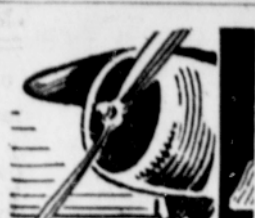




SHE LOVED A SPY

by SYLVIA TAYLOR

W-N-U Release



CHAPTER XIV

Karl was dressed in white. In appearance and manner he was as smooth and impeccable as always. But the same qualities that once charmed Joan now disgusted her as she asked coldly, "Where is Paul?"

"Do you expect me to tell you?" Karl parried.

Where was Paul? This subject held her interest most. She dared not think what might become of her without him.

But the day passed, the night, the next day, and still she had not seen him. And the next morning as she saw Karl coming on deck, she demanded, "What have you done with Paul? I want to see him."

"All right," Karl agreed surprisingly. "He summoned a sailor and spoke to him in German."

A few minutes later Paul appeared. His coat and tie were gone and his shirt was open at the throat. He looked tired.

Karl spoke rapidly in German, then suddenly turned on his heel and walked away.

"Oh Paul!" Joan gasped. "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine," Paul said grimly. "Karl's just been trying to persuade me to join his little group. Both of us, for that matter. He thinks we'd be valuable to him in his spying business."

Then he glanced at her with a smile. "You sound almost as if you care."

"I do," Joan said. And suddenly she realized that she did care. That she cared terribly what happened to Paul O'Malley.

Five more days passed as the weather became increasingly uncomfortable.

"We're probably off the coast of Mexico," Paul said as he stood at the rail looking into the vast expanse of blue sky and water.

Without turning his head, Paul said in a low voice, "I have something to tell you. Do you know which sailor is called Thomas?"

"I think so. The one who brings our meals."

"Right. It seems Karl has something on him, forced him into service on this ship by blackmail. He's promised to help us, when the time comes."

"What time?" Joan asked, feeling suddenly chilled in spite of the tropical sun.

"If everything goes as I expect, it should be within two or three days."

"You still don't know how Karl plans to get rid of those papers?"

"Submarine," Paul said briefly. "Thomas tells me we're to contact it within the next twenty-four hours."

"There's a ring around the moon," Paul observed. "We're going to have some bad weather."

"Anything would be better than this." Closing her eyes against the heat, Joan leaned her head against the chair.

When she felt a hand over hers, she started. "Oh . . . Paul . . ."

Color flooded her cheeks. "Joan," he said simply, "don't you know I'm in love with you?"

Relief and joy flooded her heart. Fatigue fell like a mask from her young face.

"I've been in love with you ever since the first day I saw you," Paul went on in his quiet voice. "But there was Karl . . ."

"Oh darling, that wasn't real. I didn't love Karl. I just thought I did. You must believe that, Paul!"

"Of course I believe it, honey," he said. "If I didn't, do you think I'd be telling you this? We O'Malleys are cagey people."

She smiled in the darkness.

"If we ever get out of this mess," Paul continued seriously, "will you marry me? It's not an easy life, you know, Joan. I'm gone a great deal and my job's dangerous. I haven't much to offer."

"You have all I want," Joan assured him. "And Paul, we've got to get out of this now. There's so much to live for . . ."

Karl's voice broke through the night. "What a romantic little scene this is. Too bad that you two must be separated."

Joan felt Paul's warning hand upon her arm but she burst out, "What do you mean?"

"I have been listening to your charming conversation," Karl told her. Joan could see the outline of his white suit in the darkness, the glow of his cigarette. "Since you seem so well informed about my plans, it might interest you to know that when that submarine leaves this ship, Paul will be on it."

"No! You can't do that?"

She could imagine his smile as he said, "I am really quite jealous, Joan, that you can transfer your affection so quickly. I would prefer

that Paul is safely out of the way so that there is nothing to interfere with our friendship."

Paul's hands clinched on the arms of his chair, but he said nothing. Joan understood then that it was better to pacify Karl than to antagonize him further.

Her hand grasped Paul's tightly as Karl disappeared around the corner of the deck. "Is he bluffing?" she whispered.

"Of course he is," Paul replied calmly. "It would be easier to get rid of me entirely than to put me on another boat. I wouldn't be any asset to Karl on a submarine."

Joan slept little that night. The ship began to roll and shudder as it met the seas that increased as the night went on. A sharp wind swept the deck. Black clouds raced across the moon and the sea splashed and hissed as it lashed over the prow.

Paul's finger tapped on the wall. Joan moved closer to the thin boards that separated them and called, "What is it?"

She did not understand his reply but realized that his door was being unlocked.

Presently Paul's head appeared in her door. "Thomas is here and



On deck, Joan had to cling to Paul to prevent the wind from sweeping her off her feet.

knows where those papers are. We're going to get them," he said. "Karl will find out," she warned.

"Karl and the captain are drinking below. They won't bother us."

"Take me with you. Please! I'm afraid."

Paul hesitated, then said, "All right. Maybe it would be better."

On deck, Joan had to cling to Paul to prevent the wind from sweeping her off her feet. The decks were slippery from the spray and the waves rose like black liquid mountains. As they proceeded cautiously, Joan dared not look out into the night. It was total blackness, and sky and water seemed blended into one evil force from which came the howling wind and spray.

At last Thomas unlocked a door and crossed the room. "They're in here," he whispered, indicating a small wall safe. "I know how to open it."

He handed the papers to Paul. "Do what you like with them! I hate Karl Miller!" In the glow of the flashlight his eyes gleamed.

Paul rapidly sorted them.

"What are you going to do then?" Joan asked.

"I'm going to change them—the plans for the bombing plane at least."

"We should meet the submarine tomorrow," Thomas said, looking fearfully over his shoulder. "But with this weather we may be off our course."

Paul seated himself at the small wooden table and handed a flashlight to Thomas. "Hold it as steady as possible," he ordered. From his pocket he drew a small bottle, a brush, pen and ink.

"What are you doing?" Joan asked, watching the grotesque shadows cast on the wall as Paul's fingers moved deftly over the paper.

"When I get through with these plans they won't know whether it's a bombing plane or a washing machine."

Once Thomas opened the door to listen, but only the wind greeted them, blowing the salt spray into their faces, and he shook his head. "This is going to be a bad one," he predicted, forcing his shoulder against the door to close it.

Paul finished his work and replaced the plans carefully in the safe. Joan was surprised to see him put the other papers back in their respective envelopes.

"These papers are probably going to Europe," Paul explained as he shut the safe.

Thomas nodded. "That's right. That's the way Karl always does it. Then they can't prove anything."

Paul threw the circle of his flashlight upon the door. "I can prove it this time."

"That's what some of the others thought," Thomas whispered, "but I've never seen anyone double-cross Karl and live to tell about it!"

"Let's get out of here," Paul said, taking Joan's arm.

The three of them made their way back and crowded into Joan's small cabin. Thomas stood by the door listening. "I guess Karl won't come on deck on a night like this," he said.

"There's nothing to do now but wait for morning," Paul said. "And I want you to get some sleep, Joan."

He put his arms tenderly about her shoulders. "Will you try, honey? Thomas and I will be right in the next cabin. Knock on the wall if you need me."

Wide-eyed, Joan lay awake listening to the thunder and the wild hiss of water as it flooded the deck. The sensitive ship seemed like another human being as it fought its valiant battle against the storm. Creaking and groaning, it pitted its strength against the double blows of wind and wave.

Dawn. The sea had subsided but rain still fell from clouded skies into the gray water. Outside Thomas had reappeared at his post and paced the wet deck with measured tread, his sharp eyes searching the seas. It was seven o'clock when Paul and Joan finally went to the small lounge which served as a dining room, and Thomas brought their breakfast.

"Any news?" Paul asked as Thomas poured the coffee.

"Karl is with the captain," the sailor reported. "They've communicated with the submarine by radio. We should meet them in three or four hours."

Paul rose. "Do you think you can keep Karl occupied in the captain's quarters for a few minutes? I'm going to the radio room."

"I'll try. But the radio operator is a tough guy. Doesn't speak a word of English either. He'll turn you right over to Karl."

Paul smiled. "I don't think so."

"Be careful," Joan begged, knowing that to ask for an explanation would be useless.

Paul bent down to kiss her. "Don't worry, dear. I know what I'm doing. I'll be back soon."

When he had gone Thomas paused in the doorway. "He should be more careful. He doesn't even carry a gun!"

"Karl took his gun away, and if he had another Karl would find it."

Thomas came closer. "But if you had a gun, Karl wouldn't suspect."

"What do you mean?" Joan whispered.

Thomas touched his pocket. "I have one here. I've had it for the last month, but it doesn't do me any good. If I gave it to Mr. O'Malley, Karl would find it but you might be able to hide it away. May come in handy."

Joan was thinking rapidly, not of herself but Paul. It would be a safeguard for both of them. "Give it to me then," she told Thomas.

He handed it to her and she put it in her pocket.

"Good luck!" he said and was gone.

Joan did not tell Paul about the gun. She was afraid he would not want her to have the responsibility. She remembered the last occasion she had held a gun in her hand. The time Karl shot Eric and made her pick up the gun to have her incriminating fingerprints on it.

"Why so quiet?" Paul inquired. Absorbed, she had not heard him return.

She smiled. "Nothing, darling. Just thinking."

"About me, I trust."

He drew her into his arms and kissed her. "I love you, Joan!"

She felt as though his love built a high wall between her and the rest of the world.

"I'm afraid you'll never have an easy life," Paul warned. "I'll be away a lot and sometimes I won't be able to explain where or why. You'll have to trust me."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

ASK ME ? ANOTHER ?

A quiz with answers offering information on various subjects

1. What is the meaning of the phrase "to catch a tartar"?
2. What is "Rotten Row"?
3. What bird that is considered one of the most beautiful birds in the world is related to our crow?
4. What name is given to the greenish deposit which forms on copper?
5. What lands are these: (1) Land of Promise? (2) Land of Nod? (3) Land of Bondage?
6. Has a foreign sovereign ever been portrayed on a U. S. coin?
7. What heavyweight boxing

champion of the world was known as "Gentleman Jim"?

The Answers

1. To catch a person who, on being attacked, proves too strong for his assailant.
2. A fashionable driveway through Hyde Park, London.
3. The Bird of Paradise.
4. Verdigris.
5. (1) Canaan or Palestine; (2) Dreamland; (3) Egypt.
6. Yes, one, Queen Isabella of Spain, on an 1893 quarter.
7. Corbett.

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