

**SERIAL STORY**  
**THE EDGE OF DARKNESS**

BY WILL A WOODS  
NEA SERVICE, INC.

CHAPTER XXIV  
WHENEVER Karl had been on sentry duty the night before, and so was entitled to be away from early roll call, the corporal wrote him down, "Absent but accounted for." So at six that morning when he awoke and saw the cot beside him empty, he was not at all alarmed.

"With the girl again," he thought, and smiled.  
But at 8 o'clock Karl had still not returned, and the corporal, with some misgivings about doing him a bad turn, had to report him. It went down in his book under the date, December 1st, "Private Fischer absent without leave."

At 9 he was called into the captain's office to be questioned.  
At a little before 10, just after sunrise, Paul Herrmann and the two soldiers, all white of face, reported that in the alley beside the shoemaker's shop they had found fresh boot tracks made since half past three when the snow had stopped falling. Near them, under a scattering of snow meant to hide it, they had seen a large red stain.

All through the cold and gloomy day, tense with foreboding, they searched. At a little before 3 it was already dark again.

Up in the hotel, Johann Stensgard sat with a group of soldiers and played 21 for hours. The men were nervous, and stopped once in a while to gaze out the dark, frosted windows. Something was afoot in the village.

"You, Herr Stensgard," said one of them, "are you going to join up? There's the Norwegian brigade, you know, on the Russian front."

"Of course," Johann told him arrogantly. "I'm going to put just as much into this fight as any of you."

They looked away from each other. The game had stopped. Johann had the uncomfortable feeling that everything they said was directed at him, that he was the outsider among them, and in spite of all he had tried, could never be anything else. "Well," he said, "well, let's get on. What's wrong?"

The man with the brandy leaned forward over the table. "You know," he drawled, "there are some words that mean the same thing in German as in Norwegian."

"Yes?" And the boy frowned surprisedly. "What words?"  
"Quisling," the man said slowly.

JOHANN started up, face crimson with anger and hurt. He had tried so hard to be one of them. But now such a hatred, and so much of his father's stubbornness surged up in him that he would as lief have gone back to the village, if he had dared. "Quisling?" he said. "Quisling. You mean traitor? I thought you were Germans, and were fighting for a new order that would stop all wars, all imperialism, all exploitations. That's why I fight. And with an ideal like that before you, what do old national boundaries or languages mean? What difference does it make if I'm Norwegian and you're German, so long as we fight for the same things? There are no more nations. There are simply those fighting for what they know is the future, and those who are trying to obstruct. If Quisling believes in the new world, I'll say 'Long live Quisling.' He stopped, pale and breathless, and was about to turn when he heard his own name called behind him.

He wheeled. The corporal, with a ghastly face, was just walking past, and there in the office door stood the captain himself.

"Herr Stensgard, could you come in for a moment?"  
The corporal said in a low voice, "Karl Fischer has been murdered in the village. His body was found in the harbor."

Johann, though he had no idea who the man was, felt a curious uneasiness come over him, but hearing the stunted silence at the table, feeling how they were all looking at him, he dared hesitate no longer. He walked into the office and shut the door behind him.

"THERE was a sharp edge to the captain's first greeting that made him feel at once that he ought to be on his guard."  
"You have been living in the village . . . in the mayor's house."  
"I had very little chance to get about," Johann explained. "My father, you know . . ."

"Unless the man subscribes to National Samling you cannot regard him as your father. He is a person . . . suspect like all the rest."  
Johann wet his lips. "Yes, Herr Kapitän. Of course."

"Very well. We shall know how to deal with such people. Our eyes have been opened. Now, what report have you to make on the time you were living in his house?"  
"I . . . I saw very little," Johann said, and realized what a fool he had been not to take advantage of his stay in the village. "I think . . . groups held meetings here and there." He was making a stab to prove he had not wasted all his time.

"Was a man named Gunnar Brogve ever at those meetings?"  
"I think so . . . but, I'm not sure."  
"Was anything ever said about resistance to the forces of occupation?"  
"I . . . I don't know."  
Konig rose excitedly and shook his finger at the boy. "We are an army of protection. Who was it who this winter brought 40 trainloads of grain into Norway? Who is it who protects these people from English bombers and landing parties? What do we get in return? Meetings! Plots! Hatred! Murder!"  
Johann could not help being impressed by the logic of that argument. His opinion of his father and the townspeople sank even lower

than before. Now, besides contempt, he could feel hatred.

"Very well." The captain wheeled and went back to his desk. "There have always been certain dangerous reactionaries in town. For example, there is Kaare Jensen, the shoemaker. Private Karl Fischer was murdered in the alleyway adjoining his shop. We shall presume it could not have been done without his connivance. Do you or do you not know him to have acted seditiously against the Reich forces?"

"He has talked in favor of the government in London."  
"Good. Now, the man who owns the canning factory, Bratogard. I have suspected him of ordering that fish be spoiled. Am I correct?"

"I have seen very little of him in the village," said Johann. "I don't know him very well."  
"Am I correct?" the captain repeated in a thunderous voice.

"Yes, Herr Kapitän."  
"Lastly, the fisherman, Gunnar Brogve. He is the most persistent troublemaker of them all."  
"Yes, Herr Kapitän." The answer came quick and strong, without wavering.

Konig punched a bell on his desk, and made several quick notations on a slip of paper. When the orderly entered and saluted, he handed him the paper. "Give this to Lieutenant Beck," he said. "These are the three men who are to be arrested."  
The news spread like fire in the village. Gunnar had been arrested at supper. Bratogard was sick with influenza, but had been dragged out of bed by three troopers and forced to go along. The shoemaker's shop, where the children had used to listen to stories, was a shambles, smashed by rifle bullets, and Jensen had been beaten

up in the hotel, Johann Stensgard sat with a group of soldiers and played 21 for hours. The men were nervous, and stopped once in a while to gaze out the dark, frosted windows. Something was afoot in the village.

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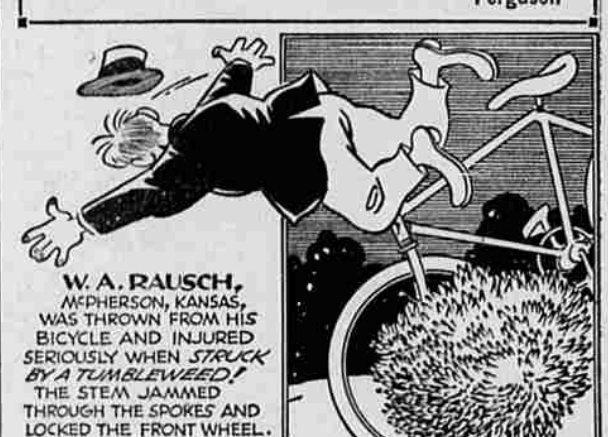
nearly senseless when he tried to put up a fight. But none of the guns had been found.  
(To Be Continued)



"With that outfit no one will suspect you of being a spy!"

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**THOR WASHERS IRONERS UHLIG'S**  
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**THIS CURIOUS WORLD** By William Ferguson



W. A. RAUSCH, WATSON, KANSAS, WAS THROWN FROM HIS BICYCLE AND INJURED SERIOUSLY WHEN STRUCK BY A TUMBLEWEED! THE STEAM JAMMED THROUGH THE SPOKES AND LOCKED THE FRONT WHEEL.



OVER \$60,000 WAS SPENT IN TRYING TO SAVE HEATH HENS FROM EXTINCTION, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS! THE LAST LIVING SPECIMEN OF THIS GAME BIRD WAS SEEN IN 1932.

**U. S. OFFICIAL**

**HORIZONTAL**  
1 Pictured U. S. Attorney General.  
12 Alleviate.  
13 Courtesy title.  
14 Verbal.  
15 Military police (abbr.).  
16 Part of a church.  
18 Biblical pronoun.  
19 Either.  
21 Dined.  
22 Novel.  
23 Lumbered type.  
26 Machine part.  
29 Pertaining to Arabian.  
32 Weird.  
33 Crystalline hydrocarbon.  
34 Symbol for Ilium.  
35 Exists.  
36 Alloy of iron and carbon.  
39 Conical.  
43 Father (Sp.).  
44 Religious holiday.

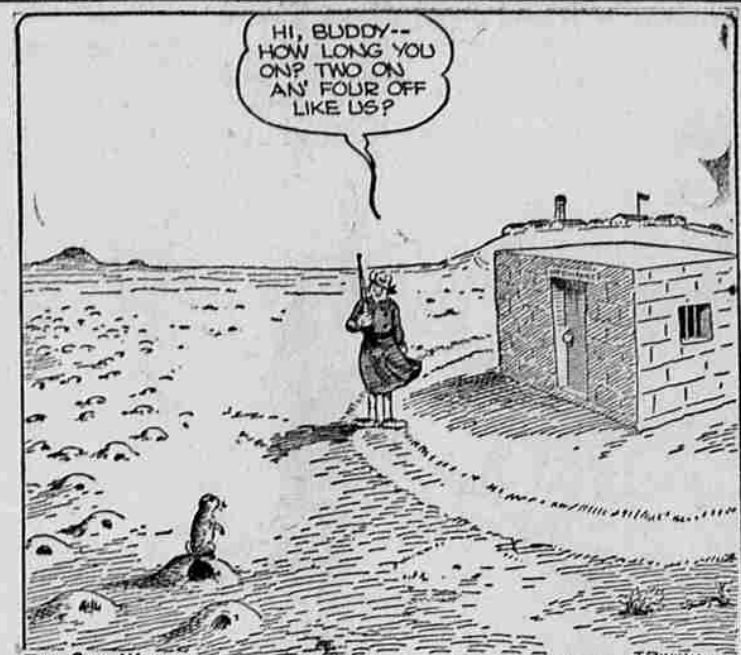
**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE**  
1 ILLINOIS AREA  
2 BELAN  
3 RISS  
4 MAD  
5 AR  
6 PET  
7 AMERICAN  
8 RS  
9 AX  
10 ERIE  
11 ABETS  
12 TILS  
13 TRAM  
14 MONOCHORD  
15 TACK  
16 ELM  
17 COMETS  
18 THEE  
19 LACROSSE

**VERTICAL**  
1 Iron (symbol).  
2 Male sheep.  
3 Snake.  
4 Compass point.  
5 Island.  
6 Be seated.  
7 Coarse part of wheat.  
8 Accomplish.  
9 Arid.  
10 City in New Guinea.  
11 Cloth measure.  
12 Noun.  
13 Gather, as a harvest.  
14 Native metal.  
15 Transpose (abbr.).  
21 Exist.  
23 Twisted.  
24 Metal fastener.  
25 Frozen water.  
27 Attempted.  
28 One who lubricates.  
30 Constellation.  
31 Assault.  
36 Enemy agent.  
37 Sailor.  
38 Limb.  
39 Fright.  
40 Knock.  
41 Z.  
42 Make a mistake.  
47 We.  
48 Appellation.  
49 Call.  
51 Beverage.  
52 Eye.  
54 Obese.  
55 Tag.  
56 High card.  
57 Before Christ (abbr.).  
58 Musical syllable.  
60 Afternoon (abbr.).  
61 Transpose (abbr.).

**Wash Tubbs**  
A BOY, I HOPE THIS'S A WIDE CHIMNEY!  
OH, FERD... IS SHE GOING TO MAKE IT?  
I-I THINK SO...

**Boots and Her Buddies**  
SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED AT HER FAILURE TO SUBDUCE KING GUZ AND HIS FREE MOOVIAN SUBJECTS BY FORCE, EENY LAUNCHES OUT ON A NEW TACK.  
GENERAL COP SIR... A MOOZY UNDER A WHITE FLAG HAS APPROACHED OUR LINES... WHAT'LL WE DO?  
YOU OUGHTA KICK HIS PANTS, BUT THAT WOULDN'T BE CRICKET, SO BRING HIM IN!

**Alley Oop**  
YEZZIR, YOUR HIGHNESS... OUR LEADER ASKS FOR A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND SUGGESTS A GET-TOGETHER ON SOME PEACE TERMS.  
MY GOSH, OOP! EENY CALLING FOR A PEACE CONFERENCE... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!  
GUZ THAT O' GAL'S LIP TO SUMPIN!



Out Our Way By J. R. Williams  
BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON



Red Ryder



Little Orphan Annie



Freckles and His Friends



Wash Tubbs



Boots and Her Buddies



Alley Oop



Our Boarding House With Major Hoople



By Fred Harman



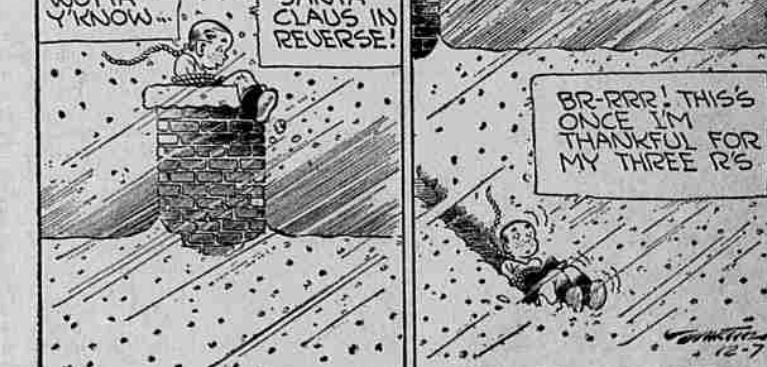
By Harold Gray



By Blosser



By Crane



By Martin



By V. T. Hamlin