

FIRE IN THE DARK by MARY SCHUMANN

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SYNOPSIS

Eleonore Lawrence, Air Raid Defense Center worker in Sweetsburg—a town humming with war industry and rumors of saboteurs—has been the recipient of spy exposure books, and wonders who the anonymous sender is. She secretly hopes it might be William Steuben, a friend of her brother Arthur, who had visited the Lawrences months ago, but from whom she had heard nothing since. One of the air raid officers showed distinguished looking B. Stead Jones how the Center operates. The Lawrence household, located on the lonely outskirts of town, consists of "Grandma" Lawrence; Sukey, Eleonore's small sister; and Mamie, maid of all work. Eleonore's brothers, Arthur and Eben, are in the Navy and Coast Guard respectively. Eleonore learned from Fannie Edgerly, real estate agent, that the adjoining Wolfe estate has been leased by B. Stead Jones. She is visited by John Sabriski, member of America's Counter Intelligence Corps, who enlists her aid, much to Grandma's alarm.

CHAPTER FOUR

Sabriski explained that one of the C.I.C. agents was living with a group of aliens not far away and that he might be hard put to get his reports out promptly. He was under constant surveillance, writing letters would be difficult, and mailing them out of the question. A rural delivery mail box, used by many, would be a poor place in which to leave a C.I.C. report.

Her mind jumped ahead of him: Eleonore thought of Hickory, a tiny settlement of workers' one-story houses, a mile down the lane leading off November Road. A couple of men from Connecticut had bought an abandoned paper mill there and were using it to reclaim rubber from old tires. The smell was unpleasant and she seldom drove or walked that way.

"Is your man at Hickory?" she asked.

"Your guess at that is as good as mine," he replied briefly. "Now this C.I.C. man can walk along this road after work, at night. He could drop his report at some special spot."

Sabriski took the last cigarette from his pack, twisted the paper container and flipped it over to the side of the room. "Like that."

She nodded. "I see. Inside the empty pack."

His thin mouth lifted at the corner in something approaching an approving smile. "You could look each morning near your barberry hedge for a discarded cigarette pack. But perhaps he wouldn't get as far as this house."

"Then?" she leaned forward.

"Three other places," Sabriski drew a map from his pocket. "Now you go walking with your dog quite a bit. South of here, three-eighths of a mile from your gate, he will

try to hit the big rock on the left side. The third place is at the five birch trees growing out of a single stump one-half a mile from your driveway. The fourth and last is a big tamarack tree on the right side, three-quarters of a mile from your gate. Is that clear?"

"Our hedge, the rock, the birches, the tamarack tree in that order? All on our road; none on the lane to Hickory?"

"Right!" He gave her more instructions: She must never appear to be hunting an object, no hint of her employment must ever escape her to man, woman or child; the coded message was to be sent to a certain address as soon as received. "Could you tell me who chose me for this work?" Eleonore asked.

He shrugged. "I wouldn't know, and it's not essential, is it? In fact I don't know the name of the agent you're helping. I take orders and am only told enough to carry them out."

"No, it isn't essential," she said slowly. "The main thing is that I can be of some use."

Eleonore's eyes sparkled with emotion, the lamp making gold lights in her chestnut hair, but John Sabriski was not a susceptible young man or had other fish to fry, for he only said gloomily, "The weasels got a long headstart on us with shortwave poison from Germany, all the Bundis and drilling, traitors sounding off, so now we've got to buck all that plotting with some snappy work of our own. We're training men in counter-espionage as fast as we can, but a whale of a big job is ahead of us, and we're short handed."

Soon Sabriski left. No taxi was waiting. He walked swiftly down the dark road.

Before Eleonore lowered a curtain, a reassuring gleam came through the trees in the direction of the Wolfe house further up the mountain. Not that she was afraid, but it was nice to have good neighbors within a short distance. Sabriski's visit made her feel uneasy, yet somewhat important.

If a boy, she would have gone into the service of her country like her brothers, but now, she rejoiced: I'm going to be of some use in stopping the enemy!

Her future quickly flowered into purpose and meaning. That stage of her life when she had grieved over the untimely death of Henry Winters, and when her affection leaned toward William Steuben, was definitely over.

Eleonore tiptoed through the dining room to get a drink of water in the kitchen. The swinging door to the pantry was propped open by a chair, occupied by Mrs. Lawrence. The poker from the upstairs fireplace rolled from her lap with a clang.

"Gran—you here?" she cried in dismay.

"Has he gone?" she croaked. "I

came down the back stairs with the poker. Think I was going to leave you alone with a strange fellow like that?"

"You were listening?"

"Heard every word he said," Eleonore eyed her sternly. "No, you didn't. You told me if you did."

"One of our spies is living among those toughs at Hickory. We're to pick up all the empty cigarette packages from here to the tamarack tree."

The girl turned on the faucet and the running water smothered her audible groan. How many times had Grandma reddened their faces by the very things they didn't want told? She would relate it to Mamie, hint of it to chance callers, give it away to the grocery boy.

"Elmer Lawrence," scolded the old lady, "take that mad look off your face! My father had his arm shot off in the Civil War, and Hen, my baby, was killed in the last war. I guess I love this United States as much as you do!"

"No one was to know," The girl's eyes smarted. "We'd better go to bed now."

Somehow she must find a way to cork up Grandma.

Eleonore worked on her grandmother the next morning before breakfast. "I've decided to give it up: it's the only fair thing to do. The conditions were that I was not to reveal it to a living person." She met the torrent of protestations that she was a viperous child not to trust her own grandmother, implicitly. "No use, Gran. You'll even hint that Elmer is working for the F.B.I."

"I'll do nothing of the kind. I can keep as tight a mouth as anyone. Anyone—do you hear?" Her burning eyes riddled her granddaughter with scorn.

"Or you'll ask questions as to what I found!"

The disappointment that over- spread the old lady's face was pitiful. Finally she said firmly, "I will not!"

"No, Gran, I can read your thoughts. You'll want to be hearing if I had any luck. That's natural. But in this more than a man's life is at stake. It may be something that affects the war, everyone, if we whispered or winked that we knew there was a spy nest at Hickory—or some such thing."

"Get the Bible!" Grandma snapped.

Holding it in her withered hands Mrs. Lawrence swore that she hoped she died in an Old Ladies Home if she ever revealed in any form or manner what she had heard the night before. Eleonore relented. "I pretend it was all a dream, Gran, something fantastic that happened in a dream, and forget it," she urged.

Grandma nodded.

(To be continued)

THIMBLE THEATRE—Starring Popeye

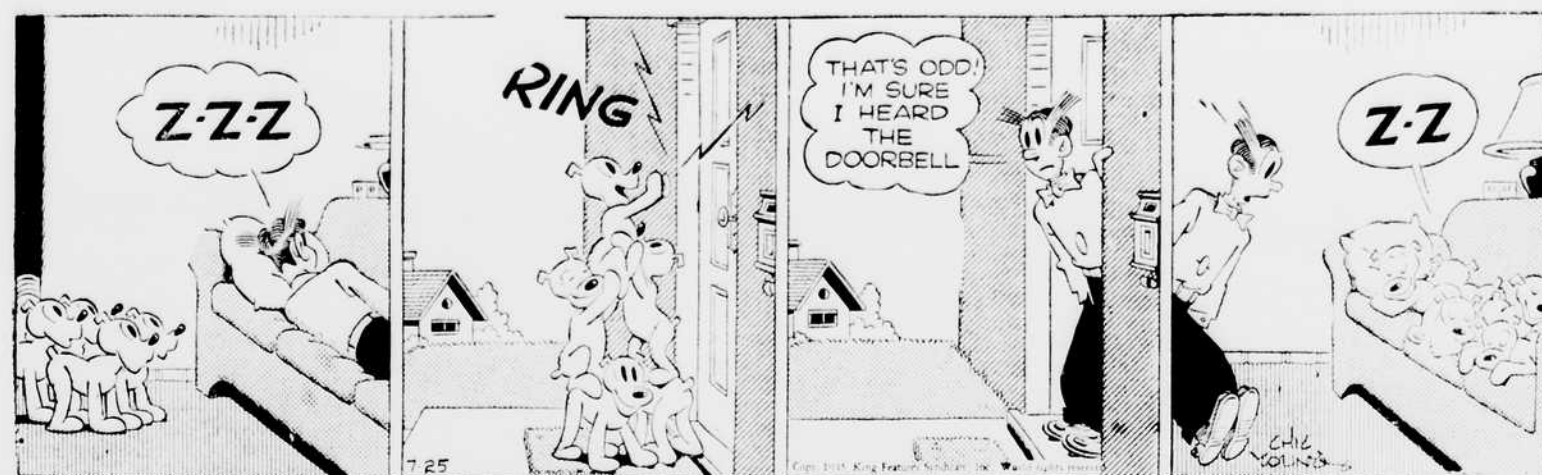
Popeye Crushed To Earth Shall Rise Again!



BLONDIE—(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

A "Daggoned" man Trick!

By Chic Young



ETTA KEIT

By PAUL ROBINSON



The Gumps—Just What the Doctor Ordered



FIRST TRIAL BEFORE U. S. COURT IN BERLIN



HERE IS A VIEW of the first trial to be held before the American court in Berlin. Standing on left is the prosecuting officer, Lt. Stephen E. Ware, reading the charge. Behind the table is the judge, Col. John MacNeill. Sitting in front of the table is Cpl. Frank H. Reed, court clerk, North Hollywood, Calif. Standing in center is defendant Hans P. Fannschmidt, with Mrs. Gerda Gottschalk, of New York, interpreter. On extreme right is Pvt. A. Mallin, bailiff, Kansas City. The defendant is charged with having made false statements when he failed to admit former membership in the Nazi Party in filling out a labor form. (International)

BOMBS BLAST HONSHU'S RAIL-FERRY LINK

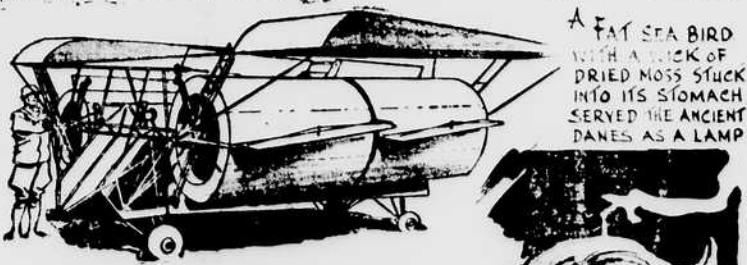


HERE GOES ANOTHER LINK in Japan's communication lines, against which U. S. plane carriers and warships are directing a large percentage of their efforts. When, just a few days ago, Admiral Halsey's 3rd units struck the northern end of Honshu, one of the target was this rail-car ferry which operated between Amori, on Honshu, and Hakodate, Hokkaido. Official U. S. Navy Radiophoto. (International Soundphoto)

THE OLD HOME TOWN By STANLEY



SCOTT'S COOK BOOK By SCOTT



A MARYLAND INVENTOR EVOLVED THIS UNUSUAL PLANE AFTER YEARS OF STUDY OF THE FLIGHT OF BIRDS



BEING A REALIST PAYS

IT IS NOT a question of what you could do against absolutely perfect play by your opponents. Winning or losing play in bridge depends on your moves against the action actually taken by the other side. In other words, the thing to do is to be a realist, and face the facts that are really presented for you to consider. Taking fullest advantage of the other fellow's slips is just as important as avoiding them yourself—and sometimes much more so.

♠ K J 6	♥ N	♦ 9 7 2
♣ Q J 9 7 4	♠ W E	♠ A 8 3
♠ 8 7	♠ S	♠ J 10 4 3
♠ 9 5 3		♠ K 8 2
♠ 8 5 4 3		
♠ 6 5		
♠ Q 9 5 2		
♠ Q 10 4		

(Dealer: North. North-South vulnerable.)

North	East	South	West
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT			

At more of the duplicate tables in a big game, North started the bidding of this deal with 2-No Trumps and South went to game in it. But more interesting play developments came at the three tables where the deal was bid as given, with North making what might be called a slight overbid. At all of these West led the heart Q.

Here's one way the contract got made. The K covered the heart Q, the A won it. East returned the 8 to the J and the 7 to the 10 cleared the suit. Three diamond trumps were scored, bad play, setting up the J, but it didn't prevent

Tomorrow's Problem

♠ Q 7 5 3	♠ J
♠ J 10 8	♠ 5 3
♠ Q J 6	♠ A 9 4 3
♠ 10 9 7	♠ A Q J 6
♠ K 9 6	♠ 5 4
♠ Q 7 6 4	
♠ K 10 7 2	
♠ 8 2	
♠ A 10 8 4 2	
♠ A K 9 2	
♠ 8 5	
♠ K 3	

One South made it by sounder play to the first trick. Instead of covering the heart Q lead with the K, he played the 2. Ready to play the 10 if the next lead was low, he used the K when the second lead was the J. Notice how this was bound to block the suit later, so that West could never get the lead to run his new set-up hearts. That declarer made his game without having to be helped by defenders' ineptitude. Not only that, but he made an extra trick, losing only a club and two hearts and getting three spades, one heart, three diamonds and three clubs.

(Dealer: South. East-West vulnerable.)

If South's 1-Spade here is passed to East, who bids 2-Clubs, what action should follow?

Wife Preservers



Wife Preservers

