Out of the Night — Jan Valtin

I JOIN THE GESTAPO

In the last days of February, [illegible], the Gestapo engineered my "escape" from Camp Fuhlsbuettel. A week after I had signed the "Pledge of Loyalty" to the Gestapo, I was transferred from the terror Camp Fuhlsbuettel to a small precinct jail in the heart of Hamburg—the Huetten Prison. The transfer took place in the dead of night. No prisoner could possibly know that I had left Camp Fuhlsbuettel. My new abode, a small jail which contained only a dozen cells, was almost empty. There were only two other convicts there—sexual criminals awaiting their official sterilization.

In the meantime, the Gestapo staged a phony "escape" from Camp Fuhlsbuettel. One of Inspector Kraus' aides later told me how it had been done. An Elite Guard had been commissioned to saw through the bars of the cell window. Another guard had thrown a rope over one of the walls. The same night the high tension wires which ran parallel to the walls had been put out of commission by an "accident." At two in the morning, a night guard "discovered" that my cell was empty. He gave the alarm. A siren shrieked. Flying squads of Death Head guards turned out, and the "hunt" was on. Of course, the supposed fugitive was not found—he sat securely in an obscure backwater jail. Only the Gestapo, the Kommandant of Camp Fuhlsbuettel, and two guards knew that the escape alarm had been a fake. The rest of the guards, some two hundred strong, and all of the prisoners, really believed that I had succeeded in making a successful getaway. Inspector Kraus calculated, correctly, that information would filter through to the Comintern that I had escaped. Even Rudolf Heitman was fooled by the trick; I later found that he had faithfully reported my extraordinary disappearance to his paymasters in Copenhagen.

On March 16, when I was taken from my cell to Gestapo headquarters, I was not escorted to the offices of the Foreign Division. The Death Head guard led me to a small room on the third floor. No sooner had I stepped into the room than he closed and locked the door behind me. Except for a table, two chairs and a radiator in a corner, the room was bare.

Firelei rose from one of the chairs. Our eyes met. We had not seen each other in more than 40 months of hardship and disaster. We looked at one another across the room, and it was as if each was afraid to take the first step forward. I put my forefinger to my lips to tell Firelei to be silent. I turned and looked at the door. There was no spy-hole. The walls and the ceiling were solid. The single window faced a large inner courtyard. There could be no watchers. I tiptoed around the room, scrutinizing the floor and the corners. At the radiator I stopped. There was a microphone, fastened between the radiator and the wall. Wires ran through the wall into an adjoining room. The little black-and-silver device seemed to grin at me out of the gloom and say, "Yes, I am here; you two had better be careful."

I pointed it out to Firelei. Then I said:

"You—are you here?"

"Yes, I am here," she answered in a strange, somber voice.

"We shall begin a new life, I said sheepishly. "It is not too late."

I do not know how long we were allowed to be together. Perhaps it was three hours, perhaps only one. We said little of what we had wanted to say. Mostly we were silent. At times we said things which were not parts of ourselves, words designed to lull the possible suspicions of the listeners on the other side of the wall. Firelei knew nothing of my assignment. When the Death Head guard came into the room to tell us that it was time to part, Firelei bade me good-by with the thought that it would be a good-by for many years. I could not tell her the truth then, without risking everything. That was the hardest of all. She had changed. We had both changed. We parted, inwardly disturbed, questing, and a little dazed.

Each morning of the last two weeks in March I was whisked to Gestapo headquarters. Each night I was brought back, exhausted from the constant tightrope walking, to my cell in the Huetten jail. During this time I learned to find my bearings in the labyrinth of the Gestapo empire. I looked over thousands of photographs. I read hundreds of pages of reports from spies abroad, each bearing the signature of a letter and a number, instead of a name. I was questioned on the possibilities of recommending Gestapo agents as candidates for political schools in the Soviet Union; of organizing Nazi Vigilante Committees in foreign ports after the communist model; of placing Nazi agents in the International Brigade in Spain; of recruiting members of the crews of Belgian, Dutch, French, Polish, Russian and Scandinavian ships as paid auxiliaries of the Gestapo, and on the feasibility of many other schemes. Each session with Inspector Kraus or his immediate aides was like a game of chess in which a single wrong move meant the loss of the game—the loss of my life.

Inspector Kraus gave me the details of the work I was to do.

"We are paying you three hundred marks monthly, in the currency of the country in which you will be at the beginning of each month. For every case when the information you send us results in the arrest of a traitor sent into Germany from abroad, we will pay you a bonus of one hundred marks. This is fair, I believe. Your first assignment will be to insinuate yourself into the counterfeiting apparatus of this man Jensen in Copenhagen. Concretely, we wish to know who uses false passports and under what names. We wish to know who uses false passports and under what names. We wish you to obtain samples of rubber and metal stamps used in the [illegible] passport-forging center. Aside from that, send us everything you can lay your hands on: Printed matter, codes, correspondence, resolutions, photographs, handwriting samples, samples of writing from their typewriters, addresses, names, meeting-places, data on communication lines and on persons who may be willing to work for us—in short, everything you hear or see anywhere at any time that may be of interest to our office. Further concrete tasks will be given you as soon as you have established yourself. Schreckenbach in Hamburg will arrange with you the details of communication and—if required—supply you with seasoned assistants."

Two days I roamed through Berlin, with a young Gestapo man as my guide." I went to theaters, cabarets, a concert, good restaurants, and I got drunk. I felt no joy. I was homesick—homesick for Hall Eleven and for Tonio. After the two days had passed, I journeyed to Hamburg by train, still under guard.

I was instructed to leave the following morning for Burhave, a small fishing village on the North Sea Coast, situated between the mouth of the Weser and Jade Bay. On this journey, too, I was accompanied by an unobtrusive, but watchful young man from Inspector Kraus's office.

We climbed to the top of the dyke. I saw the sea. Low water had bared a strip of sand and a wide expanse of mud flats. Narrow channels criss-crossed the flats. Under the sun the mud gleamed, and crags and busy sea birds left their traces in the wet sand. From far out rolled the low mutter of the surf. We wandered along the dyke. Before us rose a white two-story house, incongruous among the low-crouched cottages of fishermen. It was a hotel, encircled by a garden and many old trees. In front of it, on the seaward side of the dyke, a narrow wharf jutted into the channel. Fishing craft lay moored at the end of the wharf, and brown nets were hoisted to dry in the sun.

Firelei and our son, Jan, were not in their room. They had gone out to look for shells and to make a campfire of driftwood. I followed the dyke, toward the spot where the smoke from an open fire curved into the blue. I felt the longing to turn and to go away. I found myself wishing that the fire on the beach were still many miles off, far enough away to give me some hours to think. "Go," I told myself, "go forward. You have had years to think, and it availed you nothing." Now the fire was but a hundred paces away. I could see our son running around with great eagerness, collecting wood to feed the fire. Firelei sat by the fire; her gaze went out to the horizon where a passing steamer belched smoke. The smoke was black. Like a sinister flag it stood against the cleanness of the sky.

I halted. Jan, a piece of wood in each hand, was running toward the fire. He stopped suddenly, and peered in my direction. His little arm flew out, pointing. His voice sailed with the wind.

"Mama—there is a man!"

CHAPTER 54

Firelei turned her head slowly. Her slender shape rose from the sand. The wind rippled through her hair and tugged at her coat. She put her right foot forward, and then her left, and I stood still and watched her coming toward me. Jan was running at her side.

Not far away a man lolled on the slope of the dyke. I pretended not to see him. He was the watcher from Inspector Kraus' office.

Late at night, after the boy had fallen asleep I told Firelei the details of the campaign which had brought about her release, and mine. She listened, her face tense, her lips set in a hardness I had not encountered in her before. In her the soldier spirit of the fighting years had survived, despite all hardship and folly, despite all suffering and degradation. Nights of questioning, months of solitary confinement, and many more of hard labor in sunless halls had stifled her enthusiasm, but they had not strangled her will to live.

"We cannot give up," she said. "We can never give up! We would be people with empty hands and empty hearts. You can rely on me, and I will rely on you. I have learned that it is fruitless to dream of peace as long as one is alive."

The week passed swiftly. We made resolute efforts to play, and to laugh, but they petered out like artificial streams in a desert. We went on long walks along the dykes and over the meadows and the dunes. We talked of the past, of the prison years; we tried to untangle the present and to penetrate the uncertain and complicated roads of the future. Discreetly trailing us, at a distance of some fifty yards, sauntered Inspector Kraus' assistant. I could rely on Firelei's silence. She was sad and disillusioned, but she was neither broken, nor resigned. We spoke of the possibility of immediate flight—and rejected it. Germany was too well guarded; the frontiers were infested with watchers. We would not get far. We would be caught and destroyed.

"You must go out first," Firelei said steadily. "You have work to do. I am sure that you will find a way to bring Jan out, and me, after you have gained a foothold in the organization. Too much has changed. It would be insane to leap into the void before at least one of us had time to explore it."

WISHING WELL

Registered U. S. Patent Office.

4	6	7	2	5	8	3	7	6	2	5	4	7
C	A	S	A	F	D	A	U	M	C	I	H	C
8	5	3	7	4	6	2	8	7	5	8	3	7
E	N	H	C	A	O	A	S	E	E	I	A	S
2	4	7	3	6	5	8	4	2	7	3	6	5
S	N	S	P	N	N	R	G	U	W	P	E	E
7	6	2	5	4	8	7	3	6	4	5	2	7
I	Y	A	W	E	E	T	Y	F	I	S	L	H
8	3	6	4	8	5	7	2	8	3	6	4	5
G	H	I	N	R	B	I	W	A	E	G	P	Y
2	5	4	6	7	3	8	4	6	2	7	5	8
O	M	L	T	D	A	I	A	H	R	E	A	F
4	8	3	5	2	8	4	6	3	5	2	7	8
N	I	R	I	R	E	S	T	T	L	Y	A	D

HERE is a pleasant little game that will give you a message every day. It is a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is six or more, subtract four. If the number is less than six, add three. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner of the rectangle and check every one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

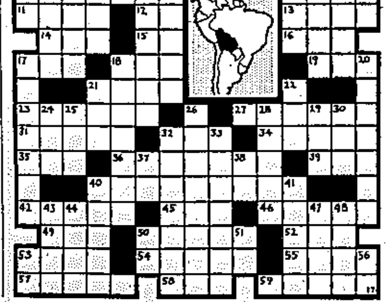
SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRY

HORIZONTAL
1 Country producing much tin.
7 It borders ——, S. A.
11 Auditory.
12 No good (letters).
13 Monkeys.
14 Single thing.
15 South America (abbr.).
16 In the middle of.
17 House animal.
18 To soak flax.
19 Kind of lettuce.
21 Withered.
23 To help.
27 Locust.
31 Browned bread.
32 To rent.
34 Bulb flower.
35 Finale.
36 Fatty.
39 Stir.
40 Furnaces for cremating.
42 To undo a setting.
45 God of war.
46 Meager.
49 Night bird.
50 Not fresh.
52 English coin.
53 Grandparental.
54 Devoured.
55 Fissure.
57 This land's capital.
58 Guided.
59 Mountains in this land.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

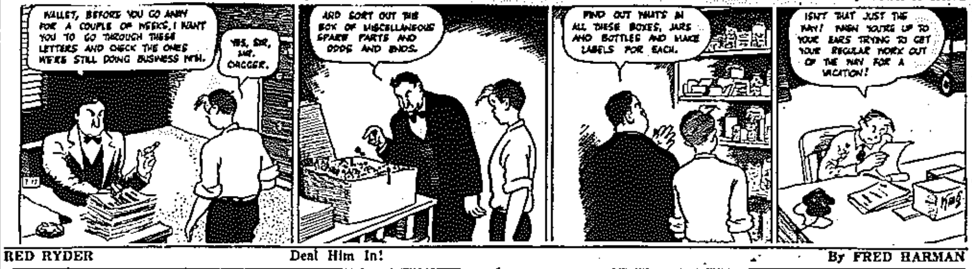
CHARLES HUGHES
COAST DOE ROPES
AWLS VELAR DOVE
NET WANDREL SEC
DR ME GAB RR
I CON CHARLES UVAS E
DIANA EVANS LATENT
A BEG HUGHES AGON A
TR YE TEN PR
EOS SALUTES DRY
MOA ROSES TEA
PAIR PEA ARES
SUPREME RETIRED

VERTICAL
1 Exclamation.
2 Indian.
3 Cotton fiber.
4 Frozen water.
5 An insect.
6 Glass marble.
7 Knave of clubs.
8 Poem.
9 To do again.
10 Plural pronoun.
17 It has a great central —— or table-land.
18 To start again.
20 It has no —— city.
21 Sister.
22 Small shield.
24 Male child.
25 Downcast.
26 Disconnected.
28 Roads.
29 Wing.
30 Sufficed.
32 Pertaining to a limit.
33 Added.
37 From.
38 Therefore.
40 Naos.
41 Disdain.
43 New star.
44 To trade.
47 Dry.
48 Appellation.
50 Compass point (abbr.).
51 Half an em.
53 Mulberry.
56 Like.



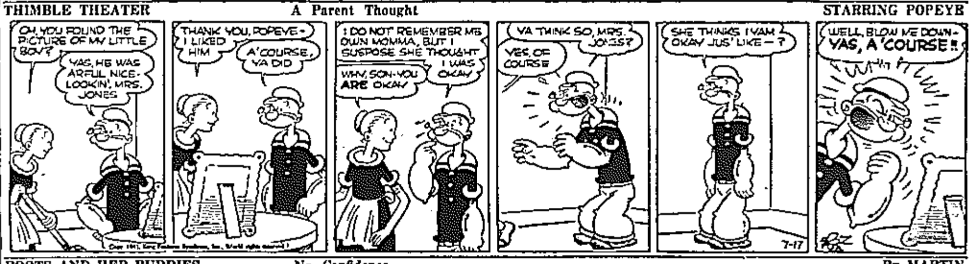
BLONDIE — Just Like a Man to Forget! — By CHIC YOUNG

GASOLINE ALLEY — Office Quicksand — By FRANK KING

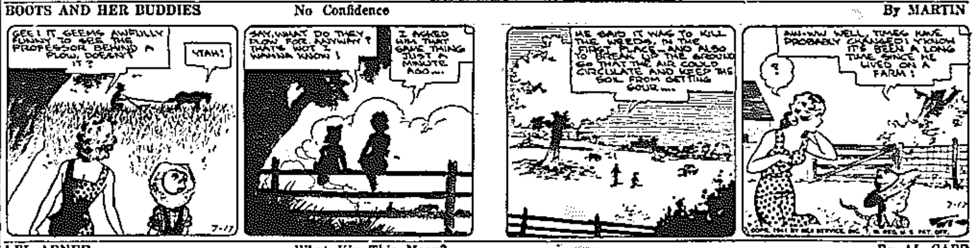


RED RYDER — Deal Him In! — By FRED HARMAN

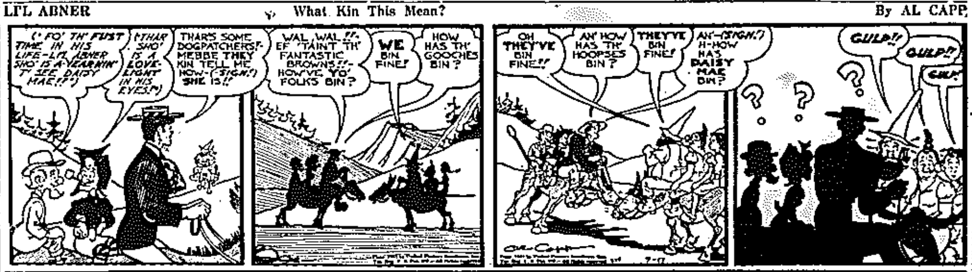
THIMBLE THEATER — A Parent Thought — STARRING POPEYE



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES — No Confidence — By MARTIN



LI'L ABNER — What Kin This Mean? — By AL CAPP



WASH TUBBS — Explain Yourself, Chief — By ROY CRANE

SUPERMAN — Ultimatum — By JERRY SIEGEL and Joe SHUSTER