

RAIDERS OF THE SILENT DEATH

As told by G-8 to Robert J. Hogan

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CHAPTER ONE *An Eagle Is Caged*

WHEN the fist crashed into G-8's face, the Master Spy felt as though the world had come to an end. The great room spun before G-8's eyes and he felt himself going down. He sensed that Germans in uniform were running from the other side of the room to catch him before he could get

away. He landed on his side and managed to roll over on his face and raise himself on one elbow. But there was no strength in his arm.

As he flopped back, his head began to clear and for a moment an angry passion rushed over him—a passion that impelled him to get up and fight the big brute who had taken him so completely off his guard. Then he forced himself to calm, remembering his position and why he was here.

News had come to him in his apartment, at the end hangar of Le Bourget field near Paris, of something very mysterious that was taking place somewhere in the Black Forest of Germany. The message, which apparently came from the resident spy, D-12, here in Hochbaden, had stated that a most important mechanical development was being discussed by high officials in the town hall, which housed the German headquarters. It was suggested that he might, if he came over cleverly disguised as a German *offizier*, learn what was going on.

So G-8 had come disguised as a German *Hauptmann*, and this great, brutish fellow, who was also a *Hauptmann*, had struck him full in the face as he presented his credentials.

G-8's head was cleared completely now as he struggled to his feet. A couple of German *offiziers* were helping him up. Everyone was laughing, and for a moment the Master Spy scarcely knew what course to follow. It would probably be best, he thought, to show indignation and throw as good a bluff as he could, but he had a very definite feeling that he was in plenty of trouble. Arrogantly he drew himself erect.

"I demand to know," G-8 barked, "who you think you are, you *verdammte* big elephant, to go about striking *offiziers* of equal rank without warning or provocation."

The German *offiziers* about him, more than a dozen, were laughing uproariously.

The big *Hauptmann* who had hit him was chuckling as he answered in a deep, resonant voice, "I am Otto Siemlicher, heavyweight boxing champion of the German Army. *Und* you were about to tell me that you are *Herr Hauptmann* somebody or other—which is a lie."

The Master Spy was not too surprised by this statement. He was certain now that all these Germans knew he was G-8, but he continued to throw his bluff, even though he was completely surrounded. He turned his head for a moment to look behind him, and he saw that the doorway through which he had entered was filled by four stout German guards with drawn guns. He turned back to face *Herr Hauptmann* Siemlicher. As he did so, he felt his holster belt lessen its tension and he knew that some *offizier* behind him had drawn out his Luger pistol.

From his pocket he took the papers which he had been about to present to the *Hauptmann*. He knew they were all neatly in order, together with his record book.

"You are making a grave mistake, *Herr Hauptmann*," he said. "Here are my papers. Examine them and check them if you wish."

Herr Hauptmann Otto Siemlicher ignored the papers, refused to take them.

He studied G-8's face and he smiled a little as he said, "I admire your courage, *Herr* G-8. Never before have I hit a man as hard as I hit you and had him rise and face me again so stubbornly."

The Master Spy shrugged and put the papers back in his pocket.

"Very well," he said. "If you are so persistent about this, what is it that makes you think I am *Herr* G-8?"

Herr Hauptmann Siemlicher shook his head.

"*Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter*, but you are a stubborn fellow. Very well. Come, I will show you something."

He turned G-8 about and walked him outside. The four guards, with their Lugers held ready, followed close behind. It was late afternoon and the sun was just beginning to crawl down toward the western horizon as they reached the sidewalk. *Herr Hauptmann* Siemlicher led him around to the end of the building where a grassy lawn stretched away

from the red brick wall. He pointed to several chipped places in the wall.

As he stood looking at those half dozen places where the bricks had been damaged, G-8 knew only too well that the chips had been caused by bullets. *Herr Hauptmann* Siemlicher was watching his face. He smiled and nodded.

"You know what did that," he said. "Then, for the final answer, look down upon the grass."

G-8 looked. There was an ugly dark red blotch on the ground beneath the wall.

"That," said Siemlicher, "was fresh blood at dawn this morning. Your local agent in Hochbaden, who was known to you by only a letter and a number, was shot here."

G-8 preserved his calm, even though he knew that the *Hauptmann* meant D-12.

"Now come with me," *Hauptmann* Siemlicher said.

HE PUSHED him on to the rear of the building. There, with the guards, they entered a basement door. In the center of a stone room a dead body bulged beneath a sheet. *Herr Hauptmann* Siemlicher drew back the sheet and G-8 saw the face of middle-aged D-12. The *Hauptmann* tossed the sheet back over the face and turned, smiling triumphantly.

"You received word, G-8," he said, "that mysterious things were taking place in this region of the Black Forest. You were advised, supposedly by your agent whose body you have just seen, that if you came here you might be able to learn more about the mystery. When you received that message this morning, your agent was already dead. After his capture last night, his house was thoroughly searched. Among other things, we found his secret codes. We used these to send you the false message. Do I make myself clear, *Herr* G-8?"

The Master Spy nodded slowly and began to smile.

"Very clear, *Herr Hauptmann* Siemlicher," he said. "I've been caught in a very clever trap. And what do you propose to do with me, now that you have me?"

"You will be shot tomorrow morning at dawn," the *Hauptmann* told him. "We will keep you safely

in a cell of the town hall here at Hochbaden until that time. Come."

The guards were following closely, so that G-8 had no chance of making a wild dash for freedom. They climbed a flight of stairs to the main floor of the building, and there, at the rear, G-8 was marched into a cell. The door clanged shut on him and was fastened with triple locks.

Herr Hauptmann Siemlicher bowed through the bars before G-8.

"You are a very brave man," he complimented. "I am really quite sorry that I had to hit you so hard. But I have heard many stories of your cleverness and it was necessary to catch you off guard. You will hold no hard feelings, I hope."

G-8 smiled back at him. He liked the big fellow in spite of what had happened.

"It's quite all right, *Herr Hauptmann*," he said. "I understand."

The *Hauptmann* bowed again.

"Oh," he said, "one more thing, *Herr* G-8. Possibly you are not aware of the fact, but your girl spy—I do not know what you call her—has also been apprehended. She is held in a prison not far away. As is usually the case with female spies, we will give her a particularly fair trial before she is shot. The evidence, however, is so strong against you that a trial really is not necessary. *Guten abend*."

After they had gone, G8 began to examine his small cell. It was about seven feet long and six feet wide, and a narrow cot was the only piece of furniture. At the end opposite the grated door was a window with bars on the outside. He wondered how solid those bars were, but he put off testing them until later when he could be certain that there were no guards watching him from the corridor.

THREE hours passed slowly, and now it was dark outside, and there was only a dim light burning down the corridor. G-8 had already made a thorough examination of the three locks that held the door. There were no keys hanging near by. It began to look hopeless.

The only possible chance left was that window. He turned to it, fairly certain now that he was not being watched. He was in the act of raising the sash slowly, noiselessly, when something

struck the pane of glass. He stood a moment, motionless in the dark, and again there came a *ping*. He was certain now that someone was throwing little stones up at his window to attract his attention.



He began raising the sash again, a little faster this time. When he had the window wide open, he leaned against the iron bars and waited. He heard gravel crunch below as someone took a light step.

Then he heard a voice whisper almost inaudibly, "G-8!"

A thrill shot through the Master Spy as he recognized that voice. It came again.

"G-8, this is R-1. I escaped a few minutes ago. I picked the lock of my cell with a steel hairpin and came here."

"Good," G-8 whispered back. "But you shouldn't have come here, R-1."

"I wanted to help you," R-1 said. "I found some hacksaw blades. I'm afraid they're pretty old, but maybe you can use them. Have you got a piece of string or anything you can drop down? You've got to get out, G-8. They're framing you."

"What?" the Master Spy demanded. "Who's framing me?"

"The Allies," R-1 told him. "I've written it on the paper that the hacksaw blades are wrapped in."

He tore the blanket on the narrow cot into strips and tied them together, then he lowered one end out the window and hung onto the other. He could feel the improvised rope jerking a little as R-1 tied the blades at the other end.

"All right," she said. "Pull up. You've got to hurry. Good luck."

He drew up the improvised rope and hastily untied the half dozen hacksaw blades and rolled them out of the paper they had been wrapped in. In the dim light that came down the corridor, G-8 scanned the writing on that paper. He recognized R-1's hand. His heart fell as he read the brief contents of the note:

Certain high members of Allied Intelligence have become jealous of your great success. Both your Battle Aces, Nippy Weston and Bull Martin, whom you thought you could trust, have betrayed you. I know this to be a fact. It was they who notified the Germans of your coming and the time they could expect you to arrive. R-1.

CHAPTER TWO

The Devil Shows His Cards

G-8 SAT down weakly on his cot with unseeing eyes and the hacksaw blades were temporarily forgotten. He knew that jealousy, when it reared its ugly head, was a horrible menace. He knew, too, on the other hand, that he could absolutely trust Nippy and Bull with anything. Then what, he tried to reason, was the answer to all this? That had been R-1's voice that had whispered up to him, and this note was in her handwriting. He knew that she had come into this section of Germany on some special mission, sent directly from Intelligence headquarters. *Hauptmann* Siemlicher had told him that she had been captured and would soon be tried. And now she had come to help him with a half dozen old hacksaw blades and the most nerve shattering message that he had ever received in his life. There was plenty to think about.

At first the thought of the whole affair angered the Master Spy, and it shocked him that anyone should even dare to suggest such a thing. He knew that there had been men in the Intelligence department who had been envious of his record. But to think that Nippy and Bull would turn against him—It was impossible, and he put the thought out of his mind immediately. Slowly there came to his mind an explanation of what might have happened. He was surprised that it hadn't occurred to him before this.

At the moment, he was disguised as a *Hauptmann* in the German army. It was true that he had walked into a trap set by the Germans, but under ordinary circumstances he would have gotten away with the disguise. What, then, would prevent the Germans from playing a similar trick on him?

Yes, it would be very possible for them to find some clever impersonator who could train herself in a brief time to imitate R-1's voice. He hadn't seen R-1 outside the window; he had just heard her whispered voice. To forge her handwriting would be even simpler. Still, if the Germans had planned this as another trick, what might their object be?

He took a long breath of relief, having satisfied himself that the whole content of the note was false, and turned his attention to the hacksaw blades. The blades were well-worn and rusted, as the voice had told him, but there were quite a few teeth left on some of them. And even where teeth had been chewed off, the edge of the blade was hard and ragged. He might stand a chance of cutting through some of the bars.

He turned his attention first to the bars that covered the window and began quietly sawing away at one of them. After ten minutes' work he stopped, for he found that he was making no impression whatever. Now he remembered something that he had noticed while it was still daylight, shortly after he had been locked in the cell. These bars in the window were of shiny new steel. The steel from which they were made was as hard as the steel in the hacksaw blades. Even new blades wouldn't have cut it, he decided.

He gave that up in disgust and turned to the door of the cell. Midnight came and passed and still he sawed away. He found that he was doing better on the bars of the door, and after more than three hours' work he was part way through one of them. But those bars were so close together that

he would have to cut through three or four of them before he could make a hole large enough to squeeze through. It was tough work. He hadn't the slightest doubt but that he was going to be shot at dawn. Yet, on the other hand, there was the baffling mystery of why that woman had been sent under his window to impersonate R1 and give him the note. He was thoroughly puzzled.

It was half-way between midnight and dawn when he finished sawing one of the bars through and began on another. By now the hacksaw blades were worn almost smooth, but life hung in the balance and he worked on.

Beads of sweat broke out on his forehead as his sawing made a low, rasping sound that echoed faintly through the corridor.

HE WAS almost through with the second bar when the first gray streaks of dawn showed through the window. He kicked at the bar, of which only a small steel thread remained, but it held firm and he sawed again savagely at it. The saw blade broke through, and he dropped it and exerted his whole strength in an effort to bend the bars back.

Suddenly he stopped, and his blood seemed to freeze inside his veins. From down the corridor came the thud of marching feet.

Stamp! Stamp! Stamp! They were getting louder, and that meant they were coming closer. He stopped, breathless, his eyes glued to the far end of the corridor.

Around the corner of it, he saw the great figure of *Herr Hauptmann* Siemlicher marching in front of four armed guards. They made the turn and came straight for G-8's cell.

The Master Spy was standing now, awaiting their arrival.

The guard had stopped, and Siemlicher was unlocking the cell door.

"It isn't dawn, yet, is it?" G-8 asked. "You must be a little early."

The *Hauptmann* stopped as he prepared to unfasten the last lock.

"I feel very sorry for you, *mein lieber freund*," he said. "Yes, it is a little early for the firing squad. You are to be questioned first."

The door swung open and he was marched down the corridor between the guards. They turned

into the same large council room where Siemlicher had knocked G8 down. There were quite a few men in the room. G8 saw a general and several colonels and a half dozen majors standing about. He recognized the high commander as General von Zinsdorf. He thought the general had a sad expression on his face, and he smiled kindly at the Master Spy.

"*Herr G-8*," he said, "I have something to tell you which grieves me greatly." He shook his head ponderously. "No message of any kind could be a greater disappointment to a loyal agent."

G-8 waited. He thought he already knew what that news was going to be.

His Excellency cleared his throat.

"It is my duty to tell you before your death that your own country has betrayed you.

G-8 had been sure that information was coming, but he realized he must act up to the situation. He caught his breath quickly and said, "Good Heavens, General, do you realize what you're saying?"

Slowly the general nodded.

"*JAWOHL*," he said. "We have proof. Your own assistants, *Herr Martin* and *Herr Weston*, were the ones who appraised us of the fact that you were coming here to Hochbaden. After we had laid the trap for you but were not sure when you would be here, they informed us, for reasons best known to themselves, that you would arrive late in the afternoon disguised as a *Hauptmann*, and that you would come straight here to the town hall."

His Excellency paused. G-8 was looking very downcast.

"Naturally," the general said, "you feel great disappointment at this news?"

G-8 choked and swallowed hard.

"*Jawohl*," he said in a hoarse whisper. "I can scarcely believe it, and yet I can see there may be truth to what you say."

He saw General von Zinsdorf brighten. It was evident that the man did not realize that G8 was lying all the time.

"You have become, in our estimation," His Excellency was saying, "the greatest spy of the entire World War." He shrugged his thick

shoulders. "Since your country obviously does not wish you to serve them any longer, we would be most happy to pay you well if you would work for us." He smiled now. "You can see, of course, that it would be a means of revenge."

G-8 nodded bitterly.

"*Jawohl*," he said. He was thinking of R-1. She had been over here getting information when she was captured. He was certain of two things, now. In the first place, it hadn't been R-1 who had spoken to him from under the window of his cell. Secondly, if it hadn't been R-1, she still must be held a prisoner, somewhere in Hochbaden. Beyond the fact that he had great admiration for the brave girl spy and would do anything to save her from danger, she, in all probability, possessed important information which must, at any cost, be brought back to Intelligence. The girl spy must be saved.

"We will be glad to pay you a salary of ten thousand marks each month for your services, *Herr* G-8," the general was saying. "You will be made our greatest Intelligence agent. I will grant you twenty-four hours to think over the proposition."

The Master Spy shook his head.

"That won't be necessary," he said savagely.

The general frowned.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

G-8 straightened.

"I mean," he said, "that I have already made up my mind. I will join your forces at once if you feel that you can trust me."

CHAPTER THREE

Cloud Chaser

THE German *offiziers* were staring at the Master Spy in amazement. Even General von Zinsdorf seemed to be taken by surprise at his quick decision.

"*Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter*, G-8! You did not take very long to think it over!"

The Master Spy shrugged.

"Perhaps not," he said, "but in my work I am quite accustomed to making quick decisions."

"*Jawohl*," His Excellency said slowly. "But I did not think that you would go so far as to give your answer now."

"Why not, Your Excellency?" G-8 countered. "When one knows he is defeated, the best thing he can do is to make an about-face and begin reestablishing himself. While I can't understand the reason for my own country turning against me, still I do realize the weakness of human beings and their aptitude to jealousy, and I can't say that I blame them a great deal. As the old saying goes, all is fair in love and war."

The German *offiziers* laughed at that remark.

"*Jawohl*," von Zinsdorf chuckled. "That is an old saying, and it is very, very true."

G-8 hadn't yet smiled. His face had been grim and serious and he went on in the same manner.

"The fact of the matter is, Your Excellency, I rather hoped for a proposition such as this when I was brought in here. I have thought the matter over for a longer time than you suspect."

General von Zinsdorf tried to look surprised but G-8 saw he wasn't as surprised as he pretended.

"What do you mean, *Herr* G-8?" he asked.

"You wouldn't know this, of course," the Master Spy said, looking quite innocent, "but last night while I was in my cell, I heard a rattle of pebbles on my window. I raised the sash very cautiously. It was dark outside and I could see no one, but I heard a voice whisper up from below. It was the voice of a girl and I recognized it as that of the girl agent *Herr Hauptmann* Siemlicher told me had been captured. She had escaped from her cell." He looked at the general. "Is that correct?"

"*Jawohl*," the general affirmed. "I got the news of it this morning."

"She came to tell me," G-8 continued, "that my own country had turned against me and had delivered me to the enemy. She also was loyal and kind enough to bring me a half dozen hacksaw blades. They were well worn, but I did the best I could to get out with them."

The general smiled, now, and answered, "It is fortunate, *Herr* G-8, that the guards came for you before you escaped. Otherwise, we wouldn't have had the pleasure of this meeting."

"I was merely trying to save my own neck," G-8 said. "I must confess that if I had gotten out, I wouldn't have known which way to turn."

"I can well imagine," the general said.

"So you see, Your Excellency," G-8 went on, "I have been thinking this matter over ever since I first received the news from R-1. She's a very brave girl."

The general had sobered.

"No doubt," he said. "I think it would be well to inform you that scarcely two hours ago this girl spy you refer to as R-1 was recaptured as she was trying to get out of the town. She is now back in the main prison of Hochbaden."

G-8 prepared to play his trump card now.

"Perhaps that is a very good thing for our cause," he said. "She would make an excellent spy for Germany. I think if you were to release her and I could talk with her privately, I might win her over to our side."

There was a dead stillness for a long moment. General von Zinsdorf shook his head.

"I'm afraid we can not move quite so rapidly, *Herr G-8*," he said. "Remember, we made you the offer only a few minutes ago."

"And I've accepted," G-8 said.

"*Jawohl*," the general nodded, "but we have no definite way of knowing yet whether we can absolutely trust you. After you have brought us important information and have established yourself definitely, perhaps we shall talk about this girl, R-1."

ONE of the *obersts*, a tall fellow with a coarse moustache, turned up Kaiser fashion at the ends, stepped forward.

"I am afraid, Your Excellency, that we cannot hold R-1 for that purpose," he announced. "She is scheduled to come up for trial as a spy this afternoon. She will be brought here from the main prison. *Oberst* von Gottenberg, the judge adjutant, is coming from *Freihoven* to conduct the trial. If she is convicted as a spy, which she no doubt will be, she probably will be executed in the morning."

G-8 stiffened just a little, then nonchalantly he shrugged.

"Very well," he said. "You mentioned my furnishing proof that I am with you, Your Excellency. You have a plan for that?"

General von Zinsdorf nodded. He took a cigarette from a case and offered one to G-8 before he spoke.

"*Jawohl*. As soon as possible you will change to the uniform of a lieutenant in the American army. In view of what has already happened, you will not go back to the Allied side of the lines as G-8. G-8, so far as the Allies are concerned, will be dead. We shall have a note dropped at Le Bourget field stating that you were shot at dawn this morning. Therefore, there will be no suspicion of any of your movements. You will simply be an American lieutenant on leave, going about France to pick up what you can get. Naturally, if you were to go back as G-8 under the present circumstances, they would suspect you. You will not go near Le Bourget field, nor will you approach any friends or aides that you had in France. We are expecting an important move on the part of the Allies very shortly. You will bring us information regarding that move as quickly as possible."

"And how am I to go over?" G-8 asked.

"You will be landed well behind the Allied lines in a captured Salmson two-seater by one of our pilots, who will be dressed in an English flying suit and helmet."

The Master Spy nodded.

"Very well," he said. "I'm ready whenever you are. In fact, I'm anxious to get started."

"In the next room," General von Zinsdorf said, "an American lieutenant's uniform has been laid out for you. You will put it on. So far as changing your facial features or anything of that kind is concerned, we will leave that up to you. Remember, your extraordinary pay will begin as soon as you have brought us the first bit of vital information and we have corroborated it."

G-8 went into the next room, and they left him alone as he changed into the uniform that was ready for him. There was really no object in trying to escape through the one guarded window, since he was practically on his way back to his own lines. When he had finished dressing, he came out and presented himself to the general and the other *offiziers*. The general smiled with satisfaction.

"You look excellent, *Herr G-8*," he said.

A bitter expression crossed the Master Spy's face.

"I should look very well in an American uniform," he said, "since I've spent considerable time in one."

"*Jawohl*, of course," the general agreed. "But now the plane is waiting for you. *Herr Hauptmann* Siemlicher will escort you to the airdrome and to the plane." The ride to the airdrome was uneventful. G-8 sat in the rear seat of an open staff car beside Siemlicher and was driven to a field ten miles south of Hochbaden in a valley below the southern ridges of the Black Forest.

A Salmson was rolled out of the hangar, and G-8 could see that it had been connected with the 158th American squadron. *Herr Hauptmann* Siemlicher introduced G-8 to his pilot, a tall, slim young German with a pleasant smile. The Master Spy got into the observer's cockpit while the pilot took up the controls in front. The motor roared out and warmed, then the chocks were removed and they swept off into the air and turned toward the Front.

CHAPTER FOUR

Death Drops a Message

IN the apartment of the end hangar at Le Bourget, G-8's Battle Aces had gotten up a little late, Nippy Weston, the little terrier ace who played with magic and laughed at death, was the first one up. Big Bull Martin, former All-American halfback, grumbled as Nippy shook him half awake.

"Come on, you big ox," the terrier ace cracked. "You want to sleep all day?"

Bull rolled over and yawned.

"Oh, go on away, squirt," he said. "There won't be anything doing until G-8 gets back. I'm going to catch another wink of sleep or two before I get up."

"You're going to get up now," Nippy grinned.

And with that, he gave the blankets a throw that left big Bull Martin lying without any covers.

Bull was out of bed in a flash and charging after Nippy. Twice the terrier ace ducked, then Bull got him around the legs in a flying tackle and brought him down.

"You're going to pay for yanking off my bed clothes," Bull boomed. "Nobody does that to me and gets away with it. Come on."



He carried Nippy, struggling like an eel, into the shower room, and there he turned on the cold water. The real fight began then as he tried to toss him under the shower. They struggled there good-naturedly for almost five minutes, then Bull, thinking he had Nippy under control, gave him a hard shove under the hissing stream. But Nippy wasn't quite through with him yet. He caught Bull by the arm and gave him a jerk, which wouldn't have amounted to much if Bull's bare foot hadn't landed on a cake of soap and sent him off balance. The two sprawled in a heap under the shower, both yelling from the shock of the cold water. Bull managed to get his arm up and turn off the stream. Nippy was laughing.

"So, you big ox, you were going to soak me but you got soaked yourself!"

"All right, squirt," Bull grumbled. "I was going to take a shower anyway."

Nippy was away from him and laughing.

"Well, you sure got one," he said. "You look like a drowned rat."

The two Battle Aces shaved and dressed and by the time they were through, Battle, the gaunt,

somber-faced manservant and master of the make-up kit, came in from the kitchen.

"Breakfast is served in the dining room, gentlemen," he announced stiffly.

Bull Martin took a long breath.

"Well, that's a relief," he said. "I was hoping you weren't going to make us wait until G-8 came back,"

Battle smiled slightly.

"I was thinking about that myself, sir," he said. "And if I may say so, when do you think the Master will be back?"

"When he goes away on a trip like this," Nippy said, "you never can tell. He might be gone for two or three days, then again it wouldn't surprise me to see him come back any minute."

"I hope he comes back pretty soon," Bull Martin ventured, "Holy Herring, I don't feel right while G-8 is away. I worry about him a lot when he isn't here."

"Yeah," Nippy said, "you worry about him so much that you get all tired out and you have to have more sleep than when he is here. I suppose that's it."

"All right," Bull nodded. "Have it your own way, squirt. But I'm not going to argue with you until I get a good breakfast inside me."

The two Battle Aces sat down at the breakfast table, and Battle brought in plates of fried eggs and ham and steaming cups of coffee. The two ate hungrily.

"I'd like to know," Nippy ventured, "why G-8 went away in such a hurry. I understand R-1 went over into the Black Forest region a day or so before G-8."

"Yeah," Bull said around a mouthful of ham. "I wonder if the two jobs could have been connected in some way."

Suddenly the terrier ace stopped eating.

"Hey," he said, "do you hear that?"

Bull Martin hesitated with a juicy forkful of fried egg halfway to his mouth. The egg dropped off the fork back onto the plate and spattered some of the yolk on him.

"Holy Herring!" he boomed. "Do you see what you did, Nippy? You never want to stop me in the middle of eating like that. I don't hear anything."

"You're as deaf as a post, then. Can't you hear it? It sounds like a Mercedes engine. It's coming closer."

Nippy was already out of his chair, and now Bull was sitting up straight.

"Sure I hear it," he said. "Holy Herring, it is a Mercedes."

He leaped to his feet and followed Nippy, who was already on the run for the living room. From there they dashed out onto the tarmac, reaching the open space in time to see a dark green Fokker diving low over the field. It was coming from the northeast, and already ground crews were running to their machine gun posts. Nippy could see the German pilot's arm upraised and there was something wadded in his hand.

"Don't shoot!" the terrier ace yelled to the machine gunners. "He's going to drop a message streamer."

The Fokker roared down scarcely fifty feet above them. The pilot's arm shot out and the message streamer plummeted down, the ribbon rippling in the air as it fell. Nippy and Bull each fought to get at it first. The terrier ace caught hold of the streamer and jerked it away as Bull lunged. The big fellow stopped.

"All right, squirt," he said. "Open it up and let's see what it says."



The Fokker was making a sharp chandelle and heading back toward its own lines. As rapidly as he could, Nippy unfolded the piece of paper that was in the container and the two stared at it. The message was typewritten. It said:

We regret to inform you that one of the bravest and cleverest Intelligence Agents in the World War is no longer alive. The American spy known as G-8 died before the firing squad this morning at Hochbaden. General Von Zinsdorf.

The Battle Aces stared at each other. Nippy felt his throat filling up so that he couldn't speak. Bull Martin took a long breath, making a trembling sound in his throat as he did so.

"H-Holy Herring!" he gasped. Then again, "Holy Herring! It can't be true! They're lying! G-8 can't be dead!"

Nippy was still staring at the message and trying to swallow the lump in his throat. But he didn't see the message at all; he didn't see anything. It was as though he had gone suddenly blind. A car, bearing the French major who commanded the field, came screaming down the tarmac.

Everybody was asking, "What does the note say? What's happened?"

The two Battle Aces were still standing as if they had been turned to stone. They hadn't even

presence of mind enough to salute the French major as he came up.

"*Mon Dieu!*" the major cried. "Have you been struck dumb? Can't you speak? What has happened?"

Vacantly Nippy handed him the note, and with Bull beside him, started toward the apartment of the end hangar.

They heard someone gasp, "Good Heavens! G-8 is dead!"

Then the major said, "That's impossible! It cannot be. I do not believe such a thing!"

Nippy and Bull went inside the living room and closed the door. Bull stood rigid, his fists clenched, staring savagely into the fireplace.

"We ought to go out and kill every German we see!" he thundered savagely.

"Come on!" Nippy yelled. "I'm with you!"

Battle appeared in the door of the kitchen, his hands wet with dishwater.

"Begging your pardon, gentlemen," he said, "may I ask if anything is wrong?"

Bull turned to bellow at him.

"Everything is wrong!" he boomed. "G-8 was shot as a spy this morning. Nippy and I are going to knock down every Heinie on wings. They're going to pay plenty for this."

The terrier ace punched the button on the wall to signal the mechanics to get out their Spads. They grabbed their helmets and goggles.

"Oh, but I say!" Battle choked. "That can't be true, sir. It—it can't be, sir. Look here. They can't kill the Master just like that!"

"They can't—but they did!" Bull roared. "And now they're going to pay for it. By the time Nippy and I get through with those Heinies, they'll wish they hadn't."

He ran outside with Nippy, closing the door behind him. Mechanics were placing chocks under the wheels. The hardboiled mechanic sergeant, looking as if he were going to burst out crying at any moment, came up to Nippy and Bull.

"Is it true what we just heard about G-8?" he demanded.

"I guess so", Nippy said vacantly. "You know as much about it as I do. It doesn't seem possible that the Germans would drop a note telling us

about it unless it had happened. But I hope they're pulling a fast one again."

Mechanics were in the cockpits and the Hissos were roaring gently as they warmed.

Bull's voice rose above the thunder of the motors as he yelled to the mechanics, "Get out of there! We're shoving off!"

The mechanics leaped out of the seats and Nippy and Bull prepared to climb into their cockpits. They had just settled in their seats and were yelling at the mechanics to pull the chocks when a dilapidated-looking car came snorting and puffing around the end of the hangar.

An athletic looking young man with broad shoulders and keen gray eyes leaped from the car. He was dressed in the uniform of an American lieutenant. He waved his arms and called to them and his voice was that of G-8.

"Hey, where are you fellows going in such a hurry? Where's the fire, Nippy?"

CHAPTER FIVE

Murder Speaks Softly

NIPPY and Bull stared at him as if they were looking at a ghost. G-8 ran toward them, and in a flash the two Battle Aces throttled back their motors and climbed out of their cockpits.

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy yelled. "Is it really you, G-8?"

The Master Spy grinned at them. He knew they wouldn't be able to recognize him by his face, because he still had makeup on.

"It's me all right," he said. "Where were you going?"

Nippy and Bull didn't seem to be concerned with any question he put to them. They were only interested in seeing him and throwing their arms around him and hugging him. Bull was feeling of his shoulders.

"Holy Herring!" he said. "I guess it's you, all right. What are you trying to do, give us heart failure?"

G-8 laughed.

"Not intentionally," he said. "But what's the matter with you two anyway?"

Men were running from all quarters of the field. The French major, who had just started driving away as G-8 rolled up, had his car turned about and got out beside the group that was forming.

"Oh," he said, looking at G-8's figure, "it's you, Monsieur G-8. I am so happy." He turned to the others. "You remember that when I read the note I said it was impossible!"

"Read the note?" G-8 repeated. He nodded. "Oh, yes. I remember they said they were going to drop a note and say that I had been shot this morning. Well, I'm still here and alive. They were just trying to surprise you."

He took both Nippy and Bull by an arm. "Come on, you two. We've got some things to talk over."

But the French major caught hold of him and drew him back.

"*Non, non*," he said. "I tell you I will not believe it is you until I see that makeup taken off your face. I will go in with you myself, if you do not mind."

"Sure," G-8 nodded. "It's a pleasure, Major. Come on."

The major followed them in and watched while Battle, overjoyed at seeing his master again, worked rapidly with the secret solution that removed the make-up from the Master Spy's face. A few minutes later, when the job was finished and G-8 looked like himself again, the French major came up and joyously kissed him on each cheek.

"Monsieur G-8," he said, holding him off by the shoulders and looking at him, "this is the most happy day of my life to see you safe when we thought you were dead!"

"Thanks," G-8 grinned.

The French major left to spread the news. Bull took a long breath.

"Holy Herring!" he said. "Start in at the beginning and tell us all about it, will you?"

G-8 told them hurriedly what had happened.

"I've got to get back into Germany as quickly as I can. R-1 is in plenty of trouble. They expect to try her late this afternoon and execute her tomorrow morning."

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy said. "We can't let that happen. She's a swell girl."

"You bet we can't," Bull said. "Isn't there something we can do to help?"

"I'm afraid there isn't," G-8 said. "The way I've got this job figured out, I've got to take care of it myself. An *offizier* in Hochbaden let something slip that I'm going to work on for all its worth. He told the general that *Oberst* von Gottenberg, the judge adjutant at Freihoven—which is about twenty miles from Hochbaden—is coming over this afternoon to try R-1. If my plan works, I'm going to be *Oberst* von Gottenberg this afternoon. I've met the man before; I know him fairly well. He's about my build, so it won't be difficult to impersonate him."

Both Nippy and Bull began to grin.

"Holy Herring!" the big fellow exploded. "You mean you're going to be the judge who tries R-1 as a spy?"

G-8 nodded.

"That's what I hope to do," he admitted. "Battle, I want a Hussar *Oberst's* uniform that will fit me perfectly, and everything that goes with the uniform, including a Luger and a blackjack. And have my small make-up kit replenished with supplies."

Battle beamed.

"Quite right, sir," he said. "And if I may say so, I would enjoy enormously being present when you wield the blackjack, sir."

"I wish you could all be there," G-8 said, "but I'm afraid it will have to be a private show." He turned to his Battle Aces. "You two dig up a captured Fokker and see that it's in proper order. I want to get away as quickly as possible."

"I'll bet," Bull ventured, "that when you get R-1, she'll have some good information for you."

"I certainly hope so," G-8 said.

Battle began laying out clothes for him, and the Master Spy stripped off the uniform the Germans had given him. He took a hasty bath while Battle made other things ready, then he sat down in his accustomed chair and Battle spread out the great make-up kit and went to work.

"I want you to make my face up to look like *Oberst* von Gottenberg," G-8 said. "That is, I mean

the principal features. I'll put in the finishing touches later—if I get that far."

He described to Battle the changes he wished made in his features, and the master of the make-up kit went to work. When he was through, G-8 studied himself in the mirror.

"I think that will do nicely," he said. "It won't take much work now to make me look exactly like von Gottenberg."

He donned the German *Oberst's* uniform, and Nippy came into the room just then, followed by Bull.

"We got a Fokker for you all right," Bull said. "It looks pretty much like a wreck, but I guess it will have to do."

"If it's a German ship that will fly, it will do," G-8 said. "I can't be particular." Fifteen minutes later he had finished his preparations and was climbing into the cockpit of the Fokker, an old battle-scarred crate painted a faded red. He turned to give last minute instructions to Nippy and Bull.

"You fellows stay pretty close to the wireless. I may need you at any time."

"We'll be here," Nippy promised.

"You bet," Bull chimed in.

The Master Spy dropped his hand to the throttle and the Mercedes engine roared out, driving the plane at an ever faster clip across the field until it took the air.

ONCE in flight, G-8 took out a folded map of the Black Forest area and spread it out before him. Quite easily he found the towns of Freihoven and Hochbaden. Freihoven was west of Hochbaden, fairly well out of the mountainous country. He found a field marked with an X a few miles south of Hochbaden. That meant that it was some farmer's pasture that could be utilized as a landing field. He aimed straight for it. Far ahead he saw the smoke haze that always hung over the front lines. That haze was just on the horizon.

As he came nearer, he saw other planes in the sky and he turned off to avoid them, for he recognized them as three French Nieuports that had come from the southeast. They were droning along in close formation when suddenly the leader made a sharp turn and headed straight for G-8.

He knew he must avoid them by some trick, so he veered to the west and gave the Mercedes engine full throttle. Looking back, he saw that he was drawing away from the Nieuports a little.

Suddenly he came up sharply in his seat. From a cloud above the Nieuports, another Fokker had dropped down and was aiming straight for them. The distance was too great for him to signal the French pilots and let them know of their danger. Moreover, he couldn't get away with that without causing suspicion on the part of the Fokker pilot who was attacking them. He did, however, turn his course straight for the lines again. That would bring him nearer the Nieuports.

Suddenly the French pilots saw their danger, and changing their courses, roared up to meet the single attacking Fokker. G-8 heard the rattle of the Nieuport's guns, but there was no firing sound from the Fokker itself, though it was already within shooting range. It continued to tear down after the Nieuports.

Suddenly one Nieuport dove out of control. G-8 followed that ship down with his eyes, thinking at first that the French pilot was pulling a trick to get out of the fight. To his amazement, he saw the plane crash in No-Man's-Land.

He looked up at the dogfight between the two remaining French ships and the lone Fokker. Already another Nieuport was going down. This one was spinning. G-8 sensed something mighty strange about that Fokker.

The last Nieuport was trying desperately to get away from the German pilot, but the latter clung to him like a leech. No sound of firing came, and yet the Fokker was near enough to the Nieuport to put in burst after burst of slugs if the pilot had wanted to. For almost a full minute the Fokker hung to the Nieuport's tail. The French pilot was doing everything in his power to escape, but not once did he have a chance to use his guns. On the other hand, no sound of firing came from the Fokker. The only noise it made was the droning of its Mercedes motor, and even that seemed a little strange. G-8 thought there was, too, a slight whirring, singing sound that accompanied the throbbing of the engine.

Suddenly the Nieuport plunged to the earth. G-8 was certain that the French pilot couldn't have been hit, for there had been no Spandau stutter

from the Fokker's guns. In that case, he decided, the Nieuport pilot was diving out of the fight. But, on the other hand, why had the Fokker pilot let him go?

A gasp of astonishment left the Master Spy's lips as he saw the Nieuport crash head on into the earth.

Being still just over the Yank lines, G-8 stared at the Fokker. It was coming toward him. There was something queer looking about the nose, and he realized now what it was. There were no Spandau guns atop the motor cowlings. Instead, there was a long, bulging, queer-looking contraption beside the motor. Instantly, he sensed the mystery of the thing and he realized now that in all probability, this Fokker had sent down all three of the Allied planes without the sound of a single shot. The three Frenchmen had been victims of a silent death.

A desperate plan came to his mind. He would do all in his power to shoot down this Fokker behind the Yank lines so that the Allies could learn of this mysterious silent death that it dealt. Chancing that death, the Master Spy whirled his old Fokker and sent it screaming at the mystery ship.

CHAPTER SIX

Fate Casts the Dice

THE instant that G-8 tangled with the other Fokker, he realized that the German pilot was an expert airman. Round and round they churned the sky, struggling to get on each other's tail. In that first thrust, the Master Spy had been almost certain that he had the German pilot dead to rights, but the Hun had slipped away before his slugs could reach him.

Suddenly the Master Spy found himself in trouble. The Fokker had dived away from him and was coming back under his fuselage as G-8 banked in a sharp turn. There was a strange sound that came faintly to his ears. G-8 couldn't tell just what it was until, looking down at his right lower wing, he saw tiny holes appear where the fabric was being torn. He knew those holes were not

made by machine gun bullets, for they were far too small. And as before during the fight with the Nieuports, no sound came from the attacking Fokker.

Then suddenly, G-8 got his man where he wanted him, tricked him into a bad position. Glancing across the sights for an instant, he pressed his triggers. The guns atop the Mercedes stammered their defiance and white tracers lashed out at the other ship. He was aiming a bit low.

G-8 pulled back savagely on his stick, but before he could raise his line of fire sufficiently, the other pilot had slid off on a wing, pulled a diving, vertical bank. Then he snapped into a quick zoom and came storming up at G-8 again. Once more, above the roar of the Mercedes engine, came that sound of light drumming. Turning, G-8 saw tiny pieces of fabric lashing up in the wind from the rear of his fuselage. He horsed the stick and kicked rudder in a mad effort to get out. They were directly over the Yank front lines. He must, at all possible costs, send this German pilot in his mystery plane down to a crash where Yank officers could learn his secret.

He caught a glimpse of faces, tiny specks of mud-smeared white, looking up out of the trenches. Those would be the Yanks, held spellbound by a fight between two German planes. They couldn't know that G-8 was flying one of them.

It maddened the Master Spy that he couldn't finish this job more quickly. Savagely he sent his Fokker careening through the sky in a series of wild maneuvers as the German pilot tried once more to catch him off guard. He remembered, now, how nicely these Fokkers could be hung on their prop in a steep climb without danger.

The stick came back into his lap and he kicked rudder. The Fokker screamed over and up until it was standing on its tail and the prop was churning thin air. His guns were pointed at the belly of the other Fokker, and he pressed his triggers. The twin guns atop the Mercedes staccatoed out in a chattering duet of death. He saw their tracers lash into the bottom of the cockpit and knew they were tearing up through the floor boards. He held down on his triggers as long as he could keep his ship in that stalled position, then he let them go as it fell off.

The other Fokker wavered a moment, and the wings wobbled as if the pilot were waiting in some sort of drunken indecision. Then it plummeted toward the earth in a wild dive.



HERR DR. KREUGER

G-8 followed it down until it crashed between the American front and second lines of defense. He throttled back his Mercedes as he dived, then pulled up scarcely ten feet above the trenches.

As he skimmed along, he leaned over the cockpit and yelled at the Yanks, "Get that Fokker back of the lines! Find out what kind of a gun it's got on it."

But for his trouble, G-8 got only a rattle of rifle fire. Bullets crashed through the covering of his wings and fuselage. Savagely, he hit the throttle with the butt of his hand and it sent the Fokker screaming back toward the rear of the Yank trenches. All along, Yanks were firing like mad at his ship. He felt helpless. "You fools!" G-8 yelled. "Don't you understand? Can't you tell that I'm on your side?"

But the scattered firing continued.

He spotted the dugouts of divisional headquarters far back of the lines, saw officers come running out. Then they, as well as the doughboys, opened fire on him with their Colt .45 automatics. G-8 jerked out his white handkerchief and waved it in the wind. That lessened the firing a little. He cut his engine and yelled as he screamed over the heads of the officers, "I'm G-8. I just shot down a Fokker back of the front line trench. Have the wreckage dragged back and save everything for an examination."

As he finished, artillery from the German side of the lines began sending up mushrooms of dirt in the vicinity of the headquarters dugouts, and the officers ran for cover. Doughboys were still shooting at him. The Master Spy hit his throttle wide open

and went roaring far back of his lines. He had no intention of crossing the Front at that point, now. He realized he must get back where the enemy hadn't seen him down the Fokker and didn't know what was going on.

He flew almost twenty miles to the west before he turned and headed for the lines once more. There he crossed, flying high. Yank anti-aircraft guns tried to reach him as he swept over and he was thankful for that, because it would convince the Germans that he was just another one of their planes returning after patrol. He flew deep into enemy territory.

ONCE well away from the Front, he turned toward Freihoven and the field that he had chosen on his map for a landing. Small towns and villages drifted by below him, and ahead he could see the mountains of the Black Forest, standing ominously dark against the horizon with their great, heavy growths of timber.

He spotted Freihoven, and flying low, he came to the field that he sought. It was a fair-sized, level pasture, easily large enough to get into, and he made the landing without incident.

He saw an elderly man and woman come out of a little farmhouse not far away and start hobbling toward him: G-8 waited, pretending to work on the plane engine until they came up.

"*Ach Himmel, herr soldier,*" the old man said. "Are you having trouble? Is there anything we can do?"

G-8 smiled at them.

"*Nein,*" he said, "but thank you. I had a little engine trouble and was forced to land in your field. I hope you do not mind."

"*Aber,* it is an honor," the old woman smiled.

"Have you a car or a truck in which you could take me to Freihoven?" G-8 asked, knowing that the town lay only about three miles from there.

The old man's head bobbed.

"*Ja, ja,*" he said. "I have a little truck. It does not run so good and it makes much noise, but if you do not mind, I will be glad to take you."

"*Gut,*" G-8 said. "I will leave my plane here for now. See that no one touches it."

"I will guard it well," the old woman said.

G-8 strode off with the bent old man trudging along beside him. He found that the truck was old and very noisy, as the farmer had said, but after a few minutes they got it running. With the old man driving, they started toward town.

When G-8 reached the town, he got out and sent the farmer back home. With a haughty dignity fitting the *Oberst's* uniform that he wore, he strode down the street. Three German privates were coming toward him along the sidewalk. He stopped them as they saluted, and they stood stiffly at attention. G-8 spoke first. "Can any of you tell me where I can find the office of *Oberst* von Gottenberg?" he asked.

All three of the soldiers nodded like a trio in a comic opera.

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst,*" said the short, stocky one, taking a step forward, "You will find his headquarters at number 63 *Eitel Strasse*. That is two blocks farther on."

"*Gut,*" G-8 nodded and strode on.

He knew there wasn't a minute to lose. Any time, now, *Oberst* von Gottenberg might be leaving for the trial of R-1 at Hochbaden. He began walking faster at the thought. Perhaps he had left.

G-8 reached number 63 and found it a large house set about six feet off the sidewalk and hemmed in on either side by other houses. There was a low, iron fence and a narrow plot of grass on either side of the entrance. Two guards stood there, one on either side of the doorway. G-8 stepped up before one, who, he noticed, was a corporal.

"*Oberst* von Gottenberg is in?" he asked.

The guard gave a short, "*Jawohl,*" in answer.

G-8 felt easier.

"I am *Herr Oberst* von Leipstein," he said. "Tell the *Herr Oberst* it is most imperative that I see him at once."

The corporal guard nodded.

"*Jawohl,*" he said.

He turned to enter the door and the other guard stepped before G-8 until he should have proper permission. Presently the corporal came out and nodded.

"*Herr Oberst* von Gottenberg can spare you a few moments. He is leaving very shortly."

"*Jawohl,*" G-8 nodded.

The corporal went ahead of him and the other guard stepped out of his way. He found himself presently in a large room in the front of the house. A desk was set up in it, now, and the walls were lined with maps and a huge bookcase filled with volumes on military law. Next to the bookcase was a door leading, G-8 hoped, into a closet.

Oberst von Gottenberg was seated behind his desk, scrutinizing G-8. He was about the same build as the Master Spy, perhaps slightly heavier in the stomach.

G-8 closed the door behind him, leaving the guard outside with an austere, "*Danke*." He heard the corporal go back toward the front door.

Stepping to the side of the desk, he said, "*Herr Oberst* von Gottenberg, permit me to introduce myself. I am *Herr Oberst* von Leipstein."

The *Oberst* was scowling at him.

"*Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter!*" he spat. "There is something very strange here that I do not understand." He nodded. "*Jawohl*, something very strange."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Gun justice

G-8 had no idea of what was in the *Oberst's* mind but he knew he must be ready to act with lightning speed when the time came. The blackjack was loose in his pocket, ready to be grabbed at the correct moment. But he must find a reason to get close enough to the *Oberst* so he could knock him out before he had a chance to shout a warning. He stood there at the end of the desk, scarcely four feet from von Gottenberg. He looked at him in a puzzled way and shook his head.

"I do not understand what you mean, *Herr Oberst*," he said.

"*Ach!*" von Gottenberg snorted. "That uniform *und* your name! You wear the uniform of the Hussars. I know all the Hussar *Obersts*, and I know of no one by the name of von Leipstein."

G-8 shrugged nonchalantly and smiled.

"You need have no fear of that, *Herr Oberst*," he said. "I can explain very easily."

But von Gottenberg wasn't giving him the chance.

"And that face of yours," he said. "*Ach Himmel*, it looks in many ways like my face. What goes on here? I can almost imagine I am sitting here, talking to myself."

"I will explain," G-8 said. He lowered his voice almost to a whisper. "I am from Intelligence and I am not really an *Oberst*."

"What is that?" von Gottenberg asked. He had lowered his voice, too; he was entering into the spirit of the thing. G-8 stepped around the corner of the desk and came closer, bending down. At the same instant, he slipped his hand in his pocket and got hold of the blackjack.

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst*," he said, speaking close to his ear, "some strange things have been going on of late. I have been sent by Intelligence on a special mission, *und* you must help. I will show you how."

Von Gottenberg had bowed his head a little and tipped it toward G-8 so he could hear the low, whispered words of the Master Spy. He didn't even see the blackjack come out of the Master Spy's pocket, nor was he aware of G-8's lightning-like movement until the blackjack descended with terrific force on his skull.

There was no outcry, no commotion of any kind. Von Gottenberg merely slumped there in his chair with all the life suddenly gone out of him.

G-8 stopped to listen for a moment. He heard a car draw up outside the building and heard the engine running, but other than that there was no sound. He hurried to the door and turned the key in the lock.

Suddenly he froze. He could hear heavy boots treading the entrance hall. There was a rap on the door and G-8 answered, giving a good imitation of von Gottenberg's voice.

"*Was ist?* I am busy."

He heard the guard corporal say, "*Bitte, Herr Oberst*, your car is waiting when you are ready."

"Tell the driver to wait," the Master Spy ordered. "I will be out presently."

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst*," the guard said quietly.

Then G-8 heard him walking back down the hall. He stepped lightly to the other door and opened it cautiously. He found that it led to a dark

closet, as he had at first hoped. This would be an excellent hiding place for the body. Besides, there was a key in the lock.

His first move was to take the medals that shone brightly on the uniform of *Oberst* von Gottenberg and transfer them to his own uniform. Then he got out his tiny make-up kit and went to work finishing the make-up on his face. He worked for perhaps ten minutes, for he must be positive of this duplication; he must look exactly like *Oberst* von Gottenberg.

When he had finished that job to his satisfaction, he put the tiny make-up kit in its secret hiding place, dragged the *Oberst's* body into the closet, locked the door and pocketed the key. Next, he unlocked the door of the office, went outside, then locked it after him.

He smoothed his uniform and straightened. Making his way to the rear of the house, he found there was a back door, which was unguarded and opened upon a small yard. He returned to the front of the house, opened the front door and stepped out.



THE two guards presented arms. He thought the corporal looked queerly at him, as if he were wondering where the visitor had gone. G-8 spoke to him in a low voice.

"The visitor that you brought in was on a special secret mission," he told him. "I sent him out by the rear door." G-8 could see from the expression on the corporal's face that he was satisfied with the explanation.

The Master Spy strode across the sidewalk to the waiting car, and the uniformed driver was

holding open the door to the rear seat. G-8 nodded to him.

"Do you know where you are to go?" he asked.

"Nein, *Herr Oberst*," the driver said.

"Nein, of course not," G-8 said. "You will take me to the town hall at Hochbaden."

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst.*"

G-8 got in. The driver closed the door behind him, took his place back of the wheel, and they drove off.

"There is no great hurry," G-8 said, sitting back comfortably. "I have some thinking to do."

They drove leisurely toward Hochbaden, for G-8 didn't want to get there until time for the trial. There might be consultations and meetings with other officers, and in that there was always a possible chance of recognition. When they reached the town of Hochbaden twenty miles away, he leaned over to the driver.

"Suppose you drive past the town hall and around the block. I have not yet thought out my problem."

"*Jawohl.*"

He drove slowly past the town hall, and G-8 could see four guards in front of it. He saw something else, too. There was another car, not nearly as fine looking and shiny as the great, powerful staff car in which he rode, standing at the curb. Guards were getting out of it, and then R-1 stepped to the sidewalk. She looked worn and tired, as if she had been through a sleepless night.

G-8's car turned around the next corner, then onto the street that ran behind the town hall. They had just gone past the grassy plot upon which D-12, the resident agent of Hochbaden, had been shot. About a hundred feet farther on, G-8 ordered his driver to pull up to the curb and stop. The driver did so, then looked around.

"Listen to these orders carefully," G-8 said. "I have an important problem to think out when my work here is finished, and I wish a quiet spot like this for that purpose. After you leave me at the front entrance of the town hall, drive the car around to this point and leave it here. Then you may take off the rest of the afternoon until eight o'clock this evening."

The driver's face lighted.

"*Danke schon, Herr Oberst,*" he said.

G-8 had been resting back against the seat; now he leaned forward.

"By the way," he said, "leave the key in the car. I might wish to drive to some other point if this place does not suit my convenience."

"*Jawohl.*"

They drove around to the front of the building again and this time drew up to the curb. G-8 got out. He was pleased that the guards stepped aside and presented arms, for that meant they recognized him as *Herr Oberst* von Gottenberg. Officers were waiting in the hall. He saluted General von Zinsdorf with a click of his heels and bowed to the others. Already R-1 stood, between two guards, before the great desk in the room.

The Master Spy rapped sharply on the desk top with his knuckles and the murmur of voices ceased. He began speaking to R-1, appraising her of the reason for her being there. He heard the testimony of three German soldiers who had captured her and of the Intelligence agent who had superintended the work.

Across the room G-8 saw General von Zinsdorf standing, with a rather sleepy expression on his face, as he listened to the trial. The Master Spy got up from his seat, went over to the general, and spoke to him in a whisper, always remembering to imitate the voice of von Gottenberg.

"I believe," he hissed, "that if I were left alone with the prisoner, it might be possible for me to get some important information out of her before I pass sentence."

He winked slightly at His Excellency and the general grinned with pleasurable anticipation. He nodded his head ponderously.

"*Jawohl,*" he said in a low confidential voice.

G-8 took his seat again.

"Is there any further evidence to come before the military court, *mein Herren?*" he asked.

The general spoke up.

"I think that is all," he said. "I believe it would be well for everyone to leave the room for a short time."

THE door opened, and one by one the high *offiziers*, then the guards, filed out. The door closed again, leaving R-1 alone with G-8.

"Sssh," he warned, getting up from his chair. He motioned her to come closer. "I am G8," he said.

"Oh!" R-1 gasped.

"If everything works all right, we'll be gone in a minute," G-8 said.

He turned to the window and slowly, cautiously raised it.

"The coast is clear," he said.

R-1 was standing next to him. The drop to the ground was almost eight feet.

"Climb over quickly," G-8 whispered, "and I'll lower you to the ground." The girl slid over the window sill. He caught her wrists, and leaning far out, lowered her so that she dropped lightly to the ground. Quickly he sprang out beside her, and taking her by the arm, hurried along the grass to the rear of the building. Neither spoke until they reached the sidewalk.

Suddenly they heard shouts from behind. A shot rang out and there came the pounding of German boots on the lawn over which they had just come.

"Hurry!" G-8 said. "We've got to make the car before they catch us."

They were running as fast as they could for the car. G-8 pulled open the door, pushed R-1 into the seat, then leaped behind the wheel. The shouts and the pounding feet were coming closer as G-8 flipped on the switch. The engine started with an even purr and the car jerked ahead as shots rang out down the street. Rapidly the car gathered speed. G-8 made a turn at the next corner and the shooting ceased. G-8 sent the car racing out into the country.

For the first time, R-1 spoke.

"G-8," she said, "how did you ever do it?"

The Master Spy smiled at her.

"It was pretty easy, after I found out what was going on and who was going to conduct the trial. They tried to frame me. I imagine you've been in jail for the last twenty-four or thirty-six hours, haven't you?"

"Yes," she said.

"I came pretty close to being shot this morning myself," the Master Spy said.

He told her about the girl who had imitated R-1's voice below his prison window.

"But you knew no one would turn against you," R-1 said.

G-8 laughed.

"Sure," he said. "That's what made me realize there was something funny about the whole thing. You'll be out of here pretty soon. I've got a Fokker waiting for you."

R-1 was watching the road behind them.

"I think they're on our trail," she said. "There's a cloud of dust way back at the edge of Hochbaden."

G-8 pushed the accelerator full down, and the great, powerful car tore like mad along the road.

"I hope they don't try to head us off," he said. "It's less than fifteen miles now to where the Fokker is waiting."

In less than fifteen minutes after that, they drew into the yard of the farmhouse. The old couple hurried to meet them. Both the man and his wife were all smiles as they bowed before G-8 and R-1.

"We were afraid something might happen to your plane," the old man explained, "so I stopped while I was in Freihoven and got a guard of soldiers to come out and watch it."

G-8's heart almost stopped. He stared across the field at the Fokker. He could see two German soldiers, with bayoneted rifles gleaming in the late afternoon sun, standing guard over the plane. For all he knew, there might be others behind the plane. Could it be possible that he was going to be blocked in his escape at this stage of the game ?

CHAPTER EIGHT

On the Wing

AS G-8 scrutinized the two guards standing beside the lone Fokker, he heard the sound of a car roaring at high speed from the direction of Hochbaden. It was still just a gentle murmur, but

he knew there was no time to spare. Turning his head, he could see the cloud of dust piling up almost a mile away. At the rate that car was traveling, it would be here in about a minute. There was not even a moment for a few words with the elderly couple. He didn't want to harm them. He took R-1's arm.

"Come," he said. "We must be on our way quickly."

They were running across the field toward the two guards. From the bottom of his heart the Master Spy hoped there would be no more of them. Noticing his haste, the guards stepped out in his path. However, they held their bayoneted rifles at present arms position. That meant they wouldn't be able to use them very quickly.

G-8 drew himself up haughtily before them, as if he were going to speak. At the same time he stepped in front of R-1. Then, with a movement so swift that it took both guards completely by surprise, he yanked his Luger pistol from its holster. He didn't bother to raise it to aiming position, for he was standing very close to the guards. Shooting from the hip, he pumped lead into the heart of one, and as the other brought down his gun, G-8 switched the muzzle to him and let him have it.

There was a cry from the old man, who had stayed with his wife in the farm yard. The guards crumpled, groaning, but they lay still. G-8 turned to catch R-1's arm, but she was already running toward the cockpit. He helped boost her up.

"Hurry and get in," he said. He ran around to the front of the propeller.

"You're going to fly it and I'll ride the wing. Contact!"

The cloud of dust that hid the racing staff car reached the farm house, and the car skidded into the yard as G-8 pulled the propeller through. Again and again he pulled it, but the Mercedes engine wouldn't catch.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw a half dozen armed Germans getting out of the car. They were still two or three hundred yards away.

"Contact!" he yelled.

"I've got the switch on," R-1 said. "I'm doing all I can. The throttle is part open."

With all his might, the Master Spy pulled the propeller through once more, just as a shot cracked from the farm yard. Germans were just breaking into the field. The Mercedes engine snorted, caught, and began to run. G-8 ducked around the propeller and leaped on the lower right wing.

"Give it half throttle," he barked to R-1. "Taxi as fast as you can down the field, then turn into the wind."

The Fokker began bumping over the ground. From his crouched position on the wing, G-8 could see three Germans running across the field, and three more were just breaking through the hedge. He aimed his Luger and fired, trying to make each shot count. Two of the Germans fell, but the last one came on. He wasn't moving so fast now, for he was bent over to make a smaller target, and he had stopped firing until he came closer. The plane was gathering speed as it raced down the field.

"Don't forget we've got to turn into the wind," G-8 called above the roar of the motor.

"I'll remember," R-1 shouted back.

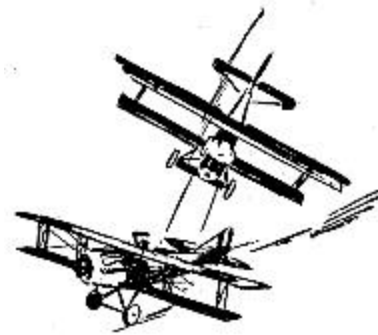
"Make your turn toward the Germans, then raise up your tail. I think you can do it all right. Let them have your Spandau guns."

She kicked the plane around in a dizzy turn and raising the tail, sent the Fokker thundering at the Germans. She clamped down on the triggers and the Spandau guns rattled out. Tracers zipped across the field and cut down three of the Germans. One of them had fallen flat and was shooting with his pistol from his prone position.

"Straighten into the wind and take off G-8 yelled.

"O.K.," R-1 shrilled.

The Master Spy rose up on the wing and fired across the top of the fuselage at the lone German. But he was a small target and he didn't get him. The answering slugs pounded on the fuselage covering.



THE Mercedes was running wild and they were gathering speed rapidly. The wings grew light and R-1 took the plane off the ground just in time to clear the trees at the windward side. Then they were climbing sluggishly and their trouble for the moment was left down on the field below them.

G-8 rose up and stared at the girl.

"Are you all right?" he cried. He thought her face was a little white.

"Yes," she said, "I'm all right. One of the bullets hit me in the shoulder, I think. No, I guess it was my left arm. I can't seem to use it very well."

G-8 was standing with the slipstream of the propeller threatening to beat him off into space. He saw blood running down R-1's left arm.

"I'm coming over to fly the plane," he said. "Raise up if you can and I'll try to slip in behind you. Then you can sit on my lap."

"All right," R-1 nodded.

The Fokker wobbled unsteadily as she rose up, and like a flash, G-8 slipped in behind her and she settled heavily on his lap. The cockpit was small and very cramped with both of them, but G-8 managed to get his feet on the rudder bar and grabbed the stick firmly between his knees. The ship steadied.

A good rush of blood was pouring down R-1's arm onto her hand. G-8 held the Fokker in a gentle climb, then tore the sleeve of R-1's dress apart and made a tourniquet at her shoulder to shut off the blood.

"There," he shouted into her ear, "you'll be all right now."

She turned and smiled back at him.

"Thanks," she said. "I guess I was getting a little weak."

They were flying very high when they came to the front lines, but no planes came to molest them. They droned on behind the Yank front toward Le Bourget Field and were within ten miles of it when suddenly, out of the east, five Spads came screaming at them.

R-1 saw them at the same time that G-8 spotted them. She was working with her one hand to pull off the white sleeve that G-8 had partly torn away. She got it off and G-8 ripped it apart, making a good-sized white flag out of it. With his free hand, he held it above the cockpit and waved it, wagging his wings as he did so to attract the attention of the Spads and let them know that something out of the ordinary was up.

At first the Spads seemed not to notice. G-8 could hear their Vickers guns rattling in warming bursts. He stuck the torn white sleeve in R-1's hand.

"Wave it for dear life," he said. "I'm going to work on the belt."

Frantically, he adjusted the safety belt to make it longer so he could strap it around both of them. R-1 was madly waving the white flag over her head, but the Spad flight was spreading out, preparing to surround the Fokker and attack it from several different positions.

"What's the matter with them?" R-1 shrieked. "Can't they see the white flag?"

"I don't know," G-8 yelled in her ear.

"I guess they can't see anything but a Fokker plane."

He snapped the belt into place and said, "Now hold on tight."

As he spoke, at least three pairs of Vickers guns began chattering their death chant.

CHAPTER NINE

Tale of Terror

IN spite of the cramped quarters of the cockpit, G-8 was able to lash the stick around and kick rudder. He sent the Fokker in a wild gyration at the same moment the shots stuttered from the

Vickers guns of the Spads. Both he and R-1 were yelling their lungs out, trying to tell the pilots of the Spads to stop shooting at them.

But those Spad pilots meant business. Instead of hanging on as G-8 had told her to, R-1 continued to wave the white flag as the Fokker went through its wild maneuvers.

G-8 was frantically waving his free hand. He came out of a sluggish roll close to three of the five Spads. Both he and R-1 yelled and waved desperately to them.

Suddenly the firing from those ships ceased and they came closer, the pilots flying a little above and looking down out of their cockpits at G-8 and R-1 in the Fokker. Then the other two Spads seemed to get the idea and they fell in on the other side above them.

The Master Spy waved again and pointed ahead toward Le Bourget. One of the pilots dropped down close and nodded to let G-8 know that he understood.

G-8 saw men running about the field as he brought the Fokker down to land. He noticed now that the Spad beside them bore the markings of the 147th American Pursuit Squadron. It was going to land, too. They taxied to the deadline together and the pilot got out. He was a tall, square-shouldered young chap and he was grinning a little sheepishly as he came over to the Fokker. He helped R-1 to the ground. G-8 grinned back at him.

"You almost got us, Lieutenant," he said. He held out his hand. "I'm G-8."

The other took his hand in a firm grip. Still grinning, he said, "I'm Obie Myers of the 147th. I thought apologies might be in order because we didn't notice your signal before. I hope you won't hold it against us."

G-8 laughed.

"Certainly not," he said, "but I'm mighty glad that you did notice our signal before you got us."

"It's a pleasure to have shaken hands with you," Myers said.

He climbed into his Spad and took the air again to join his flight, and Nippy and Bull and Battle came running toward the Fokker from the end hangar.

"Holy Herring!" Bull yelled at sight of R-1. "You brought her back, G-8!"

He hit R-1 a friendly slap on the shoulder, then started back as the girl spy cried half jokingly, "Ouch, you big brute! Take it easy, can't you?"

"Sure, you big ox," Nippy cracked. "What's the idea of trying to knock R-1 down? Can't you see the Germans have already beaten you to it?"

"Holy Herring, R-1!" Bull said, looking very sorry as he saw her blood-smeared, injured arm, "I didn't mean to hurt you! Honest! I'm just so mighty glad to see that G-8's got you back safe."

"You've got to get that arm taken care of at once," G-8 said. "Come on in and I'll call up the hospital."

"It doesn't pain very much," R-1 said. "I can stand it while I tell you what I've found out."

But G-8 didn't wait. He called up to have the best surgeon in the Le Bourget hospital sent at once. Then he changed into a Yank uniform and took the make-up off his face. A French captain and an assistant arrived shortly. G-8 made R-1 wait until her arm had been dressed to his satisfaction. By that time Battle had a tray of tea and cakes ready, which he set down beside her. While she snuggled comfortably in an easy chair and ate and drank, she told the Master Spy and his Battle Aces what had happened.

"YOU see," she began, "I went over on a very slight hint of trouble. It came to the attention of Intelligence headquarters in Paris that a *Fraulein* Wasslemann, a spinster school teacher who lives near Hochbaden in the Black Forest area, was raising quite a commotion about her brother Karl, an inventor, having vanished mysteriously. I was sent to get information from her concerning his disappearance. I posed in Hochbaden as a German nurse on leave from the front area, and I rented a room in her house for a short stay.

"I was captured, as you know. I'm not sure exactly how that happened. There may have been a slight discrepancy in my papers, but I rather suspect that they're watching everyone in the Black Forest district on account of this invention."

"What is the invention?" G-8 asked.

"That's what I was trying to find out," R-1 told him, "but I only learned that it was a new type of gun. That's all I found out, because it was all *Fraulein* Wasslemann seemed to know about it.

She said her brother had been working very secretly on it, then one day about a week ago, he told her that he had his new gun finished and he expected it would be the turning point in the war. That very evening a strange-looking little man came to call on Karl Wasslemann.

"How old is Karl?" G-8 asked.

"From the way his sister spoke of him," R-1 said, "I would judge he is about thirty. She showed me his picture. He's a big, strong fellow. Before he was given leave to work on this invention at home, he was a corporal in the Germany army. I believe he had suffered injuries at the Front.

"I'll try to give you the description of the little man he went away with and see what you think about it. *Fraulein* Wasslemann said he couldn't have been much over five feet tall, and that his whole figure seemed to be shrunken.

He was very scrawny, with thin, bony shoulders, and she guessed he was fifty years old or more. He had long, slim fingers, and his hands looked almost like those of a young boy. His face was pinched and his chin was quite small, but his head was very large. It sort of swelled out over his forehead and looked as though he had an enormous brain."

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy breathed.

"Yes," R-1 nodded. "I thought you would say something like that. But wait until I tell you the rest. *Fraulein* Wasslemann said he had peculiar teeth. The two teeth on either side of the upper jaw were twice as long as the others and came down over his lower lip like tusks."

"Holy Herring!" Bull boomed. "That sounds like *Herr Doktor* Kreuger. But that little fiend can't be alive yet."

R-1 was watching G-8.

"What do you think?" she asked.

"Go ahead," G-8 encouraged. "Tell the rest of the story, then maybe we'll be better fitted to judge."

"There isn't much more." R-1 said. "*Fraulein* Wasslemann's brother went away that evening with the little man, saying he wouldn't be gone for very long."

"And that's the last she has seen of him." G-8 supplied.

R-1 smiled.

"You guessed it," she admitted. "And here's the most baffling thing of all. *Fraulein* Wasslemann has gone to the police authorities and army heads and demanded that action be taken to find her brother. But a General von Zinsdorf called upon her personally the day before I arrived at her house and warned her to say nothing more about her brother. He warned her to raise no more complaints concerning him or she would get into serious trouble. He said his absence had to do with his invention, and they were taking no chances of the Allies getting news of it."

Nippy Weston nodded in quick decision.

"That little guy was *Herr Doktor* Kreuger, all right, unless I'm crazy."

"What do you think, G-8?" Bull asked.

"I'm afraid," the Master Spy said, "there isn't much doubt of it. We've seen how *Herr Doktor* Kreuger works many times before. Unless I'm wrong, he's stealing the invention from the school teacher's brother. Is there any more, R-1?"

The girl spy shook her head.

"Not that I know," she said, "but I have a strong suspicion that *Fraulein* Wasslemann knows a little more about her brother than she admitted to me."

"That's swell." G-8 nodded. "*Fraulein* Wasslemann is still there in her house at Hochbaden?"

R-1 nodded.

"So far as I know," she said.

"Then we've got something definite to work on," G-8 said. "Come on, now; I'm going to take you down to the best hospital in Paris."

"Please don't," R-1 said. "I'll be all right. We've only started on this case and I want to help you."

"I don't like the looks of that arm of yours," G-8 said, "and we're taking no chances. It's the hospital for you, R-1."

HE DROVE her in his powerful roadster into Paris and left her at the hospital, arranging with the head surgeon for her to have the best of care. When he returned to Le Bourget, his first move was to call up divisional headquarters in the sector where he had shot down the German plane with its

mysterious gun. After some time he got the general in command on the wire.

"This is G8," the Master Spy said "Earlier today I flew a Fokker over your sector, and I shot down another Fokker between the first and second line of defense. I shouted down orders for the Fokker wreckage to be taken to the rear at once. There is something very mysterious about it. I'm calling to find out where the wreckage was taken."

"I'm sorry to have to tell you this, G8," the general said. "It was impossible for us to remove the wreckage."

"What?" the Master Spy demanded.

"Yes," the general went on. "You see, the situation was this: the moment that Fokker was shot down, the Germans set up a terrific barrage of artillery fire. You may remember seeing it before you flew away."

G-8 recalled the instance and said so.

"That was the beginning of the fiercest drive we have had in this sector, and we weren't quite prepared for it. The Germans drove us back more than a mile, and that gave them possession of the territory where the Fokker wreckage lay. "

"I see," the Master Spy nodded. "It looks as if they wanted that wreckage very badly, doesn't it?"

"You would have thought so if you had seen the battle they put on. But that seems to be only the beginning. We're stumped here at the Front, and we don't dare move. Twice I've sent the men over the top, and practically every one of them has dropped dead in trying to cross No-Man's-Land. The ghastly part of it is that the German front has quieted down. These men just seem to drop, with no sound of machine gun or rifle fire at all. It's the most ghastly thing I've ever run up against in my thirty years' experience in the army."

CHAPTER TEN

Hell's Masquerade

G-8 stood rigid by the telephone as the general finished telling his worried story.

"You don't know what causes these deaths, General?" he asked.

"No," the general said. "The strange part of it is that all the men killed have been well out in No-Man's-Land. Not a single man who has gone over the top has returned. It's a hundred per cent victory for the Germans, and our men are so jittery they're practically useless here at the Front."

"That," said G-8, "is bad. I'll be up at the Front this evening to look things over. We've got to find out what's causing this. If you can recover so much as one body in the meantime, General, I'll be more than glad."

"We'll see what we can do," the general promised. "It's getting dark now, and perhaps we can bring back at least one."

"I'll start for your area as soon as I finish dinner," G-8 told him.

He hung up the phone and turned to Nippy and Bull.

"It looks like a bad situation," he said.

"Holy Herring, what's happening up at the Front?" Bull demanded. "I heard you getting all excited about it."

G-8 explained what the general had told him.

"Phew!" Nippy whistled. "That sure does sound bad. What do you figure it is, G-8?"

The Master Spy shook his head.

"I don't know," he said. "I'm banking on one thing; that all the trouble is caused by the mysterious gun that we suspect *Herr Doktor Kreuger* of being tied up with. But what the gun actually is or how it operates, I don't know."

"Maybe," Bull guessed, "they've got some new kind of silencer on the machine guns so you can't hear them at all."

The Master Spy shook his head.

"I rather doubt the possibility of that," he said.

"Well, you never can tell," Nippy said. "Just because no silencer of that kind has been invented before isn't saying that it can't be done."

"I didn't mean that," G-8 explained. "The thing that gets me is that not a single man who went over the top has returned. They simply fall out there in No-Man's-Land, just as if they were having heart attacks. The rest of the general's outfit is so jittery that it will be difficult to get anyone else to go out.

You know as well as I do that no machine gun fire yet has accounted for every man that went over the top."

"Maybe a lot of them ducked into shell holes," Bull ventured, "and they're lying low until darkness comes."

"It will be pitch dark in less than a half hour," G-8 said. "If that's the case, some of them will be back when we reach the Front. But I still don't think this is caused by machine gun fire—at least by the conventional type."

Battle appeared in the kitchen door, bowing and announcing that dinner was served. G-8 and his Battle Aces talked over the situation further as they ate.

As they finished, Nippy said, "How about Bull and me going up to the Front with you? Don't you think it's about time we got away from the hangar for a while?"

"I was planning to take you along," G-8 said. "One of us might get a bright idea on this subject."



AFTER supper was over, G-8 and his Battle Aces climbed into the long, low roadster and turned toward the Front. It was a long drive. As they neared the Front, the roads became worse and worse. Much of the road bed had been blotted out by shells and bombs, and they were forced to take to the fields at the side. Finally it was necessary for them to get out and walk the last two miles or so. As they came nearer the Front, they saw lights popping intermittently above the Yank lines, as if they were caused by flares that were shot up into the air to settle slowly on small parachutes.

"I'm very much afraid," the Master Spy said, "that we are not going to find that any of the bodies of the dead have been brought back."

"What makes you think that?" Bull asked.

G-8 pointed ahead and into the sky.

"Take a look up there," he said. "Unless I'm wrong, the Germans have been throwing up flares ever since it got dark. A man wouldn't have any more chance out there in No-Man's-Land in that light than he would have in the day time."

"Sure, you big ox," Nippy cracked, "can't you see that?" Bull turned on his little pal.

"I notice you didn't figure it out for yourself! G-8 had to explain it to you," he said.

"I don't tell all I know," Nippy grinned mischievously.

They reached the dugouts of divisional headquarters and were taken at once to the general in command. He was a tall, slim soldierly American with a thin, very grave face.

"I've been waiting for you, G-8," he said. "Unless something has developed within the last few minutes, I'm afraid we'll have to disappoint you on that body you mentioned. As soon as darkness began to fall, the enemy started sending up flares. It looks as if they're going to continue it all night. Those flares have kept No-Man's-Land almost as bright as day. I haven't even dared ask for a volunteer to go into No-Man's-Land."

The Master Spy nodded.

"I saw the flares as we were coming up," he said, "and I don't blame you, General. There's no need of losing any more men than we have to. You must move with all possible caution."

"I'm glad that you agree with me on that," the general said.

"I think we'll have to find another means of getting information. I wonder if you could get me a pole about fifteen or twenty feet long."

"I believe that can be arranged," the general said, looking perplexed, "but I can't possibly see what you're going to do with that."

"And I'll need a block of wood about six inches square and about a foot long, also one or two good hard chisels and a mallet," the Master Spy went on. "I'd like to have a soft white wood, if possible, such as white pine. Then I'll need some straw and an American uniform and a trench helmet."

The general stared at him.

"G-8," he said, "if you weren't the man I know you to be, I'd think you were crazy."

The Master Spy smiled.

"I could tell you what I'm planning to do with all this," he said, "but I think it would be more interesting if you merely watched. How wide is No-Man's-Land between the two front line trenches?"

"Quite short at this point," the general said. "About an eighth of a mile."

"That's fine," the Master Spy nodded. "We'll move up to the front line trench. Meantime, will you have some of your men collect the supplies that I need, General?"

"Very well," the general nodded.

Through communicating trenches G-8, Nippy, and Bull made their way to the front line. There were doughboys huddled together in little groups, talking.

G-8 could see them plainly in the light of the flares as they burst, one after another, above, keeping No-Man's-Land brilliantly lighted.

G-8 stopped at one of the groups. There were a half dozen men there—a big, rawboned, hard-boiled sergeant, a corporal, and four privates.

The Master Spy introduced himself.

"I'm G-8," he said.

An expression of relief crossed the faces of the men. Instantly they snapped to attention before them.

"Rest easy," G-8 told them. "I understand you're up against a pretty tough proposition."

The sergeant cursed under his breath.

"It's the toughest mess of trouble I've ever run into," he said. "We don't mind fighting human beings, even with the odds against us, but when every man who goes over the top never comes back, it kind of gets you down. I've got a pal out there lying in the mud. I saw him go down when the second outfit went over. I'd give a lot to know what did it."

"SO WOULD I," the Master Spy admitted. "That's what we're up here for, to try and find out what's behind all this. We'll find the solution, yet." One of the corporals, a stocky fellow, spoke up.

"We don't want you to think we're yellow, G-8," he said. "I'd go out there right now if my captain told me to."

"Yeah," the other corporal nodded, "but we're all hoping he won't."

"He won't," G-8 assured them, "as long as things keep up the way they are. And don't think that we consider any of you yellow. You notice that Nippy, Bull and I aren't offering to go over ourselves, and I wouldn't ask a man to do anything that I wouldn't do myself. It would be suicide."

Men were coming up, bringing the equipment that he required, and the general was marching right behind them.

"I'm bound I'm going to see what you've got up your sleeve," the general said.

G-8 smiled.

"All right, General, I'll be glad to have you," he said. "I want to take this block of wood and the chisel into a dugout where I can get a good light to work by."

The general led him to the nearest dugout, cleared out the captain and a lieutenant who were working there. Then G-8 laid the block of soft white pine on the packing case desk and took up the broader of the two chisels.

"I'm not much of a sculptor," he said, "but I think I can carve out something on this block that will resemble a man's face at a distance."

He began hacking away, and for a long time he worked while Nippy and Bull and the general watched. He chipped away the wood until a nose appeared, and then there were eye sockets and rather funny looking lips and a chin. He carved the top of the block until a trench helmet would fit on it, and he placed the strap under the chin. Then he went out into the trench and nailed one end of the long pole to the back of the wooden head. That done, he stuffed the Yank uniform full of straw, fastened the neck of the head into the collar of the coat, and stepping back, began to raise it up.

"I hope we get some results from this," he said.

As he spoke, he pushed the head up over the sand bags at the front edge of the trench, and the straw-stuffed khaki uniform followed, as if a doughboy were crawling over into No-Man's-Land.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Needles of Death

THE men gathered breathlessly on either side of the Master Spy as he stood well down in the trench, poking out the pole. Slowly he moved the dummy out across the parapet and on into No-Man's-Land. Not a sound came from the German side of the line, no crack of rifle fire or stuttering of machine guns.

G-8 made his dummy crawl on with raised head across the mud. As a brilliant flare burst, illuminating the earth and trenches with fresh, blinding light, he jerked the pole, moving the dummy a little to one side and raising it, as if it were going to get on its legs and start running.

In the awful stillness of the Front, the Master Spy suddenly tensed. He felt a series of shocks at the end of the long pole, and at the same time he heard gentle tapping sounds. Instantly he dropped the dummy to the ground.

Turning to the general, he said, "I wish you would have two of your best surgeons ready to make an examination."

Slowly the flare burned out, and the Master Spy jerked back the pole, pulling the dummy over into the trench. Almost instantly, another flare burst up, and G-8 inspected the dummy in that light. There were three little holes, scarcely bigger than the holes birdshot might make, in the wooden face. The holes were deep into the wood, so that it was impossible to see what sort of missile had buried itself there. G-8 wrenched the pole from the back of the head, then unfastened the wooden block from the neck of the uniform.

"That's all for that, boys," he said. Nodding to Nippy and Bull, he said, "Come on. We're going to find out what's causing these deaths. Don't any of you men get above the sand bags at the edge of the trench."

"I'll say we won't," the top sergeant promised, "not after seeing what happened to that dummy!"

G-8 and his Battle Aces caught up with the general as he was making his way through the communicating trench to the field hospital in the rear.

"I guess you know what we're after, don't you, General?" G-8 asked.

The general nodded and for the first time he smiled.

"You want to find out what sort of objects are causing these deaths."

"Sure," G-8 said. In the light of a flare that was still settling into No-Man's Land, he pointed out the several small holes in the wooden block. Turning it over, he showed the smoothness of the back. "The small bullets, or whatever they are, have gone in the face but haven't gone out behind. So we know that they don't strike with the terrific force of an army rifle bullet. Steel-jacketed bullets would have gone straight through this six inch block of white pine."

"That," said the general, "was a very clever experiment. I certainly hope we can find out what's inside the wood."

IT TOOK them almost a half hour to get to the field hospital. There G-8 began splitting open the white pine block with a hatchet before a medical major and a captain. Cautiously, he whittled away some of the wood with one of the chisels until he came to a small, needle-shaped missile buried in the pine. It was about an inch in length, and in the neighborhood of an eighth of an inch in diameter. It had imbedded itself into the wood for a space of about two inches.

"Good heavens," the general cried, "that wouldn't cause the death of all those men, not with that little force. Why, that hasn't as much power as a twenty-two caliber rifle, if that much."

"That's the way it seems to me," G-8 admitted. "That's why I've brought them here for medical examination. We're going to test these needles or bullets, or whatever you call them, for poison."

He carefully dug out the first needle-pointed steel bullet and handed it to the medical major, then he continued to split the block, digging out the others. The medical major and the captain were already testing the first when he finished digging out the last. G-8 and his Battle Aces and the general waited for a long time until the tests were finished. Finally the major nodded.

"You're perfectly right in your assumption of poison, G-8," he said. "Everyone of these bullets is tipped with the same kind of poison. It causes almost instant death the minute it flows through the bloodstream and reaches the heart."

"Nice little playthings *Herr Doktor* Kreuger uses," Bull growled.

"Did you say *Herr Doktor* Kreuger?" the general demanded quickly, and his face went a little white as he spoke.

"Yes," G-8 said. "Do you know him?"

"I certainly know of that devil," the general said. "Is he behind this?"

"We rather suspect it ." G-8 admitted, "but I wouldn't say too much about it."

"By George!" the general said. "This is serious."

"Sure it's serious, General," Nippy said. "They wouldn't put G-8 on this job if it weren't."

The Master Spy was already preparing to leave in pursuit of this mystery. "I think we've learned all we can here, General," he said with a smart salute. "My advice would be to take no chances at all with your men. We know now very definitely what will happen to them if they go over the top. The mere prick of one of these needles in a soldier's finger means that he would die, and probably within a few seconds."

"But what in heaven's name will we do for attack?" the general demanded.

"We still have our machine guns," G-8 said, "and of course there isn't any more chance of our forces being hit by these needles than by ordinary German machine guns. It simply means that if they are nicked, they're done for. You'll probably have to give ground if you are attacked. I'm afraid this is only the beginning of this thing. Now that they've found it works successfully, the Germans will soon have these guns planted along the length of the Front. I've got to get to work."

Nippy, Bull and G-8 strode on through the rear of the lines to where they had left the car, then started the long drive back to Le Bourget.

"Holy Herring, what are you going to do?" Bull demanded of the Master Spy.

"I'm trying to figure that out," G-8 said as he drove. "I'd like to know just how much this *Fraulein* Wasslemann understands about this and about her

brother's disappearance. R-1 seems to think she knows more than she told her, and I have a hunch that's the way it is. But that's what I've got to find out. I've got to get everything out of *Fraulein* Wasslemann that she knows. Then we've got to locate *Herr Doktor* Kreuger and the headquarters of this mess."

"But if R-1 couldn't get the dope out of her, how are you going to do it?" Bull demanded.

"Listen, you big ox," Nippy chirped, "will you shut up for a second and give G-8 a chance to think this out?"

"Thanks, Nippy," G-8 smiled.

THEY drove on in silence, and when they turned in at Le Bourget and drove the car into the storage end of the hangar, G-8 had his problem well thought out. He called Battle to him the minute he entered the apartment.

"Battle," he said, "I'm going into Germany tonight. I'm going disguised as an old German lawyer."

"Oh, I say," the manservant smiled, "that's a new one, isn't it?"

"Yes," G-8 said. "I'll want to wear a suit of civilian clothes, dark and of German cut and make. It will probably be well if I have a long, flowing moustache and heavy eyebrows."

"Holy Herring," Bull demanded, "do you mean you're going right to this *Fraulein* Wasslemann's house to talk to her? Why, that will be just as good as putting your head in a lion's mouth."

"I think I can work it a little more smoothly than that," G-8 told him. "At any rate, I mean to try, if I can get over there in time. I'll see how the land lies when I reach Hochbaden. Nippy, you can get the D.H. ready and have a parachute prepared for me."

"Right," the terrier ace grinned.

G-8 stripped off his uniform, sat down in his accustomed easy chair, and Battle went to work on his face. When he was finished, G-8 attired himself as an old German lawyer might dress. Nippy, with the help of the mechanics, had the D.H. out on the line warming.

From a drawer in the table, the Master Spy took out a pile of German timetables and began

perusing them. At length, he closed them and put them back in the drawer. Nippy had just come in.

"I think," G-8 said, "we're going to head for Stuttgart."

"Holy Herring!" Bull said. "What are you going to do, take a Cook's tour?"

That's pretty well back in Germany."

"That's what I want to be certain of," the Master Spy said. "There's a train that leaves Stuttgart after midnight. We ought to reach there by then. That train ought to get me in Hochbaden before morning, if they're still running on schedule over there. I want to come in from the far north by train so I won't cause any more suspicion than necessary. On your way to Stuttgart, avoid Metz as much as you can."

Nippy grinned.

"You bet your life," he said. "Metz has got about the most powerful air force on the whole German Front. We'll give them plenty of room."

"That's right," G-8 said. "I wish we had a German two-seater, but this will do."

They went out to the D.H. G-8 climbed into the rear cockpit and inspected the parachute bag and harness.

"O.K., Nip," he sang out. "I'm ready when you are."

The Terrier ace waved to Bull.

"Keep the home fires burning, you big ox," he called.

Then he hit the throttle with his hand and the big D.H. roared into the air. They were flying high when they crossed the Front. They skirted far to the left of Metz and held almost fifteen thousand foot altitude as they droned toward Stuttgart. G-8 kept glancing at his wrist watch and checking the time.

He called to Nippy through the speaking tube, "Remember, don't fly over Stuttgart. I want to step out four or five miles west of the city."

"Very good, sir," Nippy sang out. "Shall I serve you breakfast in bed, sir?"

G-8 grinned. That was just like Nippy.

"No," he said, "I'll grab a sandwich at some hot dog stand on my way down in the parachute."

They spotted the city of Stuttgart far off to the east, and G-8 strapped the parachute harness

around him. Nippy kept the engine going steadily. G-8 tapped him on the shoulder, gave a wave of farewell, and dived into the inky blackness below.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Satan Drops His Mask

IT SEEMED almost like hours to the Master Spy after he plunged off into space before the parachute cracked open. He had jumped from an altitude of nearly fifteen thousand feet above the earth, and over his head he heard Nippy droning on to the north. He knew the terrier ace would make his turn in a great circle so that no one below, if they heard him, would notice the turn at all. There was little for the Master Spy to do but hang by his harness and drift down after the parachute opened. Finally dark blotches appeared below as the earth came up at him.

Suddenly he was hurtling down with surprising speed. His legs crumpled beneath him as he landed in soft earth at the edge of a field, without making more sound than a gentle *thud*. He had seen the shielded lights of a farmhouse at the other end of the field, so he gathered up his parachute hastily, rolled it into a bundle, and carried it in his arms until he came to a thick growth of brush, almost a mile from the spot where he landed. There he hid the parachute well, and brushing himself off so that no dirt showed on his German-cut civilian suit, hurried on toward the village of Stuttgart.

At the edge of the city limits, he came to a parked trolley car, got on, and paid his fare to the conductor. In a few moments the car began moving slowly toward the center of town.

The rest was quite simple. He got off the car at the Stuttgart railroad station, went inside, and bought his ticket for Hochbaden. The ticket agent raised no question as he sold it to him. G-8 imitated perfectly the voice and walk of a man nearly seventy years old.

On the way to Hochbaden he managed to get a good sleep, and it was daylight when the train pulled into the railroad station. He got out and bought an ample breakfast for himself. There were

no delicacies on the bill of fare, and the only bread was black bread. Many of the dishes were substitutes for the real thing, and this was all evidence to G-8 of how very pressed for food the Germans were. The best food they had was going to their armies at the Front.

He had planned his method of meeting *Fraulein* Wasslemann, and with breakfast done, he was now ready to put that plan into practice. There was but one school in Hochbaden, he knew from his former survey of the town. He walked toward the school, but he didn't go to it. Rather, he stayed a block or two away and watched the children coming in on their way to class. He must find someone who had *Fraulein* Wasslemann for a teacher.

ONE group which was coming toward him consisted of two girls, perhaps eleven and twelve, and two boys, one of whom seemed to be about thirteen and a younger one about eight or nine. G-8 smiled at them kindly as they came up the sidewalk.

Stopping them, he said, "*Guten morgen*, my bright children. Are any of you in the class that *Fraulein* Wasslemann teaches, by any chance?"

"Ja," said the older girl. "Fritz, my little brother, is in *Fraulein* Wasslemann's room."

G-8 smiled at the younger boy and bent down to him. He was a pleasant-faced little chap, blond and bright-eyed.

"Is that so?" he said. "I imagine she is a very good teacher, *nicht wahr*?"

"Ja," said young Fritz, smiling, "until lately, when her brother disappeared. She has been worried about him and she gets mad very easily and punishes us."

"Ach," G-8 said, "I am very sorry to hear that. But, of course, you must remember she is probably under a great strain. I trust all the children in your room are well, Fritz."

Little Fritz shrugged.

"Mostly," he said. "But *mein kamerad*, Herman Klinkert, was taken sick last night with a bad stomach ache. He won't be at school today."

"Ach, I am sorry to hear that," G-8 sympathized. "Herman Klinkert is a very nice boy. *Und* how did he get the stomach ache, Fritz?"

Fritz looked serious.

"His mother made some cookies yesterday afternoon and he and I stole them out of the cookie jar. I guess Herman ate too many of them." He grinned. "Anyway, he got out of the whipping his mother promised him because he got the stomach ache."

G-8 laughed heartily.

"*Ach*, that is a good one on his mother, *nicht wahr*? I'll bet you boys won't steal any more cookies from the jar, or at least not so many."

Fritz grinned mischievously.

"They were good cookies," he said.

"I can well imagine," G-8 nodded. "Mrs. Klinkert is a good cook, *Ja*?"

"*Jawohl*," little Fritz agreed.

G-8 stepped aside.

"You children will have to hurry on to school now," he said. "You must not be late."

The Master Spy waited until noon, then he went to the school with a note that he had prepared. He found the school principal in his office. He was a little man who wore large glasses and was, G-8 judged, about seventy years old. The Master Spy bowed as he entered.

"*Guten morgen, mein Herr*," he said. "I am *Herr Klinkert*, an uncle of one of your pupils. If it is possible, I would like to speak to *Fraulein Wasslemann* for a moment."

"*Jawohl*," the principal smiled. "You will find her in her room eating lunch. It is the second door on the left down the hall."

"*Danke schon*," G-8 said.

He went down the corridor and turned in at the door. Several little German children were in their seats eating lunch. He was glad to see that Fritz was not there. He probably went home for lunch.

Fraulein Wasslemann was a thin, tall woman. She wore a drab-colored gray dress. Her face was thin and pinched about the mouth, and her nose was curved and sharp like the back of a crooked knife. She turned a serious, worried face to the Master Spy as he entered. He bowed pleasantly to her and smiled.

"*Fraulein Wasslemann*?" he asked.

"Yes," she said.

G-8 spoke in a low voice so that the students wouldn't hear.

"I am *Herr Klinkert*," he said. "I am the uncle of young Herman Klinkert, one of your pupils. I am very sorry that he was not able to come to school today."

"*Jawohl*," *Fraulein Wasslemann* answered.

"You see, I have come to visit the Klinkerts from some distance away, and I was very sorry to arrive this morning and find Herman taken sick. I have here a note explaining the reason for his absence today." He handed her the paper. "Good day, *Fraulein*."

He turned quickly and went out, and she was unfolding the paper as he went down the hall. He walked down the street past the town hall of Hochbaden, and he was quite sure that the guards took no notice of him as he went by.

In a little restaurant he bought lunch and then walked leisurely from there to the edge of town. There, in a little park, he sat down on a bench, well shielded by shrubbery, and waited.

TWO hours passed, then came the sound of footsteps on the gravel path and *Fraulein Wasslemann* appeared, white-faced and frightened. G-8 stood up and bowed as an old lawyer might bow to a client. He motioned her to come closer, smiling assurance as he did so. Then he placed a finger to his lips, motioned her to sit down, and stepped around to the side of the shrubbery where he could look back across the stretch of little green park. They were alone, as far as he could tell. He came back and sat down beside the school teacher.

"I think we can talk here," he said. "You are sure no one followed you."

"I am quite sure," she said a little breathlessly, "although I never can be positive. After I left school, I went to a shop to make a purchase, then I left by the side door and came directly here."

"*Gut*," G-8 nodded.

"I don't quite understand why you have come to me," the woman said. "I read your note several times. You say you are a lawyer who is interested in the case of my lost brother."

"*Jawohl, Fraulein*," G-8 smiled.

"Then why," she asked, "did you come to me as the uncle of little Herman Klinkert?"

"Don't you see?" the Master Spy asked. "I am already aware that you are being watched a great deal of the time, *Fraulein*. I knew that if I were to call on you at your home, I would, in all probability, be stopped and questioned after leaving you. We don't want that to happen, at least not until I have had a chance to go further into the case."

"I see," she said. "But why have you become interested in me and my brother?"

G-8 frowned in a judicial sort of way.

"You see, *Fraulein*," he said, "there are two factions in Germany—that is, in regard to the matter of your brother's invention. On the one hand there is the group to which the little man who took your brother away belongs. They are a ruthless group who believe that every thing must be done for them, regardless of the individuals who are hurt. I am very positive that your brother has fallen into their hands. They are trying, or have already succeeded, in stealing the invention from your brother, and while he is probably still alive, he is beyond doubt in great danger and we must work quickly to save him."

"Oh," *Fraulein* Wasslemann said. Her face turned a shade whiter and her hand flew to her throat. "Oh, you must save my brother somehow."

"We of the other faction," G-8 went on, "believe that the right people should get the glory for their work in trying to save the *Vaterland* in this struggle. Therefore, I have been sent to you, as a thoroughly experienced lawyer in these matters, to see what can be done. Now, while there is time, you must tell me everything that you know about your brother's disappearance."

The sharp-nosed school teacher sat rigidly on the bench. Her lips, which were pressed in a tight line across her face, were almost colorless.

"How do I know you can be trusted?" she demanded.

G-8 WAS aware of a strange feeling taking possession of him as this woman who had lost her brother put the question of trust to him. He rebelled at the thought of lying to a woman already in trouble, but his duty to his country came above all else. He remembered the old saying, and how the Germans had laughed when he had mentioned that all is fair in love and war. That made it easier for him to say, "*Jawohl, Fraulein*, you may trust me with your very life."

She studied him for a long moment, then she nodded.

"Very well," she said in a whisper. "I will tell you what I know."

"*Gut*," G-8 nodded. "Begin at the beginning, *bitte*. Tell me first what was the invention that your brother was working on."

The instant those words were out of his mouth, G-8 wished he hadn't said them. He might appear too anxious. But *Fraulein* Wasslemann didn't seem to notice.

"Very well," she said. "My brother Karl was working on the invention of a new kind of gun. Beyond that I do not know anything about it."

G-8 took heart and asked further, "Was it a silent gun, *Fraulein*? Did you hear him say anything about that?"

She nodded slowly.

"I think it was something of that kind," she said, "but I am not sure."

"Very well, then," the Master Spy nodded. "Tell me what led up to his going away."

"I knew nothing of his plans of leaving," *Fraulein* Wasslemann said, "until one evening when a little man came to see him. This man was very small. I noticed him particularly as I let him into the house. He had a small chin and a pinched mouth and face, and he wore very thick glasses with large rims. His head above his eyes was large, and I noticed one thing that was very strange and ugly about him. He had two teeth in his upper jaw that came down twice the length of the others and protruded over his lower lip."

"Did he give his name?" G-8 asked.

"Yes, he told me he was *Herr* Schmidt and that he wished to see my brother. I listened to them talking in the cellar, where my brother worked

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Black Castle

on his invention. The floor is quite thin and I could hear quite a bit of what they said."

"This *Herr* Schmidt mentioned some place where they would go?"

Fraulein Wasslemann lowered her voice to a mere whisper as she answered, "*Jawohl*. That is what I must trust you with. I mentioned it to General von Zinsdorf, after my brother had been gone for several days, and he warned me that if I mentioned the name of the place to anyone, there would be danger that I would be killed."

G-8 nodded gravely.

"You see, *Fraulein*," he said, "that is because His Excellency, General von Zinsdorf, belongs to the faction that wishes to steal your brother's invention from him."

"I quite understand now," she said. "And so I am trusting you not to tell anyone."

The Master Spy nodded.

"You may depend upon that absolutely, *Fraulein*," he said and he meant it. "And what was the name of the place?"

Fraulein Wasslemann looked around as if frightened that someone might hear her. Then she leaned over so that her mouth was close to the Master Spy's ear.

"The name *Herr* Schmidt mentioned was Schwartz Castle, here in the Black Forest."

"Schwartz Castle," G-8 repeated, "It is also called The Black Castle, is it not?"

"*Jawohl*," she nodded. "*Und* now I have told you; I have placed my life in your hands."

"Your trust is safe with me," G-8 assured her.

Suddenly G-8 tensed and *Fraulein* Wassleman let out a gasp. She clutched at her throat in terror and stiffened beside him.

"*Ach Gott!*" she breathed.



THEY had both heard the sound of gravel crunching on the other side of the clump of shrubbery that shielded them.

G-8 was on his feet instantly with a feeling that since this woman had helped him, he must do all in his power to help her. He dropped his right hand into his coat pocket and caught hold of the butt of the Luger that he had there.

He had just completed that move, with *Fraulein* Wasslemann standing beside him, when a small, beady-eyed German came stepping cautiously around the edge of the shrubbery. The German stopped suddenly, realizing that he hadn't surprised anyone.

Fraulein Wasslemann gasped, "*Ach Himmel*, he has followed me everywhere!"

The little German moved as if to duck back behind the shrubbery, but G-8 spoke to him.

"Come toward me very carefully, *mein Herr*," he ordered in a low voice. "Perhaps we can work out this thing together."

The German scowled and moved as if to plunge a hand into his pocket.

"You would be wise to keep your hands at your sides," G-8 warned. "Come closer and we shall talk this over,"

The man stepped gingerly to within three feet of him.

Without turning, G-8 said to the schoolteacher behind him, "I think, *Fraulein* Wassleman, if I were you, I would return to my home. Rest assured that this man will not bother you after I have talked to him."

The little German looked sullen.

"I do not know what you are talking about," he said. "I never saw this woman before in my life."

The Master Spy smiled.

"I am afraid, *mein Herr*," he said, "that you have no great regard for the truth. I presume you are alone."

"But naturally," the man said. "I was just taking a walk in the park."

"Yes, of course," G-8 said. He turned to the school teacher. "Go, *Fraulein* Wasslemann. I will give you time to get well out of the park before I permit this man to leave."

"But I am afraid," she said. "He will follow me afterward! He will come to my home and make me miserable by asking questions."

"On the contrary, I don't think he will," G-8 said. His eyes narrowed dangerously as they stabbed into the man's face. "Go, *Fraulein*, and feel certain that this man will not bother you any more after I have finished talking things over with him. I will make him understand quite well that it is not gentlemanly to be watching ladies and following them about."

The eyes of the little German flamed. He raised his right hand just a little.

"You are sticking your nose into a business that does not concern you," he snapped. "I will see that *Fraulein* Wasslemann gets home myself."

G-8 was smiling.

"I hardly think that will be necessary, *mein Herr*," he said. "The *Fraulein* is perfectly capable of reaching home by herself. Go, *Fraulein*, and do not worry any more about this man."

Fraulein Wasslemann stepped gingerly around the little man and started off across the park. Never once did G-8 take his eyes off the little German.

"I cannot permit her to go alone," the German argued. "It is my order."

"Oh," G-8 said, "so you do admit that you were following her."

"*Jawohl*," the German said. "*Aber*, what business is it of yours?"

From where he stood, G-8 could see *Fraulein* Wasslemann walking across the park.

"When an injustice such as has been brought upon *Fraulein* Wasslemann occurs," G-8 said, "I make it my business."

"You will get into serious trouble for this," the little German stormed.

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," the Master Spy said. "However, if you wish to see *Fraulein* Wasslemann on her way, you may turn around so that you can watch her as she goes."

The man turned and moved as if to walk after the *Fraulein*.

"Stop," G-8 said. "You must stand right there where you are and watch her."

He was bringing the Luger out of his pocket. He took a stealthy step behind the man. The German wore a soft felt hat set lightly on his head.

"Don't move," G-8 commanded.

He waited until *Fraulein* Wasslemann had reached the edge of the park and had passed from view down one of the streets of Hochbaden.

"There," he said. "She's gone and you didn't follow her."

The German swung half around.

"Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter!" he spat. "I won't stand—"

THOSE were his last words. In two swift moves, the Master Spy had snatched his felt hat from his head and had brought down the butt of the Luger with killing effect upon his skull. The German crumpled there on the gravel.

G-8 put the Luger back in his pocket, then bent down, picked up the man's body, and carried it into the Black Forest, which bordered the park. He went on for a long distance, perhaps two miles, carrying the dead body of the German. He was careful to walk on hard soil so that his tracks wouldn't show.

When he found a deep depression in the ground beside a fallen log, he scraped the year's deposit of leaves out of the hole, laid the German to rest there, and covered him with leaves and branches. Then, recalling the general location of Schwartz Castle or the Black Castle, he started off on foot toward it through the dense forest growth.

IT GREW dark and he plodded on, keeping his direction with the aid of a small pocket compass, for the forest growth was so thick above him that scarcely once did he get a chance to look at the

stars and set his course from them. He gave up any thought of eating an evening meal. He had had a good breakfast and lunch and had slept for a while on the train. That would have to do him for some time to come.

It was after midnight when, feeling that he should be quite close to the castle, he climbed a tree and surveyed the country ahead. At first he couldn't see anything except the rolling Black Forest and a steep mountain in front of him. A breeze was coming up, rustling the trees.

Suddenly he saw a light from the top of the steep mountain. It was nearly two miles away across a forest-covered valley. The light vanished again as the breeze let up, but G-8 was certain that the light had come from Schwartz Castle. He got down out of the tree and started down the slope and across the lowland that lay between.

He had climbed almost halfway up the steep side of the mountain on which Schwartz Castle stood when he suddenly stopped. The voice of a German sentry cracked out, "Halt!" And at the same instant, the beam of a flashlight cut the night as it darted toward him.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Chorus of the Damned

THE next few seconds seemed like hours to G-8. He stood motionless as the light wavered in search of him, hoping that the leafy branches before him were shielding him sufficiently. Slowly he bent down to a crouched position. He heard the sentry snort, "*Was ist?*"

Then came the sound of the sentry's heavy boots crashing into the undergrowth, coming directly toward him. Above all things, he must not let that sentry know that a human being was approaching the castle.

A hundred yards farther on along the side of the mountain, he heard another German call, "*Was ist? Is somebody there ?*"

The sentry who had been coming straight for G-8 said, "*Jawohl*, I heard someone. You had better come and help me look."

The Master Spy could hear the second guard coming on the run. Two of them would be looking for him now.

From the other direction came another shout, "Do you need any help?"

"*Jawohl*," the sentry said, "I am sure I heard someone climbing the mountain."

The Master Spy was thinking with lightning speed. He was down on all fours, but the light of the first sentry had almost reached him, even in his crouched position.

Suddenly a plan of escape came to him. Making no pretext of hiding his movements, he went crashing through the brush along the side of the mountain, pounding with his hands and his feet. At the same time he emitted snorting sounds, like those a startled wild pig might make. It might, he decided, be possible, now that the guard to the west had been drawn from his post, to circle around through his territory and come up inside the lines.

The Germans were all running toward him, guided by the sound that he made. One of the sentries was laughing at the man who had first challenged G-8.

"That is a good joke on you, Heinrich. You get us all excited about a spy, and we come to find that it's only a wild boar that you've scared up."

The three German guards were running headlong down the mountain.

The one in the middle called back defiantly, "What does that matter? Let's try to find him and shoot him. I could do well with a good dinner of wild pig."

"*Jawohl*," sang out another one. "That is a good idea."

The light from a second guard stabbed through the foliage.

"I see him!" the guard yelled.

A rifle cracked out and G-8 felt it tear the coat along his back. They were following too closely for

him to have much chance of getting away, running on all fours as he was. It wouldn't be long before they would overtake him, so he put aside for a moment his idea of making a dash up the hill toward the castle. He turned and ran down the slope. Putting great trees between himself and the Germans who were in pursuit, G-8 ran, bent half over, with his arms out ahead to shield his face from lashing branches.

The guards came on for a time. At the bottom of the wooded valley, G-8 struck hard, firm earth and veered sharply at an angle and continued to run softly. Then he stopped as he heard the Germans stop.

One of them called, "Where did he go? I cannot see him."

Another said, "We must have missed him."

"If we only had some hounds," said the third, "they would round him up."

G-8 was extremely glad at the moment that they had no hounds. He began to move on slowly, cautiously, picking his way so as to make no sound.

He heard one of the Germans call, "We must get back to our posts."

Then a bellowing voice from the castle above yelled, "What is going on down there?"

One guard replied, apparently to his superior *offizier*, "I heard a sound of something coming up the mountain, but it turned out to be only a wild boar."

"Then get back to your posts!" the *offizier* thundered. "*Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter*, are you guards or wild boar hunters?"

"*Jawohl*," the sentry sang out. G-8 could hear them running back to their positions as he crept along the valley. Once or twice he got a clear glimpse of the mountain. It came out from a long ridge, and the castle was out on the end. Along the ridge behind the castle, the mountain was quite level and it afforded him an easier approach.

HE HAD learned one thing very definitely in his first effort to reach the castle. That was the fact that the guards were stationed about a hundred yards apart. Surely he should be able to slip through their lines somewhere if he used caution.

Taking his time, the Master Spy picked his way carefully, skirting the back ridge of the mountain at a good distance, then coming around and heading for the castle once more. He had little more than made the turn toward the castle when his foot slipped on a steep incline and he lurched forward, struggling to catch himself. He lost his balance completely and fell into a depression a few feet deep, where the roots of a great tree had been torn up by a storm.

He lay there for a long time, scarcely daring to breathe, his ears tuned for the slightest warning sound. But there was no challenge of a guard and no stab of a flashlight beam through the darkness.

He felt about him and his hands came in contact with gravel and stones. G-8 selected a half dozen small cobbles about two inches in diameter, got up out of the hole, and started on toward the castle.

It was evident that no guards stood within earshot of that hole, and that would mean that he would be safe for five hundred yards at least, perhaps more. He moved on for almost a quarter of a mile, but always with caution. He stopped, and taking one of the stones in his right hand, threw it as far as he could through the air in front of him. He heard it crash into the woods a good distance ahead. Instantly he heard the voice of a guard beyond where the stone had crashed.

"Halt!"

G-8 took a course a good distance to the left of where the challenging guard stood. He saw flashlights stab the darkness far up front. There was one directly ahead of him and one over to the right. That one at the right would be held by the guard who had shouted the challenge. G-8's plan was to draw the three guards together, then pass through the sentry line, where the one on the left had temporarily vacated his post.

He had gone about a hundred yards on that diagonal course when he turned and threw another stone so that it would land in front of the middle guard. He heard it crash into the woods and heard the guard's second challenge, "Halt!" His ruse was working successfully, for the guards on either side of the central one were running to help.

G-8 pushed on ahead toward the gap in the line. He turned again to throw another stone at the same place. The guards cried out and ran faster

toward the place where the stone had fallen, and the Master Spy ran on through the lines. He heard them running back behind him as he headed toward the castle.

G-8 was inside the line of sentries, but he could easily be cornered in his present position. He had no definite plan from now on, except perhaps that he might climb a tree and get a look inside the castle. Better still, it might be possible for him to knock out a sentry, put on his uniform, and in that way get in to *Herr Doktor* Kreuger or *Herr* Wasslemann, or both. However, he realized that he must be doubly careful now in his most dangerous position. He moved on cautiously, half bent over.

A light winked through the trees from the castle interior. He knew that his dark clothing would shield him fairly well in the night, but his face and hands were white and could be seen all too readily.

Suddenly the night air was rent by an insane scream. It came, he decided, from the north, far below the mountain. He wasn't sure what lay down there, for he hadn't yet crossed the valley. The sound of the screaming echoed against the other mountains round about. Again it came, more piercing this time. It gave G-8 a better opportunity to study the tone of it.

Yes, G-8 thought, it sounded like the cry of a man in mortal torment. It was not too clear as it reached him, coming from as far away as it did, but he was sure now that it was a man's voice. The echo died away and the cries came no more.

G-8's brain was throbbing with thought. He moved on a few steps farther, then something happened that swept all thought of that night scream from his mind.

A light stabbed out of the darkness full in his face and a guttural voice demanded, "Who are you?"

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Hut of the Mad

THE instant that G-8 saw the blinding light go on and realized that the sentry who held that light was scarcely more than ten feet from him, he knew that he could no longer keep his presence a secret from the Germans.

Up to this time, the Master Spy had come to within fifty yards of the castle wall. He had seen the light filtering from one of the long, narrow windows, but it had spread practically no illumination on the ground beneath it. Under other circumstances, perhaps, he would have permitted himself to be taken prisoner. He had done that several times in the past so that he might get inside a castle like this to face his old enemy, *Herr Doktor* Kreuger.

But the screams that had come from the valley below had decided him against this procedure. He had a hunch that Karl Wasslemann was, in all probability, being held prisoner down there somewhere. Some time later on the Master Spy would probably come face to face with *Herr Doktor* Kreuger, but first he wished to see this inventor, Karl Wasslemann, and try to talk with him.

The Master Spy moved at top speed as that light flashed upon him. He ducked to one side for he had seen the gleam of a shiny bayonet and he knew that the rifle was pointed at him. As he moved, he plunged his right hand into his coat pocket. He didn't even take time to draw the Luger out, for the sentry was already pulling the trigger of his army rifle. A bullet screamed past G-8's shoulder, then the Master Spy pulled the trigger of his Luger four times in quick succession.

Even as the guard toppled over with a cry of pain, G-8 considered for a moment stripping off his coat and hat and taking the guard's place. But now other sentries were running from their posts along the castle wall and he decided instantly that there would be no time for that.

He turned and ran furiously away from the castle and down the slope toward the place from which the screams had come. The Black Forest seemed filled with blinking flashlights.

Guards who formed the sentry line, a quarter of a mile from the castle, came running, now, to see what the shooting was about. G-8 was running directly toward several of them, but as yet they were some distance away. The guards who had been close to the castle ran directly to the point

where they had heard the shooting, then they started out in pursuit of the Master Spy.

But by this time G-8 had plenty of tree trunks and undergrowth behind him and he knew that they weren't following him directly, for he saw their lights spread out in a fan shape. He slowed his pace, picking his way gingerly so as not to make any sound that they could hear.

HE HAD gone almost two hundred yards from the castle down the slope of the mountain. The guards in the outer ring had run in close enough, so that their searchlight beams were almost picking him out through the trees. There, in a little clump of bushes, he lay down flat on his face and folded his hands beneath him, so that there was little about him that would show plainly in the wavering flash light beams.

His heart was thumping wildly as he heard the heavy boots of the outer guards pounding the woods. They were running closer to him at every step, but they would be spread out over a wide area, and while the ring was becoming smaller, there were still wide gaps between the men.

Out of the corner of his eye, the Master Spy could see the woods lighted quite brightly with the flashlights. He scarcely dared breathe for fear one of them would hear him. They were almost even with him now, still running. Luck was with him there, for while they ran, they couldn't search the forest very thoroughly.

He heard one of the guards stamping past, hardly ten feet from his hiding place. The one on the other side of him went by, missing him by little more than twenty or thirty feet. Still the Master Spy lay there like a corpse stretched out in the woods.

As they passed him, the guards stopped running, and, meeting the other guards, who had been stationed close around the castle, began searching every inch of ground.

Slowly, cautiously, G-8 raised up and looked back toward the Black Castle. The nearest searcher was at least a hundred feet away.

Then from the castle he heard *Herr Doktor* Kreuger's shrill voice demanding to know what was the matter.

"Someone shot one of the guards," the *offizier* of the guard told him.

"*Gott in Himme!*" Kreuger shrieked. "Find him! Find him at all costs. *Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter*, he is probably the *verdammter ker!* You are a bunch of *dummkopfs* to let him get this close!"

G-8 smiled a little to himself as he slunk noiselessly away down the mountain toward the valley. He could still hear the guards up above, thrashing about in the brush and calling to each other. He was quite sure that no guards lay ahead of him; they had all come running toward the castle to be in on the excitement.

Herr Doktor Kreuger's voice could still be heard cursing the *dummkopfs*, and none of the guards seemed to have the nerve to answer him.

G-8 could see dawn streaking the eastern sky as he came down off the side of the mountain into the flat land below. He tried to remember just exactly where that screaming voice had come from in the darkness, and he thought he had the general direction right. The valley dipped low, then flattened out.

Something scurried away in front of the Master Spy, and he saw a giant rat leap in front of him. At the same time his foot struck soft ground. He came down hard on it and lurched forward. It was like quicksand under him, almost like stepping into space. In the next instant he was floundering there, sinking deeper and deeper. He managed to turn his body as he sank to his knees and catch hold of a clump of bog grass. A swamp rat leaped from a hole beneath the grassy clump. His claws dug deeply into G-8's hands as he scrambled away.

The Master Spy was almost up to his waist. It took all the strength he had in his powerful arms to draw his body out of that muck. It was a slow, tedious process, but he finally made it and sat down panting on more solid ground.

He remained there for perhaps a minute, studying the swamp ahead of him in the brightening daylight. He became firmly convinced of one thing. Beyond a doubt, the inventor, Karl Wasslemann, was held a prisoner somewhere in the swamp, and he must reach him at all costs.

There were heavy growths of towering swamp trees that covered the treacherous marsh before him, but their spread-out trunks were too far apart to permit G-8 to leap from one to the other. No doubt there was some secret way that led into the

depths of the swamp, but he didn't have time to search for that.

A THOUGHT struck him as he caught sight of a small crotched tree. It grew out of the edge of the swamp, and the trunk was about three inches thick.

He took a good-sized jack knife from his pocket and began cutting the tree off just below the crotch. At length he brought it down. He worked on the tree for a few minutes, on the branches above the crotch. One he cut off rather closely, the other was about fifteen feet long. He now had a pole with a hook on it.

He raised the hook high over his head so that it reached a lower branch of a tree just ahead. Then he put his weight on it and swung with all his might. That swing carried him to the firm roots of a tree farther on in the swamp. He unhooked the crotch from the limb over which he had placed it and slung it over a lower limb on another tree ahead. In that fashion, swinging on his pole from the roots of one tree to another, he went deeper and deeper into the deadly marsh. If the crotch of his pole should let go, he would sink into the mire and go down to certain death.

But there was no time to think of that, for as he penetrated farther into the swamp, he saw a shack on a little rise of ground like an island in the marsh. At length, G-8's feet came to rest on that firmer ground. He took a long breath as he laid the pole down.

Cautiously, he stepped to the shack and peered inside. There, lying on some straw, he saw a large young German with a bloated face and wearing only a pair of torn, dirty trousers. The upper part of his body was striped red, as if he were part tiger, and there were ugly sores on him. G-8 knew that those red welts were, in all probability, left by a brutal whip that had descended upon his flesh many times. Around the man's ankle was an iron ring, and a heavy logging chain connected it with an eight-inch post buried deep in the ground at a corner of the shack.



THE SHACK ECHOED WITH G-8's BLASTING GUN.

The man was staring at him insanely through bloodshot eyes. G-8 went over to him quickly.

"You are Karl Wasslemann," he said.

It was more of a statement than a question. The man's swollen lips moved.

"Wasslemann," he said dazedly. "Karl Wasslemann." His eyes appeared vacant. He nodded slowly. "Ja, I used to know him—long ago."

"You are Karl Wasslemann," G-8 told him. "You are the inventor of the silent gun, *nicht wahr?* A man who called himself *Herr Schmidt* tortured you until you gave him the secret of the gun, then he left you here to die."

G-8 saw a half-filled glass of water and a piece of moldy bread near the straw on which the man lay.

"Ja," he said, "*Herr Schmidt. Jawohl*, I used to know him, too."

"You are Karl Wasslemann, the inventor," G-8 repeated. "Do you understand that?"

A slight glint of intelligence came into the man's face for a moment.

"Ja," he said, "I am *Herr Wasslemann*. Who are you?"

"I have seen your sister," G-8 said, "and I have come to help you. You must tell me about the gun."

"The gun," the German repeated. "*Ja*, the gun. I have told about the gun. You do not need to torture me again. I know nothing more about it. I have forgotten everything."

"But *Herr* Schmidt has stolen your invention from you," G-8 insisted.

The man merely shrugged.

"Do you know who *Herr* Schmidt really is?" G-8 demanded.

Wasslemann shook his head and the vacant stare came back to his eyes.

"He is *Herr Doktor* Kreuger," the Master Spy said.

Karl Wasslemann shrugged his great shoulders again and grunted. The Master Spy suddenly stood rigid for from behind came a voice.

It was a deep, guttural, angry voice and it said, "Raise your hands instantly or you will be dead. I have you covered."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Death Waits

G-8 TURNED his head just enough to see a powerful German looming in the doorway. In one hand he held a small basket containing black bread. In the other he held a Luger that was pointed at the Master Spy's heart. There was no doubt in G-8's mind but the Boche would pull the trigger should the Master Spy make the slightest move toward his own weapon.

He did have one or two things on his side. In the first place, this German apparently was alone. It was evident from the contents of the basket that he had come to bring food to Karl Wasslemann.

The other point in G-8's favor was the fact that he was still disguised as an old German attorney and in that guise he probably appeared quite harmless to the big German.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" the Boche demanded.

G-8 put on his most pleading voice, the voice of a frightened old man.

"*Bitte, Herr Offizier*," G-8 said, using flattery, for the German guard was only a corporal, "if you would permit me to lower my arms, I could talk much easier. I am very badly crippled with rheumatism and it is only with great pain that I can hold my arms up."

That would make the corporal think he was harmless, being crippled as he said, and there was no way that the corporal could prove he didn't have rheumatism. He was glad when he saw the corporal straighten proudly at being addressed as "*Herr Offizier*." The German nodded and stepped inside the shack.

"Very well," he said, "let your arms go down. I guess you're harmless."

G-8 lowered his arms and sighed deeply.

"*Ach*," he said, "that is a great relief. Now let's see; what were you asking? My mind could scarcely work when I was in that position."

"I demand to know who you are and what you are doing here," the corporal said.

"My story is very simple," G-8 began. The corporal came closer to him and lowered his Luger.

"I am *Herr* Wasslemann," the Master Spy went on, "uncle to Karl Wasslemann here. I have come with great difficulty to find him. His sister and all his family are so worried about him. All the other men in his family—his cousins, uncles are off in the war, either at the Front or dead. Our family has been most loyal to the *Vaterland*. Even I, old as I am and crippled with rheumatism, offered to enlist, but they would not take me. I cannot understand why my nephew has been treated in this manner."

He stared at the big, ugly face of the corporal.

"You do not look like a harsh man," he said. "What do you think your mother would say if she knew you were helping in such a brutal affair?"

He saw a slight look of shame come over the corporal's face at the rebuke.

"I am a soldier," he said, "*und* I do what I am ordered."

G-8 had scarcely expected that much penitence from him. He was merely playing for

time, working toward an opening for the kill. The corporal had not yet noticed the slight bulge in the big pocket of his coat where the Luger reposed.

"*Und* now that I have told you who I am," the Master Spy said, "what do you propose to do with me?"

"You will be placed under arrest and taken to the castle for questioning," the corporal told him.

"But I tell you," G-8 argued, "I am only trying to do what I think is right by my nephew, Karl Wasslemann, here. Already he is out of his mind. Whatever his secret invention is, they have taken it from him. Already he has given everything for his country—everything but his life. Must he rot here in the middle of this swamp for being such a great aid to his *Vaterland*!"

He saw the corporal gulp, then a stern look crossed his face.

"That is not for me to say," he said. "I follow my orders as a good soldier. Perhaps at the castle they will let you take him back."

G-8 shook his head.

"It is the ones at the castle who placed him here," he said. "They would not show mercy. They would not admit their wrong."

G-8 turned slowly away from the corporal who was now standing in the middle of the shack. He bent down, as if to talk to the vacant-eyed Karl Wasslemann, and as he did so, he dropped his hand into his pocket and clutched the Luger butt.

Suddenly he whirled with such startling speed that it took the corporal completely off guard. Before the German could half raise his Luger, G-8 was pumping lead into him and the shack echoed with the blasting of his gun. The corporal swayed back on his heels from the force of the bullets that were pounding into his chest and heart. His heavy legs gave way under him and he crumpled in a heap on the dirt floor.

G-8 PUT his Luger back in his pocket and strode calmly over to him. At that moment, Karl Wassleman set up an inane chuckle, high-pitched and mad in its tone.

"*Ach*," he said, "*das ist nicht gut*."

G-8 turned to him. Ever since he had come into the hut, Karl Wasslemann had seemed to have lapses of insanity that switched off and on to pure

madness. There was a crafty gleam in his eyes now.

"Why isn't it good?" G-8 asked.

The inventor chuckled, then his voice dropped to almost a whisper.

"Because," he said, "with my gun you could have done the same thing without making a sound."

G-8 came over to him and bent down beside him. The Master Spy was tense. "Tell me about it, *Herr Wasslemann*," he said.

The eyes of Karl Wasslemann were suddenly bright.

"First," he said, "you must unlock my chains and set me free." He nodded to the corpse of the German soldier lying on the floor. "He has the key to the locks in his pocket."

G-8 went through the corporal's pockets and found the key. He inserted it into the padlock that fastened the chain and ring on Wassleman's leg. The crafty gleam was coming back into Wasslemann's eyes.

"Hurry, hurry," he said.

G-8 turned the key in the lock and the lock snapped open. Wasslemann lay trembling on his bed of straw while G-8 slipped the ring off his ankle and freed him.

Suddenly, without warning, Karl Wasslemann sprang up. He was a towering fellow, as big as the German corporal. G-8 took a step backward. The inventor leered at him with his bloodshot eyes.

"*Donnerwetter!*" he spat. "You are one of those against me. You are trying to steal my secret. I am going to kill you!"

He sprang at the Master Spy, hands outstretched, reaching for his throat. G-8 could have pumped him full of lead with his Luger, but he did not want Karl Wasslemann to die, at least not until he had learned everything possible about his invention. So he left the Luger in his pocket and determined to try and knock him out with his fists. Instead of moving away to escape him, he ducked under the outstretched arms and threw a straight left to his jaw. The huge German's hand caught hold of G-8's clothing. The Master Spy ducked again to the left and sank his right in the German's stomach.

Wasslemann grunted. But that was all the notice he took of G-8's blows. He caught the Master Spy by the shoulders and yanked him toward him. G-8 came up with a wild uppercut that landed full on the point of Wasslemann's chin. That blow had all the power behind it that the Master Spy could put into a punch.

The German's head snapped back. His eyes danced for an instant. But he hung onto G-8's shoulders, gave another frantic jerk toward him, at the same time working his hands along the Master Spy's shoulders toward his throat.

His arms were much longer than G-8's and he could hold the Master Spy out at full length from him so that the latter's blows wouldn't reach him. His hands tightened their grip. G-8 felt his wind shut off, felt a terrific pain in his throat as Wasslemann's thumbs pressed deeply into his windpipe.

G-8 tried every trick he knew to get away, but the big fellow seemed invincible. Struggling, they dropped to the floor with G-8 underneath and Wasslemann choking him with all his might. The Master Spy brought up his knees and kicked out with both feet into Wasslemann's stomach. There was desperation in that blow. Wasslemann grunted, let go of G-8's throat as the wind went out of him and he was hurled back across the hut.

As G-8 struggled to his feet, gasping for breath, he caught hold of a club lying near. He knew he must stop this German in some way, and so far, fists had failed. Besides, he was very dizzy from the choking he had received; he couldn't stand another attack like that.

Wasslemann was up and coming at him again with his long arms outstretched, and with his hands groping for the Master Spy's throat. G-8's head was clearing a little. He ducked the attack, swinging the club as he did so. There was a resounding whack as it struck *Herr* Wasslemann's skull and bounced off. Wasslemann's eyes glazed as he crumpled to the floor.

G-8 bent over him fearfully. He hadn't struck him with the club as hard as he could have. He wanted Wasslemann to live so that he could tell him the things he wanted to know about his invention. He dragged the big young German over to the bed of straw, refastened the leg iron and locked it. Wasslemann's pulse was beating with

average strength and he would probably recover pretty soon. G-8 sat down beside him and waited.

Long minutes dragged, then *Herr* Wasslemann opened his eyes and stared about him. As they focused on G-8, those eyes, although still bloodshot, were mild and did not have the savage gleam which they had held a few minutes before. Wasslemann's lips moved.

"Who are you?" he asked the Master Spy quite sanely. "Why are we here?"

"I have come to save you," G-8 told him, keeping far enough away so that the chain would prevent *Herr* Wasslemann from attacking him. "Do you know who the little man was who called himself *Herr* Schmidt?"

Karl Wasslemann repeated, "*Herr* Schmidt. *Jawohl*, I remember a little man with crooked teeth and a big head and thick glasses. I recall going with him and being tortured." He shuddered. "*Donnerwetter*, that was awful. That is all I remember."

"The little man," G-8 said, "is *Herr* Doktor Kreuger. He has stolen your invention of the silent death gun. He is your enemy."

"*Ach Himmel, ach Himmel*," *Herr* Wasslemann sighed.

"You must tell me about your invention quickly," G-8 said, "if I am to help you."

Herr Wasslemann sat up, and then he saw the chain and the iron ring around his ankle. Apparently his mind was now blank of all his experiences since *Herr* Doktor Kreuger had begun torturing him.

G-8 hurried on. "You see, I must take up the idea of your invention with the higher authorities in Germany and make them understand that it is your invention and not that of *Herr* Doktor Kreuger."

Herr Wasslemann still looked a bit dazed, but he nodded.

"Very well," he said. "My silent gun is one which is operated by electricity. I believe it is possible to shoot not only needles but larger bullets with it. I will try to explain to you how it works."

Suddenly he stopped and his face turned a deathly white. He was staring past G-8 toward the door of the hut. The Master Spy whirled to look

behind him. He saw at least four Germans standing outside the door, their guns trained directly on him.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Fiend Doctor

THE leader of the Germans, a *leutnant*, came in ahead of the others. "Put your hands up, G-8!" he commanded.

The Master Spy realized that in the face of all those guns he didn't have a chance. He raised his arms above his head. A half dozen Germans poured into the shack and there were more outside. Swiftly they went through G-8's pockets, taking out everything they found, including a jack-knife and his Luger. The *leutnant*, an arrogant young Prussian *offizier* with close-cropped hair and military posture, smiled thinly at G-8.

"You've been very clever up to now," the *leutnant* said, "but it was not so clever of you to stay here after you killed our corporal."

Calmly, the Master Spy smiled back at him.

"As a matter of fact, *Herr Leutnant*," he said, "you came almost at the right time. It would have been better for me, however, if you had delayed your trip ten or fifteen minutes. You see, I was planning to make a personal call on *Herr Doktor* Kreuger very shortly and now I am to be taken to him by escort. It will eliminate the trouble of thinking up excuses to carry me through your lines into the castle."

"*Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter!*" the *leutnant* spat. "You are an insolent one."

"I see no reason for making any bones about the truth," G-8 countered. "And while we are speaking of being *dummkopfs*, you might have been better off if *Herr Doktor* Kreuger had kept this poor unfortunate fellow inside the castle, instead of vending his cruel spite on him by fastening him here in the swamp to die."

"*Herr Doktor* Kreuger makes no mistakes," the *leutnant* said.

G-8 laughed in his face. "I can think of a few he made," said the Master Spy, "and unless I'm

badly mistaken, he is due to make a few more before this little deal is finished."

"You will be sorry for saying such things," the *leutnant* stated. "Come."

"I trust you are going to bring *Herr* Wasslemann with me?" G-8 said. "You already have the key to the lock which one of your men took from my pocket."

The *leutnant* nodded. "*Jawohl*," he said. "*Herr Doktor* Kreuger had ordered it."

"I am glad to see," G-8 said, "that *Herr Doktor* Kreuger is getting some sense after all."

The path along which the soldiers led G-8 and Karl Wasslemann out of the swamp was not difficult to follow once they had started their long climb up the mountain slope. G-8's mind was quite at rest now. He knew *Herr Doktor* Kreuger well and he knew his faults. He knew also Kreuger's hatred and fear of him and he realized that unless he got out before the zero hour, the fiend doctor would kill him.

Side by side, G-8 and *Herr* Wasslemann were marched through the entrance of the old castle. The interior was dingy and musty-smelling, and the great, vaulted roof sagged over their heads, as if it were about to fall at any moment,

Once inside, they were separated. Two of the guards took *Herr* Wasslemann down a stairs which G-8 knew led to the dungeons below. Two sentries stood before a closed door at the far end of the entrance hall. The procession of guards, with G-8 in the center, stopped before them.

In an important voice, the *leutnant* ordered, "Advise *Herr Doktor* Kreuger that I am here with G-8, the *verdammter kerl*."

G-8 cut in with an annoying bit of information.

"You had better let me tell the *Herr Doktor*, myself. Don't let this *leutnant* kid him into thinking he could have taken me without help," G-8 grinned tightly. The *leutnant* turned on him angrily. "*Halt's Maul*," he barked. "Shut your mouth."

The Master Spy merely laughed at him and the *leutnant* swore under his breath. The guards turned and went in through the door. One came out presently.

"Bring in the prisoner," he ordered.

G-8 and his guards advanced through the door. He saw the little fiend doctor strutting up and

down at the far end of the room. He stopped now and glared at the Master Spy through his thick glasses, then he laughed in a high-pitched child-like giggle.

"So, *mein lieber freund*," he shrilled, "once more you are a guest of mine. I have been a long time recuperating from your last attack, but you see me now well and strong."

G-8 laughed tantalizingly. "I see you well, *Herr Doktor* Kreuger," he said, "but I would hardly call you strong."

The little fiend doctor's eyes flashed like coals of fire fanned by a stiff breeze.

"*Lieber Gott!*" he cried. "You dare stand there and insult me when you are my prisoner? I do not refer to bodily strength but to my mental ability."

G-8 shrugged. "Sometimes," he said, "I have thought you were even a little weak-minded, *Herr Doktor*."

Calmly he walked toward Kreuger. The little fiend doctor looked startled and snapped a command to the guards: "Don't let him come too close."

The Master Spy laughed again.

"So you are still afraid of me, are you, *Herr Doktor*? Well, I can't say that I blame you; knowing how I feel about you. And I must say that this last little deal you've been conducting, the outright stealing of a gun invention from *Herr Wasslemann*, is far beneath you."

"*Halt's Maul!*" *Herr Doktor* Kreuger shrieked.

"You know," G-8 went on unperturbed,

"I have always thought of you, *Herr Doktor*, as a very clever scientist, as one who possessed perhaps the most keenly inventive mind in the world. But now when I find that you have stolen the invention of a fellow countryman, like a petty thief would come sneaking into a bedroom to snatch paltry things of meager value, I begin to wonder if all the inventions for which you have claimed credit in the past have not been crudely stolen from some unfortunate countryman in the same manner."

Herr Doktor Kreuger's face was white with his wild rage.

"You *verdammter hund!*" he screamed. "You dare to stand there and say things like that to me! I have a good notion to have you shot at once."

G-8 had a pitying smile on his face as he said, "There would hardly be satisfaction in that, *Herr Doktor*. After I had died, you would hate yourself for killing me while I was still of the opinion that you have never been anything but a petty thief. And to think that, *Herr Doktor* Kreuger, destroys my confidence in you and in all human beings. I would far rather die thinking of you as the great master mind I have believed you to be in the past. Surely you must have at least improved this gun of *Herr Wasslemann's* if you are so clever."

Herr Doktor Kreuger raised himself on his toes and brought his little clenched fists up as he shrieked, "Improved it! *Lieber Gott*, you *verdammter hund*, I have more than perfected it. I have developed it from a mere needle gun into a gun that will actually fire shells silently at a terrific rate of speed. Those shells are capable of blowing up whole tanks."

The Master Spy stared at him in utter disgust, then shook his head. "*Herr Doktor*," he said, "I do not believe you. I think you are lying."

Herr Doktor Kreuger bravely strode toward him in his rage.

"So you think I am lying," he spat. "*Aber*, I shall show you. This afternoon, as quickly as it can be arranged, we will try out my new big gun mounted on a tank. You shall go along as a passenger and you shall see how it is done. After that, you shall die, knowing that I am the greatest mastermind of all time."

Inwardly, the Master Spy was exultant, although he still looked very skeptical.

He shook his head again and said, "I'll believe this only when I see it, *Herr Doktor*."

"You shall not have long to wait," the little fiend doctor said, then turned to the *leutnant* in charge. "See that an American uniform is brought for this *verdammter kerl*. I will no longer have him in Germany in any clothing but that of his own country. I am ashamed even to tolerate him in German civilian clothes. Take him away and put an American officer's uniform on him. *Macht schnell!*"

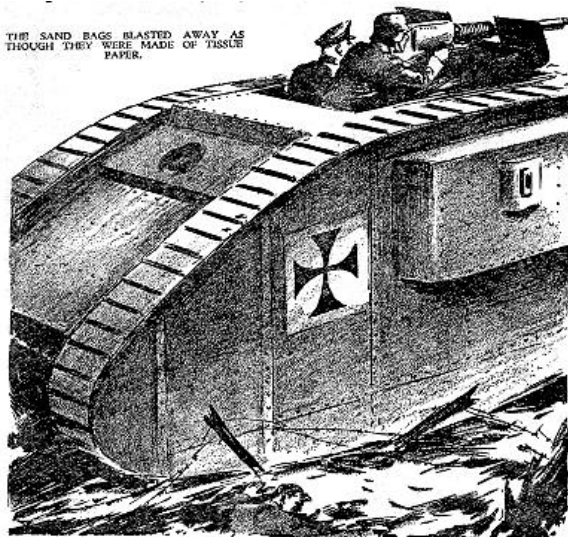
The entire guard escorted G-8 into another room and held him there. Soon a captain's khaki uniform, complete with boots, was brought in. G-8 put them on, but left his made-up face as it was. He knew that to take out his tiny make-up kit in the

guards' presence would only disclose its secret hiding place.

It was a long ride by car to the Front. There, well behind the lines, the great tank was waiting. *Herr Doktor* Kreuger was there with high *offiziers*. G-8, with his hands tied behind his back, was led into the interior of the tank. Through slits in the front of it they could watch the deadly effect of the gun.

Herr Doktor Kreuger grinned triumphantly at him.

"Now, *mein freund*," he said, "You shall see how rapidly good-sized shells can be fired. There is no heat of explosion with this gun, and I have developed it so that it can fire shots as rapidly as the operator can pull the trigger. Remember that when you watch the demonstration."



G-8 was tense. Without moving his shoulders he was trying to get his hands free from the ropes around his wrists. There came the rumbling of the motors in the tank, then the tank started rolling over the Front. *Herr Doktor* Kreuger grinned.

"Now we go," he said. "You will hear no explosion of the gun and with the tank in motion you will not even feel any vibration. Watch through the slits up ahead and you will see the destruction the gun causes."

G-8 stared through the slits, sitting sidewise so he could still work at the ropes. They went clanking on over the rough ground. The tank lurched perilously at the edge of shell holes and ground over trunks of trees that had been cut off by

shells. They were almost at the front line of the German defense when *Herr Doktor* Kreuger pointed ahead and spoke into a mouthpiece that led to the gunner atop the tank.

"There," he said to G-8, "watch that machine gun nest."

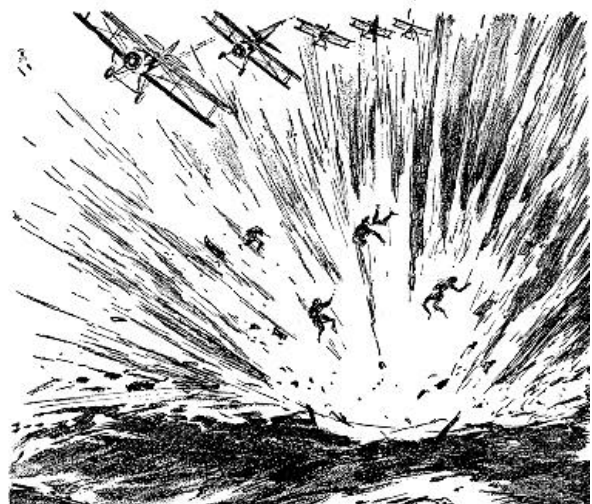
As G-8 stared, there was a violent explosion far ahead. Four men and a machine gun were blasted into the air.

"Now watch the one to the left!" *Herr Doktor* Kreuger shrilled excitedly.

The same thing happened to that one. "Watch the sand bags at the edge of that American trench, he said again.

The sand bags blasted up in a series of explosions, then the shells carried along the brink of the Yank Front, blasting the sand bags away as though they were made of tissue paper, and crumpling the whole wall of the front trench.

"There," *Herr Doktor* Kreuger said, "a dugout is exposed."



G-8 saw the top of the door open and an American officer's head appeared. There was no sound from above the tank, only the exploding of the shells as they struck the Yank officer. Suddenly the dugout was nothing but a hole in the ground with boards and men flying in every direction.

But something else had caught the Master Spy's eye. Planes out of the south came screaming down on the tank. There were five Nieuports, and off to the left were two Spads. He caught his breath as he recognized those two

Spads as the ships Nippy and Bull flew. One was number seven, the other thirteen. They were coming straight for the tank with their Vickers guns stammering.

Herr Doktor Kreuger was laughing in high glee.

"*Ach Himmel*, I couldn't have wished for anything better," he exulted. He spoke into the mouthpiece to the gunner. "Show the *verdammter kerl* how his own Battle Aces can be blown apart in their planes by my new gun."

Wild desperation seized the Master Spy. He gave a terrific wrench at the ropes on his wrists and somehow they came apart. He leaped to the trap door that opened in the top of the tank and before anyone could stop him, threw it up and leaped behind the gunner. Frantically he yelled and waved to Nippy and Bull to go back. He made a wild lunge for the gunner, but something heavy struck him on the head and everything went black, as though night had suddenly closed in.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A Call for Help

G-8 WAS still in darkness when he awoke, but he realized he was conscious. Overhead he could hear sounds of treading feet. The air was filled with a dank, musty smell. He was lying on a cold stone floor and he guessed he was in one of the dungeons under the castle. He didn't know how much time had elapsed since that blow on the head had felled him, and being in a dungeon as he was, he couldn't be sure whether it was still daylight or dark outside.

His thoughts flashed to Nippy and Bull. He had no way of telling whether they had heeded his warning and had escaped that deadly silent gun. He began making plans for the completion of his work but everything he thought of required the help of Nippy and Bull.

Suddenly he felt for the tiny radio set that he always carried fastened close against his body with adhesive tape. It was still there; the Germans hadn't found it. He brought it out and felt it with his

hands, it was so black that he could see absolutely nothing. He guessed it would work all right; it would have to. His head throbbed as though it had been split open and he found a lump on the top of it almost half the size of a hen's egg.

This whole thing had gotten so far beyond him, he felt helpless. But he must figure some way of stopping those guns. Suddenly his nimble brain hit upon a plan—a plan that seemed to him at first so impossible that he put it out of his mind for a moment and tried to think of some other way. But he came back to it.

When he had completely formulated his plan, he opened his tiny radio kit, switched it on to sending and began clicking off the message to Nippy and Bull in the secret code that only he and they knew.

NIPPY AND BULL. NIPPY AND BULL.

He switched over to receiving and listened. He thought he could catch a faint answer, but the dots and dashes were so weak that he couldn't distinguish them. He made a tour of that jet-black dungeon and found a small door crossed with iron bars. Listening at the opening, he could hear slight sounds outside, probably coming from upstairs. There was the treading of feet as before, and the far-off murmur of voices.

He felt his way on around the wall, then high up at the side opposite the doorway, he felt a long slit in the wall not much over two inches wide. He ran his arm into it as far as he could get it. He could feel a draft of air coming from outside. But it was almost as dark out there as it was in the dungeon. That meant that it was night,

He set up his wireless set again and once more called for Nippy and Bull, then listened for the answer. Again came the faint hum of signals but he couldn't catch any of them. He began sending his message:

NIPPY AND BULL:

I AM A PRISONER IN THE DUNGEON OF SCHWARTZ CASTLE IN THE BLACK FOREST. I NEED YOUR HELP. NIPPY, I WANT YOU TO HAVE BATTLE DISGUISE YOU AS HERR DOKTOR KREUGER IN FACE AND CLOTHING. YOU ARE GOING TO TAKE HIS PART. BULL, YOU WILL BE GENERAL VON ZINSDORF. GET

OUT A PICTURE OF HIM AND HAVE BATTLE MAKE YOU OVER TO LOOK LIKE HIM.

LOAD YOUR SPADS WITH ALL THE BOMBS THAT THEY WILL CARRY. COME AND BOMB SCHWARTZ CASTLE. BLOW UP ABOUT HALF OF IT. WE'LL NEED THE REST TO CARRY OUT OUR PLANS. I WILL TRY TO ESCAPE FROM MY CELL WHILE THE BOMBING IS GOING ON. AFTER THE BOMBING, LAND AT THE NEAREST FIELD POSSIBLE AND COME UP TO THE CASTLE.

G-8.

He switched over to receiving and listened for an answer. He thought he could make out similar signals to those that had come before, but he wasn't sure, because of their faintness. There was nothing for him to do but wait. Minutes dragged by into an hour, an hour and a half, almost two hours.

G-8 had been standing for a long time by the slit that let air into his cell from outside. Suddenly he straightened, stiff as a statue, and pressed his ear close to the opening. He could hear the faint drone of airplane engines, and as they came closer, he recognized them as Hissos. Nippy and Bull were coming to answer his call for help.

The sound of their engines grew louder and louder. G-8 could hear men shouting on the first floor of the castle and running about in great excitement. The door that opened at the top of the stairs must have been thrown open, for now he could hear some of the things the Germans were saying.

He heard one yell, "*Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter*, they are coming to blow up the castle!"

Another one cried, "I only hope their bombs don't reach the dungeon room across where G-8 is imprisoned. There are tons of explosives down there."

The Master Spy's heart leaped in wild excitement. That fitted into his plans perfectly. In fact, it was the only part of his plan that he hadn't finished working out.

He heard *Herr Doktor* Kreuger's shrill voice cry, "*The verdammter kerl!* Here, *Leutnant*, go down at once to his cell and see if he is conscious. He must be behind this raid. Go in his cell and shoot him dead. Be sure you stand close to him

when you fire the shot. Blow his *verdammte* brains out."

WITH a scream and a roar the first bomb exploded. Then, shortly after that, the second one shook the dungeon floor under G-8's feet. He could hear the two Spads roaring over and turning to come back and he could hear the running feet of the *Leutnant* that *Herr Doktor* Kreuger had commanded, coming down the stairs. The corridor outside G-8's door was lighted by the beam of his electric torch as he came.

G-8 hurried to the place on the floor where he had been lying when he regained consciousness. He lay down on his side and waited. The light beam stabbed between the iron bars of the hole in the cell door. The *Leutnant* grunted and G-8 heard the bolt slide back. The roar of the planes outside increased and two more bombs fell.

"*Ach Gott!*" the *leutnant* breathed in a trembling voice.

The dungeon door creaked as he pushed it open. He hurried to the place where G-8 lay on the floor.

"Now, you *verdammter kerl!*" he spat, "I'm going to kill you. I only wish you were conscious so that you could suffer more."

But the *leutnant* never had a chance to pull the trigger of his automatic pistol. G-8, moving with lightning speed, threw his arms around the *leutnant's* legs and hurled him to the floor. Then he leaped upon him and before he could cry out, slammed his head against the stones.

The light and the Luger had dropped out of the *leutnant's* hand and the light was still on. With all possible haste, the Master Spy undressed the *leutnant* and exchanged clothes with him. Then he took out his little make-up kit and began working his own face over.

He placed the Yank uniform that he had worn on the German, then, holding the Luger close to his head, fired a shot into his brain. The bark of the pistol echoed through the corridor to the second floor.

Never had G-8 worked so fast in a transformation. Again and again bombs dropped on the castle. By the time the planes had dropped their last bomb and veered away, G-8 knew that the

castle and nearly all those in it were in ruins, unless they had found shelter from the bombing.

He finished dressing and making up his face, left the dead German lying with his face away from the door, and went out into the corridor. He shut the cell door and slid the bolt into place, then he marched up the hall and climbed the stairs.

Nippy and Bull had left the front end of the castle standing. The rooms to the back, so far as G-8 could see through the open doors, were a mass of caved-in roofs and side walls. There was no one about when he reached the top of the stairs. The drone of the planes had ceased. He strode out into the night, calling softly, "*Herr Doktor, Herr Doktor!*"

He strode toward a clump of trees, calling the little fiend doctor. He was almost to the trees when several figures loomed in front of him and a flash light beam blinded him.

"*Was ist?*" a shrill voice demanded. It was the voice of *Herr Doktor* Kreuger.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Aces Ride High

G-8 ANSWERED *Herr Doktor* Kreuger in a low voice, being careful to impersonate the *leutnant* who had come to the dungeon to kill him.

"*Herr Doktor* Kreuger," he said, "I am the *Herr Leutnant*."

At that moment *Herr Doktor* Kreuger seemed to recognize his made-up face as that of the young German *offizier*.

"*Ach, ja*," he said, "the *Herr Leutnant*."

"Better turn off your light," G-8 suggested. "We cannot hear the sound of their engines but those two enemy planes might be gliding about high up and come to bomb us if they see the light here."

"*Jawohl*," *Herr Doktor* Kreuger agreed.

He turned off his flashlight and came closer. "You have done what I ordered? You have killed the *verdammt kerl*?"

"*Jawohl*," G-8 whispered. "If you will come, I will show you something that I believe will interest you greatly. Come alone, if you will."

"*Ja, Ja*," the little fiend doctor nodded eagerly.

He turned and led the way into the dark castle. Once inside, he turned on his own flashlight.

"What is it you wish to show me?" he asked when they were in the front part of the castle.

"It is down in the dungeon in the cell; something very mysterious, *Herr Doktor*. It concerns the dead *verdammt kerl*."

"*Ach Himmel*," *Herr Doktor* Kreuger demanded. "What can it be?"

G-8 opened the door that led down into the dungeon corridor, stepped aside and bowed for *Herr Doktor* Kreuger to go ahead. The little man stepped before him and G-8 with his flashlight shining down the stairs, came after and closed the door behind him.

Reaching the dungeon corridor, they walked side by side, until they came to the cell where G-8 had been imprisoned. There the Master Spy stepped before *Herr Doktor* Kreuger and unbolted a heavy door. It creaked eerily as he swung it back. He poked the beam of his light inside the room and pointed to the body on the floor with its face turned away.

"There," he said, "you see *Herr* G-8, the *verdammt kerl*, with a bullet in his head."

Herr Doktor Kreuger hurried past him into the dungeon, chuckling gleefully. "*Ach*," he said, "this is the best news I have had in years. I was quite sure I heard the shot."

G-8 followed *Herr Doktor* Kreuger into the cell. Already he had the Luger out of his pocket and was holding it club fashion. *Herr Doktor* Kreuger turned his own flashlight on the fallen body. He bent over to look at his face. He gave a quick gasp as though he were about to cry out. At that very moment, G-8 brought down the Luger butt on his skull. The thud echoed dully through the stone chambers of the dungeon. *Herr Doktor* Kreuger crumpled in a heap and G-8 let him lie beside the other body.

He went outside and closed the door, locking it securely. With anyone else he would be sure the man was dead, but with *Herr Doktor* Kreuger he couldn't be certain. Above all, he must not fire a

shot in his head, for fear of bringing down the others who were still in the woods about the castle.

He went out into the corridor, and with his flashlight began a search of the other dungeon chambers. He shone his flashlight beam into the hole in the door to the dungeon where *Herr* Karl Wasslemann was imprisoned. He saw him sitting on the floor amid scattered and decayed human bones. Wasslemann only stared into the light, then turned his face away. Some of the insanity seemed to have gone from his eyes.

G-8 crossed the corridor from there and, pushing open a door, found himself in a great store room that was piled high with cases labeled as high explosives. He searched about for a minute or two until he came upon a coil of rope hanging on a hook against one of the walls.

He took down the rope and went back to the dungeon where he had left *Herr Doktor* Kreuger. Turning the shrunken body of the little fiend doctor over on his face, he bound the wrists and ankles together and tied them so that his knees were bent. There was still no sign of life in *Herr Doktor* Kreuger, but he wanted to make sure. After he had bound him, he picked him up and carried him down the corridor to the cell of Karl Wasslemann.

AGAIN he shone his light on the young German. Wasslemann was still sitting on the floor. G-8 opened the door and laid the body of *Herr Doktor* Kreuger down, then he straightened with the light still on Wasslemann, who made no move to get up.

"I have brought you the body of an old friend," G-8 said. "I think he is dead, but I am not certain. If he is not, I give you the pleasure of finishing him in your own way. He is the one who represented himself to you as *Herr* Schmidt. He is really *Herr Doktor* Kreuger."

"*Gott im Himmel!*" *Herr* Wasslemann breathed.

G-8 went out again and locked the door. As he looked back once more through the slit, he saw *Herr* Wasslemann getting up off the floor. There was an ugly expression on his face as he moved slowly toward the bound body of *Herr Doktor* Kreuger.

The Master Spy climbed the stairs out of the dungeon. Outside a car stood on the driveway,

beyond which the road led steeply down the side of the mountain. This would be the car that *Herr Doktor* Kreuger had used. G-8 slipped noiselessly behind the wheel.

Imitating Kreuger's shrill voice, he called to men a hundred yards away at the edge of the woods, "Don't turn on your lights. This is *Herr Doktor* Kreuger. I am going on a special mission. Stay where you are in the woods until I return. I expect to be back before long."

"*Jawohl!*," an *offizier* called back.

G-8 started the car and drove down the road. He turned on the bright head lights of the car. They illuminated the road far ahead and to the side. He sat hunched over the wheel, tense, anxious, watching for Nippy and Bull. As he remembered from the map, this road led down past the nearest field where they could land, about three miles away.

Suddenly he tensed, for in the farthest edge of the rim of light ahead he thought he saw two figures leap off to the side of the road and dive for cover.

When he reached that point he stopped the car and called softly, "Nippy and Bull!"

The woods about him were perfectly still. There was only the sound of his engine idling. Again he called, "Nippy, Bull! It's me!"

Suddenly he heard a rustling in the brush at the side of the road and two figures appeared. One was small. In the dim side reflection of the headlights, G-8 could see that Nippy had effected a very good disguise of *Herr Doktor* Kreuger, tusked teeth and all. Bull towered beside him, looking very much like His Excellency, General von Zinsdorf.

"Holy Herring," the big fellow boomed. "Imagine being met with a staff car."

"Sure, you big ox," Nippy said with a grin that showed his fake tusked teeth, "when G-8 does something, he does it right. You didn't think he was going to make us walk all the way to the castle, did you?" Nippy's voice changed to an excellent imitation of *Herr Doktor* Kreuger's high-pitched tone. "*Ach Himmel*, this is indeed a pleasure, *mein lieber freund*. I was afraid you had escaped me and I wouldn't have the pleasure of killing you."

G-8 laughed softly.

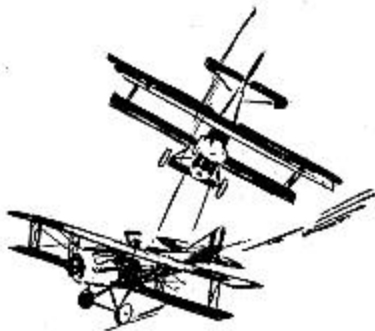
"You're marvelous, Nip," he said, "I'm glad to see you two. I was scared to death that that big

gun had gotten you. *Herr Doktor* Kreuger was demonstrating it for my benefit. Then he was going to take me back and shoot me."

"Well, we're sure glad to see you," Bull said as he and Nippy climbed into the back seat of the car. "We thought you were finished when that Heinie hit you over the head."

"How is everything?" Nippy asked.

"I think we have things fairly well under control," G-8 admitted. "I'm not quite certain, but I think I've finished *Herr Doktor* Kreuger for good. Let's drive on down the valley a way to kill time. I don't want to get back so quickly with you two. It would look funny for *Herr Doktor* Kreuger to return so soon. Meantime, I'll tell you what has been going on and what I plan to do."



AFTER he had explained what had happened, he said, "Now, here's our plan for the future. We're all going back to what's left of the castle. There's plenty there yet. By the way, you did a nice job on it—just exactly what I wanted. Nippy, as *Herr Doktor* Kreuger, you are going to use the telephone to call the Front and order that all the silent electric guns be brought here to the castle at once. You can explain that you have doped out an improvement that must be applied to all the guns."

"Holy Herring!" Bull gasped. "Do you think that will work?"

"It will have to work," G-8 said. "It's the only way we can corral all those guns and blow them up."

"How," Nippy demanded, "are we going to blow them up after we get them to the castle?"

"There's a big storage place under the castle," G-8 told him, "with tons of high explosives piled there. When we get all the guns here, we'll touch all that off and run for it, then we'll be positive that

Herr Doktor Kreuger, the inventor, Karl Wasslemann, and all the guns are blown up."

"Sounds like a swell idea if we can pull it," Nippy admitted. "I'll do my darndest, anyway."

"Maybe you think I won't," Bull countered.

"Sure," G-8 said, "we've all got to do our part."

He turned the car around and headed back toward the castle, just before they reached the top of the mountain. As they climbed up the steep incline, G-8 turned and told Nippy in a low voice, "Remember, you're in command here. I'm only a *leutnant* taking orders from you. Bull, as General von Zinsdorf, has come to lend authority to the whole thing and to help if we get in a jam and have to fight our way out."

Nippy grinned. "Don't worry," he said. "I'll run things just like *Herr Doktor* Kreuger himself."

"I wouldn't talk too much," G-8 advised. "You'll get away with it better if you only give short orders and act as if you're mad and in a hurry. Remember, you'll want a phone. If one isn't working, it's up to them to follow the line and fix it."

"Right," the terrier ace nodded.

When they drew up before the castle entrance, they saw a dim light burning steadily inside the castle. G-8 guessed they must have hooked up the electricity again.

German soldiers came streaming from the woods. Several flashlights winked at the three in the car.

Nippy shrilled at them in the voice of *Herr Doktor* Krueger, "*Ach, Himmel*, you *dummkopfs*, turn off those lights! Do you want us to be seen from the air?"

The lights went off immediately. As the German soldiers arrived at the car, they stood at attention before the two they thought were *Herr Doktor* Kreuger and General von Zinsdorf. An *offizier* spoke in the darkness.

"*Bitte, Herr Doktor und Your Excellency*, my apologies. We only wanted to be sure that it was you."

Nippy got out in a flurry of excitement.

"Don't stand there looking helpless! I must have a telephone to use at once."

"We have already repaired the damage to the telephone as well as to the lights," the *offizier* told him.

The terrier ace gave a short nod.

"*Gut*," he said. He bowed to Bull. "Let us go in, Your Excellency."

"*Jawohl*," Bull gutturalled.

G-8 had already stepped from the car and had held the door open for them to alight. Now he stopped at the entrance of the castle as they passed inside and closed the door, shutting them off from the others. The rest of the Germans came on, gathering about the Master Spy. A *Hauptmann* loomed before him in the darkness.

"*Herr Doktor* Kreuger seems very excited," he said in a low voice.

"Has anything gone wrong, *Herr Leutnant*?"

Imitating the voice of the dead *leutnant*, G-8 answered, "Naturally, the blowing up the part of the castle has aroused his anger."

All the Germans seemed very curious, particularly the *Hauptmann*.

"Did you hear anything he said to His Excellency, General von Zinsdorf?" he asked.

G-8 shook his head.

"I could not catch very much of the conversation," he said. "I was driving very fast and it was all I could do to keep the car on the road."

At that moment a cry came from inside the castle.

"*Herr Leutnant!* You *dummkopf!*"

It was the shrill voice of *Herr Doktor* Kreuger, imitated by Nippy.

"*Bitte*, excuse me," G-8 said to the *Hauptmann*.

He hurried to the door and peered in.

"Come in and close the door," Nippy ordered.

"*Jawohl, Herr Doktor*," the Master Spy bowed.

HE WENT in and closed the door behind him. The soldiers had already brought *Herr Doktor* Kreuger's desk from one of the rooms at the rear of the castle that had been partially demolished by bombs and had set it up in the front room. G8 snapped to attention before Nippy with a click of his heels.

In a whisper, scarcely moving his lips, he said, "Don't let down a second in here. Remember, you're *Herr Doktor* Kreuger. Keep acting like him. You're doing swell. Those German soldiers outside are very curious about what you are going to do. Some of them may be watching us through a window."

The terrier ace snorted and in a shrill voice demanded, "Are all my papers on this desk, *Herr Leutnant*?"

"I believe so, *Herr Doktor*," G-8 nodded.

Nippy scowled up at him.

"What a break for us," he whispered. He stabbed a sheet of paper with his index finger. "Here's a list of all the places where these guns are being used. I'll call them one by one and order the guns brought here at once to be equipped with my improvement."

G-8 bowed.

"*Jawohl, Herr Doktor*." Then, under his breath, "Boy, that is a break. I think I'd better go now. They might suspect something if I stay in here too long."

"*Danke*," Nippy nodded. He waved his hand. "That's all."

G-8 went out again. The German soldiers gathered about him once more and the *Hauptmann* plied him with curious questions.

"What did he say?" he asked in a half whisper.

G-8 shrugged.

"You know how he is. He gets excited over nothing at all sometimes. He was looking for some papers on his desk. I think he plans to talk over something with His Excellency, General von Zinsdorf."

He couldn't find some papers that he wanted *und* then he found them while I was standing there almost in front of him."

Some of the Germans chuckled.

"That is like him," the *Hauptmann* smiled. "What do you think he is going to do?"

"I do not know," G-8 said, "but I did hear him say something about an improvement on the guns."

"*Ach Himmel*, they are working so good now," the *Hauptmann* said. "If he makes them any better, we will surely win the war in no time at all."

"*Jawohl*," G-8 agreed, "I wouldn't be surprised. But maybe we had better move away from the castle. If *Herr Doktor* Kreuger hears us talking outside the door, he is liable to be displeased, *nein?*"

For more than an hour G-8 fraternized with the men at the edge of the woods. Then the first car arrived with more than a dozen of the electric guns which were carried immediately into the castle.

G-8 had an opportunity to look one over carefully when he was called in by Nippy. There was a large electro magnetic winding of thousands of feet of small wire at the end of the muzzle, and between it and the muzzle itself was what appeared to be an insulator. Each gun had a long cord to plug into an electric socket. The mechanism at the rear of the barrel was made up of a simple device to insert the needles into the chamber. There was a small container behind that where the needles were passed through a poison solution.

It was quite easy to see how the gun was fired. When the trigger was pulled, an impulse of electro-magnetism was set up in the coils on the muzzle end. This drew the needle with terrific force from the back of the barrel to the front, and almost instantly the magnetism was shut off again, thus allowing the needle to pass through the magnetic end without being stopped there.

As the night waned and the morning began to approach, more and more cars and trucks brought guns. Then came a special car with the one larger gun that G-8 had seen operated from the top of the tank.

Nippy gave G-8 the nod as he carried the big gun into the room.

"I've checked all these batches of guns," he whispered. "I think we've got them all according to the list. When do we blow up the place?"

"Any time now," the Master Spy said.

As he spoke, the door burst open. Nippy, Bull, and G-8 stared, for there in the doorway with a half dozen German staff *offiziers* behind him, towered a man dressed as a general. He and Bull were almost twins in appearance. It was His Excellency, General von Zinsdorf himself, accompanied by his staff.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Glory Wings

GENERAL VON ZINSDORF raised his voice in a bellow of rage and his eyes were fixed on Bull Martin.

"What is going on here?" he roared.

There was no time to be wasted. G-8 yelled a command.

"Let him have it!"

As General von Zinsdorf and his staff reached simultaneously for their guns, G-8 and Bull flashed out their Lugers and Nippy jerked out a big Colt service automatic from a shoulder holster. All three blazed away at once.

A roar sounded from outside the castle as more German soldiers plunged for the door. Everywhere men were yelling and driving into the gap in an effort to stop the Master Spy and his Battle Aces.

G-8 emptied his Luger and grabbed one of the small electric guns. He ducked beside the door and plugged the long lead into the socket. Three Germans came plowing over the dead bodies of the generals and his staff. G-8 aimed the electric gun at them and held down the trigger. There was a slight vibration of the gun but that was all. The three Germans fell.

Nippy and Bull were following his example. They grabbed two more light guns since the large one was too heavy for a man to hold and fire without a support. They plugged the long cords into other sockets.

Crouching on the heap of dead bodies in the doorway, they held down the triggers, spraying soldiers who were climbing out of cars that had just come and were tearing toward the castle entrance. There were a few scattered answering shots, but for the most part, the Germans fell before their own silent death that G-8 and his Battle Aces were turning upon them with frightful effect.

They heard more cars coming up the road. The mass of dead Germans outside made no sound. Lights from the cars blinked as they turned

up through the trees. Then they were stopping behind the other cars and the Germans they had brought were running headlong for the castle in hope of some protection.

"Hold it," G-8 ordered. "Wait until they are almost here. We want to be sure to get all of them."

The first signs of dawn were lighting the eastern sky and they could see the German soldiers quite clearly. At least two or three dozen had come in those last cars.

Nippy, Bull, and G-8 crouched, tense, waiting. The first of the newly arrived soldiers, a *leutnant*, came upon the bodies of the already dead.

"*Himmelkreuzdonnerwetter!*" he spat. "Was ist?"

"O.K.," the Master Spy said softly. "Let him have it."

The three electric guns vibrated in the hands of the three Yank fighting men and the poison did its work in the bodies of the Germans so quickly that none of them had a chance to cry out.

When they had finished, G-8 raised from his crouched position and listened. He heard no more sound from down the road.

"You stay here and hold off anybody that comes," he said. "I'm going down and touch off the high explosives."

He laid his gun down on the body of a dead German *Oberst* who had pitched over on his face, and with the light of his electric torch showing him the way, ran down the stairs to the storage room. It was getting light and there wasn't a bit of time to lose. He found a length of fuse in an open box, placed one end in a full box of explosives, and stretched the rest of it out across the floor. He lighted the far end. The fuse licked up the fire swiftly, much faster than the Master Spy had expected. He made a wild dash down the corridor and up the stairs.

"Come on!" he barked to Nippy and Bull.

A shot rang out from the woods. The Battle Aces were aiming their electric guns at the point in the bushes where the shot had come from. They fired freely.

"There isn't any more time!" G-8 yelled. "We've got to run for it!"

He led the way, dashing for the car that they had used before, with Nippy and Bull right behind him. Another shot and another rang out from the edge of the brush a hundred yards away. But they were in the car now and driving furiously down the mountainside. The windshield shattered and flying glass nicked their faces. Recklessly, G-8 sent the car plunging down the side of the mountain.



Suddenly the ground under them shuddered, as though a great volcano had let loose.

"Boy, did we blow up that mess!" Nippy yelled. "Look!"

"I can't," G-8 called. "I've got to watch the road."

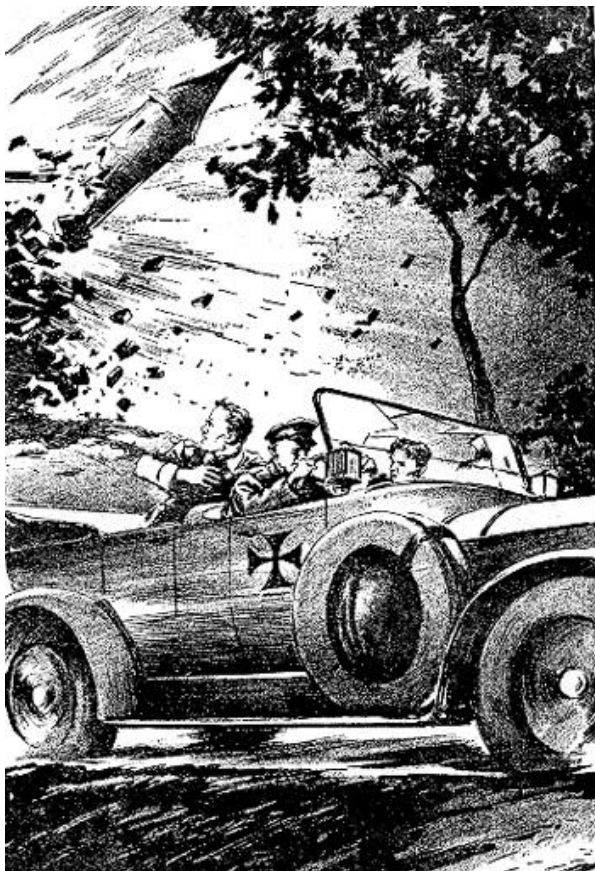
"The whole nose of the mountain is going," the terrier ace said. "There's boulders half as big as a house coming down on us."

"Holy Herring," Bull gasped, "You've got to drive as though the devil himself were after you!"

"What do you think G-8 is doing now," Nippy cracked, "taking a walk in the park?"

THE Master Spy had the throttle down to the floor. The tires screamed and the car lurched as he raced it down the zigzag mountain road. Great rocks and boulders crashed behind them or came thundering down the mountainside before them.

"Holy Herring!" Bull yelled. "Look at that boulder coming right down the road! It's as big as three elephants and it's gaining on us!"



"Yeah," Nippy cried breathlessly, "if that catches up with us, we'll be nothing but three grease spots tangled in a mess of junk."

But the boulder switched off in another direction, smashing whole trees before its advance. Then they were out in the clear and the danger lay behind them.

"Where did you leave the planes?" G-8 called back, slowing the car a little.

"About a mile and a half ahead," Nippy told him. "It was the only field we could find close by. I'll tell you when you get to it."

Less than two minutes later, G-8, at Nippy's direction, drew up between a double row of trees. They piled out and ran through a small clump of woods, breaking out into a small cleared field that was completely surrounded by woods.

G-8 could just see the tails of the planes sticking out from under the trees where Nippy and Bull had left them. There were no Germans in sight. They wheeled the planes about and started the Hiss engines. Then, with the Master Spy sprawled out on the bottom wing of Spad number 13, they thundered into the air and turned toward Le Bourget.

Battle met them at the door of the apartment, a broad grin of welcome on his face.

"May I say, gentlemen, that I am most happy to see you?" he said. "I must confess that you've had me on pins and needles worrying about you."

"Jumping Jupiter, Battle," Nippy chirped, "don't ever say anything about needles again. Let's talk about something more pleasant."

"Yeah," Bull Martin boomed. "When do we eat?"

THE END



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