



# A HUNTING WE WILL GO

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*After Madame Mazola hit town with her astrology, it didn't take Phineas "Taurus" Pinkham long to prove that Garrity was a crab, Gillis was a sucker, Goomer was two other guys, and Casey was the goat. But it wasn't until Babette hit Phineas with her skillet that the transplanted star gazer from Boonetown really got his astral plane into the ascendancy. And then he hit into something himself—a double-talk play!*

**T**HERE'S NOTHING NEW UNDER the sun. The P.W.A. of the Caesars built the first subway and called it The Catacombs, the China boys mixed up a batch of gunpowder thousands of years ago, and the Egyptians concocted an embalming fluid that makes the formaldehyde used by the corpse tidiers of the present age seem like dish water.

What's more, the Heinie mental giants of 1918

cooked up a syrup that was the same stuff that crime detection tycoons of the present day call *scopolamine*. You know—the jiggle water that makes a crook tell the truth with all the honorable gusto of a George Washington.

Now, in the aforementioned year of the Big Riot, Lieutenant Phineas "Carbuncle" Pinkham took a long hop, figuratively speaking, in an astral plane and came down to earth with the Zodiac in his lap. And

as if that weren't enough, a spiritualist of note—one Madame Mazola, who had taken a powder out of the Tyrol in 1915—put out her shingle in Bar-le-Duc. She announced to whomever it might concern that she would give an applicant a clear wire to his relatives who had long since departed this vale of tears. Ectoplasm was her specialty, and it would be produced for the most skeptical—for the insignificant sum of five francs—payable in advance!

In addition to all this, a big war was still going on in France.

The first sign of astral disturbance hit the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, located on the outskirts of Bar-le-Duc, when Phineas Pinkham moved his belongings out of the hut he shared with Lieutenant Gillis, otherwise known as Bump. The Old Man promptly haled Phineas into the Operations Office and desired to know in no uncertain terms where he had gotten orders to move. Phineas pointed toward the roof.

"I have found out that our destinies are controlled from above," he said solemnly. "I was born in April at sign of Taurus, The Bull! Well, if Taurus and Pisces, The Fish, are in the same house at this time of year, disaster will fall on The Bull—and that's me, you know. Anyhow, Bump Gillis was born a sucker—I mean under The Fish—an' so . . ."

Major Rufus Garrity got up slowly, his eyes bulging. "What in the name of—Go see a medico, Pinkham! You're off your nut. Taurus, huh? Well, let's have no more of your bull. Get out of here! And start moving back into that Nissan. I give the orders around here, you lame brain, and if you want to really see some stars, just let me know and I'll oblige you!"

"I know my destiny," Phineas persisted. "Taurus and Pisces can't stay under one roof. Taurus is on the throne an'—Say, when were you born, Major?"

"July 2 . . . but, you crackpot, what has that got to do with—"

"The Crab! Haw-w-w-w! I should've known it. Well, it's all right for Taurus and Cancer, The Crab, to be under the same roof for awhile. So I wall move in here, an'—"

"Over my dead body you will!" Garrity roared. "You make me sick. You give me cramps, Pinkham! Get out of here!"

"There! That proves it!" the C.O.'s tormentor exclaimed. "It says when you are born at the sign of The Crab you are subject to stomach aches. See, it's right in the book. You've got a happy family life, too."

"You're a liar! My wife—" Garrity suddenly jumped

up and down on the floor and swore like a mule skinner. "I'll strangle you, you halfwit!" He pawed over his desk for something to throw.

THE CAUSE of it all took a hurried departure. But he did not move his things back into the Nissan he had occupied with Gillis. Instead, he sat on his trunk in the lane outside the row of huts and studied a book he had purchased from Madame Mazola. Then after awhile, he got up and began to canvass Buzzards' Row like a brush salesman. At last he found a pilot who was born under a sign of the Zodiac that was in harmony with Taurus at that particular time of year. The pilot protested, but to no avail. Phineas simply established himself in the new quarters, and then went the rounds, tagging the birthdays of some of his mates.

He now became more convinced than ever that he had finally acquired the right slant on life. Sergeant Casey had come into the world under Capricorn, which means The Goat. And Glad Tidings Goomer's zodiacal rating was Gemini, which means The Twins.

"Haw-w-w-w!" Phineas guffawed upon learning of that fact. "I knew that, too. One bum could not be so stupid."

Captain Howell had first seen the light of day when Scorpio was in the ascendancy. "I always thought you were a scorpion, as you're poison to me," Phineas told the flight leader with an enormous grin on his homely freckled face. "It all works out right. I will live my life as the astral C.O. says."

MEANWHILE Madame Mazola was coining argent in Bar-le-Duc. There is no more potent sucker bait in the wide world than a medium's crystal ball. Half the pilots on the Allied payroll who worked in that sector trekked to her den to learn of the future and to see how soon they were likely to "go west."

A lot of them came away with the jitters.

Citizens of Bar-le-Duc also told of the amazing talents of Mazola. A dozen of them testified to having seen some ectoplasm flutter over their rooftops and disappear into the night. One Frog peasant woman swore that she had talked to her dear departed grandmother. Then again, a seance ordered by some dubious brass hats gave them the scare of their lives. They heard tappings, had a table lifted right out of their laps, and were treated to a cloud of ectoplasm that sailed right out through a window and up into the evening sky.

That same night, however, Jerry bombers nearly

erased a big French general off the map when he was journeying between Revigny and Vaubecourt. So even though spooks were becoming a nuisance in the sector, compared to the trouble that the Heinies were tossing at the Allied brass hats, Madame Mazola's spirits were as harmless as butterflies.

For weeks, the Democrats had sat with many pat hands, their eyes on a cleanup. But when the cards were laid on the jittery table, Jerry tossed in the works and scraped up the kitty. Something was fishy. Gothas bombed a road that was camouflaged better than a piece of buckshot in a barrel of caviar, and they hit just what they figured on hitting—the ammunition train.

Near Mont Sec, Frog and Yankee brain trusters tossed in heavy reinforcements to crack the Jerry line by a surprise attack. For they had been told that the Boche were as weak as starved kittens at that point. But when the brawl started, they found the Krauts thicker than Scotchmen around a free lunch counter—and they were tossed back until the waters of the Meuse River were wetting their empennages.

By this time, Chaumont was convinced that dirty work was abroad. Representatives of the Allied Intelligence Corps began counter-snooping. And in three days' time, they had four hundred citizens ready for lead poisoning. But all of them had good alibis.

As was inevitable, the Chaumont agents now appealed to the Air Force for help. A colonel and a major stopped at the Ninth Pursuit Squadron to make sure of the cooperation of Garrity. They walked into the big living room of the Frog farmhouse just as Phineas Pinkham was complaining about a pain in his neck.

"I knew I was right," the Boonetown, Iowa, astrologer wailed. "It says anybody born under Taurus would have neck trouble. Madame Mazola says I shouldn't go near any place that sounds like it has to do with a bull. Uh—er—I hope I don't ever meet that Kraut bum, Goehring, huh? If I did, I might be Goehred. Haw-w-w!"

"Attention!" the Major of the Ninth roared. "Stand stiff, Pinkham!"

"Anyways my neck will—haw-w-w-w!"

"Carry on," the visiting colonel said. "How are you, Major?"

"Fine! Fine!" replied the Old Man. "At least I was until you men got here. Ha! Ha!"

"Ha-a-ah," the brass hat echoed in sickly imitation of mirth. "We haven't bad news, Major. Relax. Just want to have a little chat. Uh—er—what ails that

man?" And he stabbed a finger in the direction of Phineas

Pinkham who had suddenly ducked out through a window. Lieutenant Gillis was coming through the door.

"Him?" Garrity snorted. "Oh, 'a fish' just came in. This is a bad time of year for a fish and a bull to be under the same roof."

By now, the brass hats had decided everyone was balmy.

Then Glad Tidings Goomer appeared at the kitchen door, scratching at his head. He did not seem to be aware of the presence of the Chaumont detectives, and he spoke to Howell. "I don't git it," he said stupidly. "Lootenant Pinkham says I was born twins, Cap'n. He says I shouldn't ought to go out on Wednesdays, as that's a bad day for Jiminy an' I might git killed. Jiminy crickets! He says to me, did I feel roomertism anywheres this mornin'. It's funny cause I got a sore arm. What do you think he—?"

"Garrity!" the colonel stormed. "Let's get out of here before I go batty, too. I don't know what to think about you. But you'd better have these men looked over. Too many hours in the air—nerves probably."

IN THE PRIVACY of the Operations Office, the Intelligence officers told Garrity of the grave situation confronting the Allies. The Heinie spy system had gotten out of hand and reports were drifting across the lines that the Kaiser had established a clearing house for his espionage system much nearer to the war zone than Berlin.

"There's evidence in the back area that the nerve center of the whole works is in Alsace, Major," the brass hat said seriously. "There have been reports of undue activity in one of those places not far from Metz. The location has no military significance. There are no signs of ammunition or supply dumps in that area. Yet a French flyer reports that it is heavily ringed with camouflaged anti-aircraft batteries. Why?"

"You tell me!" Garrity retorted under his breath. "Maybe it's the headquarters of the High Command," he suggested aloud. "That's reason enough to have popguns around it, isn't it?"

"Perhaps. But we've got to be sure, Major. Somebody has got to find out if the Germans have set up a communication center there, and if they have new apparatus—a system of signals. If so, an air raid—"

"I knew it!" the C.O. of the Ninth grumbled. "So



you didn't bring bad news, huh? All you want is a solo flyer to go over there and get his pants burned off. Duck soup, Colonel! Simply duck soup! I'll have a victim ready for a spade by tomorrow night. What's the name of that town? Show me on this map."

The colonel pointed. "Right there," he said. "Just north of Metz. The town of Varche. Well, that's all, Garrity. I'll communicate with Wing Headquarters. Just to confirm—"

"Get the undertaker on the phone while you're about it," the Old Man interrupted with a snort. And say, "how'd you happen to think of us for this job?"

The Colonel grinned. "Playing a hunch, Garrity. Paid Madame Mazola a visit. She told me nine was my lucky number. So the Ninth Pursuit Squadron was the answer. What's more, this is the ninth of the month, and I was thirty-nine today. Well, we must be going now, Major." The C.O. dropped his head in his hands and groaned as the brass hats stalked out. He went up to his room and got a bottle out of his trunk. And when he awoke next morning, his mouth tasted like the under side of a rag rug.

The early patrol flyers were polishing off their breakfast prior to taking to the air when the Old Man carefully descended the stairs (carefully, so as not to jar his head) and changed the orders he had given "A" Flight the night before.

"I'm giving you a chance to spot somethin' this morning—so that one of you fatheads won't have to commit suicide tonight. You patrol the sector near Metz, drop down low over this point here on the map, and keep your eyes peeled. We want to know what's going on there—the place is named Varche. The Intelligence thinks—"

Phineas choked on a piece of toast and shoved his chair back. "What's the name of that town, huh? What did you call it?"

"Varche!" the Major hollered. "Why don't you give your ears a bath?"

"Oh, I can't go there!" Phineas argued. "I would get killed. We'd all get washed up. Anybody born under Taurus is out of luck if he goes near a place that sounds like that. 'Varche' is the Frog word for a cow, and a bull is a cow's husband. It's too risky. Anyway, my neck is worse this A.M."

"You go out with the rest!" Garrity roared, "or I'll have you shot for cowardice in the face of the enemy. Just give me half a chance. Get out to that Spad of yours, Pinkham, or—"

"Awright," Phineas gulped. "But you are sendin' me

to my doom! My ectoplasm will come back an' haunt you. If I 'go west,' I will find my way back to Madame Mazola's, an'—"

Glad Tidings Goomer came out to clear up empty java cups. "Is it okay for me to go out today, Lootenant?" he asked Phineas. "What does it say in the kodak, zodac, or whatever you call it?"

Major Garrity booted Goomer halfway to the kitchen, then thundered at Howell to get his gang onto the tarmac. In five minutes, five Spads were heading for Boche territory, and in one of them Phineas Pinkham was shakily thumbing his nose at fate against his better judgment. He sensed that Disaster was hiding behind a cloud over Varche with a blackjack in its fist.

Anyhow, Disaster took its first crack at Howell in the form of a Jerry Fokker, and the flight leader's crate went into a tantrum. Then three Fokkers came down off the top shelf and ganged Bump Gillis. Another trio of them headed for the illustrious offspring of the Iowa Pinkhams.

Even though Phineas had taken a running start, bullets fell an inch short of his tail for fully five miles and he got over the lines with a spent bullet tumbling around inside his coat collar.

"I told 'em!" he complained. "No bum can kid with Fate. Mazola was right. An' Bump should not be upstairs with Taurus at the same time. I had better resign, marry Babette, an' go home."

Grumbling and muttering, Phineas Pinkham landed outside of Bar-le-Duc. He got out of the cockpit and started walking across a field toward an open road when suddenly he tripped and fell. He scrambled to his feet and turned to look at the hole in the ground. Something was moving at the bottom of it, and when Phineas bent over he saw that it was a field mouse. It squeaked as he picked it up and stored it in his pocket.

"Fate—that's what it is!" the ardent follower of Madame Mazola chuckled. "I'll name you 'Oswald.' And you'll be good luck."

THE flyer's legs were still shaking when he knocked on the door of his choice of Frog damsels. Babette ushered him in, then tossed her sewing on a table and turned to give all her attention to her Yankee Romeo.

"*Sacré, Pheenyas,*" she exclaimed. "What ees thees which have scare' you, *non?*"

"When was you born?" Phineas asked in a hurry.

"Ah, *mais oui,*" Babette replied, all smiles. "*Le sixieme Novembre, Pheenyas. Pourquoi?*"

"Sagittarius? *Sagi*—?" Phineas let out a howl and leaped for the door, tossing his cigarette away as though it might impede him. It landed on the heap of thin dress material lying on the table. "We can't be in ze same *maison* this week, mawn cherry. He-e-ey, the door is stuck! Lemme out, Babette, as it is awful bad luck. One of us might kill ze other, comprenny? What's the matter with this do—"

"Crazee *vous ete!*" Babette shrilled at him. "Peeg! Look—*regardez!* Ze *nouveau* gown I have make. Ze hole you burn *dans* ze cheefon! Bah-h-h, *allez vite!*"

Phineas' light of love then picked up a skillet. Her swain pulled violently at the door and it flew open suddenly. The article of kitchenware followed him out into the hall, overtook him, and clanged against his pate. Babette had made a bull's eye! Unfamiliar with the Zodiac, she was unaware of the fact that she had been born a marksman. For Sagittarius is—The Archer!

"*Sacré bleu!*" she raged. "Ze belle gown ees ruin, bah-h-h-h!" She snatched the thin creation up from the table and threw it out the window. "*Nex' temps* I see ze peeg, I keel heem!"

Phineas quickly went over and entered the lair of Madame Mazola. It was a clubby, albeit spooky, tepee.

*Vin blanc* and *vin rouge* decanters stood on a table in a dimly lighted makeshift reception room. A bell tinkled when Phineas closed the door behind him, and the medium appeared almost at once.

Madame Mazola was a meatless female clad in a long black dress. She wore a hood of the same ebon hue, and the face it shadowed resembled a wedge of restaurant pie. Her prop boss was sharp pointed, and the eyes that stared at her latest caller looked as though they could count the vertebra in his backbone.

"*Bon jour, M'sieu.* Lieutenant Pinkham, *oui?* You wish to know the future again, perhaps?"

Phineas tenderly massaged his bruised noggin. "I got a good bump here you could read," he grinned as

he followed the clairvoyant into the mysterious inner sanctum of the ghost-baiting bazaar. "But I will be satisfied with gettin' in touch with my Uncle Thaddeus who got scalped by Indians once. Ask him how is every little thing, huh?"

"I'll try," Madame Mazola said in a ghostly voice. "There—all the lights are out. Let me go into a trance. Be still . . . very . . . very . . . still . . ."

"Ye—yeah—er—" Phineas hardly breathed for fully five minutes. The stillness was first broken by a faint squeak. But though he yearned to tell his little rodent

to shut up, he restrained himself. Suddenly a quick tapping sound lifted the hairs straight up on the Yankee's cranium.

The medium mumbled: "Ah! The spirits move. *M'sieu.* Sh-h-h-h-h!" Phineas felt little feet patter across his arm. He made a pass at the mouse in the dark and missed. The tapping came again, then Madame Mazola said: "I am in contact with your dear departed relative. Speak to him, *M'sieu.* What do you want to say to him?"

"Hello, Uncle Thaddeus," Phineas gulped. "What do they feed you where you are, huh?"

From somewhere above came a reply: "*Manna,*

*Phineas.* And the nectar of the g—" The voice was suddenly smothered and Madame Mazola coughed as if a fishbone had been caught in her throat. A light snapped on, and the medium's eyes looked glassy.

"It is not the time for contact with the other world, *M'sieu!* Tonight, later, perhaps—I am sorry, *M'sieu!*"

"Huh—er—awright," Phineas grinned. "Here's a coupla francs, anyways. As long as I know Uncle Thaddeus is doin' awright, okay. And now, if you don't mind, Madame, I lost a little pet mouse here some place. Maybe it went under the table an'—" He got down on his hands and knees and started to wriggle underneath the article of furniture. A faint rapping sound came again and Madame Mazola's voice



intoned: "I'm sorry about your pet mouse, but you must go now, *M'sieu*. My sister wishes to speak with me. Always this time of day—"

The Boonetown jokesmith felt his spine unraveling and he got to his feet in a hurry. "*Oui, oui, Madame!* I beg voos pardon. I'll be back *ce swar*."

Out in the reception room Phineas paused and poured himself a stiff drink of *vin blanc*. While he was imbibing, a coal black cat trotted in, whiskers quivering and nose sniffing at the ozone. Phineas sidestepped it, then put down his glass and went out.

On his way back to his Spad, he got to wondering about the spirit that had suddenly refused to talk. The black cat worried him, too.

It was a mile to where he had left his battle wagon, and when he crossed the field, he spotted a hound dog chasing a rabbit. The rabbit, beginning to lose the race, suddenly went into an Immelmann, however, putting the canine into a skid that knocked it off its undercarriage long enough for the big-eared bunny to whisk inside a hollow log.

"Haw-w-w-w!" the A.W.O.L. Yank laughed. "That's kind of cramped for the bunny, so surely that pooch'll never get his shoulders in. Well, back to my C.O.!" Phineas yawned.

But his lethargy dropped away briefly as he turned to looked back at the log where the rabbit was thumbing its nose at the Frog mutt. A section of the Pinkham brain cells suddenly began to operate, and a dubious grin appeared on his unmatchable pan. "Hm, I wonder?" he pondered.

THE OLD MAN was fit to be tied when the wonder worker of the outfit set his Spad down on the field. Sergeant Casey informed Phineas that Captain Howell had been forced to ground his bus on the roof of a Frog barn near Revigny. The flight leader was in his hut talking to himself. "He got side-swiped by a Boche slug, an' his marbles ain't picked up yet. They got Lootenant Gillis over in a base horsepital. An' they are havin' a time gettin' him straightened up, as he was all bent over like a droopin' sunflower."

"I told 'em!" Phineas yipped. "Pisces did not belong in the ascendancy with Taurus, which is me. They did not have a chance, the bums. Bump has got arthritis, as that is what happens to guys born under the sign of The Fish. You look it up! Haw-w-w-wer—hello, Major!"

"Where've you been, Pinkham?" the Old Man thundered.

Phineas surprised himself. The truth came out of his mouth before he could clamp down on it. "I beat three Fokkers to Barley Duck," he said. "An' I went to see Babette an' Madame Mazda. I got talkin' with my uncle who was scalped a hundred an' fifty years ago, an' I took a stiff drink of van blank, an'—"

"You look it!" Garrity yelled. "Your eyes look like Trilby's after Svengali ogled her. Get to your hut, as you are under arrest for running away from Heinies, getting boiled, and ducking the mid-day patrol. You can get shot for this."

"Awright," Phineas mumbled. "Why —er—why did I have to tell the truth, I wonder? I—er—huh!"

Sergeant Casey cut across Phineas' path as the disgraced flyer wended his way to Buzzards' Row. "Funny, ain't it, Lootenant? That town over in Alsace wasn't Varche after all. The Intelligence was here an' said they picked the wrong town. Ha! Ha!"

"Yeah? Why the big bums! Then it was Bump Gillis himself who was bad luck!"

THAT NIGHT, still glued to his Nisson and waiting for a Yankee courtroom, Phineas heard that the Krauts had blown big holes in an engineering project near Varennes. More than that, they had scattered a Frog grocery warehouse all over the map outside of Sivry and the place had seemed to be as well hidden as a black bear hived up in a pile of coal.

All the next day Chaumont was in a dither. Brass hats percolated throughout the sector insulting everybody and threatening to bust every officer in the territory. Major Rufus Garrity was not snubbed, a Brigadier telling him that the Ninth Pursuit was getting to be a liability to the Government. He pointed out to the C.O. that one particular aviator had washed up a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars worth of sky buggies in less than three months.

"Don't let that worry you any more," the Old Man growled. "I am arranging to have him shot in a couple of wee—"

"Ah—er—you talking about *me*?"

The brass hat whirled around and saw Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham standing in the doorway. Garrity told him to get to Hades out, but Phineas was adamant. "Seein' as how I am gettin' shot anyways, why not let the Kraut bums do it? You see, I have found out that the Intelligence Corps made a bull—for that Varche was not the name of the town where you think the spy factory is. It's all right, then, for me to volunteer to go over there, as it will not conflict with Taurus The Bull. I will



not fail, as when Taurus is in the ascendancy without Pisces—”

“Get him out of here, Garrity, before I go crazy,” the brigadier said in a rising crescendo that could have been heard back at Chaumont. “He’s as goofy as a—”

“That is not unusual,” the Major ripped out. “Pinkham, the job is yours!”

“I can’t thank you enough,” the Boonetown patriot enthused. “I will never forget your kindness. Sometimes I could just cry—!” He ducked out ahead of a huge book on aviation tactics.

HALF AN HOUR LATER, Phineas was pushing his Spad across the field, Hisso wide open. And as he did so, Sergeant Casey leaned against the ammo shack and grinned with pleasure. It was strange conduct for a man who was watching a brave flyer head for what seemed a certain washout. But then Casey could remember many personal indignities since Lieutenant Pinkham had joined the Air Force, and at the moment he was convinced that the end justified the means.

Captain Howell was also feeling almost like himself as he watched Phineas lift the Spad into the dusky scrapo-sphere. “Where’s he going?” he yelled at Casey.

“Well, it ain’t after Mayflowers, sir. Ha! Ha!”

“Why, he’ll get killed!”

“You hope—” Casey supplied and walked away with a spring in his step.

The lone Yankee flyer did a lot of thinking when he flew over the lines. A pooch chasing a bunny was the picture that would not leave his astute brain. And the whole thing had something to do with a field mouse, he was pretty sure. A field mouse might have jumped down the throat of Uncle Thaddeus’ ghost!

Near Metz, Phineas dispensed with plenty of altitude and slid down into a bleak stretch of territory that seemed utterly devoid of Krauts. He landed, listened for several minutes, then got out of his Spad and crossed a sheep pasture. His steps brought him to a road intersection where a sign post leaned drunkenly against a tree. Reading them, Phineas abruptly felt butterflies begin to beat their wings against the walls of his stomach, and his heart leaped up to his tonsils and almost strangled him. “VARCHÉ 2 MI. BULLOISE 4 MI. BOVINEZ 7 MI.” was what he saw.

“I have been framed!” he quavered and started away from the place. “Bulloise—Bovin—ow-w-w-w!”

Then things began to happen. A patrol of Boche doughs spotted Phineas sprinting for his battle wagon and they opened up with everything they had. Bullets dug up turf around the flying Yank. A potatomasher grenade washed out part of a fence over which he leaped with little or nothing to spare. The fugitive got to his Spad, gave the Hisso its head, and got upstairs with bullets snarling close to the seat of his pants.

The worst was yet to come, however. For anti-



aircraft batteries threw everything at him but a church and a narrow gauge railroad train. The Spad pitched and tossed, whined and squealed, groaned and moaned.

"I'll kill somebody for this," Phineas yowled: "Casey—if I ever get back—you bums; Tellin' me the place wasn't Varche!"

A remnant of shrapnel hit him on the noggin just then and made him do things with a Spad that no man in his right senses could have coaxed out of one. When the Iowa marvel got the fog out of his brain, he was hedgehopping a Heinie settlement. One wing swept a Jerry off his feet. A tin pail spun through the air and bounced off the Spad's strut. Fragments of something stung the Yank's face as he frantically backsticked. Some went into his mouth and he chewed on them.

Regaining a few thousand feet, Phineas thought he was in the clear. But then three Albs pounced on him. He tried to make a run for it, but the Potsdam pugs crowded him against the sky ropes and shot in punches to the Spad's mid-section before he could blink. He banged left rudder, felt something interfering with his boot. Kicking at it crazily, he suddenly remembered that it was a big book that he had put inside the pit three days back. It was called *Dr. Oblesby's Astrology For All*.

Yanking the stick back, Phineas sent the Spad into a loop, and the big tome dropped out of the pit, plummeted down through the ozone, and hit a Von right on the square head!

PHINEAS managed to shake off the remaining Albs and slip into friendly ozone just as darkness surrounded him. He looked off to the right, saw something fluttering through the sky that made his teeth chatter and his hair crawl all over his pate. A filmy, decidedly ghostly substance was slowly settling earthward.

"Ectoplasm!" the credulous Yank gulped. "I bet it got loose from Mazola, an'—" He circled, trying to keep his eyes on the slowly descending supernatural phenomenon. The wind was whipping it around some, so that Phineas got slightly gaga trying to follow its course.

"It—it must be the ectoplasm from the spirit of St. Vitus," he decided as he kept losing altitude. Quickly he gave the Spad the gun and dived in so that his wing tip snagged the ectoplasm and kept on going down to the carpet with the stuff streaming out from his strut. The Spad's wing then buckled and Phineas landed in a heap three miles from Bar-le-Duc.

A bunch of Yankee doughs near Vaubecourt had watched the Spad stagger over their heads with top wing apparently smoking, and they agreed that nothing human would ever step out of it with a whole neck. They passed the word along to Divisional Headquarters, and in due time the phone in Major Rufus Garrity's business office buzzed. The Old Man was told that a crate had crashed somewhere between Vaubecourt and Bar-le-Duc and that it must have been one of his.

"The crate was singed," ran the report. "The top wing was wobbling like a hangnail. You better send out the dead wagon and pick up what's left. Goodbye."

The Old Man banged down the phone, looked at the R.O. "Get a cablegram ready to the Pinkhams in Boonetown, Iowa. Phineas has used up his ninth life. He couldn't expect to—don't just sit there! Do somethin'! *Ah-h-h-h-h cr-r-r-ripes!*"

Twenty minutes after his crash, Phineas Pinkham's eyes uncrossed and he began to gather up his marbles from under a tree. There was a familiar taste in his mouth as he became aware that his jaws were moving rhythmically upon a mealy substance.

"H-Huh," Garrity's mental hazard grunted, "that was a funny place I just come back from. A dozen Heinie jalopis there! A big pole with wires—" His musings ceased when something brushed against his face. A diaphanous substance that settled into his lap.

"Er—ugh—ectoplasm, I bet," he stuttered. "No-no, it looks like—" He picked up what turned out to be a filmy heap of cloth, and he examined its fabric closely. Then Phineas' helmet lifted and nearly broke its strap! In the cloth was a small hole, the edges browned as if by a hot coal. "Babette's gown—well, I'm a—for the luvva—slap my brains out. Now what—things git rotten in other places besides Denmark, I bet!"

In a short while, the only son of a long line of only sons in the Pinkham lineage had a herd of wild thoughts corralled. He had added up the events of the last two or three days, and the sum total staggered him. "I know all about it now," Phineas ejaculated. "Why spirits rapped at me. What I been chewin' on! Why Uncle Thaddeus was gagged when he tried to—Haw-w-w-w-w! And that Zodiac stuff is a fake, as I am alive right now. Just the same, I will slug Casey. I have to get out of here. I've got to see Babette. The Heinies are smart, huh? They forgot that a Pinkham is still around."

Ruminating thus. Lieutenant Pinkham trekked into Bar-le-Duc with a limp slowing him down a bit. He demanded entrance at the door of his heart throb and got it. It was necessary to duck a skittle or two, but he



made it. One question after another tumbled out of his mouth. "I was only kiddin' the other *jour*, cherry. Lissen, what did you do with the dress I burnt, huh? Answer *vite vite*, as it is for the Allies, comprenny?"

Babbette finally calmed down and told Phineas she had thrown the ruined garment out of the window. The next morning when she had experienced a change of heart and had gone to look for it, alas it was gone.

"Ah-ha!" Phineas said, snapping his digits. "And was there a seance in Barley Duck that night, huh?"

"*Mais oui*," Babbette said excitedly. "Madame Mazola she have ze beeg crowd. *Un general et beaucoup* officers. She breeng ze spirits, *et* I see ze white ghost fly through ze air, Pheenyas. Over top from ze roofs *et* into ze night, *oui*."

"Well, now I know something," Phineas yipped. "An' this time it is no bull. Haw-w-w-w-w! Ectoplasm, huh? An voices from above! I guess all the Allies was born under Pisces, as what suckers they have been! Ado for now, mawn amoor, as I can't wait."

Phineas Pinkham appropriated a motorcycle that he found outside an *estaminet* and rode to the Ninth Pursuit Squadron at record speed. Sergeant Casey saw him first and he extended an investigating finger to touch the lieutenant's hefty chest. "It ain't you, Lootenant, is it?" he gulped. "It can't be!"

KERWHOP!

"That should convince you, mawn rat!" the returned Yank snorted. Then he limped toward the Operations Office. "Lieutenant Pinkham reporting, sir," he blasted the Old Man's privacy. "And with the situation well in hand—that is, almost. I know now why I told you the truth yesterday—and how the Kraut bums have been puttin' aces up their sleeves. It's the juice—the juice that makes a guy sleepy so he doesn't have pep enough to think up lies. Anyhow, I want you to arrange a seance with Madame Mazola tomorrow night, an' it will be some fun! Invite some red tabs and some Frog officers, too, as I want witnesses. I think I will take over the old gal's business. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

"You're crazier than usual," Garrity bellowed. "Get out of here. You're still under arrest. Why didn't you get killed like they said, huh?"

The Recording Officer came in then reading from a slip of paper. "How does this sound, Major?" he asked, without looking up. "We regret to inform you of the death of your brave son while—*Awk!*" The R.O. had glanced up and seen Phineas. He dropped the cablegram and tore out of the office as though he had seen a ghost.

MAJOR GARRITY changed his mind during the night. In the morning he informed Lieutenant Pinkham that he would go through with the seance. "You know something, fathead!" he gritted. "I've got to find out what it is. All I say is you'd better know!"

"Was I ever wrong?" Phineas queried loftily. "Haw-w-w-w! well, I must go over and look through my trunk for something," And he strutted out jauntily.

That night the citizens of Bar-le-Duc sensed that Madame Mazola was going to extend herself. Imposing looking officers from three armies trickled into her mysterious parlor between the hours of nine and ten. Twenty brass hats and Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham ringed the big circular table when the medium put out the lights and got to work. In a ghostly voice, she told her customers to join hands. Phineas thrust a clammy hand into the big flipper of a Limey general and Mazola announced that she was going into a trance.

In a few moments she groaned: "I hear someone . . . calling . . . calling a name. General Rhys-Boylinge. Does the General know who—?"

"My poor departed brother," sighed the Limey red tab. "How are you Jeremy, old thing?"

"*Top'ole, old pip-pip*," a voice came right from the general's lap. "*Haw-w-w! Nice bit of fluff—I mean girl—I saw you with in Nawncy, what? Tsk! tsk!*"

Madame Mazola was making a queer sputtering sound. The Limey general wanted to know the meaning of the outrage, whereupon the clairvoyant announced that the seance was at an end, and that spirits had no sense of humor. Her contact with the spirit world was broken. They could all clear out. But twenty nervous systems strummed when a voice floated down from somewhere above the table—

"*Haw-w-w-w! I am a spirit and I want to play. Wait, bums, as here I go!*"

There was an almost inaudible click, then up through the darkness sailed a ghostly white substance. It fluttered over the heads of the assemblage and Madame Mazola let out a frightened squawk.

BANG! cracked a gun, and the ectoplasm stopped in mid-air, then dropped down and settled in Major Rufus Garrity's lap. The Old Man pushed it to the floor and hastily kicked back his chair. "Lemme out of here! I'll kill anybody who stops me. Lemme—"

Madame Mazola was out of her chair, too. But Phineas Pinkham had a grip on her leg and he pulled her off her feet. Still clutching her appendage, he found a light switch and snapped it on. Red tabs and Frog brass hats stared in wonderment. Phineas was

sitting on Madame Mazola and he held a hood and a wig in his hand. Mazola, as bald as the crystal ball standing on the table, was protesting violently.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" Phineas guffawed. "Here's your Heinie snooper. He does not seem to be in good spirits. Get it? Haw-w-w! That free *vin blanc* and *vin rouge* out there were loaded with stuff that makes bums tell the truth, and this Kraut pumped officers and doughs after they had gulped a snifter. I got wise the day I came here to talk to my uncle, as I had a field mouse in my pocket and it got loose. Anyhow, tip over the table, as there is a rubber tube there that Mazola does her talking through. It goes up to the ceiling if you follow it, and that is why her voice came from above! You see, I saw a dog chase a rabbit into a hollow log. And when I did, I says to myself, I bet my mouse got caught in a tube, as just after it got loose, the spirit of Uncle Thaddeus got choked."

Garrity was at sea. "Huh?" he yipped. "Talk sense, will you?"

"Gimme time," Phineas chided him. "Well, the day I had the seance, I called on Babette and found out that she and I didn't belong in the same house at the same time as she was under the influence of Sagittarius—"

"Never heard of the stuff," Garrity cut in. "Maybe you mean absinthe."

"I said Sagittarius, who is The Archer," Phineas replied. "Taurus and him could not get along this time of year, so I ran out on Babette, an' I threw away a cigarette, and it burned a new gown she was sewin'! She threw it away, and a piece of it fell down into my lap just after I cracked up on my way back from Varche. It had a hole in it—burned there by a cig, you see."

"Do you understand? This Kraut, Mazola, ran out of ectoplasm and had to get something new. He mooched around Bar-le-Duc looking for dress goods and found some in Babette's back yard. He cut it up into ectoplasms and put one around the neck of a carrier pigeon when he wanted it to take off to Varche. It was fastened loose so it would get torn loose by the wind when the pigeon got a mile or so from Barley Duck. In the dark you couldn't see a pigeon's head stickin' out. Look at the dead pigeon there on the floor; its head is stained black. Haw-w-w, an' I shot him down without even havin' a haunting license! Get it?"

GARRITY growled and Phineas hastened to take up his story lest he get socked. "Mazola kept the pigeon under the table in a box an' it had a chiffon dress on.

The ectoplasm always disappeared through a window, didn't it? And it looked real, awright."

"Well, I'm a—" A British brigadier picked the dead pigeon up and searched it. A tiny capsule was tied to its leg and he opened it up. In diminutive writing it told the location of Yankee billets in back of Commercy. "He's done it, Garrity!" the red tab enthused. "The Lieutenant has exposed this German agent. Well, we've got you, you smart Dutchman, eh, what?"

"*Ach Gott! Always Pinkham,*" the spy growled. "For years I have fooled people with my impersonations. When war started, we put Madame Mazola in jail and I told *der* Kaiser—in his agitation he lapsed into broken English—dot I should be *das* Mazola *und* gedt ofer *der* lines. *Himmel*, for *drei* years I practice *mit der* spirits, *und—Donnervetter!*" he groaned. "*Herr Leutnant* Pingham *der deffil ist*. Efen me—Gottfried von Liverwurtz—cannodt fool him yet. Bah-h-h-h!"

"I knocked over a Kraut with my Spad over in Alsace," Phineas went on, chuckling. "I got cracked corn in my face and when I got a taste of it—haw-w-w-w! Your black cat looks plump, ce swar, Mazola. I bet that field mouse tasted good, huh? The rappings I kept hearin', you sausage hound, were made by that pigeon's beak picking up corn in the box. It's awful how so many people are suckers, huh? Pallin' for this stuff—haw-w-w-w-w! They had me believin' it, too. Why just look how many different bums are in the same house at this time? Scorpions, rams, lions, fishes—an' cr-r-rabs! They could not all be on the astral throne at once. So it's a fake, awright. I—"

CR-R-R-R-R-RASH!

The roof fell in. Plaster pelted down on frantically milling brass hats. Phineas dived under the table three seconds before a rafter hit where he had been standing. The crystal ball rolled off the table and bounced off Garrity's head, and the C.O. of the Ninth got a look into the future for fully five minutes. When somebody found a light, Phineas looked around for the Von. The Kraut's head was protruding from the top of a pile of plaster and two big boots jutted out from another part of the heap of debris.

"Come out of there!" Phineas yipped, and pulled and tugged. The Von's head stayed where it was. It was a Frog general who owned the feet. M.P.'s and *gendarmes* came running in and started sorting the mess. Phineas slumped down on a piece of timber and jettisoned a mouthful of plaster. "N-Nothin' happened, huh? M-Maybe I'm wrong. I will not move back into that house with Pisces yet—to make sure. Let's see—

Taurus is in the ascendancy—on the throne between—it falls durin’—oh, my neck! It feels broke. That means that—”

“Git this lootenant here,” a stretcher bearer yelled. “He’s went nutty. Hurry!”

But the scion of the Iowa Pinkhams got up, pushed the rescue workers aside, and hustled out of the spirit hangar. He found a motorcycle, kicked it into life, and rode to the nearest bombing squadron. He called the Old Man up from there two hours later.

“I have told the egg layers where they can tag the Kraut snooping factory—the place I found where they got a big radio, an’ all,” he bawled into the mouthpiece. “But as for me, I will not be back until it’s safe for me to stay under the same roof with a crab, as that is you.”

“You come back here, you fathead!” the C.O. roared.

“You want to look out, too, Major,” came back over the wire, “as it is a terrible time for you to be close to a scorpion like Howell. It’s awful bad luck, an’—”

Garrity’s apoplectic reply was broken off when an orderly came in and handed him a registered letter. He ripped it open and read:

*“Dear Rufe:*

*Something terrible has happened. Your house burned down. Your dog, Rover, got distemper and they had to shoot him. That oil stock we bought is all a fake. I think my asthma is coming back.*

*Your loving wife, Sarah.”*

The Major dropped everything and yelled for the orderly. “I’m right h-here, s-sir,” the fellow quaked.

“Get Captain Howell. Hurry up. Take the lead out of your pants. Oh-h-h-h; cr-r-r-ripes!”

Howell reported two minutes later, and Garrity said: “Pack your bag. You’ve got two weeks leave. Get out of here!”

The flight leader nearly fainted, pulled himself together, and reeled out of the Operations Office.