

SERIAL STORY
THE EDGE OF DARKNESS
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BY WILLIAM WOODS
NEA SERVICE, INC.

THE STORY: While their fathers in Trollness are planning action against their German conquerors, Margit Osterholm and Karen Stensgaard are at the mountain-side, where they had almost forgotten the war and the occupation of the village. Nordic Mordensen, a neighbor, gives Karen a pair of ski skis, admiring her, holding her, and the two troopers approach the water, and laughs at the girls' efforts to chase him away.

AN SS OFFICER ARRIVES

HE kept looking at her. It made his eyes on her.

"I hate you," she cried. "We're enemies. No decent Norwegian girl..."

"Karen!" Margit clapped a hand over the younger girl's mouth.

He burst into delighted laughter. His eyes got smaller and smaller, with little wrinkles in their corners.

Karen stamped her foot. "Stop," she cried. His face sobered immediately. "How did you know my name?"

He leaned back without answering, pulled a mouth organ out of his hip pocket, and watching them quizzically, with one eyebrow lifted, tapped it on his knee and began to play.

"How did you know my name?" Karen cried again petulantly.

He stopped. "I saw you one day last June," he said. "You had on black boots and a yellow kerchief, and were planting in the doct's garden."

"Oh," she said, and then a moment later in a lower voice, "But now you have to go."

The soldier looked brown and healthy and happy. He had no intention of going.

Margit saw them look at each other, and got up stiffly and went into the door. Margit ran to her. "What happened?"

She felt Karen cling, sobbing, to her shoulders.

"What happened?" she kept asking. "What happened?"

Karen broke free and ran out again. The soldier was gone. Margit followed her. "Karen, what happened?"

But Karen would not look at her. "I never want to see him again," she whispered. "Never, never." Then she whirled round and cried passionately. "We are Norwegians. I don't like him. Do I, Margit? Do I?"

"No," Margit said, and went to her, shyly at first, then bravely, took her and held her close, stroking her hair. "No, Karen," she said. Over and over again. "No, no, of course not."

THE hotel was a rambling, gabled structure of dark brown wood, that stood in a grassy clearing half a mile up the hill. An enormous red and black swastika flag rippled gently from a pole atop the porch roof. From the broad steps, one could see down over the pine tops to the village itself, and westward out beyond, to the sea, sparkling in summer sunlight.

In peacetime, the town had been something of a tourist resort, and Englishmen and Americans had come up on the excursion boats from Trondheim and Bergen, and on summer evenings gathered at the hotel, where there was music on the veranda and Japanese lanterns strung between the trees.

But now everything was changed. The gray-green uniforms were quartered there, and milled about the restaurant evenings, talking and drinking beer. During the day, when they were down in the village on duty, or else going through maneuvers back in the hills, the place was deserted.

In the hotel restaurant, some 25 or 30 soldiers were sitting at the round tables playing cards or talking in low voices. The room, broad, with a beamed ceiling, was warm and hazy from cigarette smoke. Gerd Bjarnesen sat stern and decorous in her alcove under the stairs and watched.

Even at this hour the men were in regulation uniform, complete and ready for inspection. She marveled sometimes at their adherence to rule, even in conversation. Tonight, for example, not a word had been said about the debacle of Stokund (it was forbidden), even though they could hardly have had much else on their minds. "It is as bad for them," she thought, "as for us, not to know."

One thing she had noticed over and over again, how even in the midst of laughter, a man's eyes would be fixed on his neighbor's lips as if to drag out something that lay beyond the words. They were tense, even when resting. It showed in their quick, nervous reactions when one of them mentioned the war. Yet they were the battle-trained troops who had marched into France and thundered over the bloody plains of Poland, who had fought six of the great armies of Europe and never lost.

She feared and hated and respected them with a silence and fixedness that not even they could have altered. For she saw them not as manifestations in themselves, not as episode, but as elements to all of her uneventful 40 years. She forgot in her hatred of them her own plainness and barrenness, the loneliness, and the still rankling fear of her stern father that had oppressed her even after his death. The three things most important to her, the hotel, the memory of her father, and the young boy Trygve, who was not her son, faded into the welter of daily trivia before the

new, physical fact of a company of men who sat every evening in her restaurant, and talked, smoked, drank, and played at cards.

It was about 9 o'clock when Karl came in from his day's leave. The men greeted him with curt nods. He waved at them, sat down, and ordered beer.

Two soldiers were shooting darts over in the corner. Toward the front of the room, a bridge game was going on. The players were all older men, and went at their game with great seriousness.

DOWN near the cashier's cage an argument developed. Phrases floated over. "Two million men... mine throwers... the attack on Kiev." The corporal had gone over. Everyone heard his voice, unexpectedly loud. "Must you always be talking about the war?"

The men sitting at the tables looked up at him, and one or two shifted in their chairs. He fumbled for words. "You start thinking about war, and soon... soon you can't think of anything else."

The voices in the room died away. "I, for one," said the corporal, "am sick of the... the talk."

A tightness came into the air. The mouths of the bridge players froze in the midst of laughter. The fat one stopped with a card suspended, and looked at his partner. Somebody cleared his throat.

At that moment the porch door was flung open and a giant of a man in an SS officer's black uniform strode quickly into the room. He turned his shaggy head right, then left. The soldiers snapped to their feet. Gerd Bjarnesen came sliding out from behind her desk.

"I wish to see Captain Konig," the stranger said in a clear voice. An orderly scurried from a table. "This way, sir."

The men sat down. The room was uncharacteristically still.

(To Be Continued)

BY WILLIAM WOODS

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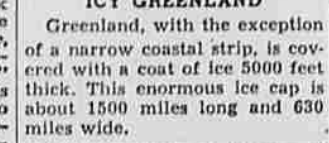
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Out Our Way
By J. R. Williams



ICY GREENLAND
Greenland, with the exception of a narrow coastal strip, is covered with a coat of ice 5000 feet thick. This enormous ice cap is about 1500 miles long and 630 miles wide.

CREDIT
AT CASH PRICES!
YOU DON'T PAY 1c EXTRA
* No Interest
* No Carrying Charge
* No Red Tape
* As Long as 90 Days to Pay
KLAMATH'S CREDIT
Clothing
OREGON WOOLEN STORE
8TH AND MAIN

BY WILLIAM FERGUSON

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Red Ryder
By F. R. Harman



Little Orphan Annie
By Harold Gray

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Interviewing Another Witness
By Fred Harman



By Fred Harman

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THIS CURIOUS WORLD
By William Ferguson
SOUTH AMERICA
IN 1930 SAW THE SPREAD OF A MALARIAL TYPE MOSQUITO THAT NEVER BEFORE HAD BEEN SEEN IN THE NEW WORLD, AND IT IS BELIEVED THE INVASION CAME FROM ONE MOSQUITO... A STOWAWAY ON AN AIRPLANE FROM THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

WOMEN'S FLYING CHIEF
HORIZONTAL
1. 6 Pictured woman pilot.
2. Mrs. Harkness.
3. 10 Walk in water.
4. 14 Musical drama.
5. 15 English river.
6. 16 Egg-shaped.
7. 17 More recent.
8. 18 Girl's toy.
9. 19 Dairy product.
10. 20 Sorrowfully.
11. 21 Weirid.
12. 22 Ship.
13. 23 (abbr.).
14. 26 Moving truck.
15. 27 One (Scott).
16. 28 Unemployed.
17. 31 Naval officer.
18. 33 Sheltered side.
19. 35 New Guinea (abbr.).
20. 36 Crimson.
21. 37 Made of oats.
22. 39 Bill of fare.
23. 40 Symbol for thallium.
24. 41 Negative.
25. 42 Literary collection.
ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE
1. Wisconsin.
2. Tonal.
3. Olden.
4. Tern.
5. Ego.
6. Eton.
7. Star.
8. Arm.
9. Rev.
10. Slit.
11. Des.
12. Oat.
13. E.
14. O.
15. G.
16. E.
17. S.
18. N.
19. E.
20. S.
21. C.
22. R.
23. L.
24. S.
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26. S.
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96. N.
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100. U.

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Freckles and His Friends
By Blosser

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