and crashed it down with all his might on the skull of the *Rittmeister*. There was a dull, hollow thud as the hammer struck. The *Rittmeister* never once suspected his danger. His eyes had been glued down the road in an effort to see the figure G-8 had told him about. His body went limp and he pitched forward, bumping against the windshield. Fortunately, the glass did not break.

Quickly, G-8 sought a way into the woods, and a little farther on he saw a rutted lumber trail. He turned into it and the car bumped along through the trees for perhaps a hundred yards. There, hidden from the main road, he stopped the car. At first he could hear no sounds in the woods, then, from some distance away, came the low hacking of an axe against a tree.

There was much need for him to hurry, for at any moment someone might come along the trail. He drove the car off the trail a little so that other vehicles could pass, then he got out and carried the body of the *Rittmeister* about a hundred yards away. He stripped the uniform coat, trousers and boots from the *Rittmeister's* body.

He didn't take time to put his own clothing on the body, but dressed himself as quickly as possible in von Staub's uniform. It fitted him pretty well.

The tiny make-up kit came out and he went to work on his face. He must make it appear narrower, enlarge his nose a little, and change its shape somewhat. His hair was already cut quite

close. He went over the details of his make-up once more after he had finished, checking up each detail, and added a slight scar on the left cheek and a cleft in the chin. After long minutes of working rapidly, he was satisfied.

He dragged the body of the *Rittmeister* and the discarded clothing to a little depression in the earth and covered them with a thick bed of leaves. He turned and began retracing his steps to the car.

Suddenly he stopped, for he heard voices about the car. Cautiously, he ventured a little closer. From behind a tree he could see the car plainly ahead of him. Two boys, about fourteen years of age, were looking at the car and talking about it.

"*Jawohl*," said the lighter-haired one. "There must be something very mysterious going on for a staff car to come into this woods. Do you suppose it is the car of that American spy we have heard is loose in this part of Germany?"

"Perhaps," the other answered in an awed voice.

"Let us hide," suggested the other who had spoken first, "and see who comes back to the car."

"*Ja*," agreed his companion. "That is a good idea."

They turned from the car. G-8 strode out in plain view, crashing leaves and dead branches under his feet, giving no appearance of trying to hide his actions. The two boys froze suddenly and stared at him. The darker one turned to run, but his friend caught him by the arm.

"Wait, Fritz," he said. "It is an *offizier*."

It was apparent that the light-haired lad felt nervous, although he was trying to hide it. G-8 couldn't help admiring him. The other one stopped, came back and tried to force a smile.

"*Gutten morgen, Herr Offizier*," they chorused. "We were just looking at your car. It is a staff car, *nicht wahr*?"

G-8 smiled at them.

"*Gutter morgen, young men*," he said. "*Jawohl*, it is a staff car. I suppose you are wondering what I am doing here?"

The light-haired boy, who seemed brighter than his companion, said quickly, "*ach, nein, Herr Offizier*. That is, we were not exactly wondering. Of course it is none of our business what an *offizier* does in my father's woods."

G-8 smiled genially.

"Perhaps I can satisfy your curiosity," he said, lowering his voice, "if you will promise not to tell anyone."

The two lads looked at each other, then nodded.

"*Jawohl*," they chorused, "we promise not to tell anyone."

The Master Spy looked at the light-haired youngster.

"Not even your father?" he asked.

The boy hesitated, and G-8 shrugged.

"Perhaps that is asking too much," he said. "I am sure we can trust your father with the secret. You see, I am *Rittmeister* von Staub."

The boy's eyes popped.

"*Rittmeister* von Staub!" cried the fair-haired one. "I have heard of you and I have seen your pictures. You are a famous ace, *nicht wahr*?"

The Master Spy shrugged.

"I have had my share of success in aerial battles," he said.

"I am Hans Kramer," the light-haired boy said, "and this is my friend, Fritz Leitel. We are both fourteen; in another year they will take us into the army."

G-8 looked at the two boys so young, so eager and so innocent of the horrors of war.

"It is too bad," he said, "that the Kaiser's army needs lads as young as you."

"But it is our duty, *Herr Rittmeister*," Fritz argued.

"*Jawohl*," seconded Hans, "it is our duty to our country and to our Kaiser."

"Yes," G-8 nodded, "I suppose you are right. I was not much older than you when I enlisted. But now, can you guess why I am here?"

"We thought at first," Hans admitted, "that perhaps you were the American spy that everyone says is in this locality."

G-8 chuckled.

"*Ach, nein*," he said. "You can see that I am a German *oozier*. You recognized me after I told you I was *Rittmeister* von Staub."

Hans grinned up at him.

"*Jawohl*," he said, "of course, we know that we are wrong now."

Fritz spoke in a whisper. "Are you looking for the American spy, *Herr Rittmeister*?"

"That is partly my mission," G-8 admitted. "This is quite a large woods that your good father owns here, *niche wahr?*"

Hans straightened proudly.

"*Jawohl*," he said, "there is no larger forest in this area."

"I know that," G-8 said, "and"—he was almost whispering now—"that is why I have come here. I was sent here to try and find some trace of the American spy but so far I haven't succeeded. I thought he might be hiding here. You are sure there is no mysterious car farther up the logging road?"

"*Nein, Herr Rittmeister*," Hans said. "We have just come from where my father is cutting timber. There is no car along the road. No one has been up this way but you."

"*Gut!*" G-8 nodded. "But if I were you boys, I would be very careful. I would not take a chance with anyone whom I did not know. Do you understand?"

Both the lads nodded solemnly.

"We received a report a short time ago that this American spy was headed in this direction," G-8 said. "I want you boys to keep close to this woods. road. If you should see any mysterious car with one or two men in it, go immediately to the nearest *offizier* and report it."

Both boys nodded and promised, "*Jawohl, Herr Rittmeister.*"

G-8 stepped to the running board of the car.

"I believe I can trust you two to guard the woods on this side of the main road," he said, "but be very careful and don't take any chances."

He climbed into the car, and starting the motor, backed around and drove onto the main highway once more. As he went on toward Konighofen, he was a little nervous as to what the boys might do.

G-8 DROVE rapidly toward the town. When he was well along the main street, he stopped the car beside a *leutnant* who was standing on a corner.

In close-clipped words, he said, "I am looking for the offices of his Excellency, General von Reichberg "

The *leutnant* nodded.

"*Jawohl, Herr Rittmeister*," he said. "I believe you will find him located in the town hall, on the

square."

"*Danke schon*," G-8 thanked him and drove on.

He parked his car a half block from the town hall and walked the remaining distance. The guards stopped him and he presented his papers as *Rittmeister* von Staub. After a close scrutiny, he was allowed to pass. An orderly met him inside and went through the same procedure, then he nodded to a chair.

"His Excellency will see you in a few minutes, *Herr Rittmeister*," he said.

G-8 sat down and waited. Five, ten minutes passed, then a door in front of him opened and an *oberst* and a major stepped out and walked away. The Master Spy could see General von Reichberg sitting at his desk inside the office.

The orderly appeared again and said, "It is your turn, *Herr Rittmeister.*"

G-8 walked into the office swiftly, his chest thrust out, von Staub's *offizier's* cap held in the crook of his arm. He stopped before General von Reichberg's desk, clicked his heels.

"*Rittmeister* von Staub reporting," he announced.

The general was a heavily-built fellow, and his rigid face now cracked in a smile. He nodded.

"*Bitte*, close the door, *Herr Rittmeister*," he said.

G-8 did a smart about-face, closed the door and returned, clicking his heels once more. The general nodded to a chair at the end of his desk.

"Sit down, von Staub," he invited.

G-8 obeyed. The general looked him over from head to foot before he spoke again.

"Of course, you know why you are here, von Staub," he said.

The Master Spy smiled hesitantly. "I believe I am to be given a special assignment to work with *Herr Koln*," he said.

"That is correct," the general confirmed. "Perhaps you know the condition accompanying it; however, I will outline it for you. *Herr Koln* has been well thought of for some time—but at heart he is a brute. He has been experimenting with these helicopters. I understand that this morning, with the help of the model that was stolen from the French ace, Pierre Marquette, he has perfected his helicopter, with its cutting knives, to the highest possible degree. Remember, I have told you that

Herr Koln is a brute. He has been made even more ruthless because of the accident he suffered in his first experiment with the cutting blades of his helicopter. That is how he lost his right hand and got his face scarred. *Herr Geist*, his extremely clever phantom man, was also in the same accident and received those scars on his face. For a time it was thought that neither of them would live, for the knives nearly slashed them to bits. But they are both well now and very capable."

The general paused to light a cigar that he had taken from a desk drawer. G-8 waited silently for him to go on.

"*Herr Koln* is an able engineer when he can control his temper, but he is erratic. Further than that, he is a ground man, and knows little or nothing about aerial combat. He has developed these helicopters so that he can control their flight by wireless from a captive balloon. Since *Herr Koln* knows so little about aerial combat and you have been such a success in the air, *Herr Rittmeister von Staub*, I am appointing you as his adviser. But remember, you must be diplomatic in your suggestions so that you will not to incur his anger. *Herr Koln* is a raging beast when he is mad."

G-8 nodded.

"I am honored, Excellency," he said.

General von Reichberg smiled again. "I hope you will feel as honored after you have worked with *Herr Koln* for a while," he said. "I am going to raise you to the rank of major."

"*Danke schon*," G-8 said. "That is very nice of you, Excellency."

"Tush, tush," the general answered, "it is nothing more than you have earned. A tailor waits in the next office to measure you for your new uniform. He will have it finished after lunch, *und* then you will go directly to the field adjoining *Herr Koln's* factory—to meet *Herr Koln*. Here are your papers."

He handed them to the Master Spy. General von Reichberg puffed on his cigar

"Yes," he said, "I believe that is all." He nodded to the papers. "You will find your commission as a major there, with the instructions and identification papers. You will have time to read those instructions between now and the time that the tailor has your suit finished. A new car with a driver will be waiting for you outside the office. It is important that you make a good impression upon *Herr Koln*."

G-8 rose, clicked his heels, and bowed.

"Good luck to you," the general said.

G-8 went into the next office and was measured for his new uniform. Early in the afternoon, when it was done, he put it on. It fitted perfectly. He transferred the papers from the old one and stepped out into the street. A shiny new Benz car was waiting for him. The driver stood holding the door open, and G-8 stepped inside. The door slammed shut and the Master Spy was on his way to meet *Herr Koln*, the one-armed devil of Germany.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Captured

THEY drove for most of that afternoon, since *Herr Koln's* factory was quite some distance away. The Master Spy sat in the back seat of the great car, alone with his thoughts.

The driver pushed on without saying a word. It was plainly evident that he knew where he was going. It was just about dusk when they reached the town. The car rolled on past the *offiziers* club where G-8 had gotten his information—then, on the outskirts of town, it headed north. G-8 wondered what adventures would befall him when they reached the field.

Darkness had fallen when they reached the outer ring of guards who had been stationed in a great circle about the factory and airdrome. But now, with the important-looking car coming, men rose up out of ambush on either side of the road. Some of them flashed their lights into the faces of G-8 and his driver. The car halted and in the twinkling of an eye there were a dozen guards about it, crowding in close, and as many guns were leveled at G-8 and his driver.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" a *leutnant* demanded.

"I am Major von Staub," G-8 said with a ring of importance in his voice. "I have been commissioned by his Excellency, General von Reichberg, as aide to *Herr Koln*. Here are my papers."

He handed first his newly-made commission as major to the *leutnant*. While the others played their lights on G-8 and the driver to make sure that no trick was pulled, the *leutnant* studied the papers. He nodded and handed them back.

"So far, so good, *Herr Major*," he said. "*Und* now your papers from General von Reichberg."

"*Jawohl*, of course," G-8 said. He handed those over and the *leutnant* scrutinized them. At length, he folded the papers and put them in his pocket, then he nodded to his guards and they backed away.

"These papers seem to be in order, *Herr Major*," he said.

Climbing onto the running board of the car, he said. "I will ride with you to the entrance of the factory."

"Very good," G-8 nodded. "Perhaps with you along I will not be held up every two feet. You must realize that I am on an important mission."

He thought the *leutnant* looked at him rather suspiciously, but perhaps that was just his imagination. The Hun shrugged calmly.

"*Und* I have my orders," he said. "Go ahead, driver."

The car moved on for about a mile, then suddenly G-8 could see the dark form of a long, narrow building. This, then, was the factory.

As the car slowed, a dozen or more guards came out and surrounded it. They, too, carried drawn guns. The *leutnant* stepped down and gave an order to them.

"Watch these two men until I return," he said.

G-8 leaned back luxuriously in the deep cushions of the rear seat and lighted a cigarette. He was perfectly calm, gave no outward sign of his real feelings.

The *leutnant* returned and the guards stepped back. G-8 shifted his eyes to the *leutnant*, but he made no other move.

"I trust, *Herr Leutnant*, that you have carried out your orders to completion?" he asked.

The *leutnant* nodded.

"I have," he said. "I have verified these papers by calling his Excellency, General von Reichberg on the telephone. He personally confirmed them. If you will come with me, *Herr Major*."

He opened the door of the tonneau and stood stiffly, waiting for the Master Spy to get out. G-8 stepped to the ground and the *leutnant* slammed

the door, then strode rapidly ahead of him toward the factory entrance.

Four guards presented arms as they reached the door. Evidently the *leutnant* had told them that they were coming. He rapped on the door in a strange manner—one rap, three, then one. Instantly, the door opened. Another *leutnant* stared at them.

The *offizier* of the guard strode in and G-8 followed. He heard the door close and lock behind them. The typical sounds of a busy factory came to them through the door straight ahead. Suddenly, above those sounds came the roar of an angry man.

"You *dummkopf!* Why are you working so slowly? I told you I am in a hurry! These new planes must be assembled for flight by dawn. Move faster."

There was a pause, then there came a cry of pain from some workman inside. Two minutes more went by, then the door opened. Past it, G-8 got a glimpse of the great factory. There was a regular production line there. Planes were being assembled as swiftly as possible. Men were rushing about like busy ants at work.

Then the view of the factory was cut off by a great figure. Instantly, G-8 recognized him from the descriptions he had heard of *Herr Koln*. There was his great bulk, his scarred face, and most striking of all, his right arm gone at the wrist and the socket in place of the hand. From the socket he now wore there dangled three lashes weighted with lead at the tips. From his belt hung two more sockets, one holding a hook and the other a sword.

G-8 stood rigid while the *leutnant* of the guard, with the papers in his hand, advanced toward the great scar-faced Hun.

"This is *Herr Major* von Staub," he said, "and here are his papers, signed by General von Reichberg. I have checked them with the general by telephone. They are all in order."

Herr Koln nodded. There was no smile of greeting on his face as his beady eyes fastened on the Master Spy.

"Come in here *Major* von Staub," he thundered. "I will show you about."

G-8 SENSED the animosity in the man's tone at once and realized that he must work fast and very cleverly to get into *Herr Koln's* good graces if he were to accomplish his mission. He strode

forward, hat in hand, and stopped before *Herr Koln*. He clicked his heels together sharply so that they echoed through the outer office, and bowed stiffly from the waist.

"*Herr Koln*," he said, "permit me to say in all sincerity that I am honored."

The *leutnant* had gone. *Herr Koln's* scarred face was calm as he stared at G-8. Those beady eyes seemed to be boring right through the Master Spy. There was no relaxation of the anger which G-8 was sure the Hun beast felt toward him. *Herr Koln* hesitated a moment, then stepped into the outer office and closed the door.

"You have seen General von Reichberg?" he growled.

G-8 bowed again.

"*Jawohl*, Excellency," he said.

"*Und*," *Herr Koln* thundered on, "he told you why he was sending you here?"

G-8 hesitated.

"Well, yes, to some extent, Excellency," he admitted.

Herr Koln's chest swelled out a little more at the form of address. G-8 saw with satisfaction that he was appealing to the man's vanity.

"General von Reichberg said you were beyond doubt the greatest inventor in Germany. He thought I might be of service to you in giving some small advice here and there as to how to pit your wonderful new planes against the enemy. Although I would not mention it to General von Reichberg, I feel, Excellency, that he is partially wrong in his belief. You see, to my way of thinking, in perfecting these radio-controlled helicopters that can cut the Allied planes to bits, you have developed a *new* type of attack, of which I know little or nothing. However, if you wish it, and to humor General von Reichberg, I will be glad to remain here and do what little I can to help. I say this, Excellency, so that you will understand that I have no idea of telling you what you should or should not do. But if I can aid you in some small way, I will be only to glad to do so."

Herr Koln's stern visage relaxed just a little and he gave a short, matter-of-fact nod.

"I believe that under those circumstances," he said, "you and I will get along. *Und* now that we have that settled, let us go into the factory so that I can show you what we are doing."

He placed his hand on the knob of the door, then hesitated.

"Remember," he said, "we are rushing everything tonight so that these new type planes, with the improvements of the stolen model added to them, may be sent into the air at dawn."

G-8 stared at him.

"You mean," he demanded, "that you have actually redesigned your helicopters and are going to turn out a fleet of your cutting planes by dawn—with these improvements on them?"

Herr Koln stuck out his chest proudly.

"*Jawohl*," he said.

"That," said the Master Spy, staring up with admiration, "is *wunderbar*. I am sure no one else in the world could do it but you, *Herr Koln*."

Herr Koln actually smiled a little now as he gave a shrug.

"Perhaps," he said, "but to me it is nothing. We received word that a mass attack of Allies planes is expected at dawn. That will give us the opportunity of making a complete test tomorrow morning. I plan to go up in my captive balloon, in which has been installed the wireless equipment for the control of these cutting planes. I shall direct them all from the balloon. Perhaps you would like to go with me, *Herr Major*, and see with your own eyes how devastating my attack will be. Beginning tomorrow morning, I shall not only cripple the entire Allied Air Force, but I shall break the morale of their pilots. Now come"—he opened the door—"and I show you the planes."

G-8 followed him into the factory. Instantly, as *Herr Koln* entered the place, it seemed to take on new life. Men hopped to their work. Hammers beat in swift tattoos. Hands flew and workmen, in moving from one part of the factory to another, went on a dead run.

Suddenly, *Herr Koln* stopped. To the right, where the saw-toothed cutting edges were being made, he saw one workman sway as he bent to his work. Instantly, G-8 recognized the signs of extreme fatigue in the poor Hun's movements, but to *Herr Koln* it meant only that he was slowing up.

"*Eine minute, bitte*," *Herr Koln* snapped, never once taking his eyes off the workman.

He strode over to him.

"I want speed!" he bellowed. "*Macht schnell!*"

The workman stared at him, his face going ghastly white. Suddenly, the screw driver that he was holding slipped through his nerveless fingers and dropped to the floor. The fellow staggered

back and slumped in a dead faint at *Herr Koln's* feet.

"*Himmel!*" *Herr Koln* spat.

He swung his great boot and kicked the unconscious man full in the face, then he whirled.

"*Herr Hurtz! Herr Hurtz!*" he boomed, looking about the big room. G-8 saw a bull of a fellow, bulging with muscle, come in on a run. He had a short, thick neck, which seemed almost larger than his head, and his face was that of a brute. He stopped with a click of his heels before *Herr Koln*.

"Have this weak *dummkopf* dragged out instantly and another man put in his place," *Herr Koln* demanded, kicking at the unconscious man again.

"*Jawohl, Herr Koln,*" the factory boss barked.

He grabbed the workman by one wrist and dragged his body across the factory floor like a sack of meal, yelling to another workman to take the place of the fallen Hun.

Herr Koln came back to the Master Spy, his face still red with rage.

"PERHAPS," he said, "that will be an example to the others. Now we move on. You see"—he pointed to a lathe—"there is where the cutting blades are made. The edges of the blade are made of steel saws, and each blade is made very strong so that when they cut into the Allied planes they will not be broken."

He conducted the Master Spy to the assembly line.

"The fuselage is not unlike that of a Fokker," he explained, "with variations, of course. The special engine, designed by me, is in the nose of the plane. These planes can move straight up and down. That is why we need only a very small field for take-offs and landings. The blades are geared through the motor. Now here"—he pointed into one of the cockpits—"is my radio control mechanism. It is covered with steel plate. I haven't time to go into detail on that at the moment. I will explain it to you later. It is completely concealed."

"But I notice," G-8 observed, "that you have a seat in each cockpit. Is there a pilot in these plain's?"

Herr Koln laughed mirthlessly, now. "See if you can tell me the answer," he said.

G-8 stared into the ship they were inspecting now.

"That's strange," he admitted. "There seems to be no room for the pilot's legs. That space is all taken up by the wireless control outfit."

"That," *Herr Koln* chuckled, "is the trick. You see, I set only a pilot's torso in the cockpit." He lowered his voice and grinned as he added, "the torso of a dead pilot."

"Of a dead pilot!" G-8 gasped.

"*Jawohl,*" *Herr Koln* nodded. "It sounds ridiculous, does it not? I might go so far as to say that each cockpit holds not the torso of a pilot, but only the skeleton. Look, come here."

They had been moving along toward the back of the factory, where one finished plane was ready to be moved out. *Herr Koln* pointed to a row of skeleton torsoes lying on the floor.

To a workman at the last plane, *Herr Koln* barked, "Put in the pilot now."

Two white-faced, frightened workmen hurried to the row of skeletons. G-8 saw that the bones were held together by tiny wires. The Huns lifted one of the skeletons, carried it to the cockpit, and placed it there in a sitting position.

It was a ghastly sight. As the workmen fastened it into the cockpit, *Herr Koln* chuckled and turned to the Master Spy.

"You see," he said, "I do this in order to make my planes more terrifying. Each plane is being flown by Death. *Und* now that we have seen everything, what do you think of my invention?"

"Words can not express my feelings," G-8 said. "Aber, I think it is a marvelous invention, Excellency. But tell me, the plans for this invention and the secret papers—the intricate measurements, wing curve section, and all that—they are secure so that none of the enemy spies can get hold of them and use the information?" "*Jawohl, Herr Major,*" *Koln* said with a jerk of his head. "You saw how hard it was to get in, even when you had proper credentials. You know, then, that it would be impossible for an enemy spy, no matter how clever he might be, to come in here and learn my secrets. Even the *verdammter kerl*, G-8, could not do it. You agree with me there?"

"Absolutely," the Master Spy assured him. "But if I may be permitted to ask one more question, are all these secret plans and measurements kept here in the factory?"

"Certainly," *Herr Koln* snapped. "Do you think I would trust my plans to any of the *dummkopfs* in the Imperial Air Force? *Nein*, I have not permitted

one of my papers to leave this factory. Every workman, every engineer, is a virtual prisoner here. We have living quarters attached to the factory. Everyone is held under heavy guard. They are not permitted to leave for any reason whatsoever. In this way I guard my secret."

G-8 hesitated a moment before he ventured the next question.

"Aber, *Herr Koln*," he said, "suppose Allied bombers were to come over and blow up this entire factory. Then all your secrets would be lost."

Herr Koln's face darkened.

"You have forgotten one thing. We would know when these bombers came. They would be heard at the Front, and I would have ample time to send up enough of these cutting planes to slash the Allied bombers to bits before they reached here."

G-8 nodded quickly.

"*Jawohl, Herr Koln*," he said, "I did not think of that. I fear I am *adummkopf* compared to you."

The Master Spy was smiling inwardly, for already a plan was taking shape in his nimble brain—a plan that would rid the Allies of this awful menace to their Air Force.

"And now," *Herr Koln* said, "let us go into my private office, where we shall have dinner together. You have not eaten?"

G-8 shook his head.

"*Nein, Herr Koln*," he said, "I have not had dinner. It will be a pleasure."

They found a table spread in *Herr Koln's* private office. Food was heaped generously upon it, and two stalwart waiters stood beside the table. Even they were armed with Lugers.

G-8 and his host sat down across the table from each other. They had just begun eating when a sharp knock sounded on the door. Instantly the waiters turned toward the door, their hands on their gun butts, ready for any emergency.

"Come in!" *Herr Koln* thundered.

The door opened, and two *offiziers* of the guard, with drawn guns, stepped in. One was the *leutnant* who had inspected G-8's papers and ushered him into the factory. Now he closed the door behind him and turned to *Herr Koln*.

"*Herr Koln*," he announced in an excited voice, "we have some most important information. The man sitting across the table from you is not Major von Staub!"

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Condemned to Die

THE moment the *leutnant* spoke, G-8 realized that he was trapped beyond escape. Both the officers had their guns trained on him. A flick of their fingers would finish him.

Now the two waiters suddenly turned and their guns were also trained on him, and at much closer range than those of the *offiziers*. It would not be possible for them to miss.

Herr Koln, his face crimson with rage, glared at the Master Spy. G-8 simply sat back and relaxed.

"*Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter!*" *Herr Koln* spat.

He turned and focused his beady eyes on the two *offiziers*.

"How do you know all this?" he demanded.

"We will show you, *Herr Koln*," the *leutnant* said. He turned to his companion. "Bring in the two boys and the *hauptmann* who accompanied them," he ordered.

The *offizier* turned. This was the only possible chance of escape that G-8 could see. He had learned everything he could about the factory, its location and the secrets that it held. It was absolutely essential that he get out of this, then he could bring back bombers to blow up the factory.

If he leaped up and started to run there might be one chance in a million that the slugs would miss him. The guard *offizier* had turned his back and was going into the outer office. No, G-8 decided, the chances were too great. He must stall for time. If he tried to escape now it would mean almost certain death for him—and the sure success of *Herr Koln* and his invention.

The *leutnant* was coming back, and behind him were the two boys, Fritz and Hans, whom G-8 had met in the woods. Behind those two boys another *offizier*, a stern-faced *hauptmann*, followed. The boys were trying to keep their composure. Hans Kramer, as he had proven before, was the braver of the two. The *hauptmann* stepped up beside them.

"Now look closely, boys," he ordered. He pointed to G-8. "Is that the *offizier* whom you saw coming through the woods—the one who told you that he was looking for a spy and then climbed into a staff car and drove away?"

Bravely, the two boys marched up before the Master Spy. G-8 smiled at them both.

"Hello, Hans Kramer and Fritz Leitel," he said. "Do not be afraid.

Hans Kramer nodded staunchly.

"*Jawohl, Herr Hauptmann*, this is the same *offizier*," he said.

"Who are these boys?" *Herr Koln* thundered.

The boys went a little white at the sight of *Herr Koln* and the sound of his voice.

"They are two very clever boys who saw this man in their father's woods," the *hauptmann* said. "He told them he was searching for the spy, who we are certain now is G-8."

The *hauptmann* nodded to the boys.

"Tell *Herr Koln* what you did after this man drove away," he ordered.

"First," said Hans, "we went back and told my father about it. He got very much excited, and after lunch we went back to the place where this man had left the car. My father carried his gun, since we thought that at any time we might see the spy this man said he was looking for. We began making a search of the woods, but we couldn't find anything. Then late this afternoon, Fritz and I were still searching the woods. We each had a hunting rifle. We thought we would be great heroes if we could find the spy. All of a sudden, I slipped and fell in a bunch of leaves. As I struggled to get up, my hand touched something very cold. At first I jerked back my hand, because I was frightened, then I felt around again and found that I had touched a hand. It was the hand of a dead man. We pulled the leaves away from him and found him lying there in his underclothes. There was a German *offizier's* uniform beside him. I ran to get my father and we took the dead man into *Konighofen*."

Herr Koln had leaped to his feet now.

"Who was that dead man?" he demanded of the *hauptmann*

"His body," the *hauptmann* told him, "has been identified as that of *Rittmeister* von Staub. He had been struck on the head with a heavy instrument."

"*Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter!*" *Koln* spat,

whirling on the Master Spy. "Then you are not von Staub. You are the *verdammter hund* G-8!"

For a moment the Master Spy did not move. All eyes were riveted upon him. The boys were staring at him as though their eyes would pop out of their heads at any moment.

"G-8!" young Fritz Leitel breathed in awe. He turned to the *hauptmann*. "But if this man is G-8, why didn't he kill you?"

"Perhaps he did not think we would be so clever," Hans Kramer said a little proudly.

The Master Spy smiled quite calmly.

"Perhaps you boys do not realize," he said, "that I may not be quite so bad as I am painted."

Herr Koln was staring down at him in amazement.

"*Lieber Gott!* Then you admit that you are G-8?" he demanded.

Already the Master Spy's mind had been working like lightning. He was formulating another plan. He shrugged.

"Of course I admit it," he said. "There is no object in denying it any longer." He nodded to the boys. "I will try to answer your questions, Hans and Fritz," he said. "You wonder why I did not kill you. You know, a great many stories get around, about how terrible certain fighting men are—on both sides of the lines. I can't give you much information about the rest, but I can speak for myself. I kill only when it is necessary. I am not a murderer, and I do not kill noncombatants. Besides, I like both you boys. You are brave fellows and you have stout hearts. I had hoped that some day after the war was over, I might meet you again, and we could talk over old times. But now"—he shrugged and glanced at *Herr Koln*—"that seems a very vague possibility, *nicht wahr, Herr Koln?*"

Herr Koln cursed under his breath.

G-8 was going on, "Yes, I like you boys. I think perhaps some day you will make very good detectives or spies. Let us hope it will be detectives, and that the war will end before you become old enough to fight."

Hans Kramer was staring at the Master Spy, tears welling up in his eyes. He looked up at the *hauptmann*

"What will happen to him?" he asked. "Will he be killed because we have betrayed him?"

"He most certainly will," *Herr Koln* cut in, "and

as quickly as possible. Would you boys like to see him killed? I will do it at once."

Fritz Leitel broke out in a sob.

"*Nein, nein*," he cried, "He is too brave. I would never sleep again."

Hans Kramer shook his head.

"*Nein*," he said, "I do not want to see him killed. Couldn't he be put in a very stout prison until after the war? Remember, he spared our lives."

"It is a good thing," *Herr Koln* thundered, "that we older Germans are not so chicken-hearted as you boys."

Hans Kramer came up to the great, scar-faced brute.

"*Herr Koln*," he pleaded "I would like to make one request before we go. Can I shake hands with G-8?"

"I would like to do that, too," Fritz Leitel choked, "if he is not too angry with us for acting as we did." "Don't worry," the Master Spy assured him, smiling. "I am not angry with you. You boys did your duty and did it nobly. It will be a pleasure to shake hands with both of you."

The boys took eager steps toward him.

"Wait!" *Herr Koln* thundered. "I have not given my permission. How do we know that this is not a trick of G-8's? He may use the boys as a shield."

The Master Spy stood up.

His voice betrayed his anger as he said, "*Herr Koln*, let us assume that I am possessed of at least ordinary decency. As has been proven before, I spared these boys because I am not a murderer. Even if I had suspected that they might have chanced upon the body of *Rittmeister* von Staub, I would have handled the situation in some other way besides taking their lives." He nodded to the two waiters who stood with guns leveled at him from either side. "Would you two mind stepping behind me?" he asked. "Place your guns at my back. If I make a false move, shoot me dead instantly."

The waiters moved behind him. G-8 could feel the muzzles pressed into his back and knew that the fingers were poised on the triggers. He nodded to *Herr Koln*.

"Now are you satisfied?" he asked.

"Very well," *Herr Koln* grumbled.

G-8 held out his hand, and Hans Kramer stepped up and took it in a quick, firm grasp. Fritz did the same and the two boys backed away again.

The eyes of both lads were filled with tears.

"Well," *Herr Koln* thundered, "if you youngsters are through with your blubbering, you can go."

The *hauptmann* opened the door, and after a hurried last glance at G-8, the boys were ushered out. The Master Spy sat down again and the waiters who had held their guns at his back stepped away. *Herr Koln* was glaring at him with his beady little eyes. They were alive with hate.

"Well," G-8 said, "what do you propose to do with me?"

"I am going to kill you," *Herr Koln* snapped. "The quicker you die the better I will be pleased."

G-8 smiled.

"You forget, *Herr Koln*," he reminded the brute, "that you promised to show me the fight between your slashing planes and our Allied ships, which is scheduled for dawn. Why not tie me up securely and take me into your balloon basket in the morning? Then, after you have finished your work and have crippled our squadrons, you can toss me overboard."

"You think," *Herr Koln* roared, "that you can get away with that? You have more nerve than anyone I have ever heard of."

G-8 shrugged.

"I did not think you were so easily frightened, *Herr Koln*," he said. "Surely you must be very easily scared if you are afraid that I, securely bound in your balloon basket, could do you any harm."

"Afraid!" *Herr Koln* spat. "You are insane! I am afraid of nothing "

"So?" G-8 said. "Then why not grant my last request. Otherwise, I and the others here must believe that you are afraid—even of a man securely tied."

Herr Koln stared about at the faces of his guards. There seemed to be a challenge in the glance of every one. He gave a short nod.

"Very well," he said. "You shall see the sun rise once more. I will prove that I am not afraid. *Und* then, after the battle, you die!"

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Substitute for Satan

HERR Koln nodded to his guards.

"Take this *verdammter hund* into the front office," he ordered. "Lay him on the cot there and tie him securely. If he escapes, I will see that every one of you is killed. Stand guard over him all night with drawn guns, and see that he is ready to go when I leave for my balloon ascension at dawn."

G-8 spent most of that night sleeping. He knew that he would need every facility at his command by the time dawn arrived.

He awoke to find the guards sitting in chairs about him, the nearest one six feet away. One of the guards dozed. His gun lay in his lap. The others, save one, were lolling back comfortably, half asleep. But that one, the *leutnant* who had ushered G-8 into the place—was alert.

The Master Spy opened his eyes. Immediately, the *leutnant* barked, "He's awake!"

The dozing Huns snapped upright and raised their guns. G-8 smiled.

"Is it a crime to wake up?" he asked. "It would seem that you, too, are afraid of what I might do—even though I lay here tied so that I can scarcely move."

"You will stay tied that way, too," the *leutnant* snapped, "until you are dead."

"That," G-8 smiled, "is a pleasant thought to wake up to."

It was still dark outside.

"I don't suppose I get any breakfast?" the Master Spy suggested.

"*Nein*," said the *leutnant*

"Not even a glass of milk that you might pour down my throat yourself?" G-8 ventured.

The *leutnant* glared at him, then shrugged.

"Very well," he said. "I will see about it."

Ten minutes later he came in with a glass of milk. Holding the Master Spy up to a sitting posture, he poured the milk into his mouth. The door opened and *Herr* Koln appeared.

"I am ready," he thundered, "and the car is waiting." In his left hand he held a Yank uniform. "Put this on," he said.

"We just took it off a captured American pilot. I think it will fit you."

"That," G-8 said, "will be a pleasure if you will unfasten these ropes."

Herr Koln nodded to the *leutnant*

"Untie him," he ordered, "and the rest of you stand about him with your guns trained on him. Shoot to kill if he tries any tricks. I will not have him disgrace a German uniform by wearing it any longer. He will die in the uniform of his own country."

G-8 changed hastily into the Yank uniform. That done, he was bound again more tightly than ever—bound so securely about the ankles that he couldn't move his feet to walk. The guards carried him to the waiting car and dropped him in the back, then they climbed in. *Herr* Koln took the front seat beside the driver and the car moved off toward the south.

The eastern sky was showing the first streaks of dawn as they reached the balloon base, some distance behind the Front. Below the swaying bag was a great basket that rested on the ground. As G-8 was lifted into one corner, he saw, along the opposite side, a great array of radio apparatus. There were many box-like affairs, and each was equipped with a small wheel control. Each box had a number, which G-8 guessed corresponded with the number of the plane which the wireless apparatus in that particular box was to control.

The Master Spy's bindings were again inspected, then he was tied securely to the edge of the basket in a standing position. *Herr* Koln climbed in, and standing with his back to the Master Spy, took his position at the controls. He roared out an order and the balloon began to rise rapidly at the end of its cable.

NOW G-8's work began. They were coming up into the daylight. The earth was still fairly dark, but the clouds above them were tinged with pink. The Master Spy had tightened up his muscles as the ropes were being tied. Now, relaxing them, he found that he had some degree of slack in the rope. With his hands behind him, he began working at his bindings, tightening part of the rope to give him more slack in other parts.

Out of the southwest Allied planes came droning. Turning his head, G-8 saw that the slashing helicopters were rising from the little field near the factory.

Herr Koln, with his radio control mechanism, was flying them straight at the Yank planes. Higher and higher they rose. The Allied planes, still far off, were heading straight for the balloon. G-8 could see that the saw-edged helicopters would reach

the Allied planes before they could come within range of the balloon.

The first of the helicopters passed the balloon, and tipping with its knife blades foremost, went hurtling at the first of the Yank planes. *Herr Koln* was in his glory, sending those ships of his to chew the Allied crates apart. G-8 marveled at the speed with which those helicopters climbed. They could reverse their direction faster than the conventional plane.

The first of the helicopters zoomed straight up at the lower wing tip of a Spad which was in a bank. Suddenly, the Allied plane was caught in the saw-like blades. There was a screaming sound, above the roar of the motor, that was like a great buzz saw at work. Almost before G-8 could wink an eye, the two lower wings of the Spad had been slashed off in sections. The plane was going down, but the helicopter, having done its devilish work, seemed to be in excellent condition.

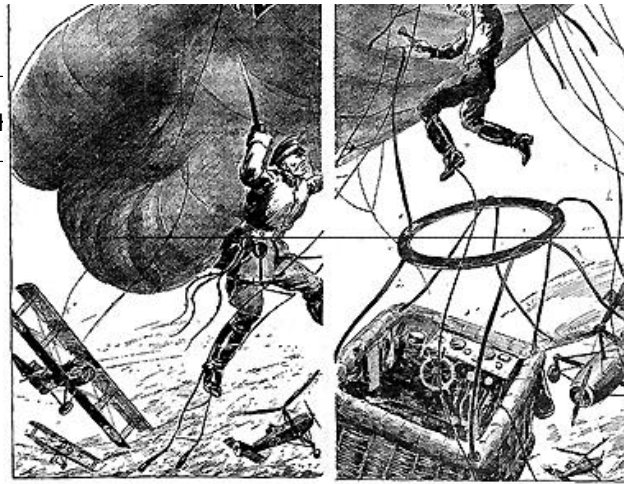
Herr Koln sent it after the next Spad. The blades caught that ship in the tail as it whirled and chewed the fuselage until the pilot was cut in two.

With all his might, G-8 struggled at his ropes as the ghastly battle went on. The Yank pilots were pouring their slugs into the cockpits of those helicopters where only skeletons sat. The Master Spy knew that the boiler plate which surrounded the wireless control in those helicopters was proof against the machine gun slugs and that the Yank planes were helpless.

Herr Koln was paying no attention to the Master Spy, and his back was turned toward him. G-8 gave a terrific wrench, and his right hand came free. With that much slack, he managed to slip the bindings from his left wrist.

Along the side of the balloon there were tools hung in sockets—tools that could be used to make hasty repairs if the radio equipment went wrong. G-8 snatched up a pair of wire cutters, and with those severed the ropes that bound his ankles. He was free now. Cautiously, he climbed to the edge of the basket.

He had one idea in mind. If he could sever the cables that held the basket to the balloon, and the larger cable that held the basket captive, that would not only free the balloon—but would let *Herr Koln*, the basket, and the radio control equipment plummet to the ground.



THE MASTER SPY CUT THE FOURTH AND LAST CABLE.

A rope ladder was stretched from the balloon to the basket. G-8 caught hold of the ladder and was part way up it before *Herr Koln* realized what was happening. The one-armed devil spun around, staring upward. He spat out a savage curse and sprang from his wireless control. He started up the ladder after G-8 just as the Master Spy cut the first two cables that held the basket.

The socket with the sword attached to it was in place on *Herr Koln's* right arm, and he was climbing with one hand. G-8 cut another of the cables as *Herr Koln* slashed at him with the sword, but he was still just out of reach of that deadly weapon.

Now the Master Spy cut the fourth and last cable and the basket dropped. He swung to a rope that was dangling from the bag. He whirled swiftly, and as the sword descended again, grazing his boot, he cut the anchor cable that fastened the balloon to the ground.

The balloon shot up into the air, rising higher and high, and *Herr Koln* was drawing back to slash at him again. G-8 leaped for a single rope that was swinging from the bag and caught hold of it. He barely grasped it with his finger tips and slid down with perilous speed, below *Herr Koln*. Luckily, the rope's swing carried him away as *Herr Koln* struck at him on the way down. Then the Master Spy tightened his grasp on the rope and stopped his downward plunge.

Herr Koln cut with his sword at the rope which supported G-8. But the Master Spy was swinging now for the bottom of the ladder. The sword struck the rope and severed it, and G-8's body shot down. He let go of the useless rope and reached out for the last rung on the ladder.

As he caught hold of that, a new danger confronted him. The helicopters with their slashing, saw-toothed knives were running wild, now that the radio control was no longer working. One was coming up beneath the Master Spy. In another minute it would slash his body into bits.

Herr Koln, hanging above him, was slashing with his sword and cursing wildly. G-8 pulled himself up in a quick move and got his foot on the lower rung of the ladder. He reached higher and grabbed *Herr Koln's* foot. With a quick wrench, he gave the foot a terrific twist. *Herr Koln* was in the act of striking again, straight at G-8's head, but suddenly the great, scarred-faced German let out a cry of pain. His body twisted and writhed. He struggled to get free from that hold that was driving him mad. Suddenly, as he turned to break the hold, he lost his one-hand grip on the ladder. G-8 gave his leg a harder wrench for good measure, and *Herr Koln*, screaming, fell backward into space and plunged to eternity.

Now G-8 saw that Spads were in the sky all about him. The balloon was still shooting upward, but the wind was carrying it back into Germany. He must let it go higher. Perhaps it would strike a strata of air that was moving in the other direction.

Up, up the balloon shot like an express elevator. The helicopters with the cutting knives were diving, plunging, flying off in all directions. Some had already crashed to earth, now that there was no one to control them.

G-8 saw Spads Seven and Thirteen coming up at him. Nippy and Bull flew near enough to wave, and suddenly, the Master Spy noticed something else. He was in another current of air, and it was blowing him back toward his own lines. It was getting very cold up there and his hands were so numb that it was hard to hang on. He tangled his body in the rungs of the ladder and stuck his hands inside his coat. There was nothing to do but wait for the balloon to blow back over the Front.

Nippy and Bull came close again, and the Master Spy shot a signal to them, giving them the exact location of the factory and telling them to return and order all bombers to carry full loads of bombs over to blow it up. The secret of those fiendish-planes would be lost forever.

The two Battle Aces turned and roared back toward the nearest field. Later, as the Master Spy drifted on toward his own lines and over them at a high altitude, he saw bombers rising from various fields to carry out his orders. He was too far away to see the results of their work, but he did see them return after completing their mission.

THAT afternoon, after the balloon had come to rest some twenty miles inside of the Yank lines and G-8 had been transported by car to Le

Bourget, he got the rest of the story from Nippy and Bull. They all sat about the dining room table, enjoying a late lunch.

"Yeh," the terrier ace said, "we sure carried out your orders, all right. Boy, I never saw such a nice bunch of bombing in my life. We blew up everything for half a mile around that factory. First they spotted the place, then the boys let go with everything they had."

"I'll say we blew it up!" Bull chimed in, grinning. "Holy Herring, there isn't anything left but a hole where that factory was. I'll bet that hole is big enough to bury a mountain in."

Nippy grinned at him.

"Yeh," he said, "it's almost as big a hole as that mouth of yours, when you try to put a pound of steak into it all at once."

"Oh, I say!" Battle cut in. "Don't you think, Mr. Nippy, that's stretching a thing too far?"

G-8 was laughing.

"You know, Bull," he said, "I thought of you over there, when I saw those cutting knives on the helicopters at work. I was thinking how swell they would be to slice up your meat. You wouldn't have to do anything but stow it away."

Bull looked at the Master Spy reproachfully.

"Aw, listen, G-8," he said around a mouthful of food, "that's kind of a dirty dig, don't you think?"

"Oh, but I say," Battle cut in, "I would hardly call it a dirty dig, sir. But I might say it's a bit of a cutting remark, if you get what I mean."

THE END



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