

Flight from the grave

By Robert J. Hogan

Deathless men from another world who move like machines against a helpless human race! These are the enemies that G-8 must fight—this is the test of an airman's courage! What is the fate that lies before the Master Spy? Where is the end of the trail of Death?

G-8 saw the graves give up their Dead, that they might walk and fight again upon this mortal earth. He saw, too, the strength of these creatures who had already died, and could therefore not die again. Zombies!—with a terrible power that mere man could not match—flying against the Allies to write their deeds in Blood! G-8 sought to stem this tide of Horror, but you cannot kill the Dead!



CHAPTER ONE *The Dead Speak*

Three Spads flying in a tight formation romped down at the north end of Le Bourget field near Paris. In the lead was the Spad of G-8, the Master Spy. To the right of G-8's tail came Spad number seven, the plane of big Bull Martin, former all-American halfback. Bull was naturally

superstitious, hence the number seven on his plane to bring him luck. In striking contrast was the number of the other plane that formed the tight V formation. Little Nippy Weston, the terrier ace, sat grinning in his cockpit, and on the side of his fuselage was painted brazenly the number thirteen. Nippy defied death and invited danger on the earth and in the sky with that characteristic reckless grin.

The three Spads landed as though they were guided by one expert hand. With a roar, they blasted up to the end hangar and stopped, their motors ticking over evenly.

Nippy Weston flipped open his safety belt, stood up in his cockpit, stretched and yawned.

"Jumping Jupiter!" he said. "If we don't get any more action than we've had lately, I'll have to take shots in the arm to keep awake. This war is getting to the point where there isn't any more action in the air than there is in an old ladies' home on a Sunday afternoon." As the three strode toward their apartment, he demanded of the Master Spy, "Listen G-8, how much longer is this going on? We're supposed to be fighting a war, aren't we?"

G-8 shook his head a little sorrowfully.

"Yes," he said, "We're supposed to be."

Big Bull Martin's booming voice cut in, "Yeah, but if you ask me, what we've been doing lately isn't much more than murder. Look at that five Fokker flight this afternoon! We catch them coming over our side of the lines, hop on their tails and they turn around to run and we ride them back. They split up and we each take one, trail

him down and finish him. There wasn't enough fight in that to keep a fellow's eyes open. They're slowing up. They don't scrap the way they used to."

They were in the living room now. A look of revulsion spread across the Master Spy's features. He lighted a cigarette and savagely flung the match into the fireplace.

"Something has got to be done pretty soon," he said. "I, for one, am not going to keep on fighting the war this way. Why, those three Germans that we killed this afternoon didn't put up any fight at all. I've been wondering since if they had any ammunition in their guns."

"They must have been able to fight back if they had wanted to," Nippy countered. "At least, none of them asked for any sympathy."

"The thing I don't like about it," G-8 went on, "is that the whole outfit seemed like a bunch of kids just out of training school who didn't know what it was all about until our slugs finished them." He hung up his helmet and goggles and sat down in his easy chair. "I think, gentlemen," he said, "that before many days, Germany is going to ask for an armistice. Most of their great aces are gone and their air service consists mainly of green youngsters fresh from training fields."

Odors of cooking food came from the kitchen. The swinging door opened and Battle, the gaunt English manservant, peered through the door and bowed.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said. "I trust you had a successful flight?" Then, without waiting for an answer, he rambled on, "And did I hear someone say that the war would be over shortly?"

G-8 nodded.

"Yes, Battle," he admitted, "I'd be willing to bet on it."

"Oh, I say, look here!" Battle beamed. "How soon would you say that this great news will come to pass?"

The Master Spy shrugged.

"Not being a fortune teller, I couldn't say," he admitted. "But I'd gamble it won't be long." He got up and began to pace restlessly up and down the floor. "Believe me," he exploded suddenly. "I'll be mighty glad when it's over. I'm getting sick of killing people. Most of these German lads are swell fellows. They're just as good as you or I or

anyone else. War is nothing more than wholesale murder."

But Battle didn't seem to hear the last part of what the Master Spy was saying. He was grinning happily from ear to ear.

"Oh, I say, sir," he enthused, "and as soon as the war is over, I suppose we'll be released to go home?" He paused a moment, a little apologetically. "I say, sir, I haven't said much before about it," he ventured hesitantly, "but there has been a girl—or perhaps I should say, a woman, back in good old London town. I've kept up considerable correspondence with her, sir, and I believe we shall be married when the war is over." His eyes were upon G-8 now. "Would it be asking too much, sir, if I should speak for your presence at the--er--"

"At the christening?" Nippy cut in.

Battle's face flushed crimson.

"Christening?" he repeated. "Oh, my goodness, no. I was going to say—er—Well, that is to say, when the preacher makes her my—er—dash it all! I can't get it out! Well, whatever the preacher makes her."

G-8 couldn't keep back a smile.

"Are you trying to say, Battle, that you want me to stand up with you when you're married—be your best man?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" Battle beamed. "That's it, exactly! How did you guess it, sir? Mr. Nippy's talking about the christening and all that sort of rot got me a bit strung up."

Still grinning, G-8 nodded.

"Sure, Battle," he said, "if I'm around I'll be glad to stand up with you."

Battle looked relieved.

"Oh, I say, that's jolly good!" he said. "You see, in my last letter, I promised Gwendolyn that if she would marry me when the war was over, I'd ask you to stand up with us. She wrote back yesterday and she said that if you would stand up with me she'd be very much pleased to marry me."

The Master Spy suddenly looked grave.

"Hey, wait a minute, Battle," he countered. "Who is Gwendolyn going to marry—me or you?"

The English manservant blinked.

"Why, me, of course—I hope!" he cried.

G-8 took a long breath and pretended to look relieved.

"That's O.K., then," he said. "I'll stand up with you on that basis. By the way, Battle, how's dinner coming?"

"Fine, sir. It will be served in a very few minutes, sir."

As they ate, the conversation turned to what they would do when the war was over.

"Boy," Nippy ventured, "maybe the war will be over and I'll still be alive. Jumping Jupiter, that will be something! I never counted on that."

Bull Martin stared at him.

"You never counted on what?" he demanded around a mouthful of rare steak and onions.

Nippy shrugged.

"Why, on being alive when the war's over," the terrier ace explained. "I've always figured that one of these days there would be a Heinie slug with my name on it."

"Well, don't start laughing up either sleeve," Bull warned. "The war isn't over yet."

"I know it," Nippy admitted, "but talking like this just made me realize all of a sudden that maybe it will be some day. Boy, oh boy, what I'm going to do when I get out!"

What are you going to do, Bull, besides eating your head off?"

The big fellow shrugged.

"Oh, I don't know," he said. "Haven't thought much about it. Maybe I'll go back to the old university and try coaching." Suddenly, he stopped and shook his head. "Nope, I guess that wouldn't do. The only clothes I've got to my name are my uniforms and a dress suit."

"How's that?" G-8 demanded.

"Got a letter from home the other day," Bull grinned "Mother tells me that my kid brother has grown big enough to wear my clothes. He's got everything worn out but my dress suit, so"—he shrugged—"I guess I'll have to be a waiter."

Nippy chuckled.

"That would be just your luck, you big ox," he chirped. "That's right up your alley! The only trouble is, you'd be getting fired all the time for snitching feed off the trays."

The bantering went on between Nippy and Bull, but the Master Spy fell silent.

With his dinner only half eaten, he pushed back his chair, lighted a cigarette, and watched the smoke curl up toward the ceiling. Suddenly he

rose. As he stood up, the telephone bell in the living room rang.

There was sudden, tense quiet in the dining room. Something seemed to compel Nippy and Bull to get up and follow the Master Spy into the living room. They saw him pick up the receiver, suddenly his face clouded. He shook his head and held the receiver tighter to his ear.

"That's funny," he said. "The line seems to be dead." Suddenly, a vibrant voice filled the room.

"Wait there; I am coming."

There was no further sound, either from the mysterious voice or the telephone. Nippy's laugh broke the silence

"Jumping Jupiter, that's swell, G-8!" he said. "How long have you been practicing ventriloquism?"

There was no answer from the Master Spy. He stared at Nippy with narrowed eyes, but the terrier ace chuckled again.

"Yeh, I know you've been holding out on us," he said. "You're trying to make us believe that you didn't do that yourself. But you're pretty good at fooling us, fellow. You thought we weren't getting enough action so you pulled this joke to make us—"

Suddenly, the terrier ace realized that his joke wasn't going over. Big Bull Martin was scowling at him and G-8, who should have been laughing by now if he had planned this as a trick, looked graver than ever.

"Hey," Nippy exploded, "what is this, a game? You and Bull seem to be wise to something. Let me in on it."

There was a sarcastic note in G-8's voice as he said, "You seem to be the only wise one around here at the present time. Maybe you can tell us what happened."

The terrier ace stepped nearer to the Master Spy.

"Listen, G-8," he demanded, "no fooling now! Didn't you throw your voice so it filled the room and said, 'Wait there; I'm coming?'"

G-8 shook his head.

"In the first place, I can't throw my voice," he said. "And in the second place, I wouldn't. In the third place, I haven't the slightest idea of what caused this."

"Maybe that voice came out of the telephone," Bull ventured. "You still have the receiver off the hook."

"You think so?" G-8 asked. "Come here, both of you." He held out the receiver to them. "Listen," he said.

In turn, Nippy and Bull put their ears to the receiver.

"Sounds dead, doesn't it?" the Master Spy asked.

Nippy tried it again.

"Sure it's dead," he admitted. "Deader than the deuce."

"So the voice couldn't have come out of the telephone," G-8 went on. "It seemed to fill the whole room."

Bull nodded.

"I was trying to figure out where it came from," he admitted.

"Did you notice anything peculiar about the way the words were spoken?" the Master Spy asked.

Battle had come in from the dining room and was standing just behind the Battle Aces. His face was white and he was shaking.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but I heard the voice in the dining room, too. It seemed to fill the whole room and yet it wasn't very loud. If I may say so, sir, it seemed perhaps as if a German were speaking in English."

"You mean you detected a slight German accent?" G-8 asked.

"Yes, sir. Perhaps I am wrong, sir, but that was my feeling."

"I thought so, too," the Master Spy said. "Come on." He grabbed Battle by the arm and herded Nippy and Bull before him. "Get out of here," he cracked. "Get out as quickly as you can."

Bull stood his ground for a moment and demanded, "What are you talking about? What have we got to run for?"

"Don't argue—move!" G-8 snapped.

He rushed them through the hangar and yelled to the mechanics to follow them as they tore on out into the night.

"Why all the hurry?" Bull persisted stubbornly. "Where are we going?"

"I don't know," G-8 retorted. "I just got a hunch—or a feeling—or whatever you want to call it—that we ought to get out of there and—"

They had gone perhaps a hundred feet back of the hangar when the Master Spy tensed suddenly.

"Listen!" he hissed.

He pointed into the darkness toward the north. The far off scream of a rapidly approaching plane came to their ears.

"Hey, that's a Mercedes engine!" Nippy cracked.

"Yeh, and he isn't stopping for any flag stations on the way, either!" Bull put in.

"Come on," G-8 said.

He pulled them back, farther away from the hangar. They crossed a road and stood at the edge of a grove of trees. The scream of that Fokker was deafening as it roared through the night, low down, straight for that end hangar where they had been a few minutes before.

Suddenly there was a flash and an explosion at the other corner of the hangar. Debris was thrown high in the air. Then the Fokker turned abruptly and before the wreckage had spattered down to earth again, the Hun plane was droning back through the darkness the way it had come.

G-8 and the rest ran back to the hangar. The hangar sergeant was beside the Master Spy.

"I'll have your ships out and warmed for you, sir," he said.

But the Master Spy shook his head.

"No," he said, "we'd be too late. It wouldn't be any use tonight."

G-8 rushed to the opposite corner of the hangar. The field's fire truck was already coming up the tarmac, for the building had begun to blaze. The Master Spy whistled when he saw the damage the bomb had wrought.

"That certainly was close," he said. "I never saw a bomb land more accurately than this one did. Look!" In the light of flaming timbers he pointed into what had been their living room. "The bomb landed smack in the middle of this room," he said. "And that message was meant to keep us here."

"You mean the voice that didn't come over the telephone?" Nippy asked.

G-8 nodded.

"Yes," he cracked.

There was no more time for conversation now, for everyone was tearing in to help put out the fire. It was nearly an hour before the flames were extinguished. The Master Spy was surprised when the mechanic sergeant brought him a message streamer.

G-8 unbuttoned the flap, and with Nippy, Bull, and Battle looking over his shoulder, he stared down at a short poem written in a queer longhand.

I LIVE AGAIN, VERDAMMT G-8
TO PLAY ONCE MORE MY WINGING ROLE
THAT YOU MIGHT JOIN ME, DEATH,
IN HELL WHERE YOU HAVE SENT MY SOUL.

CHAPTER TWO
A Trap for the Dead

"Hey," Bull Martin exploded as he finished reading that strange poem, "what's all this baloney about, anyway?"

French, American and British officers were beginning to gather around them. G-8 thrust the note quickly into his pocket and laughed loudly.

"Somebody is playing a joke on us," he cracked. "Come on, let's find some other quarters where we can turn in for the night."

The commandant of the field came up to G-8 and G-8 saluted.

"We will make all possible haste to have your quarters restored to their original condition," the commandant said.

The Master Spy nodded.

"Until then we will take up quarters in the officers' barracks."

No word was spoken of the strange event by any of the four until they were safely lodged in a section of the officers' barracks and all doors were closed. Battle was the first to speak.

"I say," he breathed, "I didn't get a chance to read that poem, sir. I've always been a bit of an enthusiast over poetry. It positively thrills me at times, sir. You know, 'the moon and June,' 'tulips

and lips'; 'love and dove'; and all that sort of thing. Could I have a look at it, sir?"

G-8 was spreading the white paper out under a bright light. It crinkled peculiarly as he laid it on a table. All four bent closer to read it again.

"You know," the Master Spy said, fingering the texture of the white material, "this stuff feels more like skin than paper."

"Yeah." Nippy chirped, "like the sheepskin we got when we graduated from college."

"Something like that," G-8 admitted, "only it isn't exactly that. Did you notice the writing? It looks to me as though it had been done in blood—and quite recently, too. I'm going to have it tested."

"Begging your pardon, sir," Battle cut in, "but if I may say so, sir, the writing is a bit fascinating, what? Reminds me of the way my nephew—he got to be quite a master penman—wrote when he was very young. It is very even and straight up and down. But I say, a child could never think up poetry like that. I don't know what it means myself."

"Neither do I," G-8 admitted, "but I'd give a lot to find out."

He read the poem again aloud:

I LIVE AGAIN, VERDAMMT G-8,
TO PLAY ONCE MORE MY WINGING ROLE
THAT YOU MIGHT JOIN ME, DEATH,
IN HELL WHERE YOU HAVE SENT MY SOUL.

"It's my guess," Nippy chirped, "that some Heinie is just getting funny with you, G-8. He thought he'd write a crazy poem and scare the life out of you with it."

"Scare the life out of me?" the Master Spy repeated. "How?"

Nippy jerked his head toward the slip on which the poem was written.

"Don't you get it?" he asked. "It sounds as though some Heinie has got the bright idea of trying to make you believe that he's a guy you've already killed and that he's risen from the dead."

The terrier ace pointed to the first line of the poem—"I live again."

"That's what that might mean," he said. "'To play once more my winging role'. That means he's jumped up out of his grave, climbed in a

Fokker, and shoved off. And the rest of it"—Nippy shrugged—"well, that means that he's come over to get you and send you to hell where you sent him."

"So the guy is just fooling around, is he?" Bull exploded. "Just kind of kidding G-8? All right, wise guy—but he was certainly a pretty straight shot when he laid eggs in the middle of our living room! He couldn't have hit it more squarely if he'd backed in a load of bombs on a truck! And what about the telephone call? You're a magician! Come on and let us in on that secret!"

"You really want to know how it's done?" the terrier ace demanded.

"You're darn right we want to know," Bull challenged. "Go ahead; spill it."

The terrier ace grinned and shook his head.

"You'll have to get a greater magician than I am to explain it," he said.

"Somebody might have slid a tube into the room and spoken through it from the outside," G-8 mused.

"Hey, that's an idea," Bull cried. "It could have been done that way."

G-8 was walking toward the door.

"Yes, that's possible," he admitted, "and I'm hoping that's the way it was done."

At the door he called a motorcycle rider. He folded the poem, placed it in an envelope and gave it to the messenger.

"I want you to take this down to our chemical laboratory in Paris," he said. "Tell them I want both the tissue that this message is written on and the liquid used in the writing examined carefully. I'll be down tomorrow to learn the results of their observations."

The rider saluted and they heard his motorcycle sputtering away in the night.

"Really," Battle ventured, "this might be a beastly serious thing, sir. You know, I was just thinking, as Mr. Nippy spoke. Suppose all the Germans that you've killed came back to kill you?"

Nippy was grinning again.

"Don't worry, Battle," he reassured. "Thing's don't happen that way. Besides, look at all the fun G-8 would have if they *did* come back for him. That would mean so many more good air scraps for him."

Bull Martin glared at the terrier ace.

"Listen, you little squirt, I hope you're having a whale of a lot of fun now," he growled, "because I've got a hunch that things aren't going to be so funny pretty soon." The big fellow sucked on his cigarette nervously. "Did I ever tell you about my cousin who was always traveling? He wrote a book on voodooism. It seems he'd spent a lot of time in Haiti studying that voodoo stuff that those natives down there go in for. Some of the stuff he told me, before he died so mysteriously, would make your hair stand on end—or at least it did mine."

"It would be just like a bird of your size to get scared about a thing like this," Nippy jibed. "It's all explainable. Once before we got tangled with a thing like this. Do you remember the guy by the name of Croloi who was supposed to work magic and raise people from the dead and all that sort of hooley? Boy, I never saw you more scared than you were when we were solving that case! But"—he shrugged—"we found out that it was all a fake."

And now you're getting all steamed up again over something else supernatural." He chuckled. "Boy, if I ever get out of this war, I know now what I'm going to do. I'm going on the stage with my magic—and I'm going to pray for audiences as dumb as you are, you big ox!" The Master Spy had been paying little attention to Nippy and Bull as he paced up and down the floor, smoking and thinking. Suddenly, he stopped as the sputter of a motorcycle came from outside the hangar. He glanced up at the door as it burst open. The motorcycle rider stood there, covered with mud and breathless, his eyes opened wide in fright.

"I lost it!" he gasped. "Excuse me, sir, for busting in like this, but—but that thing you gave me in the envelope—it's gone!"

"Shut the door and sit down," G-8 said calmly. He poked a cigarette between the rider's trembling lips and struck a match. "O.K.," he said, "have a smoke and get your breath and then you can tell us what happened."

The rider sat there for a moment, trembling, puffing hungrily on the cigarette; then he began to speak shakily.

"I just started out of the field," he said. "I was about a mile or so down the road, running without lights as I usually do, when all of a sudden my front wheel hit something. The road was muddy and I tried to control the cycle, but the next thing I knew I was flying over the handle bars. I landed right on my ear in the mud." He touched his pockets. "I carried the envelope you gave me in

here. I didn't get knocked out at all—just kind of let down easy; then I was turned over—but *there wasn't anybody around that I could see!* I felt something cold as ice on my neck, and I jumped and hollered. The next thing, somebody jerked my pocket open. I got up, and I was so shaky I could hardly stand on my own legs! When I put my hand into my pocket, I found it was torn—just as it is now—and the message was gone."

Four pairs of eyes were staring at that left breast pocket. The flap was half torn off and the side of the pocket was ripped, but there was something white sticking out of one corner of it. The Master Spy seized this and drew it out.

"Why, here's the envelope I gave you," he said.

The rider nodded.

"Yes, sir," he said, "but there's nothing in it. That—that ghost or whatever it was tore it open."

"Holy Herring!" Bull barked. "You mean something came and took that right out of the envelope and—"

The driver gulped, dragged on his cigarette, and nodded.

"Hey, let's go over this thing again," Nippy chirped. "I'm trying to figure out how it might have been done by magic. It sounds like a swell trick." He turned to the messenger. "How light was it out there on the road where your motorcycle hit this obstruction? Could you see things around you?"

The driver nodded.

"Yeah," he said, "I could just see the fences by the side of the road."

"And you say a cold, clammy hand grabbed you by the neck?"

"It didn't exactly grab me," the rider said, shuddering again. "It just sort of touched me as it went by. Then there seemed to be hands pawing over me as though someone were bending down, searching for that letter. Maybe I was so scared that I couldn't see, but I'll swear there wasn't anything to see." He turned to G-8. "Honest, sir, I'm awful sorry I lost that letter," he said. "I'll do anything to make it right."

G-8 managed a reassuring smile.

"It's all right," he said. "I guess we didn't lose anything important, anyway. You can go now. I'm sorry this had to happen to you."

The driver turned toward the door, but G-8 stopped him suddenly.

"Just a minute," he said. He lowered his voice confidentially.

"Try to forget this, will you?" he said, "that is, if you can."

The driver's face twisted in a poor semblance of a smile.

"Gosh, sir," he said, "you're asking me to do something that's mighty near impossible."

"I mean," G-8 corrected, "forget it so far as telling anybody else about it is concerned."

"Sure—sure!" the driver nodded. "I'll do that all right."

"Good." the Master Spy nodded. He slapped the driver on the shoulder. "Don't worry. I doubt if you'll be bothered again by—" As he paused, everybody in the room tensed, waiting for him to continue. "By whatever it was that bothered you," he finished. "Good-night."

When the messenger had gone out, he closed the door behind him and glanced at his wrist watch.

"Well," he said, "I think I'll hit the hay. Here's something for you gents to lie awake on. Did you ever hear of the German ace, Baron von Siebert?"

Bull looked blank for a moment, but Nippy chirped, "Sure! This guy von Siebert was one of Germany's most famous aces."

"That's exactly what I mean," G-8 added. "I shot down the Baron von Siebert three months ago."

"Huh?" Bull grunted in amazement.

Nippy's eyes widened.

"Jumping Jupiter!" he cried suddenly. "That's right. I'd forgotten all about it. Maybe—"

"No," G-8 said, shaking his head, "he didn't live. It was a little after dawn when I shot him down. I set his plane on fire and he jumped at ten thousand feet—without a chute. I followed him down and saw his body land in the middle of a field. He was buried later with high military honors."

"Jumping Jupiter!" the terrier ace breathed. "Listen, G-8, are you trying to say that this guy von Siebert has come back from the grave to write poetry and try to—"

"That's what I've been trying to tell you," Bull cut in. "Listen, you birds, you've laughed your heads off at me when I talked about my cousin and voodooism. There is something to it. My

cousin said in his book that raising people from the dead and putting a curse on them and all that sort of stuff is a lot of baloney—but look how he died! They just found him dead—and nobody to this day knows how he was killed. They got a word in Haiti for these guys—Zombies, I think it is. My cousin wrote about one old voodoo doctor who acquired a big plantation and raised up a bunch of these dead men every night to work in the fields and cut sugar cane. He said he'd seen them working there himself."

"Yeah, but listen," Nippy interrupted, "remember that once before we proved to you that the whole thing was screwy. It was all done with mirrors or something. But could we convince old skeptical Bull Martin? Not for long. Now we've got another jam that looks like the same thing, and you jump in with both feet and try to tell us that they can raise a guy that's been dead for three months and send him out to fight. Jumping Jupiter, you've even got G-8 believing it! And you've almost persuaded me, too!"

The terrier ace turned in desperation to the Master Spy.

"What do you say, G-8, let's take this guy and stick him in a guard-house so we can think a little straighter?"

G-8 shook his head and a slow smile spread across his face.

"On the other hand, Nip," he said, "it might be true that you're the only one of us that isn't thinking straight."

The terrier ace stared at him for a moment, his mouth dropping wide open; then he cried, "Hey, cut it out, will you? You'll have me nuts!"

G-8 had turned toward the room that was to serve for his quarters for the night, but he suddenly turned his steps toward the outer door. Stepping into the hall, he lifted the receiver of the barracks' phone.

"Get me General Headquarters at once," he ordered.

In less than a minute, he was talking to G.H.Q., giving them his new location.

"I'm expecting an attack here at the field by some lone plane," he said. "I'd like you to request all divisions at the Front to notify me if they hear an enemy plane crossing the line tonight, heading for Le Bourget. I'll be waiting."

He hung up the receiver and strode to what was left of the end hangar. He found mechanics

working there and ordered them to remove the three Spads and the other ships to a space farther down the line. He ordered that the entire hangar be emptied. He called Nippy and Bull, and with them helped the mechanics rectify the slight damage done to the planes by the bombs that had blasted the apartment. At length, the three ships were ready to fly.

Suddenly, Battle came running from their new quarters.

"I say, sir," he cried, "Captain somebody-or-other from the something-or-other company of a certain regiment at the Front just called to let you know that a Fokker plane passed over them, heading in this direction."

The Master Spy's teeth clenched.

"Good," he snapped. "We won't have to wait." He yelled to the mechanics: "Wind up those Hissos! We're shoving off right now!" Then, to Nippy and Bull as they hurriedly climbed into the cockpits of their respective Spads, he ordered, "Follow me. We've got plenty of flares on board. We'll climb to about a thousand above our end hangar, then we'll circle and wait. But it won't be for long. Watch my stacks. When you see me going down, drop a flare apiece, then come after me."

The Master Spy ran to his own Spad, leaped into the cockpit, and with Nippy and Bull following, he thundered into the air.

CHAPTER THREE

The Mystery Ace

The Master Spy led his Battle Aces in a slow circle, as he had announced. They didn't have long to wait. Less than two minutes had crawled by when, in the darkness, they made out the glow of the Fokker's exhaust stacks below.

As G-8 watched that plane come on, something seemed to freeze within him. There seemed to be nothing about this Fokker, as it came on, to warrant that sensation, yet it was somehow impossible for the Master Spy to feel that this was just another German pilot coming over to bomb a strategic point. There was something horribly determined and deadly about the way that Fokker flew, straight as an arrow to

its objective—the already half-demolished end hangar.

G-8 pushed his stick forward, dropping the nose of his Spad sharply, and dove straight for that screaming Fokker less than five hundred feet below. As Nippy and Bull saw his exhaust stacks plunge ahead of them, they followed his orders, each dropping a flare. The earth below and that streaking plane were lighted in a weird, intense brilliance.

The Master Spy's eyes were glued to the pilot in the cockpit of the plane. He sat hunched forward, eyes staring down over the leading edge of the right lower wing at the end hangar which was almost beneath him. The pilot appeared to have no thought for the three planes that now plunged down on him in the light of the two flares. As far as G-8 could tell, he didn't look up once into the blinding light.

Suddenly, something dropped from beneath that Fokker. The Master Spy gasped at the deadly aim of the man. This pilot was laying his egg as accurately as the former pilot had done. There was a flash, a booming explosion, and what little had been left of the end hangar apartment was blasted to bits by this second bomb.

Instantly, the Fokker pilot leaned a little to the right, and stick and rudder moved in perfect coordination. He swept around in a tight vertical bank and headed back for Germany, still paying no attention to the three planes above him.

G-8 changed his course immediately, and with Nippy and Bull following him, took after the fleeing Fokker. He was ready with the incendiary bullets that he had placed in his ammo belt for this particular mission. He had no desire to kill the pilot, but he wanted to knock him down and see what kind of a man he might be.

For the first time, the pilot turned in a grotesque, mechanical fashion. A ghastly, sunken, half-human face, with eyes that appeared sightless, turned up toward the Master Spy.

G-8 was pressing his triggers, watching the incendiary bullets from his chattering Vickers guns tear down, not at the pilot, but at his engine. The slugs tore holes in the motor mounting of the racing Fokker, and the pilot was hurling his ship about in a crazy zigzag course to avoid them. With a suddenness that took even the Master Spy by surprise, the nose of that Fokker leaped up before his Spad, forcing him to hurl his ship over to avoid a headlong crash into that Hun plane.

Now he got a closer look at that ghastly face. He saw that in spite of the sunken cheeks and the hollow-looking eyes and the grinning jaw, there was something familiar about it. He was sure that he had seen it somewhere.

But there was no more time to think about that, for he was caught in a mad tangle of Spandau fire. His instrument board was swept away, and a stream of Spandau slugs tore through the front of his coat and all but pierced his body. By some miraculous means that he couldn't quite understand himself at the moment, G-8 escaped death in that awful attack and sent his crate hurling around to get in another burst of slugs.

But as his ship flashed about, there came another light to add to the weird illumination of the magnesium flares. Red flames soared back over the cockpit from the gasoline tank of the Fokker. The Mercedes engine had stopped. That ghastly figure in the cockpit, shrouded now in flames, was still staring across his sights and sending a stream of lead into Bull Martin's Spad number seven!

That attack lasted for only a half second, then the nose of the Fokker dropped and glided away toward a smaller field north of Le Bourget.

Staring in amazement at the ghastly spectacle, G-8 followed. There was something horribly sinister about that figure sitting in his cockpit and completely covered by the crimson flames of his burning gasoline tank.

Nippy and Bull were following close on G-8's tail as he trailed that blazing Fokker down until it had made a perfect landing and stopped rolling. Wings and tail were burning furiously.

G-8 swung back to his own field and landed. Nippy and Bull came in behind him. They had just cut their switches and climbed out of their cockpits when a cry from the other end of the field reached them.

"I saw him! I saw him!" a hysterical voice screamed. As it babbled on, it lowered in tone and they could not catch the words

G-8 broke into a run

"Come on!" he yelled.

He led the wild race to the far end where an excited group was crowding about the end hangar. It was one of G-8's mechanics who had made that outcry.

"What is it, Tom?" the Master Spy demanded.

The corporal turned a white face to his chief.

"G-8," he said, "don't think I'm crazy! Do you know that plane you just shot down? I was running to see it land, because it was coming down in flames but it looked as though it was still under control. It landed as smoothly as a bird."

"Yes, I know," G-8 nodded. "We saw it. Go on."

"Well, I ran toward it after it had landed. Something seemed to draw me toward that burning plane, but when I got within a hundred yards of it, I stopped. For some reason, I couldn't seem to go any closer. I could see the pilot in the burning cockpit. Naturally, I figured he was dead, but so help me, that Heinie pilot climbed out just as calm as though he had finished a cross-country flight and started walking—kind of funny—over to that woods."

"Walking kind of funny?" Bull Martin exploded. "Holy Herring, you'd walk funny, too, if you'd been sizzling in that cockpit!"

The corporal shook his head.

"No, sir, I don't mean that," he said. "He wasn't staggering as though he'd been hurt or burned. He—he just didn't seem to walk like a human being. He kind of—well—I've heard stories of mechanical men that walk with a sort of jerky step. That's the way this guy walked. He got almost to the woods, then he looked around. I could see his face in the light of his burning ship. It was awful, sir! He stopped there as though he'd seen me for the first time and couldn't make up his mind whether to take after me or go on into the woods." The corporal trembled again. "Gosh," he said, "I never was so scared in my life as I was when I thought he was going to come after me!"

"Then what did he do?" G-8 asked.

"He turned quick and ran into the woods," the corporal said. "That's the last I saw of him."

G-8 raced for the telephone, put through an order for troops to surround that section. He examined his automatic, procured flashlights and nodded to his Battle Aces.

"Come on," he said, "we're going after him."

"We probably won't have to go far to find that crazy fool," Nippy cracked. "He may have walked out of those flames by some miracle, but he won't get far."

G-8 didn't answer.

They were just entering the woods when big Bull Martin said in a hushed voice, "Holy Herring, I'd just as soon get out of this job! Listen, G-8, did you get a look at his face? I did, when he came after me. Boy, it gave me the creeps!"

G-8 made no reply. For nearly an hour they prowled about those woods, searching every crevice and depression where it might be possible for a man to hide, but they found no trace of the mystery ace. At length, they came upon soldiers searching from the other direction and with that, G-8 and his Battle Aces returned to their new quarters in the officers' barracks.

They saw no sign of Battle, but from his bedroom they could hear a series of loud snores. G-8 nodded.

"That's where the rest of us ought to be," he said. "We don't seem to be gaining anything this way, and until something breaks we'll need plenty of sleep."

G-8 had to exert all the will power he had in order to drown out the mad tangle of thoughts that raced through his brain and to go to sleep. At length, he dozed off for what seemed to be a few moments. He was awakened by a sound, although he couldn't tell what it was. In the next instant, he had jumped out of his cot and was pulling on his clothes.

Nippy must have heard him, or the same sound that had awakened him, for he called from his room, "Hey, is it morning? Is it time to get up?"

The Master Spy glanced at his wrist watch.

"It's getting along toward morning," he said. "We may as well get up. Did you hear some shouting?"

The terrier ace hesitated for an instant

There it goes again!" G-8 called.

He rushed to the door of the barracks and stood there listening. Down at the other end of the field by their end hangar he could hear wild confusion. Once more he started in that direction.

He could hear loud voices as he came within earshot of the blasted end hangar. A rapidly growing group of mechanics and pilots were gathering about an excited guard.

"What's all the commotion about?" G-8 demanded.

The guard turned to him.

"Thank God you're all right, G-8!" he gasped. "He was here after you."

"Here after me?" the Master Spy demanded.

"Yes, sir," the guard answered. "He talked with a German accent and he said, 'I come for G-8' when I told him to halt."

"Wait a minute," G-8 said. "Let me get this thing straight. You were standing guard near the end hangar, right?"

The guard nodded.

"I was standing over by the gate, sir," he said, pointing to the field entrance. "All of a sudden, I saw this man coming from the direction of your blasted apartment. He didn't act like a human being—walked more like a mechanical machine. I told him to halt or I'd shoot. He didn't stop; he came right on and he said, 'I come for G-8. Where is he?' I told him again to halt or I'd shoot and when he didn't stop, I started firing. Honest, sir, believe me! I'm telling the truth! My bullets seemed to go right through him! I'm a good enough shot, and I can hit a man in the middle at ten paces easily—and this guy was a lot closer to me than that."

"I kept shooting until my gun was empty, and by that time he was on top of me. I tried to use my gun as a club but he grabbed it and took it away from me. I never felt anybody so strong! I couldn't do anything. His hands were like ice when they touched me." He shuddered. "He got me by the throat and began choking me, trying to make me tell where you were, sir. I tried to holler for help, then he threw me to the ground. I was just conscious enough to see him when he ran away. He went back into those same woods over beyond the field."

Instantly, the Master Spy jerked his automatic out of its holster and started off toward the woods where the mystery pilot had vanished.

"Come on," he yelled, "we're going after him again!"

The guard cried out a warning:

"Honest, I'm not fooling, Captain. That gun won't do you a bit of good. This fellow is a ghost or something."

"Okay," G-8 nodded to the others. "Come on."

He started off in the lead. It would soon be dawn, but it was dark still. G-8's nerves were on edge as he plunged on ahead, cutting the darkness with his flashlight beam. Nippy and Bull

and others were searching on either side of him, spreading out in a fan-shaped line.

Far off on either side, the Master Spy could see the lights of other searchers. He was alone—and yet he had a feeling that he was not alone. The air became electric with that same intangible sense of the supernatural that he had felt before.

At that very instant, the Master Spy couldn't help turning around quickly. He found, to his horror, that this strange feeling was not imaginative! There behind him in a slow, measured, noiseless tread, came the ghastly form of the pilot of that Fokker he had just shot down. He was not more than two paces behind G-8.

Instantly, the Master Spy swung the flashlight full on his face. A strange, musty odor from that horrible figure struck G-8's nostrils. At the same instant, he recognized—with a feeling of horror—that sunken decayed face!

"Von Gunther!" he gasped.

CHAPTER FOUR ***Return of the Dead***

The head of that trailing figure nodded mechanically.

"Ja," he answered in a hollow voice that seemed to emanate more from the trees about them than from those grinning, set lips. "You recognize me. *Gut*. Then you know why I have come."

G-8's brain was spinning like mad. There was no doubt in his mind now as to the identity of this figure before him. There was the pallor of the grave on his face, and his flesh betrayed the fact that he had been buried for several months. G-8 thought of the guard's experience against this brute. As he stared at him in the light of the electric torch, he could see the holes that the bullets from the guard's gun had pierced in the body of this inhuman being. It seemed impossible—contrary to the laws of man and nature and common sense—yet here he stood before G-8, his lips set in a hideous, challenging grin—his awful, washed-out, sightless eyes boring into the Master Spy's very soul.

But G-8 was striving for something more than the apparently impossible annihilation of this

being. He must get the truth from him! He must know what was behind this unbelievable series of events!

The Master Spy didn't cry out a warning to the others, as his first reactions had prompted. Rather, he forced himself to calmness and spoke in a voice that was not quite steady.

"This is a most singular meeting, von Gunther," he said. "I suppose you've come to even up the score with me."

Von Gunther didn't move or answer.

"After all, von Gunther," G-8 went on, "I had nothing personal against you when I ended your earthly life. This is war, and if luck had been on your side, you would have killed me instead."

Von Gunther spoke, but again his voice sounded as though it were the sighing of the trees rather than the speech of a being who had once been human.

"You have always been clever, G-8, but now I have come to match wits with you. You cannot reason with me. The Master who brought me back from the grave for this and other killings left me without reason. Nothing that you say can save you! Call for help if you wish; it will do you no good."

G-8 stepped back quickly and gripped his automatic more tightly.

"Get back!" he cracked. "Get back, von Gunther, or I'll blow your head off!"

He jerked his automatic upward and aimed it full in the face of von Gunther. But the hideous grin on the German's face broadened and he stepped forward slowly. It was then that G-8 let go. His fingers worked on the trigger with lightning speed. Holes appeared in the forehead of his attacker as the bullets tore through. One dull, sightless eye was obliterated—but von Gunther came on. There was something almost hypnotic about the way that he moved upon the Master Spy. Even at that close range, G-8 was missing half his shots. He emptied his gun in the very face of his adversary.

Suddenly, von Gunther bent low and rushed in. At the same time, G-8 raised his automatic, hammer fashion, and struck with all his might. The automatic flew apart from the force of the blow. G-8 felt bands of steel about his waist. He was fighting furiously to get free. He beat that half-gone face of von Gunther with both fists, but each blow hurt G-8 more than it did von Gunther.

Striking that face was like punching a piece of granite.

The ice-cold, clammy hands of von Gunther were about his throat and he was helpless. He saw a bony right hand sweeping up toward his face in a swift, openhanded stroke. G-8's head spun suddenly as that palm connected with his jaw. Stars danced before his blinded eyes.

The Master Spy was still fighting vainly as the hulking mass of inhumanity lifted him over one shoulder. Then another blow struck him full in the face, and as consciousness left him he sensed that he was being carried, at a swift dog trot, off into the darkness.

From somewhere, as consciousness returned, G-8 heard the stutter of a machine gun, answered a moment later by another one. Far off, he could hear the blasting of heavy artillery. His first inclination was to sit up, but those yammering machine guns acted as a warning against that. It was broad daylight and a haze of smoke hung about him.

He felt something soft and oozy in his hand. It was mud, and he realized that he was lying in a shell crater. He could hear firing on all sides, but from his position down inside the crater he could see nothing. He stared about the hole, and at the same instant, the vivid recollection of what had happened flashed before him like a horrible nightmare. He saw a ghastly thing lying next to him. It was the gray form of a mummy with sunken cheeks and hollow eyes. Even in its shrunken form, he recognized with a sense of horror the face of von Gunther. He had no idea how he had reached this shell hole in No-Man's-Land unless von Gunther had brought him here on his shoulder.

Von Gunther looked horribly different in the daylight! True, in the darkness he had appeared like an inhuman, mechanical thing, and yet there had been sufficient life and action in that body to render G-8 unconscious. But the mummy figure beside the Master Spy did not move now. He could see the holes that he himself had put there with his bullets. The left cheek bone was partly shot away, and the left eye was gone, and there were three holes in the forehead between the eyes. The rest of his shots had been clean misses.

G-8 rolled over in the mud and touched the cheek. At the slight contact of his finger, one side of the face crumbled away into little hunks of

dust. The Master Spy sprang back from the repulsive thing.

As he crouched there, staring at it, the ground beneath him shuddered with the report of heavy guns. The rest of the face crumpled and fell from the neck. The chest, which had been ample and barrel-like when von Gunther was alive, caved in completely, sinking to a heap of musty powder.

G-8's natural inclination was to get away from that ghastly sight as quickly as possible, but his sense of duty held him there a little longer. He must go as far as he could in his investigation. Taking out a half-empty match box from his pocket, he filled it with some of the dust of the crumbled mummy. With that sample securely in his pocket, he peered over the edge of the shell hole. He would have to take his direction from the rising sun. Facing it, he crawled out of the shell hole and turned to the right. Far ahead of him he saw the Allied trenches.

A machine gun picked him out and spattered mud in his face. He lay flat for a long time, burrowing into the mud, before he started on again. Now and then he saw Yank troops peering over their sand bags from the rifle step, and at their encouragement, he crawled a little faster. At length, he reached the sand bags.

A commanding voice cracked out, "Wait! Stay there until I give you the signal!"

G-8 flattened himself against the rifle wall. There was a long moment of waiting; then suddenly, three machine guns from the other side of No-Man's-Land blasted out simultaneously.

"Come on over!" the voice said. "We're drawing the firing away from you."

G-8 made a dash for it, landing in a heap at the bottom of the trench. He was helped to his feet by a captain who stared at him in amazement.

"Bless my soul!" he cried. "Is it really you, G-8? You're so covered with mud that I- "

The Master Spy nodded.

"Yes," he interrupted hurriedly. "And you're Captain Carver. I remember you from a previous meeting. I've got to get back to Le Bourget at once."

"You're lucky to be back from anywhere," the captain told him. "How in the name of heaven did you get out there in No-Man's-Land? I didn't see you go through."

"I'm not sure," the Master Spy admitted. "Some very strange things have been happening. I was knocked unconscious, back at Le Bourget, and the next thing I knew it was daylight and I was out there in a shell hole."

The captain's eyes widened.

"Good heavens, man!" he cried. "Listen, let me tell you something! This morning just as it was getting light, the queerest-looking figure came running through the communicating trench. He was wearing the remains of a German uniform—the rest of it had been burned off him. He had the most ghastly face I've ever seen in my life. It wasn't human! It was"—the captain swallowed—"well, I can't describe it. At any rate, he was carrying a man dressed in an American captain's uniform. He ran with a sort of mechanical step. It gives me the jitters just to think about it. We all tried to stop him. We must have put at least a dozen bullet holes through his legs, but in a moment he was up over the wall and gone across No-Man's-Land."

The Master Spy nodded.

"Yes," he said. "As you've probably guessed by this time, Captain, I must have been the officer he was carrying on his back."

"But who is he?" Carver asked.

"I don't know," G-8 admitted, shaking his head, "and I'm not even hazarding a guess—just now. But there's one thing I do know. I've got to get back to Le Bourget at once. Can you furnish me with transportation?"

The captain motioned toward the nearest communicating trench.

"Yes, we can go along here," he said. "I'll show you the way. I can give you a motor-cycle sidecar and a rider."

After nearly a half hour of sloshing through the mud, G-8 was in the sidecar of a sputtering motorcycle, bounding and bucking toward Le Bourget. He found Nippy and Bull and Battle in a state of feverish anxiety, and they bombarded him with questions. G-8 explained briefly what had happened, then he went out to his long, low roadster, which had been salvaged from the bombing raid, and drove to Intelligence headquarters in Paris. The chief of Intelligence stared at him.

"Great Scott, G-8!" he cried. "The last I heard of you, Nippy and Bull reported that you were being carried away toward the Front on the shoulder of a living dead man."

The Master Spy smiled.

"Strange as it seems," he admitted, "that's the truth. That's what I'm down here for now. I'd like to have the Intelligence department get me all the possible information on the weird science of raising the dead."

The Intelligence chief stared at him in open-mouthed amazement.

"Look here, G-8," he protested, "you're not really going crazy on this thing, are you? Why, that's ridiculous!"

"Yes?" the Master Spy countered. "Well, maybe you can answer these things then. The telephone bell rang last evening as we were finishing dinner. When I lifted the receiver, the line was dead. But a voice coming from nowhere said, in English with a German accent, 'Wait there. I'm coming.' I got a hunch that maybe we ought to get out of there, so I took the men and ran out to the side field. We got out of there just in time to escape being blown up by the bomb. A Fokker came over in the night, made a dead-center hit and went back. The pilot left a message written in poetry in the style of von Siebert, the famous German poet. You remember him."

The chief nodded.

"Yes, of course. Von Siebert was—"

"Yes, I know," G-8 cut in. "I killed him about three months ago. So much for that. We established ourselves in new quarters in the officers' barracks at Le Bourget for the rest of the night. Then I got a hunch that perhaps other planes would be coming over. We took off and set a trap. I got notice from the Front that the second one was coming, so we waylaid him, set his plane on fire, and conked his engine. I thought I recognized his face, although he had been buried for some time. Well, this German that I shot down walked out of his flaming ship, came back again and"—G-8 shrugged—"the rest of it doesn't matter particularly, except that I recognized him. I was closer to him than I am to you, and there could be no mistake! It was the bodily remains of Baron von Gunther—looking just as you think he would after lying in a grave for over four months."

For a moment, the chief was speechless with surprise and horror, then he burst out, "Good heavens, don't tell me that you shot him down, too!"

"Yes," the Master Spy nodded "A little over four months ago. That's why I want all the information you can get on resurrecting the dead—principally from Haiti. I believe that's the place where they're supposed to raise the dead at night so they can work the fields, cutting sugar cane.

"Great Scott!" the chief exclaimed. "You mean that old superstition concerning the Zombies?"

G-8 nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Get me all the information you can and send someone over to Le Bourget with it as quickly as possible. "

He turned, before the Intelligence chief could argue further, and went out. Back at Le Bourget, the Master Spy, with the aid of Nippy and Bull and the mechanics, checked over the three Spads. Bull Martin grinned as they met for instructions on the coming flight.

"Now this is what I call a chance to fight," he said. "Anybody can have my share of night fighting against the Zombies that you can't kill! I'll take my scraps in the daytime against birds that will die when you get enough slugs in them."

"What are we going to look for?" the terrier ace demanded.

"I don't know," G-8 admitted. "We're just going out and see what we can find."

They made several returns to Le Bourget for gas and oil, but in that entire day of flying over almost the whole Front area, G-8 and his Battle Aces sighted not one single enemy plane in the air. It was late afternoon when the Master Spy and Nippy and Bull returned from their last patrol. The Intelligence agent was waiting for them at their quarters. He handed G-8 a typewritten report.

"I think you may find something of interest there, sir," he said.

G-8 glanced quickly at the short notice, then he demanded, "How long ago did this come in?"

"It was sent from Haiti nearly three weeks ago," the agent replied. "Haiti, of course, is one of the Allies. Apparently, the officials there didn't think it important enough to rush it through by cable. This notice just arrived at Brest yesterday, by steamer."

G-8 glanced quickly over the typewritten page. He uttered a low whistle.

"Listen to this, men," he said.

CHAPTER FIVE

Scourge of the Zombies

The Master Spy raised his voice and read aloud the report from Haiti:

For several days, natives have reported seeing a queer monster in the ocean of Haiti. This monster of the deep has been sighted on at least ten occasions, always within a fifteen-mile radius of Marigot, which is a small seaport on the south coast. Members of our secret service have been instructed to watch for a German agent working here among the Voodoo doctors, but it is apparent that this officer has slipped through their fingers and that the sea monster reported by the natives was a German submarine.

Last night, a number of the citizens of Marigot reported seeing, by moonlight, two men put out in a boat and go out to this submarine, which rose from the water and took them aboard. One man was recognized as the German under suspicion, the other as the best known Voodoo doctor in Haiti—one Jolito—about whom there is much mystery. The superstitious natives call him 'King Jolito'.

G-8 looked up at Nippy with a challenging glance. "What do you make out of that, Nip?" he asked.

The terrier ace shrugged.

"No more than I have all along, G-8," he said. "I still claim that whole thing is a trick—as it was before. Probably this King Jolito is another one of these smooth magicians. You could get away with almost anything on a bunch of those superstitious Haitians. As I said before, if I ever get out of this war, I'd like nothing better than to go around the country pulling magic tricks on a bunch of dumb clucks—with maybe a few gullible Bull Martins thrown in. That'd be what I call soft picking."

"It's going to be soft picking for one of these Zombies," Bull growled, "if he gets his hands on you."

G-8 nodded to the Intelligence agent who had brought the information to him.

"Thanks a lot for bringing this report over," he said. "I'll keep it, if you don't mind."

The agent smiled and nodded.

"You're certainly welcome," he said.

"I guess there's nobody who could use it better than you can, G-8. I'm glad I'm not mixed up with this mess."

"We'll all be mixed up with it if something isn't accomplished before long," Bull growled.

With that parting shot to think over, the Intelligence agent left them. G-8 glanced out of the window and saw that it was growing dark. Battle announced dinner from the doorway of the improvised kitchen, and they all filed out to the table he had set in the next room.

"I'll be more than delighted, sir, when we get back in our old location," Battle ventured.

"You mean back at the end hangar?" G-8 asked.

The English manservant nodded.

"Yes, sir," he said. "It shouldn't be long, however, at the rate they're rebuilding it. I dare say we could almost sleep there tonight. Perhaps you noticed from the air that carpenters and mechanics have been working on it all day long. I never saw things going so rapidly in my life, sir. That apartment is growing up again like a toadstool, as you Americans say."

Nippy grinned.

"Battle," he cracked, "you're poisonous. What you mean is 'mushroom'."

"Oh, yes," Battle grinned. "Quite. Mushroom, of course. But they both grow rapidly, don't they?"

"Yes, I suppose so," the terrier ace said. "But just because they both grow fast, don't ever try to feed us toadstools for mushrooms."

"Oh, no, sir, I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't want you to break out with warts, sir."

"Warts?" Nippy demanded.

"Why, yes sir," Battle nodded. "Aren't toads supposed to give you warts, sir?"

Nippy threw up his hands and shook his head.

"I give up, Battle," he cried. "Let's call it off."

G-8 tensed suddenly as the sound of a throbbing car engine came from outside. He heard a step in the corridor.

The next moment, a woman's voice was asking, "Is G-8 in here?"

The Master Spy was on his feet instantly. He had recognized the voice of R-1. As he threw open the door, the blonde, blue-eyed girl spy stood before him, a look of concern on her face.

"Oh, I'm so glad I found you in, G-8," she said.

She turned to a great, bulky figure behind her. G-8 found himself staring, with not a little amazement, at a huge woman. He guessed that she must weigh at least two hundred pounds. Her face beamed happily as she looked at the Master Spy, and two rows of big, gleaming teeth showed as her thick lips parted in a grin.

Land's sakes," she boomed out in a deep, resonant voice, "is it sho' enough the real Mr. G-8 I been hearin' so much about?"

The Master Spy grinned at her.

"This is Betsy," R-1 explained. "She's Colonel Herron's cook. You know him, of course?"

The marine commander?" G-8 asked.

R-1 nodded.

"Yes," she said. "You see, Betsy has cooked for him for years. He's sort of dyspeptic and she's the only one who seems to be able to conjure up food that will agree with him."

Betsy's great big face beamed again.

"And speaking of conjurin', Mr. G-8," she said, "Miss R-1 tells me you've got a little conjuring for me to do. Mr. G-8, I wouldn't fool you; there ain't hardly a magic doctor that can conjure up better magic than I can—exceptin' maybe one that I knows of."

G-8 had been so taken by surprise that he simply stood there, still blocking the doorway. R-1 pushed him gently aside

"If you won't ask us to come in, we'll have to do it on our own invitation," she smiled. "Won't we, Betsy?"

She turned to the big cook and led her in.

"Yes, ma'am." Betsy beamed. "Nobody don't have to give me no second invitation to come in the same room where Mr. G-8 is. That's what I calls not only an extraordinary honor, but a superordinary honor! Yes, sir!"

G-8 bowed an apology.

"I'm terribly sorry," he said, "but I guess you two took me so much by surprise that I was too fussed to think of asking you in."

R-1 went quickly to the point of her visit.

"I heard from Intelligence this afternoon, G-8," she said, "that you were collecting all the information you could get on voodooism—particularly from Haiti. That's right, isn't it?"

"Why, yes," the Master Spy admitted. His eyes shifted quickly to the beaming woman.

"That's why I brought Betsy along," R-1 said.

"Yes, sir," Betsy grinned. "I told R-1 if there was any real conjurin' to be done I could do it!"

"That's fine," G-8 nodded. "I'm honored, Betsy, but I don't know that I want any conjuring done. I'm looking for direct information on these things. I don't know a great deal about voodooism and Zombies, and—"

The broad smile suddenly vanished from the woman's face.

"Zombies?" she repeated. "Lord sakes, Mr. G-8, you ain't seen Zombies?"

The Master Spy nodded.

"I'm afraid I have, Betsy," he said. "Do you know anything about them?"

"Well, I know quite a powerful lot about them," Betsy admitted.

"But you're not a real Haitian, are you?" G-8 asked. "Aren't you from the southern United States somewhere?"

"Yes," R-1 interposed, "Betsy used to cook for Colonel Herron in the United States several years—before they went to Haiti. She's practiced conjuring for some time. When she heard the colonel was going to be transferred to Haiti in charge of a detachment of marines, she said she'd go along with him. She stayed down there—how long was it, Betsy?"

"Yes, sir," Betsy said. "About two years. And I sure learned a powerful lot about conjurin' down there." Her heavy brows knit together. "But Mr. G-8, I don't like this Zombie talk. I've heard some strange things lately, and last night I had a feeling that something queer was going on. I don't know nothin' about nothin', exceptin' one thing: I don't like Zombie talk. It makes me think of a man that mighty near put me out of conjuring business when I was in Haiti."

G-8 leaned forward in deep interest.

"Do you know the name of that man?" he prompted. "Is he a Haitian?"

"Yes, sir, he's a Haitian all right. His name's Jolito. The natives call him King Jolito and he sure is a king when it comes to conjurin'. He's got

all the folks in Haiti scared of him." Again Betsy frowned deeply. "But you ain't interested in him, be you? I mean, he ain't done nothin' to you, Mr. G-8, has he?"

"I've just received a report from Haiti, Betsy. We had some trouble last night and we're going to have plenty tonight. This report said that your friend, King Jolito—"

"My friend!" Betsy exploded. "Mr. G-8, I don't mean to be disrespectful, but don't you go calling that magic maker no friend of mine. There ain't nothin' I'd rather do than conjure him up a mess of bad luck he'd never get over."

"I think you'll have the opportunity to do that," G-8 told her, "and I hope you can work it—or at least tell us what we can do. At any rate, as I was saying, this King Jolito has apparently been conspiring with Germany against Haiti. He was seen boarding a German submarine off the coast of Haiti about three weeks ago. That means that he's surely in Germany by now."

Betsy's great mouth opened wide in horror and amazement. Her eyes rolled and she raised her hands in supplication.

"Lawsy me!" she groaned. "I reckon there's sure going to be trouble now." Suddenly she stopped her incantations and stared at G-8. "Mr. G-8," she demanded, "do you know where this King Jolito hangs out?"

The Master Spy shook his head.

"No," he said, "I haven't the slightest idea, except, of course, probably somewhere in Germany. That's what I intend to find out tonight, if possible."

The bell on the hall telephone rang and the Master Spy leaped to answer it. Two reports came from aerial headquarters. The voice of the reporting officer was tense with fear and excitement:

"Fifty-Seventh pursuit squadron has just been bombarded from the air. Seven German night bombers came over and have completely destroyed the field. Every hangar is blown up and half the personnel has been killed. Also, headquarters of the Thirty-First Division was blown to bits in another bombing raid by six day bombers. We're waiting for advice from you."

A jumble of thoughts raced through G-8's mind. He tried to think of a sensible answer.

"Move all headquarters from their present positions," he ordered. "Have all planes taken

from their present hangars and moved to the opposite side of each field."

He hung up the receiver and stood there thoughtfully. Nippy and Bull had joined R-1 and Betsy in the main room when G-8 came back.

"Nippy, you and Bull and I are going to do a lot of flying tonight. Plenty. We're going to try to trail one of these enemy planes back and see where it lands on the German side of the lines."

R-1 looked surprised.

"But surely you know practically all of the enemy airdromes," she said.

"Yes," the Master Spy admitted, "we know them. But we've been patrolling all day and we haven't been able to spot the slightest activity. All the old dromes seem to have been abandoned, and I don't know where these planes are coming from tonight."

"Say, listen," Nippy chirped. "Remember—you pulled a clever stunt not so long ago that helped you to follow a car. Why couldn't you pull the same thing on one of these planes?"

"You mean phosphorous?" G-8 demanded.

"Sure," the terrier ace nodded enthusiastically.

The Master Spy smiled.

"Remember," he said, "I had things under control, then. This is going to be something else again."

"Yeah, but all you've got to do is to manage, somehow, to get some phosphorous paint thrown into the propeller of one of these planes," the terrier ace insisted. "By the time that's done, you'll have the plane plastered well enough so that you can follow it."

G-8 tensed.

"Say, that's not a bad idea," he said. "I see now how it can be done. I'm going down to the laboratory in Paris and see about preparing some of the stuff now. R-1, you and Betsy better get out of here. I wouldn't be surprised if the enemy will try to blow up every airdrome on this side of the lines—tonight!"

Another bad report came in before G-8 could get away. Headquarters phoned him that the 97th squadron had been completely demolished by bombing raids. Ground guns had had no effect on the ships with their ghostly pilots.

The Master Spy climbed into his long, low roadster and drove slowly toward Paris. He

needed time to be alone so that he could think clearly. Here in the car, at least the telephone wasn't ringing every few minutes to bring him one ghastly report after another. Never had he encountered such a difficult problem. Complete annihilation threatened the Allies if something weren't done soon. This simple trick of throwing phosphorous on a Zombie plane and following it back to the place from whence it had come was the only move he could think of to solve the ghastly problem. And that would be a mere beginning.

He heard a thunderous roar above as he reached the outskirts of Paris. German bombers were droning along on their course of destruction. They passed him, and farther on he heard the roar of the bombs which they dropped in the center of Paris.

He was driving with more caution now, for the streets were filled with screaming throngs of panic-stricken citizens. Allied soldiers were vainly trying to keep order.

The bombing raid was over when G-8 reached the general's office, and he found the building still intact. As he entered the lower hall, the great Yank commander himself was helping the police clear the building of terrified citizens who had taken refuge there.

"G-8!" he boomed as he saw the Master Spy. "Are you all right?"

The Master Spy nodded.

"And you, General?" he asked.

"Yes," the general said. His face was haggard and worn from the strain he had been under. "For the love of heaven, G-8, can't something be done to stop this cursed thing?" he cried. "Reports of bombing raids have been coming in from every sector, and our men are getting the jitters. They can't fight these new German devils! What's happened to them? A few days ago I was sure we had the enemy licked. And what are all these crazy stories I hear about not being able to kill these new German pilots?"

The general looked imploringly at the Master Spy. G-8 knew he was waiting for reassurance that the rumors were not true, but he had to shake his head.

"I'm afraid that's the truth, General," he confessed. "I encountered one before dawn this morning and I wasn't dreaming."

The general stared at him for a moment.

"Then for heaven's sake, start doing something, man!" he cried. "Any help you want is yours for the asking."

"Right," G-8 nodded. "I just dropped in to see if you were O.K. Keep well under cover, General. We don't know when more of these raids will be coming."

The Master Spy hurried out of the general headquarters building, leaped into his car and sped through the streets. Groups of people stood on the dark sidewalks, talking excitedly.

G-8 drew up to the curb, several blocks farther on, before the official chemical laboratory of the American Army. There he gave directions for a mixture to be made—a phosphorescent paint that would dry quickly and glow in the darkness.

With this liquid safe in a vial of thin glass, G-8 took the match box filled with the dust of the crumbled mummy, and gave it to another chemist for analysis.

The investigation took only a short time. The chemist shrugged as G-8 asked him the results.

"This is nothing more than the ash which is left after a body has been cremated," he said.

G-8 thanked him, and still in a mental haze, went out to his roadster. Carefully, he deposited the thin glass vial on the cushion of the seat, and starting his motor, headed back for Le Bourget. Another bombing raid was on over another portion of Paris. Planes roared and bombs blasted deafeningly.

As he neared Le Bourget, the blasting of bombs came from ahead of him as well as behind. There was the scream of many Fokkers, interspersed now and then by the sound of British and American pursuits. The raid was just over when G-8, dodging shell holes in the tarmac, reached the officers' quarters. They were still standing in fairly good condition.

Dark figures came running through the night from across the field. Nippy was the first to reach him and Bull was close behind. Then some of the mechanics and R-1 and Betsy arrived.

"Holy Herring!" Bull choked. "Can't we do something about this, G-8? If this keeps up, there won't be anything left of us! We won't have an air service or—"

"We're going to do something right now," the Master Spy cut in. He held up the bottle. The contents glowed like a firefly in the night.

"Listen," Bull pleaded, "you can't do this, G-8. Let me try! If I get knocked down by one of the Heinies, the war won't lose much. You've got to keep going, fellow!"

"I think I can manage this without getting hurt," G-8 told him. "At least, I'm going to take the chance."

"Listen, a bird can't do it and live!" Bull protested. "If you get close enough to one of those Fokkers to throw that bottle into the propeller, the Zombie that's flying the thing will kill you! I was watching the raid from these trees, and believe me, those Zombies never miss what they aim at. They just didn't know where we were; that's the only thing that saved us."

As they talked, G-8 was striding toward the three Spads on the other side of the field.

"I'm not going to try to throw this bottle into the propeller," he said. "I'm going to hook it on the bottom of my aerial, in place of the lead weight that holds it down now. I can be about a hundred feet above a German plane and still drag the vial through his propeller—with luck."

"We'll go with you to see that he doesn't pull any funny stuff," Bull said.

But G-8 shook his head.

"No," he said. "This is a job for only one—and I'm going to do it. You stay here, unless something big breaks or you hear from me."

The engine of his Spad was started and he climbed in. He saw that his tank was full of gas and watched his instruments rise to tell him the motor was warmed. He brought the end of the aerial cable up over the edge of the cockpit and tied the neck of the thin glass bottle to the cord. Then, still holding the bottle gently in his lap, he gave the signal for the chocks to be removed and pushed the throttle ahead. The Spad thundered into the night.

While he climbed, he eased the bottle and aerial over the side and began unwinding the cable until it was full out and trailing below. From that same aerial, he contacted headquarters.

"I want the number of the airdrome nearest to Le Bourget that hasn't been bombed yet," he said

A moment later, the number was flashed back to him.

"Squadron Thirty-Four at Tresley has not been attacked yet."

G-8 wired confirmation of reception and climbed as he turned toward the Allied airdrome mentioned. For more than an hour he droned patiently above the field of the Thirty-Fourth. Suddenly, far below, he saw the blast of bombs, and in the light of the explosions, he made out the silhouettes of five enemy planes turning south.

He picked the plane on the left rear tip and sent his Spad hurtling down upon it. The Hisso screamed like mad as the plane gathered speed. G-8 sat tense, hunched over his stick, eyes measuring the distance between his Spad and the Hun plane he had chosen.

His hand grabbed the triggers of his Vickers and the machine guns bucked and chattered. But he was not aiming for any vulnerable spot on that enemy plane; rather, he was pointing his guns directly at the right wing tip. In the light of a burning hangar below, he followed his tracers. Now, as he had expected, the Hun ship cut out from the formation and zoomed up to meet him

At that same instant, the Master Spy zoomed also. It was a perfectly-timed attack. The bottle hanging from the aerial cable smacked into the Hun pilot's propeller. There was a dull flash as the iridescent paint flew back over the enemy plane. The Spandau guns on the nose of that bomber yammered, and slugs drummed up through G-8's motor cowling. He zoomed high and cut the aerial loose.

The rest of the bombers had gone on, but the ship which G-8 had attacked was coming up after him. The Master Spy turned to the right and kept climbing, managing to lose him. He saw the Fokker turn left, wander about the sky in search of him for a few minutes, then streak off toward the enemy lines.

That great splotch of phosphorescent paint was easy to follow. G-8 droned on over the lines and far back into the interior of Germany. Now and then his motor caught, sputtered, then picked up again. He sat tensely in his cockpit, teeth clenched, eyes glued to the glowing bomber below.

Suddenly, he saw that the enemy plane was going down to land. G-8 circled, orienting himself so that he would know exactly where this airdrome was.

Without warning, a half dozen Spandau guns suddenly sputtered out from above and a flare burst over G-8's ship, almost blinding him. Enemy slugs pounded upon his wings, cut down through

his cockpit, clanked into his motor. Suddenly, the Hisso stalled.

There was only the roar and blasting of the German ships, now. G-8 had no alternative; he must land here at the field of the dead.

CHAPTER SIX

The Devil's Whip

There had been times in the past when the Master Spy would have welcomed this situation, but that was when the circumstances below had been slightly different. In this case, however, the last thing in the world he wanted was being forced down in this field. He had had no intention of landing there if he could possibly avoid it.

He had thrown one hand up in a gesture of surrender; and he flopped back limply in his seat as though some of those screaming Spandau slugs had stabbed into his body. He let both hands fall to the sides of the cockpit, the left one dangling limply over the edge. But with his feet, he kept a firm grip on the rudder bar and he held the stick tightly between his knees. Through his half-open eyelids, he saw the attacking Fokkers veer away and he knew that his ruse had worked so far. They thought they had finished him, and they were waiting for him to crash.

Flying in a dizzy glide with one wing dipped low, G-8 sent his Spad over high trees that skirted the boundary of the field and on into lower scrub growth. He knew he must work with caution, for the Zombie pilots were hanging menacingly above him. In the next instant he would drop one hand inside the cockpit to the stick, and leaning forward, effect the best possible crash landing in that scrub growth.

G-8 eased back on the stick as the tops of saplings lashed through his landing gear. The Spad lurched slightly. He leaned forward, brought his stick hand into the cockpit and grabbed the top of the control lever. The Spad was settling. He yanked the stick back in his lap. There was a crash as wings, nose, and landing gear struck branches and the trunks of small trees.

The Master Spy threw up his free arm to protect his face as his body was hurtled forward. That arm struck the cockpit cowling, and slipping

down, crashed into the instrument board. Everything was whirling about G-8. From above he could hear the chatter of Spandau guns. The Zombies had perceived his trickery and were determined to prevent his escape.

Above the turmoil that was set up by the crashing plane and the enemy guns, G-8 was dimly aware of several things. Bullets were spattering down into the ground and pounding against the ship covering. The tail was rearing up behind him as the Spad nosed over, and in the next instant, he was hanging hand downward. A bullet ripped through his clothing. Instinctively, he flipped the safety belt catch and dropped out on his head and shoulders.

By now the flares had gone out, but the firing from above became more intense than ever. Fokkers zoomed and dove, shooting wildly all about his ship. G-8 was running zigzag fashion for the heavier timber farther away from the field. From behind him, he heard the ponderous thud of heavy, running feet and the crashing of bodies hurling themselves through the timber growth. Strangely enough, there were no lights and there was no shouting.

Flares suddenly filled the sky again as the Fokkers rose high above the woods through which he ran. The light and shadow streaking across the forest created a weird effect, made more horrible by the knowledge that living corpses were running in savage pursuit of him.

At first, when he heard the roar of those plane motors, G-8 was positive that they were going to bomb the whole woods area in the hope of getting him. He stopped suddenly beside a large tree and stood close to it as the planes droned overhead. Other German crates came rumbling on, but no bombs fell.

G-8 stared behind but could see no sign of the pursuing Huns in the light that the flares spread over the woods. He waited while a third *staffel* of Hun ships came over.

He caught a glimpse now of his pursuers. They were at least a hundred yards behind him. His heart leaped as he realized that he had gained on them. They were running with a slow, ponderous gait that was more like a fast walk. There was again that same mechanical, rhythmic pace that was not human.

He dashed off into the woods again, keeping that large tree behind him as long as possible. He dashed on in breathless haste, wondering

fleetingly why all those enemy planes were passing over him. Other ships were coming over now, and he heard them cut off their motors farther on.

Suddenly, a fearful suspicion crystallized in his mind. He remembered the general terrain of this country and he knew there were fields on beyond him. That probably meant that those planes were going over there to land in those fields. Yes, there was no doubt about it now, for he could see flares settling down to the right and left ahead of him. Pilots were climbing from their ships and entering the woods to form a tight circle about the Master Spy.

A feeling verging upon panic seized G-8. He turned sharply to the right, for he had seen no flares in that direction. If the Zombie pilots had found no landing place over there, he might have a possible chance of slipping through. He didn't know how far he had run, but he guessed it must be at least two or three miles. His breathing was labored, now, and he could feel his heart pounding at the base of his skull. Now and then he slowed to a fast walk when his legs refused to carry him any longer at a dog-trot.

The forest became horribly still. Only occasionally was the silence broken by the distant rumble of a great gun, far off on the Front. There was no more screaming of planes, and the wind sighed gently in the treetops above G-8. Twigs snapping under his boots sounded like pistol shots to the Master Spy's straining ears. His whole body was crying out for rest, but he pushed on at a desperate speed.

Slowly, he realized that something strange was taking place about him. A night bird flew past as though driven on by sudden fear. Something came crashing through the thicket on his left. Other beasts of the forest—squirrels, chipmunks, and rabbits—came rushing by.

The Master Spy's woods instinct swiftly told him the awful truth. Something ahead of him was frightening these animals. This path, which he had hoped would be clear, was closed in!

In desperation he changed his course, this time to the right. There might be a space there that his ghastly pursuers had not covered. No animals had come from that direction, so he would be safe for a time, at any rate.

Regardless of his fatigue, the Master Spy started off on a mad race for freedom. He had gone perhaps a half mile when once more he saw

birds flying past him and heard animals fleeing toward him. These beasts and birds of the forest seemed to have no fear of him, but they fled in panic from something else.

Bewildered and frantic, G-8 turned again, this time directly backward. He was completely at a loss. The animals that he could hear about him would probably know how to escape this awful menace better than he, so he dashed back the way he had come. From the right he could hear thudding boots.

G-8 turned again from his pursuers. Suddenly, he stopped short and stood tense and motionless, for from the darkness ahead, not more than ten paces away, came an awful scream of fear. For an instant, he was unable to distinguish the night beast that had made it. Then, as it subsided into a sort of grunting whimper, he realized that it had been the cry of a wild boar.

G-8 was in the center of this mad group of beasts. They were tearing away from him. It was almost pitch dark in the woods, but he had been there long enough so that his eyes had become accustomed to the gloom. He could make out the shadows of the trees and also certain larger moving objects. Thus it was that he saw dark forms closing in from all sides. Ghastly white faces leered at him.

In frantic desperation, he whipped out his automatic, convinced at the same instant that it would do him no good. He emptied his gun at the three nearest Zombies, but the shots had no effect. With that slow, even, plodding tread, they came on—straight for the Master Spy.

There was only one chance left—a desperate chance. He lowered his head and charged in the manner of big Bull Martin making a line plunge. A shoulder struck the nearest Zombie and immediately that side of G-8's body seemed to lose all feeling. He recoiled as though he had struck a stone wall, then his head hit something just as hard. He sensed that he was being hurled back. Queer lights flashed about him for a moment, then went out, leaving him in total darkness.

A strange sense of horror already had hold of G-8 as he regained consciousness. There were no woods about him now. It must, he decided, have been a long time since he was knocked out. He felt the cold, clammy hands of Zombies on his arms as they held him up.

Before him he made out a strange figure. At first, he thought it had no face, then he realized that it was a man. The fellow stood perhaps six feet, six inches tall, with immense, slightly-stooped shoulders and a powerful body. He was dressed in rags, and on his head, set well back, he wore a battered high silk hat. The eyes of the man glowed like red coals. He was holding out both arms.

He appeared to be standing in an attitude of prayer, with arms raised as though to pronounce a benediction. Suddenly, the Master Spy's muscles contracted with a feeling of horror! He stared at what he had thought to be muscles rippling along those huge arms. A head drooped and a body coiled, and he realized that these were snakes that had wound themselves around the arms.

As his brain cleared, the Master Spy knew that this must be the Haitian voodoo doctor, King Jolito. He ventured that opinion in his first words. The great head gave a short nod, and a booming voice left the thick lips.

"*Ja. Mein* King Jolito." He lowered one arm and pointed at G-8's feet. "There is shovel—dig!" he barked.

The Master Spy stared down. A shovel lay on the ground in front of him. He saw, too, something else that he had not noticed before. To the left was a small, white cross planted in the ground, and beyond that were many other crosses. He realized that he was standing in the midst of a cemetery.

The giant voodoo doctor waved a hand to the Zombies that clustered behind G-8. A clammy hand was placed at the back of the Master Spy's neck and he felt his collar choking him. There came a terrific wrench that nearly snapped his head off, accompanied by the sound of ripping fabric. With one sweep of his hand, a Zombie had laid his back bare. King Jolito uttered one word:

"Whip!"

G-8 heard the swish of a lash and felt it strike with terrific force along his back. King Jolito spoke again.

"Dig," he grunted.

There was no thought in G-8's mind of resisting. That whip lash had told him that argument would be useless. Before the lash could strike again, G-8 was digging into the grave. Zombies formed a tight cordon about him as they watched.

The spade struck something hard and hollow-sounding, then broke through the rotten wood of a casket. The odor of the long dead came up through that break to the Master Spy's nostrils. It choked and gagged him, but another merciless stroke of the whip across his bare back nearly knocked him flat and made him forget all about his nausea. He dug on, uncovering the top of the casket.

King Jolito spoke from just above him.

"Bring out," he ordered.

G-8 bent down, took hold of one of the handles and strained upward. The coffin loosened. One of the Zombies took hold of the other end, and together he and G-8 heaved on it. It came grudgingly, as the earth clung tenaciously to its dead. At length, the casket was free and they lifted it out on the pile of dirt that G-8 had dug. The Master Spy straightened his pain-wracked back.

"Put on coat," the voodoo devil ordered.

G-8 turned. Two Zombies were holding out his Yank uniform coat, and he slipped his arms in and buttoned the front.

All this time there had not been the slightest change in the expression on the doctor's face. King Jolito spoke again.

"You G-8," he boomed. "They tell me, when I come, 'Look out'—maybe you stop me. You come see what happen. I show you. You have chance to fight for life against Zombies. Come. You carry coffin."

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Flying Coffin

G-8 was suddenly seized from behind. A bandage was placed quickly over his eyes and tied securely at the back of his head.

He heard the deep-throated voice of King Jolito order, "Bend over."

The memory of that whip lash was still fresh in the Master Spy's mind, and he obeyed instantly. He felt a great weight placed on his

shoulders, bearing him down. Putting his hands up to steady it, he caught hold of the casket handles.

Someone seemed to be guiding him by a gentle touch on the arm. There was no word spoken, but G-8 started off through the cemetery, bearing that half-rotted casket on his back.

For a long time he plodded along under the weight. The ground became rough, and several times he stumbled and was about to fall. But the cold, clammy hands of the Zombies caught him, held him up, and helped him to go on. He had lost all sense of direction, time, or distance. The heavy load that he carried was becoming unbearable, but there was no way out. For once in his career, the Master Spy had encountered circumstances beyond all control.

At length, when it seemed that he could go no farther, he heard the commanding voice of Jolito bark, "Stop!" He obeyed gladly, and the bandage was slipped from his eyes. The change was so abrupt that at first he could not see clearly about him; then he made out a great Gotha bomber standing nearby.

The coffin was being lifted off his shoulders, and he was aware of a terrible pain in his back. With considerable effort, he managed to straighten, and as he did so, he saw that several Zombies were tying the coffin on top of the fuselage between the rear cockpit and the tail. The voodoo doctor was pointing to a ladder that led up to the rear gunnery cockpit.

"In," he grunted.

G-8 obeyed, and he noticed that the head of the casket was less than three feet from the edge of his cockpit. In fact, the single machine gun on its swivel, pointing backward, almost touched it.

Someone seized G-8's feet. He heard irons clamped about his ankles and knew that he was anchored there. This happened just as he was beginning to have hopes of a possible escape if they left him with that machine gun at his disposal. He turned it tentatively on its swivel and felt the knuckle joint. The gun was anchored there solidly so that he could not turn it upon the crew.

He tried to keep his voice calm as he spoke, but it came out a bit weak and unsteady.

"What is this, King Jolito," he demanded, "some new kind of a game?"

Jolito's facial expression never changed as he answered. "You come to see. I raise corpse

from dead to fight with you. You have machine gun."

"When does all this take place?" the Master Spy demanded.

"We take off, fly over lines," Jolito told him. "You see."

Already the motors were being warmed, and Zombies were walking about the plane. Some were climbing into the forward cockpit by way of the ladder, which had now been moved.

The giant voodoo doctor was walking about on the ground. G-8 moved his machine gun cautiously, for if he could catch that devil in the line of fire, he would be able to finish him off. There was no doubt in his mind but that bullets would kill King Jolito. He swung the gun, but it wouldn't turn to the doctor. He pushed harder, strained against it, but it seemed that Jolito defied his very thoughts. For he stepped back out of range. Even though his back was toward G-8, he spat out:

"Fool! You cannot kill Jolito. Do not try!"

He walked away again, paying no further attention to the Master Spy. A minute later, G-8 saw him climb into the forward cockpit. The giant raised his great arm in signal as the motors churned, and the Gotha lumbered across the field, gathering speed slowly. At length, when it seemed she was about to crash into the trees at the far end of the field, the great bomber lifted and labored higher, heading toward the front.

G-8 found a folding seat in that big cockpit, let it down and sat on it. As they flew on, he looked about the inside of his cockpit. Something moved on either side of him. Upon closer examination, he saw that the rudder cables ran through there from the pilot's cockpit. His eyes strained out across the coffin and he saw the cable move first to the right and then to the left as the pilot kept the bomber on an even course.

Turning to look ahead, G-8 could see occasional spurts of flame from German artillery guns and he knew they were nearing the front lines.

Suddenly, above the roar of the engines, he heard a booming voice ring out. King Jolito was standing in the pilot's cockpit, facing the tail. His words came in a strange tongue that G-8 couldn't understand—perhaps it was a language native to the Haitians. But even though he couldn't get the meaning of that odd chant, there was something

austere and compelling about it that held the Master Spy.

He scarcely noticed the movement of the thing that crawled along the fuselage. Suddenly, he felt it glide past, brushing against him. Turning in horror, he saw a snake like those that had coiled themselves about Jolito's huge arms. This snake, he was sure, had something to do with the ceremony of raising the dead. Perhaps if he could catch it and fling it from the plane, it would break the spell!

He lunged for it, but the snake was already moving more swiftly. It slithered into one rotted corner of the casket, near where the head of the corpse would be, and vanished inside.

G-8 stared in awed silence. The motors were being throttled back, and he could hear King Jolito's voice rising higher and higher in an unearthly, wailing chant. But the Master Spy was paying no attention to the conjurer; his eyes were glued to that casket behind him. Although he could see nothing, he sensed that something awful was taking place there.

The voodoo doctor's incantations rose to an even higher pitch and volume. Never before had the Master Spy heard any human being make a sound that was so weird!

He sensed a movement within the half-rotted casket. Something was stirring inside! The casket rocked a little, in spite of the fact that it was bound to the top of the fuselage.

G-8's eyes fairly popped out of his head as he saw the top of the casket bulge. The corpse inside was alive once more, struggling to burst out of his stinking prison! A splinter of wood rose up, the sides of the casket bulged—and suddenly the cover burst open!

G-8 saw a hand rise up, then an entire greenish-white arm was poked through the break in the coffin cover. Next, a close-cropped head appeared. The living corpse was rising dazedly on all fours through the coffin top as though awaking from a long sleep. He stood up through the shattered wood, at first unsteadily. The rushing air tore nearly all of his rotted uniform away from him, and the rest clung to his decayed flesh. Shrunken lips in the greenish-white face parted to bare teeth that were long and white and dry. The seemingly sightless eyes were rolling slowly in their hollow sockets, as if in frantic search of something. Suddenly, they riveted on G-8!

The Master Spy crouched in his cockpit. His hands were grabbing the machine gun in front of him, but he was certain that it would be useless to him. He had fired full into the face of the Zombie who had carried him into No-Man's-Land, but his bullets had no effect at all.

The creature in the coffin crouched as if to spring. He was forced to balance himself against the racing wind. His hands groped over the shattered top of his casket and closed over a portion of the lid—a piece which consisted of nearly half of the heavy wood cover. He rose now to a full standing position and drew back his improvised club to strike a blow at the Master Spy's head.

The muzzle of G-8's machine gun was scarcely more than two or three feet from the half-naked stomach of the Zombie. He pulled the trigger.

The machine gun bucked and chattered, and he saw holes appear in the Zombie's middle, evidence that the bullets had torn into the tissues. Those slugs had no effect on G-8's attacker, and the club was descending with terrific speed. G-8 held down the trigger until the very last second, then he ducked. Even then, he slightly misjudged the speed of the club, for it scraped the top of his head as it whizzed past. He was about to rise up, but the club descended again with such terrific speed that he was compelled to duck once more.

Suddenly, he was aware of smaller planes in the air about the Gotha. He heard a stuttering machine gun and caught a glimpse of an Allied ship bearing down on that Zombie. But Fokkers were tearing in at that Allied Camel.

There was a rending crash, right in the Master Spy's face. The club that the Zombie wielded had swept away the machine gun. G-8 made a lunge for it as it was snatched from its swivel, but missed. The gun plunged down into space.

Suddenly, the Master Spy hit upon a possible plan. There was no other course left to him.

The newly arisen Hun was drawing back his club for another blow at the Master Spy's head. G-8 crouched in his cockpit and with both hands, he grasped the rudder cable on the left side. As the Zombie swung the club, G-8 pulled on the cable with all his might and ducked. The living dead man lurched. The club struck the top of the gunner's cockpit.

G-8 peered up, saw he was still there. Quickly, he swung over to the other cable and pulled with all his strength on that. The rudder swung over to the right, this time, switching the tail to the left just as the creature was striking again.

The club descended as the Zombie lurched. It was plain to see that he was falling now. He had lost his balance completely and was going over into space.

The Master Spy was so pleased with the success of his trick that he had lost track of the club. Then, too late, he realized that it was sweeping down on him with killing force. It crashed against his skull. Flares of light danced before his eyes for a split second and he knew no more.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Death Sentence

As consciousness returned, the Master Spy became aware of voices about him. There was no longer the rumble of Gotha motors in his ears nor the screeching of King Jolito. Someone was speaking in a heavy, guttural German voice:

"*Aber, mein Herr Jolito*," the voice said, "I tell you it should not be! To kill him now, if he is not already dead, would be to go against the wishes of—"

The speaker stopped. In his dazed, half-conscious condition, G-8 could feel someone working over him. He lay there motionless.

Another German voice closer to him said, "He is alive. I felt a distinct series of heart beats. He has a concussion of the brain, but within a few hours he will be conscious once more."

"*Jawohl*," said the first German voice. "*Das ist gut!* You see, *mein Herr Jolito*, you do not understand the circumstances connected with this case. For many months this man you see lying unconscious here has been the most hated and feared enemy we have ever had. *Und* now that we have him completely in our power, you would

kill him like this! *Lieber Gott*, think of the effect it would have upon our people if he were placed against the wall of the *Stadtschloss* in Berlin and shot by a firing squad! The Kaiser would speak from the balcony, *und* perhaps he might even give the order to the firing squad himself! We have not been able to make a move in secret without this *verdammte* one finding it out. *Und* now you would simply kill him here by putting a gun to his head. *Ach du Lieber*, it is ridiculous!"

"Jolito got other plans," G-8 heard the doctor say. "I kill G-8 here, now. Take his body in coffin to Berlin. Tomorrow night I come, raise from dead to fight for Germany."

There was a moment's pause, then the first German said, "*Ja, das ist gut*—but not good enough. Better still the German people should see him die. We can have a hundred thousand people—perhaps two—in the square before the *Stadtschloss* to witness it. *Und* after his heart is riddled with bullets and his body covered with his own blood—then you come forward *und* bring the *verdammte* one back to life—and compel him with your will power to fight for the *Vaterland!*"

G-8 heard Jolito reply in his booming voice, "No, I kill now!"

That next instant was one of the toughest moments that G-8 ever lived through. It was not the fear of death that worried him, but rather the fear that his mission would be fruitless; that he would be unable to carry on.

Suddenly, the voice of the German roared out, "One move, *Herr Jolito*, *und* I will be forced to pull the trigger. I have come at the order of his Majesty, the Kaiser. I still stand for no foolishness from you. I take the *verdammte* one back to Berlin now. You will be there for the execution, as I have mentioned. You will bring this *verdammte* one back to life for his Majesty, the Kaiser."

For the first time G-8 realized that he was lying on a stretcher. He sensed that he was being picked up and yet no hand touched his body. Later, the stretcher on which he lay was put into an ambulance.

Not until the ambulance rolled away did he open his eyes. Through the merest slits, he gazed upward about him. He was the only patient in the ambulance. He could see plainly, for it was broad daylight. There was a double grating door at the end, beyond his feet. He raised his head just enough to see that it was securely locked, then he lay back, rolled his eyes upward, and saw that

there was a grating and a small window separating the stretcher compartment from the driver's seat.

The Master Spy was contemplating his chances to escape. To his relief, he found that his arms and legs weren't bound and he was free to move about. He peered through the driver's window again.

There was another figure sitting beside the driver. He was a big, stern-faced German with the insignia of an *oberst* on his uniform. This man, G-8 decided, must be the German who had insisted upon taking him to Berlin for his execution. The driver was a smaller man, a non-commissioned officer. Both sat rigidly in their seats, staring at the road ahead.

G-8 was studying the grating that covered all sides of the compartment. It was formed of heavy steel cable, with the mesh large enough for a man's hand to pass through. There was only a fabric curtain beyond the grating to separate the driver's seat from the rear compartment.

Hurriedly, the Master Spy fumbled in his pockets, searching for weapons. In the watch-pocket of his breeches, he found a small pen-knife. He lay back on his stretcher and began cutting the canvas from the pole of an empty stretcher next to him. It was rather dark inside the ambulance compartment, and if either the driver or the big Hun *oberst* beside him looked back through the window, they would be unable to see what G-8 was doing, as long as he was in his original position.

Once during that tedious work of cutting away one pole, the *oberst* glanced back. G-8 froze there until he was sure that all was clear again, then he went to work faster than ever. He had the long stretcher pole clear of the canvas now. He crouched by the window and peered through it. As far as he could see, the driver was "unarmed, but the *oberst* held a Luger on his lap. He would have to be taken care of first.

There was one more operation for the Master Spy. He must cut away enough of that curtain behind the *oberst* so that he could make the first attack effective and sure. He must be most careful, for the curtain which needed cutting was less than six inches in back of the *oberst's* ears. He cut slowly, stitch by stitch. After a time, the opening was made. He raised the pole and placed it gently through the wide opening in the mesh. Now he poised the pole there like a javelin thrower, crouched ready to hurl his spear. But this

pole was no javelin, rather it was a heavy beam with a blunt end which in the next instant, if G-8's plans carried, would be bashed against the base of the *oberst's* skull.

Stealthily, G-8 slipped his left hand through another hole in the mesh and prepared to grab the pistol in the *oberst's* lap. All was ready now.

He stared down the road and saw a rough spot ahead. That would help him. Suddenly, the *oberst* moved nervously, as though he suspected something. The Master Spy couldn't wait for that lurch in the road. He hurled the stretcher pole forward and there was a sharp crack as the blunt end struck the base of the *oberst's* skull. The German commander's head snapped forward. At the same instant, G-8 lunged to snatch the Luger, but the ambulance struck the rough spot in the road and lurched sidewise.

The *oberst's* body went limp from the blow and tipped to the outside of the car. Before G-8 could reach the Luger, it had pitched off into the road with the body of the *oberst*.

There was a cry from the driver.

"*Ach du Lieber! Was ist?*"

There came a squeal of brakes and G-8 leaped back. The Master Spy crouched in the darkest corner of the ambulance, holding the stretcher pole at his hip as he would hold a rifle. The driver turned quickly.

"Don't move until I tell you what to do," G-8 cracked. "And hold your hands high."

Obediently, the driver raised his hands as high above his head as the roof of the cab would permit.

"I have you covered," the Master Spy snarled. "Make one wrong move and I'll blow your head off. Now come to the back of the ambulance and unlock the door."

"*Lieber Gott!*" the ambulance driver pleaded. "If I release you, I will be shot by my own countrymen."

"And if you don't, you will be shot by me," the Master Spy rasped. "Come, hurry! You can at least go into hiding after you release me. You'll be alive, anyway! But if you don't unlock that door before I count ten, you'll die immediately. Take your choice! *Eins, zwei, drei—*"

The driver, with his hands still held above his head, climbed down out of his cab and went quickly to the rear while G-8 continued to count. His hands trembled as he took a bunch of keys

from his pocket, selected one and placed it in the lock.

"Nine," G-8 counted savagely.

The key turned in the lock and the door swung open. The Master Spy gave a short nod.

"*Danke schön, mein freund,*" he said.

He hopped out. The young German was down on his knees.

"*Lieber Gott,* spare me, *Herr G-8!*" he pleaded. "I am not worthy of being called a German citizen, now! I should be condemned and shot for this cowardly thing that I have done. But *Herr G-8,* I am only seventeen. I do not want to die! I love life too much."

The Master Spy smiled.

"If I were you, I'd forget it," he advised. "I have a story for you to tell your superiors. Tell them that I hit you on the head and knocked you unconscious with this"—he pointed to the stretcher pole—"and that I must have taken the keys from your pocket. That will satisfy them. Now get away from here as quickly as you can before I become angry and decide to kill you."

"*Jawohl, jawohl!*" the boy cried.

He ran off across the fields, and G-8 turned to the car, drove it farther off the road. There he dragged the *oberst's* body back into the underbrush that skirted the other side of the road and quickly exchanged uniforms. Next, the secret make-up kit came out and the Master Spy began working on his face. His build was somewhat smaller than the *oberst's* and his face did not have the German's heavy jowls. He did not try to duplicate his appearance, but merely to effect a slight resemblance. In all probability, the *oberst's* epaulets and hardware would get him by. He scanned the man's papers and thrust them in his pocket.

Leaving the Hun's body clad in his own Yank uniform, G-8 stepped out on the road. Two cars had gone by while he had been changing with the *oberst,* now a third was coming. It slowed and stopped. A *leutnant* who had been sitting beside the driver of the open car stood up and saluted.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst,* is there something we can do to help you?" he asked. "Are you in trouble?"

G-8 answered the salute and shook his head.

"*Nein,*" he said, "I am simply making an investigation. Tend to your own affairs, *Herr Leutnant.*"

The *leutnant* apologized. He sat down and the car moved away. G-8 slid in behind the wheel of the ambulance. The *oberst's* Luger was in the holster at his side.

The Master Spy felt a little more confident now, and yet there was always that uncertainty. It was all right to fight men who could be killed with a blow on the head or a bullet in the heart, but fighting these Zombies was something else again.

He drove on until he reached the next town, for he had no idea even of his general location. In the village, he learned that he was almost a hundred miles from the field where he had crashed in the Spad. He turned now toward the nearest large city, Wiessberger, which was located approximately ten miles distant.

He left the ambulance on a back street, slipped out when no one was looking, and made his way to the main business quarters of the town. German officers saluted him with much dignity and respect. He knew that he was passing inspection nicely, although his uniform was quite large for him.

At a little hotel, he ate a sumptuous dinner, and lolled in the lobby to smoke for awhile. When he was convinced that enough of the hotel attendants had seen him, he walked in a leisurely, dignified manner to the door and accosted the attendant there.

"Have a staff car and driver brought at once," he ordered. Adopting the name of the *oberst* whose uniform he wore, he continued, "Tell him *Herr Oberst von Dunich* requires transportation at once."

Instead of going outside as G-8 had expected, the doorman stepped into a little telephone booth just inside the door. G-8 watched him suspiciously until he came out again.

"The car will be here in a moment, *Herr Oberst,*" the old man said.

G-8 waited tensely. His hand crept toward the Luger in his holster, for this was no time to be trapped. He had tried to hear what the doorman had said, and the fact that he hadn't made him all the more suspicious.

Presently, a staff car drew up in front of the hotel. A German sergeant was behind the wheel. The *leutnant* beside him climbed out and came

striding up to the door. G-8 was waiting inside. The *leutnant* saluted with a sharp click of his heels.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst* von Dunich, I beg to apologize for this car," he said. "It is all that we can spare at present. I trust it will serve you satisfactorily."

G-8 gave a short nod and peered past him at the car as though he hadn't seen it before.

"It will do," he said. With a matter-of-fact "*Danke schön*," he stepped through the front door of the hotel to the sidewalk.

The *leutnant* darted past him and opened the door of the rear tonneau. G-8 stepped in briskly, turned, and saluted again as the *leutnant* snapped up a final salutation. The sergeant threw the car in gear and they rolled swiftly away from the curb. Now that they were in motion, the sergeant turned sidewise.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst*, I await your command," he said.

"I wish to go to the new airdrome near Browhoffen," G-8 told him. "There is no hurry. I wish to arrive there late this afternoon."

He saw the back of the driver's neck bleach to a sickly white color. His face was the same pasty hue as he turned further around.

"*Ach du Lieber!*" he cried. "*Bitte, Herr Oberst*, do you mean the very new field by the great cemetery of dead heroes? You wish to reach there when it is almost dark?"

G-8 nodded shortly.

"*Jawohl*," he said. "Follow my orders."

The driver said nothing as he turned, but G-8 saw his hands tremble and the knuckles glowed white as he gripped the wheel more tightly. He heard him breathe, "*Lieber Gott!*"

CHAPTER NINE

Airdrome of Death

As G-8 rode along in the back seat of that staff car, he inspected the Luger in his holster carefully and made sure that it was loaded and in good working order.

The driver turned several times to look out of the side of the car and G-8 knew that he had caught sight of the Luger on the Master Spy's lap. That was one reason why G-8 was toying with it, so that the driver would know that he meant business.

Some of the roads they traveled were rough, others were fairly well-paved, but on the whole the trip was long and tedious. The late afternoon sun had lowered well toward the western horizon when they reached a gate in what seemed to be a great fence that extended to the right and left of the highway.

Guards stepped out in front of the car, forcing the driver to stop. G-8 sat back in his seat and glared importantly. One of the guards came up beside the car and presented arms.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst*," he said, "have you a pass?"

G-8 frowned in annoyance.

"A pass?" he repeated in a rumbling voice.

He reached in his pocket, opened the record book of the *Oberst* von Dunich—whom he was impersonating—and flashed the first inner page before the guard.

"There is my pass," he said. "Do I need any more? I am *Herr Oberst* von Dunich. I was sent to inspect this area."

The corporal of the guard hesitated.

G-8 leaned forward and barked sarcastically, "Or perhaps I should write a pass for myself!"

The corporal clicked his heels in a salute.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst*, it will not be necessary," he said. "You may enter."

The corporal's face had turned crimson. It was plain to see that G-8's bravado had worked on him with satisfactory results. The Master Spy nodded to his driver.

"We go on," he said. "Hurry. There is no time to lose. I must get my work done before it becomes dark."

He was not stopped again for questioning. A quarter of a mile farther on, he reached the corner of the great airdrome. He ordered the driver to go along the side of it, turning in where the road entered. There they stopped.

The driver leaped from his seat to open the door, but G-8 was ahead of him.

"You may return," he told him. "I will have no further need of you."

The driver's eyes widened in amazement; then a look of relief crossed his face.

"You mean you are going to stay here—tonight?" he asked. His voice held wonder and awe.

"*Dummkopf!*" the master Spy barked. "Since when has a sergeant had the right to question an *oberst's* action? You will return at once."

The driver gave a short nod.

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst,*" he said.

He jerked the car into gear and shot away.

G-8 stood there, staring out across the field. He turned and looked up and down the line of ships. There were German planes of every description. He didn't take time to count them, but he guessed there were perhaps three hundred lined up and they were bringing more from canvas hangars. There were large numbers of giant Gothas, Hannoveraners, Rumplers, Fokkers, Albatrosses and Pfalz'.

The airdrome was a beehive of activity. Everywhere mechanics worked feverishly. No one seemed to pay any attention to G-8. The sun was growing lower in the west as he strode down the line, glancing at one ship after another.

The air was clear of planes, and as far as he could tell, there was not a single pilot on the field. He was watching one mechanic in particular as he worked on the engine of a Fokker D-7. He stepped up behind him and tapped him on the shoulder. The mechanic jumped as though he had been seared by a red-hot iron. Instinctively, he whirled and stared into the west at the setting sun.

G-8 followed the direction of his gaze. He noticed something there, far off on the west side of the field, that he had not seen before. There seemed to be a white growth like grain sprouting up. Then he made out what it was. There were thousands of white crosses there. This, then, was a cemetery—in all probability, the same place where G-8 had unearthed the casket early that morning. In the center of the cemetery, G-8 saw a great, marble mausoleum. Crosses of many graves stretched far on every side of it.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst,*" the mechanic was saying, his voice trembling anxiously. "I am working as fast as I can."

G-8 had been about to ask a question, but he changed his mind, for it was quite evident that it

was not fitting for him to ask it now. Instead, he gave a short nod.

"Very well," he said. "See that you are done in time."

"*Jawohl,* I will do my best, *Herr Oberst,*" the mechanic promised.

He turned and with desperate speed, worked on.

As G-8 moved down that tarmac, he noticed that the same feverish excitement and haste was evident all over the place. Some fear or anxiety seemed to be compelling the mechanics to do their utmost. He noticed them as they glanced at the setting sun and turned back to their work furiously.

A few moments later, G-8 saw a ground officer approaching. He wore the emblems of a *hauptmann*. As he came up, he saluted the Master Spy smartly.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst,* is there anything I can do for you here at the airdrome?" he asked, speaking in a tense voice.

"I have simply come on an inspection tour," G-8 snapped back.

"I assure you," the *hauptmann* said, "that the mechanics are doing all they can to be ready when the sun sinks below the horizon."

G-8 nodded.

"*Jawohl,*" he said, "I can see that. *Aber,* they should have started earlier and worked harder today. This way, it comes too close upon the zero hour, *nicht wahr?*"

The *hauptmann* colored.

"*Jawohl,*" he admitted, "perhaps it seems so, *Herr Oberst. Aber,* as I say, we are doing our best. Already, half the mechanics that I had here with me have gone partially insane. They are poor mechanics at best."

"*Ach du Lieber,*" G-8 grunted, "are there no men in the *Vaterland?* Must all the good mechanics be sniveling idiots, afraid of their shadows as soon as the sun goes down?"

"They are afraid when the sun goes down," the *hauptmann* told him. "They feel that fear all day long. A number of the mechanics died mysteriously when it was discovered that they had done poor work and some of the motors had failed because of it."

G-8's eyes narrowed suddenly.

"You are sure that's the truth, *Herr Hauptmann*?" he asked.

The *hauptmann* shrugged.

"Those are the facts," he said.

Motors were barking out now all along the line as mechanics started them and let them warm. Gasoline trucks were plying up and down, filling tanks with fuel. A white-faced mechanic came running to the *hauptmann*. He didn't stop to salute, but cried out in agony:

"*Lieber Gott, Herr Hauptmann*, I can not do it! I can not finish it! The engine will not start! They will kill me!"

His eyes bulged in fanatic terror, then suddenly he screamed again. But the *hauptmann* had acted with lightning speed. He raised his hand in which he held a blackjack and struck. There was a sharp crack as the weapon struck the mechanic's skull. The unfortunate mechanic crumpled to the tarmac. The *hauptmann* bowed jerkily before G-8.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst*," he said, "I hope you will excuse me. I must remove this one before he frightens the others."

He picked up the man, tossed him over one shoulder like a sack of meal, and carried him to the nearest hangar.

G-8 glanced at the western sky. The sun was already rimming the horizon. Motors were roaring all along the line now. More and more were being started. The Albatross that the mechanic had been working on before he collapsed was standing without anyone attending it. The *hauptmann* himself strode out from the hangar and took charge, working rapidly to check that Mercedes engine. In another five minutes he had it running.

G-8 strode down toward the far end of the line of ships, pretending to inspect them. Some of the mechanics were leaving their ships with the motors idling slowly; others still worked feverishly on their engines. It reminded the Master Spy of a factory, two minutes before quitting time. Everyone was packing up tools, getting ready to leave.

Down the road along the side of the field came motor trucks, one after another, in a long line. The men of the field stepped into formation, stood rank upon rank, waiting for those trucks.

There were others on the trucks—burly fellows with ugly faces and bayoneted rifles. G-8

stepped behind one of the Fokkers and watched from there. He saw the truck attendants go into the hangars, one after the other and rummage about.

The mechanics were climbing into the trucks. G-8 saw the *hauptmann* climb up beside the driver of one, then turn suddenly and stare about. His keen eyes fell upon G-8, standing behind the Fokker. Quickly, he turned to one of the searching guards and spoke to him. In the next moment, the guard was coming over at a dog trot towards G-8.

The last of the sun's fiery rays had vanished below the horizon. The rank of the uniform that G-8 wore seemed to make no impression upon this guard. He came within a fraction of an inch of jabbing the Master Spy with his bayonet.

"Come, *Herr Oberst*," he barked. "There is no time to lose. Come quickly or we will be late."

"I am an inspecting *oberst*," G-8 snapped. "I came here to inspect this area."

He got no farther. The bayonet pricked through his clothing and he felt a stinging pain as it pierced his flesh a fraction of an inch.

"Move quickly," the guard rasped, "or I will be forced to kill you. It is my order."

There could be no denying the guard's sincerity. G-8 moved. The guard propelled him from behind toward the nearest truck. There he was extended the courtesy of riding beside the driver on the front seat. The guard climbed in behind.

With every truck filled, the procession rumbled off the way G-8 had come. Fearful eyes of those in the truck, and even the eyes of the driver, constantly turned toward the west to gaze again and again upon the sea of white crosses and the marble temple of the dead. It was as though they expected some awful power to rise up from that cemetery to crush them, if they didn't leave in time.

The whole sight was an awe-inspiring spectacle. Not one living soul, as far as G-8 could tell, was left in that entire area. Yet, there in the twilight stood almost three hundred planes with motors idling, waiting for pilots to come and fly them.

The arrival of those pilots was the one thing that G-8 must witness. He must somehow contrive to be there when they arrived; to see the ships take off; to see the unbelievable sight of their rising from the dead *en masse*.

The procession reached the gate through which he had passed a short time before and the truck in which the Master Spy rode was the last to pass through the entrance. He saw the gate closed and locked securely behind them. There was a small gate house to the east of the road. One of the guards opened a heavy metal box on the outside of that building, and threw open a great switch. That done, he closed the door, placed a heavy padlock on it and climbed in the car.

G-8 guessed that by throwing the switch, the metal fence had been charged with electricity.

Three miles farther on, they reached a temporary barracks that had been hastily erected. The mechanics climbed out, and the *hauptmann* came up to the Master Spy, saluted, and bowed.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst,*" he said, "I beg to apologize for the way you were treated. You no doubt realize now that it was necessary. There was no time to lose. The order is that any man not in the trucks by the time the sun sinks below the horizon is to be shot. You knew that, of course."

G-8 nodded.

"*Jawohl,* of course," he said, "*aber* I did not realize that it was so late. I should, perhaps, thank the guard for sparing my life, *nicht wahr?*"

"That will not be necessary, *Herr Oberst,*" the *hauptmann* assured him. "*Und* now I offer you the hospitality of my meager quarters for the night. Or would a car be of more service to you?"

"I'll choose the latter," G-8 said.

"Perhaps you would be my guest for dinner," the *hauptmann* invited.

G-8 hesitated for a minute, then nodded.

"*Jawohl,*" he said, "*Danke schön.*"

He ate leisurely and it was dark when he had finished. He excused himself.

"I would be glad to furnish you a driver with the car, if you wish," the *hauptmann* suggested.

G-8 shook his head.

"You need all the men you have here to work on the planes," he said. "I would not think of depriving you of even one man. I can drive well enough myself."

He climbed into the car and started off into the night. He turned away from the airdrome, after leaving the camp, and drove on for a little time. Then he turned back by another road that

he remembered from his map, circled the mechanics' camp, and headed for the gate of the airdrome. He drove slowly and cautiously, without lights. Occasionally, above the purr of the car motor, he heard the blasting of enemy planes as they roared over his head.

At length he reached the field and stopped the car before the little gate house. He had only the car tools and no skeleton keys of any kind for that switch lock. He cut off the car motor, and climbing out, listened for a few minutes. He could hear the churning of motors on the tarmac beyond that fence and the rumble of planes above, filling the air with ominous sound.

He walked noiselessly to the heavy steel switch box and inspected the lock. It was of a make that could not easily be picked. However, he found a piece of wire and went to work at it.

He had been working for perhaps ten minutes when suddenly he froze. He and everything about him were bathed in the brilliant light of a dozen magnesium flares that were settling down from high above. Motors were screaming as ships dove, and he heard Spandau guns chatter in a wild chorus.

Quickly, he moved a few paces away from that switch box and looked up. His heart seemed to skip a beat, for there above him, in the center of a terrific battle, were two Spads. They were quite low down—low enough so that he could see the large identifying numbers on the side of each. The one bore a Seven—the other a Thirteen.

CHAPTER TEN

Three Against the Devil

From the instant that G-8's eyes riveted on the movements of the Spads, grave apprehension overwhelmed him. Nippy and Bull were fighting furiously up there, but the odds were too strong against them. These Zombie pilots rarely missed—and none knew that better than G-8.

He continued to stare up at the awful sight. Nippy was fighting furiously, thrashing about like the terrier ace he was, while Bull Martin stabbed in and out of that mass of Fokkers as though he

were back on the gridiron, making a sensational run with the ball before cheering thousands.

Nippy ripped into one Fokker and it fell burning, but three other Hun ships romped down on his tail to trap him in their cross fire. Instantly, Bull whirled over and came to his little pal's rescue. He hurled his Spad in front of the three attacking Fokkers, forcing them to veer away. Something was happening to Bull's ship. Black smoke belched from the nose and covered his cockpit for a moment.

Horror-stricken at the sight, G-8 stared up, certain that at any instant flames would spurt out to follow that black smoke and cremate the big fellow in his cockpit. The Spad went hurtling down, and Bull's head and shoulders appeared above the smoke. He was sending his ship in a screaming dive for some point to the east of G-8, well outside the wire fence that hemmed in the airdrome and the great cemetery. The Zombies in their Fokkers were trailing him down, still pouring lead at him. Even in the glide, Bull was managing his ship well enough to keep out of the line of fire.

Nippy was lashing down with chattering Vickers guns in a wild effort to protect his pal, and another Fokker before him burst into flames. Other Fokkers were snarling in from the rear and the side of Nippy's Spad. The Spandau guns raved and clattered and sent streams of metal death in Nippy's direction, but the terrier ace was kicking in a wild zigzag course to keep himself out of trouble.

G-8 caught a last glimpse of Bull before he went down behind the trees. When he stared back at Nippy, he knew that the little fellow was in trouble, too. No smoke billowed from the cowling, but the motor had stopped dead and the propeller stayed in a straight vertical position.

Nippy was diving for the same spot that Bull had picked. G-8 waited, then saw the terrier ace's Spad go down below the tree tops. He listened for the sound of a crash, but none came.

He ran for his car. Swiftly, he turned it about and drove back down the road through the darkness. He guessed that Nippy and Bull had gone down more than a mile away. There might be a good chance of reaching them first. He put the accelerator down to the floor on the straighter stretches as he sped through the clear, moonlit night. Far beyond he came to a fork in the road and took the branch turning to the right. That would lead him near the spot where he had last seen Nippy and Bull. The woodland through which

he had been going became dotted with open fields. Nippy and Bull must have come down somewhere in this section.

Suddenly, the Master Spy pulled the car to a short stop. A group of men were coming across the field. A little farther on, two cars were parked in the ditch.

G-8 stepped down to the road, climbed over the stone wall, and approached the men. He saw Bull's head and shoulders towering above the Huns that surrounded him.

Nippy was at the front of the group. Every one of the Germans held a Luger trained on the pair.

"Halt!" the Master Spy cried. He spoke in German but with his natural voice to let Nippy and Bull know who he was. "What are you men doing here?"

He had his Luger out now, ready for trouble. The group stopped. A *leutnant* advanced, squinting at him, then at recognition of his rank, he straightened.

"*Ach, Herr Oberst!*" he cried. "Attention, men!"

There came a clicking of muddy heels. Men stood rigid, their automatics at their sides.

"*Ja,*" G-8 grunted, "*das ist besser! Und* now answer my question. Who are you and what are you doing here?"

"I am *Herr Leutnant Eisenstein,*" the *leutnant* told him. "These are some of my men. We heard the planes of these two enemy pilots coming down. We were going by the road *und* we stopped and captured them."

"Enemy pilots, eh?" G-8 barked. He chuckled. "You act as though you have done important work, *Herr Leutnant.* Better perhaps you should have left them alone. Our former heroes could have taken care of them *sehr gut.*"

"*Aber, Herr Oberst,*" the *leutnant* exclaimed, "*bitte* do you mean that we should not have taken them prisoner?"

G-8 chuckled again.

"*Ach, nein,* of course not," he said. "However, it does not matter much. I shall take charge. Come; bring them to my car."

"But do you know who they are, *Herr Oberst?*" the *leutnant* asked.

"Who they are?" G-8 repeated. "You said they were two Allied pilots. That is enough, *nicht wahr?*"

"*Aber* they are the two assistants of the *verdammte* one, G-8," the *leutnant* told him.

"*Was ist das?*" G-8 demanded. "How do you know?"

"Because of the numbers on their planes," the *leutnant* answered. "The plane of the big one had number seven on it and the other was number thirteen."

"*Ach du Lieber!*" G-8 exclaimed. "That is fortunate—and all the more reason why I should take command of them. These men must not escape. Come, bring them to my car."

The *leutnant* hesitated.

"*Aber, Herr Oberst*, I thought perhaps since we have two cars, it would be better if we put them in the forward car and let the other car follow. As soon as we reach the first town, I will telephone ahead for a stronger guard to make sure that they do not escape."

G-8 realized that this was not going to be an easy release. Above all, he must be able to get Bull and Nippy free. As things were working out it would take a little longer, but he must be on the safe side.

He nodded quickly and said, "*Jawohl*, they must not escape. *Aber*, I have a still better plan. I will take them in my car. You *und* one of your guards will come with me. Your other men can follow in your two cars. In that way, we will make certain that they do not escape."

A look of agreement and relief flashed across the *leutnant's* face. G-8 realized that he had hesitated to let the Master Spy take full charge because he wanted to get credit for the capture himself.

"I will see, *Herr Leutnant*, that your men are given full credit for the capture of these dangerous enemy pilots," the Master Spy said. In the moonlight, he saw the *leutnant* beam with pleasure.

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

"It is nothing," G-8 shrugged. "Come, we must move quickly. I have other things to do. Pick your best guard to accompany us in my car."

The *leutnant* surveyed the men who surrounded the Battle Aces and selected a short, stocky fellow.

"Come," he ordered. "You go with us. Bring the prisoners."

Nippy and Bull advanced. G-8 turned now to let them pass. Bull shot him a look of close scrutiny as he went by but Nippy never once glanced his way. They marched down to the car that G-8 had driven. The Master Spy motioned them into the back seat and ordered the chosen guard to sit between them. He and the *leutnant* took the front seat with the Master Spy at the wheel. The rest of the guards got into their cars and the procession moved down the road.

"I think," the *leutnant* suggested, "perhaps it would be best to take them to general headquarters first."

But G-8 shook his head.

"*Nein*," he said, "that will not be necessary. I wish to have them placed behind bars as soon as we reach the next town. From there I will telephone general headquarters immediately and see that you and your men receive proper recognition."

That seemed to satisfy the *leutnant*. He nodded.

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

They drove a good five miles before they reached the first town. There was a square, on one side of which stood a three-story building of old German style.

A lone, aged policeman was pacing the sidewalk as they drew up before the building.

G-8 called to him, "Do you have a jail here, *mein freund?*"

The old police officer's chest swelled proudly.

"*Jawohl*," he said, "to be sure. *Und* it is a very good jail, too."

"*Gut*," G-8 said. "We have two prisoners for you. Show us the way to the jail and give me the key."

The other cars had drawn up behind them. Nippy and Bull were marched down to the far end of the dimly-lit front corridor of the jail. They turned to the right at the end of that passage for there, barring their way, was an old iron grating.

The police officer took a key from a peg in the wall, a good six feet from the cell door, and placed it in the lock. There was a rusty, squawking sound, then the lock turned. The door groaned and creaked on its hinges.

"We have little use for this, now that everyone is away at war," the old police officer apologized. "This door has not been opened in almost three years."

"That is all the better," G-8 nodded. "It will be that much more difficult for these two desperate prisoners to escape." He turned to the guards. "March them in," he ordered.

The Battle Aces were pushed into the cell. G-8 himself closed the door and locked it, rattling the iron grating to prove to the others that it was securely locked. He dropped the key into his pocket and turned again to the aged police officer.

"Now, if I might be alone in the mayor's office for a time," he suggested. "I have some telephoning and a little routine work to attend to."

He turned back to the *leutnant*.

"You may find quarters for yourself and your men," he said.

The *leutnant* hesitated.

"You do not think it is necessary to place a guard over these two?" he asked.

G-8 stared at him for a moment in mock surprise.

"*Ach du Lieber*, nein!" he chuckled. "Look at the door, *Herr Leutnant*. It is locked and I have the key. There is no way in which they could get out."

The *leutnant* bowed.

"*Jawohl, Herr Oberst*," he said. "I will take my men now to find their quarters."

The Master Spy turned with his back to the cell and watched the *leutnant* march his guards out. Just before following his men around the turn in the corridor, he hesitated again.

"*Bitte, Herr Oberst*, you will not forget to make the report to general headquarters of my capture of the prisoners?" he asked.

G-8 shook his head.

"Have no fear, *Herr Leutnant*," he assured him. "I will surely do that at once, as soon as the police officer has shown me to an office that I may use."

The old policeman nodded.

"Follow me, *Herr Oberst*," he said.

The *leutnant* and his men marched on down the corridor and were passing through the front

door into the street when G-8 and the policeman stopped before a door on the left and opened it.

"This, *Herr Oberst*," the police officer said, "will be your office so long as you wish. I trust you will find it satisfactory."

He turned on the light. The room was furnished with old tables and chairs. A large desk stood in the middle of the ample room, with a heavy, carved, leather-upholstered chair behind it.

The police officer motioned to a telephone on the desk.

"You may use that telephone if you wish, *mein Herr*," he said.

"*Danke schön*," G-8 said. "You may leave me now. No doubt you have your regular police route to cover through the town. That must not be neglected."

"*Jawohl*," the policeman bowed.

He paused at the door, then closed it gently. There were two great windows in the office. One apparently opened at the front of the building, on the square, and the other on an alleyway on the side. The old-fashioned blinds over these windows appeared to be closed. G-8 was satisfied that no one could look in from the outside. He sat down to think and wait. He needed only a few minutes to make sure that the police officer and the *leutnant* with his guard had gone.

Two, three minutes slipped by. He took the key from his pocket, and stepped toward the door. If he waited much longer, the policeman would return.

With the key held ready in his right hand, the Master Spy opened the door with his left. He stopped short, every muscle rigid, for the light behind him shone on the face and figure of *Leutnant Eisenstein*. He was blocking the doorway. There was a menacing look on his face and he held his Luger pointed straight at the Master Spy's middle.

"Hold up your hands, *verdammte* one," he barked.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Buried Alive

G-8 tried his best to hide his astonishment. He didn't raise his hands at once; that would be admitting his true identity. He was careful not to reach for the Luger in his holster.

"*Ach du Lieber, Herr Leutnant!*" G-8 cried. "Have you gone insane? What is the meaning of this?"

The *leutnant's* nerves were evidently on edge. The gun in his hand shook a little. G-8 seized upon that fact immediately.

"*Himmel, Herr Leutnant*, do you know what you are doing?" he asked. "Do you realize the seriousness of this? You, a *leutnant*, are holding me, *Herr Oberst* von Dunich, at the point of a gun. That is the highest form of insubordination. Men have been shot for less! Think what you are doing!"

But the *leutnant* remained firm, although nervous. His lips trembled as he spoke.

"It is true that I am not sure you are the *verdammt* one," he admitted, a little shakily, "but I am willing to take that chance. I have been watching through a hole in the blind. You promised that you would call general headquarters to see that I am given credit for the capture of these two prisoners. You sat down at the desk when you came into the room but you made no attempt to telephone. Instead, you sat there a moment, looking as though you were waiting for all to grow quiet. This, of course, after you thought you had made sure that no one could see in. I watched you take the key to the cell from your pocket and get up. It was then that I ran in here to stop you."

G-8's mind had been working like lightning. For a moment he had thought his best move would be to ridicule the earnestness of the *leutnant*, but now he realized that Eisenstein was not positive that he held the *verdammt* G-8 before his gun. Perhaps there might still be a chance for the Master Spy to make him believe that he was really *Oberst* von Dunich.

G-8 stopped erect and glared at the *leutnant*.

"You *verdammt*, meddling swine," he rasped. "Who do you think you are? A mere *leutnant* telling me when I shall call up general headquarters! Is that all you think of in this war—getting credit for a simple capture? What part of the army regulations gives you license to peek into the private office of a superior officer and spy on his actions? You mentioned the key. Since you feel so concerned about that key, and are so sure

that I was about to use it wrongly, let me remind you that there is a peg where that key hung, well out of reach of the cell. You saw the policeman take it from there, and it was my intention to put it back where it belongs. *Und* now, you insulting, meddling pup, remove that gun from my stomach before I call out the military police and have you placed under arrest!"

The *leutnant* was wavering, but even G-8's last arguments had not convinced him that he was wrong.

The Master Spy was staring at the gun in his hand, speculating as to his chances of lunging to the side and turning the gun from him before it went off. Then something else happened—so unforeseen, so startling that it shocked even the Master Spy. A phantom-like form appeared in the dark hallway behind the *leutnant*. There was the slightest sound of a step, the swish of a weapon descending upon the *leutnant's* head, and a sharp crack of metal on bone! All the life went out of the *leutnant*. The Luger slipped from his fingers, his knees buckled, and he crashed to the floor at G-8's feet. Behind him stood Nippy Weston, holding a lead pipe in his hand. He was grinning from ear to ear.

"By the grace of God and the help of a bent bedspring, we are here, G-8," he announced.

Behind the terrier ace came big Bull Martin. He, too, was grinning.

"Holy Herring!" he said. "Let's get out of here."

The Master Spy was bending over the *leutnant*. When he straightened, he had the *leutnant's* Luger in his hand. He handed it to Nippy.

"I think you've earned this, Nip," he said. "Bull, you will have to go out and get one for yourself."

As he spoke, he saw the big fellow turn suddenly. A draft of air filtered in from the corridor and G-8 heard the front door of the building open. There was a low exclamation from someone who had just entered.

Bull had vanished. There was a smack of fists on flesh, and as G-8 reached the door and peered out, he saw the police officer falling to the floor. Bull bent down, snatched the automatic from his holster and came running back.

"Well, I got mine," he nodded, "only I hated to have to smack the old bird. I didn't hit him very hard. I think he'll come to pretty soon."

"What are we waiting around here for, then?" Nippy demanded.

"Nothing that I know of," G-8 admitted. "Come on."

Bull started for the door, but G-8 drew him back.

"Not that way," he whispered. "I think there's a back door to this building. We'll have to find that. This *Leutnant* Eisenstein may have left some of his guards out front."

They started down the corridor toward the cell. Suddenly, Nippy stopped them.

"Hey, wait a minute," he said. "I've got an idea. Bull, you get hold of the old policeman and bring him along. G-8, I guess you'll have to give me a hand with this *leutnant*."

They carried the *leutnant* and the police officer into the cell and laid them on the floor. G-8 locked the door and hung the key on the peg. Down another lateral hallway they found a door that opened into a rear court. From there they made their way out into the night. They went across the back yard of a smaller building and thence to a back street.

"You two stay in the shadows," G-8 ordered. "I'll walk out under the street light when we come to it. We've got to get a car somewhere."

"And then where do we go?" Nippy demanded.

"We're going to the airdrome of the dead," G-8 replied.

"Holy Herring!" Bull Martin breathed. "You can think of the loveliest places to spend an evening!"

"Something has got to be done mighty soon," Nippy cut in. "That's what Bull and I came over to signal to you."

The Master Spy tensed.

"You mean, something worse has happened in France?" he demanded.

"I'll say it has," Bull boomed. "Tell him, Nip."

"You see, these—whatever they are that are flying the German planes at night—have blown up most of Paris," the terrier ace told him. "Not only that, but they put on one trial attack in the trenches in the Chateau sector. They started in right after dark. The Frogs tried to repulse them

but they couldn't seem to do a thing. They claim they can't kill these Huns! They put bullets in them, but they come right on. And they say that they can see in the dark."

"And I suppose the French are demanding that all the Allies surrender to stop it," G-8 guessed.

"You sure didn't need three guesses to make that one," Bull boomed.

"Then we've got to stop this, before the French actually talk the rest of the Allied nations into surrendering with them," the Master Spy finished.

"That seems to be it," Nippy admitted.

G-8's only answer was to quicken his step. At the corner, he turned right.

"We've got to find a car," he said, "and I don't see any on this back street. We'll have to take a chance on the main street."

Suddenly, he stopped and pointed to a small, dark porch on the front of a house built flush with the sidewalk.

"Suppose you two wait there," he suggested. "I'll go get a car and meet you here. It'll be safer that way."

They followed his orders and G-8 went on alone. Two blocks down the main street, he found a high-powered car parked at the curb in front of a darkened house. A quick glance told him that the car was unlocked. Quickly, he got behind the wheel, turned on the switch and stepped on the starter. A moment later, he was rolling down the street. Behind him, he heard a window slide up and an angry voice yell something at him. He turned right into a side street. Nippy and Bull came running from their hiding place, climbed in, and G-8 drove on.

"Somebody will probably try to follow us," G-8 said, "but I doubt if they'll get far. The police force in this town won't be functioning for the rest of the night."

He sped out of the town and turned in the direction of the mystery drome. He slowed as he came near the field where Nippy and Bull had set down their planes.

"Do you think you could possibly fix your planes so you could take off?" he asked.

"Are you going back with us?" Nippy demanded.

"No," G-8 countered. "I'm going to see what's taking place in the cemetery, if I can get there."

"Then we're going with you," the terrier ace said.

"What do you say, Bull?" the Master Spy asked.

"I can think of about a million other things I'd rather do, if I had my choice," the big fellow said, "but it looks as if we've got a job to do. I'm with you, G-8—straight through."

"Good," G-8 nodded. "I believe I've found a way to get through that fence into the airdrome and cemetery."

"Airdrome and cemetery?" Nippy demanded.

"Sure," Bull countered. "Didn't you know? That's the method my cousin's book says they used in Haiti. These voodoo doctors have their big cane fields next to a cemetery. When they raise the Zombies from the dead, they can go over and start working in the cane fields right away. Then they come back before dawn and sneak into their graves again. That's all there is to it. That's what they're doing here."

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy chirped. "Do you both still believe that these birds are actually being raised from the dead?"

G-8 turned to him from behind the wheel.

"Nip," he said, "I'm not believing anything. I know there's something very crazy going on that I can't explain, but I think that within an hour or two you'll see enough to make you think you're crazy yourself."

As they drove on through the wooded road leading to the entrance of the field and the guardhouse beside it, G-8 told them of his experience in the Gotha. Nippy, still skeptical, only grinned.

"Boy," he said, "they certainly have got you buffaloed! Sure you haven't been having a nightmare lately?"

G-8 only smiled. A few minutes later, they drew up before the guard house. G-8 climbed out of the car.

"Have you got that same bedspring you used to pick the lock of your cell?" he asked.

"Sure," the terrier ace nodded. "Right here in my pocket. Thought maybe we might need it again."

"You will," G-8 told him. "Come on. I've got a tough lock for you to work on."

He led them to the steel switch box.

"There you are, Nip," he said. "Go ahead. As soon as you get that opened, we'll pull the switch and see what happens."

The terrier ace went to work on the lock, probing into the key-hole, twisting the wire this way and that and trying it again. Minutes crawled by. There was a constant rumble and roar of planes out on that airdrome of the dead and above it. Big Bull Martin was plenty nervous.

"Holy Herring!" he breathed, "I never heard so much action around a flying field in my life."

"Wait until you see it," G-8 countered.

"I'm waiting," Nippy grinned. He gave a sudden jerk on the padlock. "There," he said. "It's open."

He removed the lock. G-8 threw open the cover of the switch box and pulled down the lever. There was a flash of blue flame, but that was all. He closed the door again, leaving the switch open, and slipped the lock into place again.

"There," he breathed, "I think that will let us go through the wires now."

"Better make sure," Bull cautioned. "It might not be the right switch."

"I'm going to be sure," G-8 nodded.

In the guard house he found a rifle. Holding it by the wooden butt, he laid it across the bottom strand of fence wire. There was no sign of blue flame or flash or sparks.

"It's O.K.," he said. "Come on."

Boldly, he reached out and touched the wire. There was no shock. He and Bull tugged at the wire while Nippy crawled under. They helped each other until all three were on the other side.

"You follow me," G-8 hissed.

He led the way into the darkness. The drone of the planes became louder and louder as they skirted the road that led from the gate. Suddenly, the Master Spy stopped and crouched beside the road. He drew Nippy and Bull down beside him and pointed. A figure was striding toward them.

"Look!" he breathed.

Nippy and Bull peered from the niche where they were hiding. The figure came closer, using that strange, mechanical step.

G-8 turned his head just enough so that he could see the terrier ace's face. Nippy's brow was wrinkled in a frown and his eyes were narrowed,

surveying this spectacle dubiously. The Zombie was opposite them in the road, not more than twenty feet away. For an instant, he seemed to hesitate in his stride, then he moved on.

"Holy Herring!" Bull gasped when he had passed. "Let's get out of here!"

"You mean," G-8 corrected, "let's get in deeper. That's just a beginning, Bull." He turned to the terrier ace. "How are you doing, Nip?" he asked.

"I'd be doing a lot better," the terrier ace confessed, "if I could figure out how they work this."

"Maybe you think you're going to use tricks like this in a magic show someday," Bull retorted.

"I'd sure like to," the terrier ace admitted.

They struck off through the field, skirting the side opposite from the road. Planes were constantly landing and taking off in the moonlight. The three kept to the shelter of brush and overhanging trees. Now and then the ghastly figure of a Zombie walked within a hundred feet of them. Nerves became more and more tense. Suddenly, Bull stopped and pointed.

"Hey," he gasped, "what's all that white stuff?"

"Crosses," G-8 whispered. "The white crosses of the cemetery. There are more heroes buried in that cemetery than in any other in Germany. It's like our Arlington cemetery."

"What are we doing here?" Bull demanded.

"In the first place," G-8 went on, "we're going to try to find out exactly what's being done here. Then, if it's possible and he's here, we're going to kill King Jolito. I think that's the only thing that will put a stop to this fiendish business."

"Yeh, but where are we going?" Bull demanded.

"There," G-8 said.

He pointed toward the marble mausoleum that glowed in the center of the cemetery.

"We'll work toward that from the rear," he said.

As they approached the mausoleum from the rear, they dropped and crawled on hands and knees between the crosses and over the graves of enemy heroes. Suddenly, Bull, who was on the Master Spy's left flank, gave a low cry and vanished from sight.

"H-holy Herring!" he stammered as he came into view from a hole beside a white cross. "I—I fell into an open grave!"

"Shut up!" Nippy hissed. "Do you want to wake the dead?"

"Shut up yourself!" Bull retorted. "Somebody has beat me to that!" The big fellow's teeth clinched. "I'll be a nervous wreck if I ever get out of here, but I'll see it through. Come on!"

They crawled forward again, close to the side of the mausoleum, moving flat on their stomachs. Out across the white markers toward the field, they could see a group of figures, white and weird in the moonlight. Nippy, who was now on the outside, suddenly rolled away from a grave with a quick gasp and lay still, staring into it.

"Jumping Jupiter!" he breathed.

G-8 and Bull were staring into the grave, too. A snake had just come out of a hole in the ground and was wriggling rapidly away. The ground over the grave was heaving, as though the corpse were struggling to free itself.

"I—I was lying on that grave," Nippy stammered shakily. "I—I felt it crawl over me."

"I think," G-8 hissed, "you are about to witness the arising of a Zombie!"

Nippy's teeth were chattering.

"Not me!" he hissed. "Come on, I'm going to get out of here!"

G-8 took him by the arm.

"Come on," he said, "we're going into the mausoleum."

He pushed the terrier ace ahead of him and they crawled on. They reached the door of the mausoleum and found it open. Not until they had crawled inside did they rise to their feet.

"Jumping Jupiter!" Nippy gasped. "Excuse me for making fun of you, G-8. This stuff is beyond me. It's got me so jittery I can't even think."

"Remember," the Master Spy ordered, "we kill King Jolito the first chance we get."

He pointed out across the sea of white markers.

"I think," he said, "he's in the center of that group of Zombies."

There was a moment's pause. Suddenly, Bull gasped,

Three pairs of eyes were bulging half out of their sockets. G-8 and his Battle Aces were staring at a mound of dirt which they could see plainly in the moonlight. It was rising up, not more than a hundred feet from the entrance to the vault. Slowly, a seemingly bewildered figure pushed the casket lid aside and stood up, still knee deep in his grave. The Zombie stood there, apparently skeleton-like at first; then he seemed to take a more solid form. With a sudden, mechanical effort, he drew himself out of the grave and climbed to the edge of it. Seeming to grow stronger with each step, he strode forward.

G-8 and his Battle Aces stood there like petrified humans, motionless with amazement at what they saw taking place all over the cemetery. Graves were popping open everywhere. The dead were rising in wholesale numbers.

On beyond, they saw planes settling down on the field in the moonlight. There were Zombies going out to service those planes and then take off in them again.

G-8 glanced at his wrist watch. It was midnight, the time when, according to legend, the living sleep and the dead walk. The group of Zombies was drawing closer to the mausoleum. As they came, grave after grave opened and they were joined by others.

In the moonlight, G-8, Nippy, and Bull could see wriggling forms making their way across the surface of the cemetery, then vanish into the ground. G-8 called their attention to one fact:

"Do you notice," he asked, "how the snakes seem to play a part in the raising of the dead?"

"Yeah," Nippy admitted. "I've been trying to figure that one out. The snakes seem to dig themselves into a grave, then they come out again. Soon after that the ground starts heaving. The earth turns back by itself and then—"

The terrier ace stopped. G-8 felt him move over closer to him. He stamped his foot on the stone floor of the death vault. Nippy shuddered uncontrollably.

"That," he said in a shaky voice, "was a snake! I felt it crawl over my foot. I thought I saw it coming around the corner of the door."

"Hey," big Bull Martin hissed, "let's get out of here!"

The first thing we know, the dead in this vault will be raised up and then—"

"We can't!" Nippy gasped. "Look! That bunch is coming this way!"

Already the group of Zombies was within a hundred and fifty feet of the mausoleum. They were moving more swiftly now. G-8's eyes were upon a head with a battered stove-pipe hat, in the center of the Zombies. That was King Jolito. He pointed to him.

"Steady men!" he breathed. "That's King Jolito, there in the center. Do you think you can hit him with your automatics, when he gets a little closer?"

"Holy Herring!" Bull gasped. "I'm so shaky I couldn't hit the side of a barn with a handful of rice at ten paces! But I'll try."

"You've got to get hold of yourself, Bull," G-8 pleaded. "How about you, Nip?"

"I'll try," the terrier ace promised.

Suddenly, the Master Spy leaped back. There was a low, choked cry from Bull.

"Snakes! A half dozen of them just came in! They—"

"Yes, I know," G-8 said tensely. "They were crawling over my feet, too. Hang on to yourselves. They aren't going to do us any harm."

"Yeah, but—" Bull began.

"Never mind that," G-8 cut him off. "No matter what happens, we've got to get Jolito! See his head above that crowd of white-faced Zombies?"

"He's going to stop," Nippy said.

"No," G-8 countered, "I think he's going to come a little closer."

By now, the group surrounding the giant had reached a point within fifty feet of the entrance to the mausoleum. There Jolito and his group of followers stopped. Above the heads of the Zombies, G-8 and his Battle Aces saw him lift the struggling, bleeding body of a stabbed kid goat. Something about that awful scene held them spell-bound so that they were unable to move.

In the most weird fashion imaginable, Jolito began chanting a sing-song sort of poem in that strange tongue of his. It lasted for only a few sentences; then he spoke in jerky, broken German:

"Greatest heroes, come!"

As he spoke, he towered high above the others and raised the bleeding goat over his head to let the blood gush down on him.

"That's the best target we're going to get," G-8 breathed. "Come on, take aim!"

He raised his Luger and drew a bead on the giant. Suddenly, his arm became paralyzed! He heard Bull cry out and Nippy choke in a gasp of horror! Cold, icy fingers were gripping his own throat. He tried to turn his head but it was no use, for he was held immovable in that stone-like clutch. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Nippy pushed ahead, a Zombie holding his neck from the back, propelling him forward through the door.

G-8 was being moved forward, with his feet scarcely touching the stone floor of the mausoleum. Bull, either through fear or complete paralysis, seemed to have been rendered suddenly helpless. A Zombie clutched him, too. All three were held powerless and moved out of the door by three of Germany's greatest fighting heroes, just risen from the dead.

No sound came from either Nippy or Bull. Their guns had dropped from their hands. Presently, they stood before the group they had been watching. The Zombies parted so that the Battle Aces faced King Jolito himself, only two paces away. The giant voodoo priest was speaking.

"Once you fool Jolito," he rasped, glaring at the Master Spy. "This is end." He nodded to the creatures who held G-8 and his Battle Aces as their helpless prisoners. "Take them back to your caskets. Bury alive."

Bull made a sudden, futile effort to escape. The scuffle lasted but for a second, then he was turned back with Nippy and G-8 toward the mausoleum.

It was pitch dark inside there. All three Battle Aces suddenly broke loose as they passed the entrance. G-8 reached out with both fists, but they seemed to have no effect on his guard. He heard a cry of agony from Bull.

There was no word at all from the terrier ace.

G-8's brain staggered dizzily from a blow on the jaw, as solid as though dealt by a stone slab. He was weak and powerless, but he had enough consciousness left to realize what was going on. Heavy caskets had been pulled out from the wall—like drawers from a dresser—and Nippy, Bull, and himself were being placed in them. They reeked horribly of the odor of the dead.

G-8 made one, last, feeble effort to rise before he was pushed in, but again he was

slapped down brutally by the stone hand of the Zombie who had slept in that coffin for months.

The Master Spy sank back. The cover was jammed on and the casket was pushed back into the crypt.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Message After Midnight

Workmen had already rebuilt the hangar back at Le Bourget. All afternoon, Battle, with the aid of Betsy, the fat Negro cook and conjure woman, had worked getting the various new rooms settled, under the expert supervision of R-1. Then the girl spy had left them alone to arrange the kitchen utensils as they saw fit. Betsy had bustled her bulk about the kitchen for some time, giving orders to Battle and arranging things to her own satisfaction. Suddenly, the English manservant stood stock still in the middle of the kitchen.

"I say, my good woman," he barked, "isn't this going a bit too far? I mean to say, after all, this is my kitchen, what? It's beastly presumptuous on your part to tell me where I should have my utensils."

Betsy turned on him.

"Look here, you," she bellowed out. "I always says, and I says it now, there ain't no man knows as much about a kitchen as a woman does. I ain't goin' to take that back for nobody. I watched you when you started puttin' things to rights here in this kitchen. I saw right then you didn't know where things belongs, and I says to myself 'Betsy, you better take a hand in this and help this gentleman out.' And I don't never aim to take a hand in anything less'n I does the whole thing the way I wants it. That's what I'm doin' here.

"You can't never tell, maybe this conjurin' business I'm goin' to help in will take a long time,

and if I'm goin' to work in this kitchen, I'm goin' to have things where I want 'em. And I don't care whether you throw a lot of big words at me or not, it ain't goin' to make no difference. Now look at that shelf of seasonin' truck! You got the cinnamon and cloves and allspice right out there in front. That ain't never goin' to do you no good if you want to do some conjurin'."

In spite of Battle's excitement, he couldn't forget his politeness. He bowed.

"Beggin' your pardon, ma'am," he said stiffly, "but so far as I know, I will continue to do the cooking here. Furthermore, I never did any conjuring in my life, and I don't expect the necessity for it to arise."

Betsy let out a roaring laugh as though she thought Battle were the silliest man in the world.

"Lawsy me," she cried, "you don't know much, to stand there and say you ain't goin' to do no conjurin'. Man, with this here King Jolito runnin' around, pullin' Zombie people out of graves, I reckon it's about time you turned your hand to a little conjurin'. Because one of these minutes, maybe you're goin' to need it. And just like I says, you don't want them kind of spices and things out where they are. Now come over here beside them and take a good look."

With one great, heavy hand, Betsy grabbed Battle by a skinny arm and jerked him over beside her. She pointed to the shelf in question.

"See," she cried. "Suppose you wanted to do some quick conjurin'. What you want to grab is the vinegar or the salt. Where you got a pain that maybe Jolito's black magic give you, cinnamon and cloves ain't goin' to do you no good. So, I sets the bottle of vinegar and the box of salt right where they'll be handy. Now if you get a toothache or a pain in your toe, and you think maybe this Jolito man or somebody workin' black magic on you, you just rub on salt like I tell you and pour on vinegar. Maybe if you work that black magic good, the pain will go away."

Battle raised his hands in a gesture of resignation.

"My good woman," he cried, "if I may say so, I have no pains. I am not subject to toothaches. Blast it all, I—"

"Yes, sir," the conjure woman nodded, "but you don't never know when you're goin' to have one. Best thing you can do is to be ready for them when they comes."

"But look here," Battle cried desperately, "I tell you—"

He broke off suddenly to listen. From off in the night a sound had reached his ears.

"Oh, I say," he cried. "We must go! We must get out of here! That's a German plane. It might be going to bomb this place again."

Betsy threw up her hands and rushed for the door. Battle started for it, too, and they reached the entrance at the same time. There was scant room for Betsy's ample bulk to squeeze through, but with Battle trying to push through at the same time, it was an impossibility. The two suddenly wedged there.

"Let me go! Let me go!" Betsy cried. "Listen, don't you hold me back! I'se—"

Battle was grunting and puffing as he tried to push his way through the door. He was the first to come to his senses and realize it couldn't be done. He drew back quickly, just as Betsy made a terrific lunge to break through. She stumbled on the threshold and fell flat.

"Oh, I say," Battle cried, rushing forward.

He took hold of the big woman's arm as she was struggling to get to her feet. She managed to rise to her knees, then she swung a powerful right palm that caught Battle full on the cheek as he bent down. The slap echoed through the new living room.

"You fool," she cried angrily, "I'll teach you to push a helpless woman when she's going through a door! Don't you touch me! Leave me be. Next time I slap you, I'll hit you so hard your teeth will make a sound like you had swallowed a mad rattlesnake."

Already, Battle, knocked half silly by that slap in the face, had veered off. He took a step toward the outside, but he was too late. Betsy had just managed to struggle to her feet. She, too, was heading for that same door. Before either of them could reach it, it burst open.

A ghastly-looking figure stood framed in the opening. His face was a greenish-white, and sightless eyes stared vacantly from their hollow sockets. His arms hung limp at his sides and he moved with the mechanical gait of the Zombies.

The room was filled with Betsy's scream. She turned suddenly and fled with a rustle of skirts and a thumping of feet through the kitchen door.

Battle edged his way toward it. The Zombie strode on rhythmically. His weird, inhuman voice spoke:

"Halt! Where is G-8?"

Battle was shaking with fear.

"I—I don't know where he is," he stammered.

With terror gnawing at his heart, he backed through the kitchen door.

"Where is G-8?" the creature repeated, walking a little faster.

"I don't know where he is," Battle repeated. "And I wouldn't tell you if I did."

The Zombie was coming through the kitchen door, hands extended to grasp Battle.

"One more time I ask—where is G-8?" the Zombie said.

Battle's back was to the stove and his hands were groping behind him. He brought up a frying pan and with a quick wind-up, left it fly at the head of the Zombie. But the thing came on relentlessly. The pan caught him full in the face—clanked as though it had struck a rocky cliff and clattered to the floor. Again Battle threw an iron pot, then other utensils—one after another.

Betsy was crouched in a corner, her face covered with her apron. She began screaming:

"Salt and vinegar! Vinegar and salt! Salt! Salt! Salt!"

The Zombie had stopped and was standing there hands still outstretched, taking everything that Battle could throw.

"Blast it, I can't make a dent in him!" the English manservant wailed.

The heap of shining utensils that had been piled on the stove were transformed into a pile of broken and twisted metal at the feet of the Zombie.

Battle's eyes were bulging. He didn't dare turn his back on the creature. He moved along from the stove to the sink, groping along behind him for something more to throw. Again Betsy screamed at him:

"Salt! Salt! Salt!"

At that moment, the English manservant's hands grasped something. It was the vinegar bottle on the flavoring shelf. In wild panic, he flung it at the Zombie. It missed his face, sailed through the door, and crashed on the living room floor. Battle grasped the next thing that came into his hand. It was the box of table salt.

The Zombie suddenly leaped for him, and a wild cry of rage rent the air. Battle let go with all the strength that remained in that throwing arm of his. Salt sprayed through the air, spattering the Zombie in a thousand places. The salt box itself struck him in the chest and broke about him.

Battle had ducked as the creature charged. Suddenly, all the life seemed to go out of that living dead man. He cried out in one, low, tormented groan, then slumped to the floor. The air of the kitchen was filled immediately with the stench of rotting human flesh.

Betsy rose from her crouched position in a corner and pulled the apron away from her face.

"You did it!" she cried. "You broke the spell! I *knew* that salt would do it! The Zombies can't live when they get salt on 'em. I forgot to tell you that until this one came to attack. But lawsy me, don't he smell somethin' awful? That's one Zombie that's gone back to real, sure-enough dead. That salt will do it every time."

Battle was panting so hard from his exertion that he couldn't speak. His face began to turn a whitish green. He put his fingers up to his nose and closed his nostrils to shut out the awful smell. From the other room, he heard a sound.

"Listen," Betsy breathed, "there's somebody else coming."

She leaped to grab the salt receptacle and took in her hand what little there was left in it. She braced herself against a corner cupboard and drew back her arm, ready to throw.

Light footsteps sounded, coming across the living room to the kitchen door. Betsy said, "I'll get this one myself."

In the next instant she relaxed, for there in the doorway stood R-1. The girl's eyes were wide in amazement and horror.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed. "What's happened?"

"Something mighty good, Miss R-1," Betsy told her. "I'm awful glad to see you, because maybe you're goin' to get me out of this terrible place. You know what happened? Mr. Battle, he just put one of these here Zombies right back in his place. Dead men ain't supposed to be walkin' around!"

It was some time before R-1 got the clear explanation of what had actually happened. Mechanics came and took the repulsive body of

the dead German away and the windows were left open so that the place could air.

R-1 glanced at her wrist watch.

"It's just past midnight now," she said. She leaned back in her chair. "Nippy and Bull haven't come back, have they?" she asked. "They should be here by now."

"I've been listening for them, Miss R-1," Battle said.

"Have you been listening for them over the radio?" the girl spy asked.

Battle looked guilty.

"No, Miss," he apologized. "That is, not yet. I was just going to, when that beastly chap arrived."

"Then I'd better see if there's any message to pick up," R-1 said.

She went to the wireless set that had been installed in the newly constructed apartment and threw over the switch. Now and then she left the instrument to pace the floor. Minutes dragged on. At length, she shook her head.

"I guess there's no use," she said. "We may as well turn in for the night."

Betsy had packed herself into a chair, her ample bulk overflowing the arms. Suddenly, she straightened.

"Miss R-1," she said. "I've got a funny feeling right here in the last joint of my little finger! That means somebody wants to talk to me. I ain't hardly ever wrong about that. Maybe you ought to listen to the radio again before you go to bed—just to make sure."

R-1 smiled.

"Why, yes, I'll listen if it will make you sleep easier," she said. "Perhaps one of us should listen all night."

She fitted the earphones for the tenth time that evening and turned on the switch. Then she sat as before, listening to a steady, far-off hum. Suddenly, she straightened and her eyes took on a glint of interest. There were signals coming through that steady hum—signals so dim that she could scarcely catch them at all.

Battle tiptoed over to her and leaned down

"Are you getting a message, Miss R-1?" he whispered.

She nodded, held up her hand for silence.

"You see?" Betsy burst out. "I told you! That last joint of my little finger ain't never done me

wrong yet. Whenever that starts aching, somebody is trying to get a message through to me. Only trouble is, sometimes I can't get connected. I—"

"Ssh!" R-1 warned, making frantic gestures for silence. She was writing swiftly with a pencil on a piece of paper. Battle read the words over her shoulder:

—buried alive in second, third, and fourth drawers—fifth column from door on left. Mausoleum in cemetery next to newest airdrome north of—

R-1's pencil stopped. She looked up with a horrified expression on her face.

"But we don't know where!" she gasped.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Back From the Grave

"Don't know where!" Battle cried. "Oh, but I say, we've got to find out! Wait; I've got an idea. You remember that when Mr. Nippy and Mr. Bull went over, they were going to follow the course which the Zombie planes took when they turned back after their bombing raid. I heard them say that they had a general idea of—"

"Wait," R-1 cried.

She pushed Battle away and tensed, listening again to the sound that came through the earphones. Once more her pencil was moving swiftly. She wrote:

We are buried alive in cemetery next to newest airdrome north of Nurzig.

R-1 switched over the wireless and began buzzing away at the key in the secret code. Her message ran slowly and distinctly:

Hold everything. We are coming as quickly as possible.

She leaped to her feet and stared about for a moment. Under stress of the excitement, almost anyone would have had a bad case of the jitters, but R-1 was desperately calm. Her eyes flashed to the conjure woman.

"Betsy," she asked, "what was that you said about salt killing the Zombies?"

Betsy nodded.

"It sure enough does!" she said. "In fact, it did, Miss R-1. I reckon you seen that dead man. Lawsy, you couldn't help *smelling* him! That was all because the salt was poured on him."

"Then," R-1 said, "if we could shoot these Zombies with salt bullets, they ought to do the trick, hadn't they?"

The woman's eyes opened wide and rolled, flashing white.

"Miss R-1," she said, "you sure is wonderful!" She chuckled deep in her throat. "Speaking of shooting rock salt into 'em makes me think of the time my old man was caught stealing chickens. But that ain't got nothin' to do with this, has it? Yes, sir, rock salt will sure fix 'em!"

"Then that's settled," R-1 nodded. "That German ship that the Zombie came over in is standing outside. I saw it when I came in. It's an L.V.G. There's room for all of us in that."

Battle and Betsy exploded at the same instant.

"All of us!" they cried.

R-1 nodded.

"Yes," she said, "we're going to need your help, Battle. And we'll need Betsy's advice if anything comes up about conjuring against these Zombies."

"Oh, but, I say!" Battle breathed. "I wasn't afraid! Please don't think that, Miss R-1! I hesitated only because I thought I should go over alone. I will do anything I can! But for you two—er—women to go! I think this is a bit of a man's war, don't you know?"

"In this case, it isn't," R-1 retorted.

"But, look!" Battle reminded her. "After all, Mr. Nippy and Mr. Bull and the master, G-8, are a bit excellent at this sort of thing—and you see the jam they've gotten themselves in. There were three of them and they've been buried alive, presumably by these Zombies, in a vault. How do you ladies expect to accomplish something that they couldn't do?"

Betsy cut in before R-1 could answer.

"I can tell you something about that!" she cried. "Here's something else I know about these Zombies." She lowered her voice to confidential tones. "They don't never do nothin' to women! They only fights men, when there's any fighting to be done."

R-1 stared at her.

"Are you sure that's true, Betsy?" she demanded.

"Sure I am!" the woman nodded. "Yes, ma'am, they never hurts women! I'll bet we can walk right through them and they won't touch a hair of our heads, no matter what we do."

R-1's eyes suddenly shifted to Battle.

"Battle," she said, "we're going to bank on that. You've got to dress as a third woman! You'll be safer that way."

"But I say, Miss R-1, isn't that—er—a bit—"

"Never mind," R-1 snapped. "There's one of my extra uniforms, with a cape, lying in the next room on the bed. Put it on. And hurry!"

While Battle dressed, R-1 hurried to the telephone. She called the ammunition department of the field.

"I want three double-barreled shotguns," she ordered. "And I'd also like to have a hundred pounds of rock salt delivered here as quickly as possible." She paused for a moment. "Yes," she snapped, "that's what I said! Three shotguns and a hundred pounds of rock salt. And a couple of hundred shells for those shotguns."

She left the telephone and went into the kitchen. Out of the heap of broken and bent utensils, she picked up two tin funnels. With a screw driver, she made the funnel large enough to fit into a twelve-gauge shotgun barrel. She found a helmet and a pair of goggles and put them on.

Battle came from the bedroom, looking very sheepishly in R-1's uniform. His spindly legs, garbed in white stockings, stuck out from beneath the flowing skirt. R-1 couldn't help smiling at the ludicrous sight.

"Begging your pardon, Miss R-1," Battle groaned. "Isn't this a bit—er—unprecedented, as you might say? I really would prefer to take my chances in my own trousers, as it were."

"If Betsy is right," R-1 told him, "you might be glad that you have that outfit on when we get over there! Come, now. I think we're ready."

The shotguns and shells and salt were waiting at the German two-seater. R-1 looked into the rear gunner's cockpit. It was large and ample.

"Battle," she said, "you and Betsy will have to sit here in the back. That's the only place for you."

"Oh, but I say!" Battle choked. "There's only one seat there!"

Betsy grinned.

"Looks like I'm goin' to have to hold you on my lap, Mr. Battle," she said.

The English manservant frowned.

"Oh, but I say!" he protested. "I've never sat on a woman's lap in my life. It really isn't done!"

"Then," R-1 replied, "Betsy will have to sit on your lap, Battle. Take your choice, but hurry up. G-8, Nippy and Bull are buried alive over there, waiting for us to come and rescue them. Here you stand arguing about—"

Battle, with a flurry of skirts and a showing of gaunt, spindly legs, was climbing hurriedly into the rear cockpit. R-1 was in the front cockpit, testing the controls. Battle stowed the guns and shells and salt, then the whole plane suddenly trembled as big Betsy heaved herself aboard and struggled into the rear cockpit. That rear space which had looked quite ample before, was now filled to overflowing.

As Betsy settled her broad bulk on the spindly-legged lap of Battle, that disguised male let out a cry:

"Oh, I say, you're breaking my legs! Oh, this is most unpleasant! I can't stand it! Wait, get up!"

From the cockpit ahead, R-1 shouted back above the roar of the motor, "You chose that position, Battle. Remember, this is no parlor car to begin with. Hang on, here we go!"

She opened the throttle wide. The Benz motor thundered out, and with its great load, the L.V.G. two-seater staggered into the air and droned away on its urgent mission.

Now and then, as they neared the Front, they saw flames darting from exhaust pipes of Zombie-piloted planes. There were many other ships below that R-1 knew were bombers, laying their eggs with unerring aim upon helpless and jittery infantrymen in their trenches.

On they droned toward Nurzig. The map that R-1 had spread out told her that the town was far back of the German lines. Suddenly, a flare burst into brilliance above them and in the light, a Fokker dove.

R-1 heard Betsy cry out in alarm, "Miss R-1, he going to shoot us?"

"I don't think so," the girl spy replied, trying to keep her voice calm. "This is one of their ships.

And anyway, if what you said about Zombies not bothering women is true, they won't "

She broke off and turned to watch the Fokker. It came so close to them that the wheels and landing gear threatened to crash through the center section. Quickly, R-1 sent the stick ahead. The L.V.G. dove, the Fokker zoomed up.

Another one was coming down in the light of a flare.

Battle's voice came through the tube:

"Look here, Miss R-1! Something has got to be done! Something must be done! These legs of mine are paralyzed! I'm afraid they're both broken in two. I won't be able to use them!"

That second Fokker was snarling nearer. A short, three shot burst chattered from the Spandaus, but R-1 had seen the slugs slash harmlessly through the right wing tip. The Fokker veered away. The flare died and in the darkness they droned on.

"Lawsy me!" Betsy cried through the tube. "We sure was lucky that time, Miss R-1."

"I think," the girl spy said, "that they were just double-checking us to make sure we were flying a German plane."

She stared ahead. In the light of the moon she could see a good-sized town under the nose of the plane.

"We're almost there!" she cried. "Hang on, Battle." She looked down again. "Yes, this is Nurzig all right. There's an expanse to the north that looks like—"

She broke off suddenly.

"Good heavens!" she cried. "I can see the mausoleum from here! It stands out white in the moonlight. I hope they're still alive—they've got to be!"

She leaned forward tensely and pushed on the already wide-open throttle. She was dropping the nose, beginning to kill altitude. The air about them was filled with ships, but the pilots seemed to be paying no attention to them. In the moonlight, R-1 saw Gothas and Fokkers and Albatrosses as well as two-seaters like the one they flew. She turned and gave an order through the speaking tube:

"Get out those shotguns! Load them with shells and fill up the barrels with salt. There are too many of those living dead men down there to take chances with. We can't rely too much on their policy of not attacking women."

She heard no reply from the rear. Turning, she saw Betsy looming high in the cockpit, drawing out a shotgun and loading it. Poor Battle was completely hidden behind her huge bulk. The plane was falling rapidly, and R-1 stuck the nose down into a steeper glide to give her more control of it. She was aiming for a spot as near the cemetery as she could get. She leveled off as evenly as she could, and wheels and skid touched and bounced, then the tail skid dug in. With a short pancake, she settled down and rolled to a stop.

Before the ship had halted its forward motion, R-1 had unfastened her safety belt and began climbing out of her cockpit. Two Zombies were running toward the ship. R-1 whirled and grabbed one of the loaded shot guns, holding the barrel up to keep the salt in. Betsy was standing up in the rear cockpit.

"I tell you, Miss R-1," she said, "Zombies won't do nothin' to harm us when they see we're women folks."

R-1's lips were set in a straight, firm line. She gave a defiant nod of her head.

"I expect you're right, Betsy," she said, "but I'm goin' to make sure of it. I know that the salt works. Come, we're getting out. We've got to hurry."

The L.V.G.'s fuselage shuddered and groaned as Betsy transferred her huge form to the ground. Battle sat motionless for a moment, then he groaned.

"Oh, my legs!" he breathed. "I say, Miss R-1, did you ever hold a steam roller on your lap for an hour or so?"

R-1 didn't take time to answer. The Zombies had reached a point near the tail of the ship. They stopped suddenly and stared.

"Hurry, Battle," R-1 cracked. "Bring that bag of salt and the other rifle! Betsy has the shells."

Battle groaned again as he moved, but he managed to get up. The Zombies stared. Finding that he could use his legs, Battle took heart and glared back at them from under the nurse's cap. He reached behind the seat for the bag he sought. Suddenly, the Zombies made a lunge for him. Battle's hands came out of the rear compartment, both full of rock salt. He flung first one and then the other handful of crystals into the faces of the Zombies. At the same time he barked, "Come on, you blighters! I'm not afraid of you!"

The creatures suddenly screamed in torment, fell back, and slumped to the ground.

R-1 had suddenly broken into a run. She was threading her way through the cemetery among the crosses. Betsy was coming after her as fast as she could waddle.

"I'se coming, Miss R-1!" she called. "But I'd rather be in a lot of other places than this cemetery tonight."

Battle, limping on first one sore leg and then the other, brought up the rear. He carried the bag of salt under one arm and a shotgun in the other hand.

A grumbling roar of rage had suddenly risen from Zombies all over the field. Planes whined down to sudden attack from above. A horde of weird creatures came charging across the field to the mausoleum.

R-1 had nearly reached the iron door of the mausoleum when the first chatter of Spandau guns sent bullets thudding at her heels.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Bullets of Salt

The girl spy leaped to the left, then to the right, as she ran. At the same time, she shouted a warning to Betsy who was coming behind her:

"Zigzag back and forth as you run, Betsy!"

"Yes'm," the conjure woman cracked. "That's the best thing I does."

In the next instant, R-1 heard a double explosion. She glanced back as she made a last, wild dash for the door. A diving Fokker, less than fifty feet up, wavered for an instant, then plunged nose-first, crashing only a few feet from the mausoleum.

Betsy was standing still, looking up while she reloaded her double-barreled shotgun.

"Hurry up there, Mr. Battle, with that salt!" she boomed. "I reckon there's some more of these Zombies coming down for some seasonin'. Germans or crows, they's all the same to me when I got a shotgun in my hand!"

R-1 heard the last as she darted through the stone doorway. It was pitch black in there, and she had to feel her way. She counted five

columns to the left of the door, then she was straining at the handle on the stone slab second from the bottom. She could move it slightly, but not enough to open it.

"Betsy—Battle!" she cried. "Hurry! I can't open these drawers!"

She tried the next one and the one above that. They all moved a little, but her strength wasn't sufficient to open them.

Betsy's bulk filled the doorway and Battle came charging in behind her. The conjure woman's voice raised in a vibrant, wailing moan.

"Ooah!" she quavered. "I sure don't like this!"

"Betsy!" R-1 panted. "Come here at once and stop that foolishness! We've got to get these drawers open."

In the next instant, unwilling Betsy and Battle were helping R-1. The first casket came out grudgingly, and something moved. R-1 bent over the open, odorous coffin.

"Who is it?" she choked.

"H-Holy Herring!" Bull Martin gasped. "Wh-who are you?"

"R-1," the girl spy answered. "We've come to get you. Hurry, get out of that casket! We've got to get Nippy and G-8 free."

Dazedly, Bull rose from the coffin. As soon as they had helped him out, he slumped to a sitting position, panting desperately for breath.

The next drawer came out. Nippy Weston yawned and stretched.

"Jumping Jupiter!" he said. "Is it morning? Do I have to get up?"

"Get out and stop your fooling," R-1 commanded.

The terrier ace sniffed the air.

"Jumping Jupiter, who died?" he demanded, yawning again.

"Don't you know where you are?" R-1 asked. "You've been buried alive in an old coffin! You—"

Suddenly, Nippy was alert.

"Hey, that's right! I remember now," he said. "I must have been asleep. Hey, who are you? You're R-1, aren't you? Watch out for those Zombies! They'll bury you alive, too."

Suddenly, the moonlight that streamed in through the doorway was cut off. A strange, hollow voice filled the whole inside of the crypt.

"You all die!" it said.

Betsy whirled, a bulk of fury.

"Who die?" she yelled. "I'll show you who's goin' to die and stay dead!"

She snatched up the shotgun loaded with shells and rock salt. The inside of that tomb echoed and shuddered with the terrific blast as both shells went off at the same time. Cries came from the doorway and the moonlight shone through again.

R-1 and Battle were straining at the uppermost casket in the fifth column. There they found G-8, his tiny pocket radio set lying where his limp hands had dropped it at the side of the casket. Feverishly, R-1 worked over him.

Again the entrance to the mausoleum was filled with Zombies but Betsy, who had taken up her post half way to the door, let go with another blast of her shotgun. Once more, moonlight streamed in, and Battle leaped to help Betsy with his gun.

The place stank with the bodies of the re-killed Zombies that half-choked the entrance. Nippy and Bull were gradually returning to their normal selves.

At length, G-8 began breathing regularly and opened his eyes. Now, not only the moonlight was streaming in through the open door of the mausoleum but a brighter light as well. Day had dawned.

Bull Martin pushed his way past Battle and Betsy.

"There's just one bird I want to get my hands on now," he growled. "You've either killed all the Zombies off with rock salt, or daylight has caught them before they got back into their graves. And—"

Suddenly, the big fellow stopped. A German staff car was tearing across the field. It came charging through the cemetery, knocking over crosses and bumping over graves that were still open. A huge figure leaped out of the car.

"Lawsy me!" Betsy cried. "Here comes that King Jolito conjure man! Get out of my way, Mr. Bull! I've got my shot gun trained on him but I ain't got rock salt in it. He's goin' to get a double dose of buck shot!"

But Bull didn't move. He shook his head stubbornly.

"No, Betsy," he said, "I'm going to handle this one alone."

With a roar of rage, the Haitian charged at Bull, huge fists doubled, broad shoulders hunched forward. The former crack football star rushed to meet him. The voodoo doctor was larger than Bull and more powerful. He caught the big fellow with a right on the shoulder, but it had force enough behind it to knock Bull flat on his back. Jolito leaped upon him, but by then, Bull was ready for the attack. He doubled his legs, and as Jolito dove with powerful hands outstretched, Bull caught him in the middle with both feet. A grunt left Jolito's wide mouth. For a moment, the air went out of him and he was hurled back.

That pause gave Bull a chance to get to his feet. The two big powerful men faced each other toe to toe. Fists flew, and Bull ducked and weaved and slammed out blow after blow. This giant voodoo man seemed to have no vulnerable spots. Jolito's aim was poor, but his punch was tremendously powerful.

Five times in succession Bull slammed blows into the heavy jaw of Jolito. The fifth time the big man went down—but he was up again instantly, fighting like a huge panther—clawing, tearing, snarling.

Bull himself was taking terrific punishment. He was concentrating on that jaw. He had floored Jolito once; he could do it again! He was working harder than he ever had before—in any fight.

Both men were almost out on their feet as the minutes dragged on and the morning light grew steadily brighter. The big fellow put all his remaining strength into one last, desperate blow. He measured with a left and let go with a right—a right that started from his hip and slammed in a half hook, half uppercut, to the left corner of Jolito's jaw.

His head snapped back. Jolito's huge arms dropped at his side, his knees buckled, and he slumped in a huge heap and lay still.

Bull stared down for a moment, then another huge form—broad but not so tall—waddled by him. It was Betsy, holding her loaded double-barreled shotgun at her hip.

Without the slightest hesitation, the conjure woman stuck the double-barreled weapon between the closed eyes of the fallen King Jolito and pulled both triggers. A gaping hole, three inches across and deep enough to hold a man's fist, appeared in Jolito's forehead. Blood gushed out.

Betsy gave a decisive nod of smug satisfaction and wiped the blood off the shotgun muzzle with her apron.

"There's one voodoo doctor I reckon ain't never goin' to do no more raising from the dead—lessen he raises himself first!" she said.

G-8 was rapidly becoming himself again. R-1 walked beside him as they made their way through the cemetery to the Hun planes. The ships stood on the field where the now permanently dead Zombies had left them.

"I guess you would have been still there," R-1 said, "if it hadn't been for the pain that Betsy got in the last joint of her little finger."

Betsy chuckled.

"Yes, sir, Mr. G-8," she said, "that little finger ain't never failed me yet! I always know when somebody wants to get a message through to me."

"Then I'll bet it's going to pain you plenty for awhile," G-8 smiled, "after the reports of what you've done go through. I wouldn't be surprised, Betsy, if you get medals from every Allied country."

Betsy chuckled and patted her ample bosom.

"I sure got lots of space to wear 'em." she said.

G-8 quickened his pace.

They paused before a group of German two-seaters. The motors were started and warmed.

Battle hesitated a moment, then he asked anxiously:

"Beggin' your pardon, but will it be necessary for me to hold Miss Betsy on my lap when we go back?"

R-1 laughed.

"Don't you worry, Battle," she assured him. "You can have the back cockpit of this L.V.G. all to yourself. Betsy can ride with someone else."

Battle scrambled eagerly into the cockpit before R-1 could change her mind.

"That is very kind of you, Miss R-1. I was going to say, that if my style was going to be as cramped—so to speak—as it was coming over, I would much prefer to walk."

THE END



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