

THE
MAN
FROM
U. N. C. L. E.

THE CALCUTTA AFFAIR



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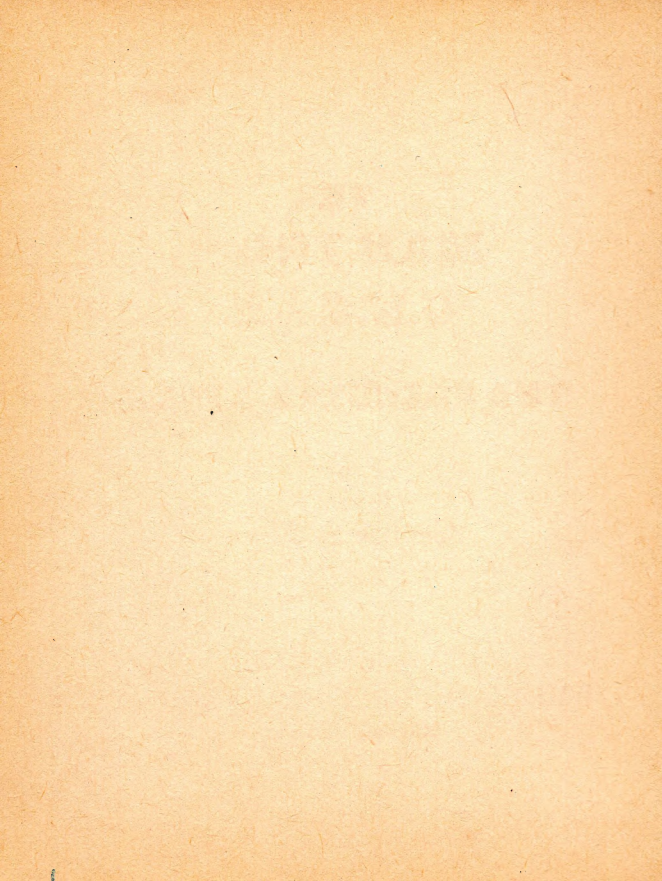
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THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.



**THE
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U.N.C.L.E.
THE CALCUTTA AFFAIR**

by

George S. Elrick

Authorized Edition

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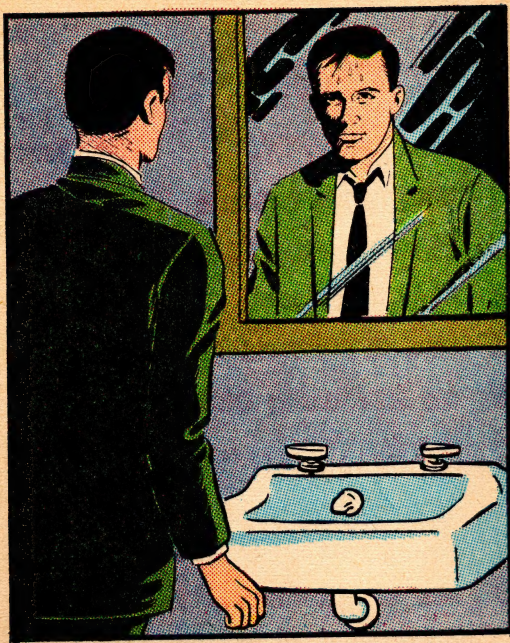
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Calcutta Was Hot!

CHAPTER 1

WELCOME TO CALCUTTA

Napoleon Solo, a chief enforcement agent for U.N.C.L.E., stared at his perspiring face in the mirror of his hotel room. He shrugged his broad shoulders. He hadn't realized it could be so beastly hot in Calcutta.

"Better rinse this sweat off my face before I unpack," he muttered

to himself. He turned on the cold-water tap in the bathroom. "Otherwise, I won't be socially acceptable," he added wryly.

As he twisted the handle of the tap, a slight movement on the living room rug behind him caught his eye. A mouse had scurried into the center of the room and was now dashing around in frantic circles.

"Cute little fellow," he thought, the corners of his mouth turning upward in a faint smile. He had raised white mice as a boy, and he



A Furry Visitor

had always felt an affection for the tiny creatures. He wondered idly if Illya Kuryakin had the same kind of visitors in *his* room.

Solo twisted the tap handle full force so that cold water literally splashed into the bowl. The added movement had an immediate and startling effect on the mouse. The rodent suddenly stopped circling, sat up like a squirrel begging for nuts, squeaked in a high-pitched voice, then streaked across the floor toward Napoleon's feet.

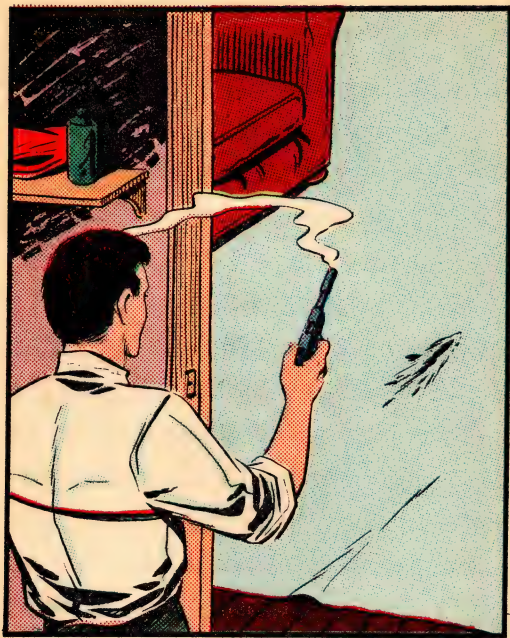


Strange Behavior

This was too much for the special agent. Obeying his reflexes, he whipped his Walther P-38 pistol from its shoulder holster and pulled the trigger.

The mouse vanished, leaving nothing behind except a furrow in the carpeting—dug by the spinning bullet—and a few scattered hairs. Because of the gun's silencer, there had been no sound.

Shamefacedly, Napoleon glanced down at the large "S" engraved on the automatic's handle. He



No More Rodent

had winged more than one T.H.R.U.S.H. agent, but he had never shot a defenseless mouse before. "I must really be on edge," he thought to himself. "But it wasn't a bad shot . . . even if I do say so myself!"

He sat down on the edge of the bed and slipped the pistol back in its holster. Then he explored the room with cold eyes. He hadn't, as yet, checked it for bugging devices because he had wanted to cool off before unpacking his luggage—a



"I Must Be on Edge!"

streamlined suitcase that contained enough high explosives in jelly-compound form to blow the entire Shangri-La Hotel right off the street.

Stretching out on the sagging bed, he stared at the whitewashed ceiling. This was the very room in which U.N.C.L.E.'s Calcutta agent, Gordon Thorpe-Smith, had come down with bubonic plague. It was hard to imagine pipe-smoking Gordon out of his head with the fever of the black death, but that's what



Napoleon Relaxes

it was. He had apparently been bitten by a tiny flea that had lived its short life in the straggly hair of an infected rodent.

Through top-secret arrangements between U.N.C.L.E. and the Indian port authorities, Thorpe-Smith had been flown back to the United States in a special jet and put under observation in a secret quarantine station in Manhattan. The entire sequence had been hush-hush—one top-level man pulling strings with another.



Deep in Thought

The sound of footsteps in the hallway made Solo turn quickly. Someone stopped in front of his door for a moment, then shuffled on. Solo continued his musing.

Even stranger than the fact that Gordon Thorpe-Smith had come down with a dreaded sickness was the fact that tough little Paddy O'Donnell had disappeared.

Red-haired Paddy O'Donnell, U.N.C.L.E.'s Bombay agent, had been rushed to Calcutta to investigate the situation when it appeared



Alerted by Footsteps

that T.H.R.U.S.H. might somehow be involved in the incident. But within hours, O'Donnell had vanished. It was as if he had evaporated.

The footsteps in the hallway returned to his door. Solo swung lightly off the bed, crossed the room in two strides, and pulled open the door. It was the cab driver who had driven him and Illya from Dum-Dum Airport into the teeming city.

"Yes?" asked Napoleon politely.



Napoleon Has a Visitor

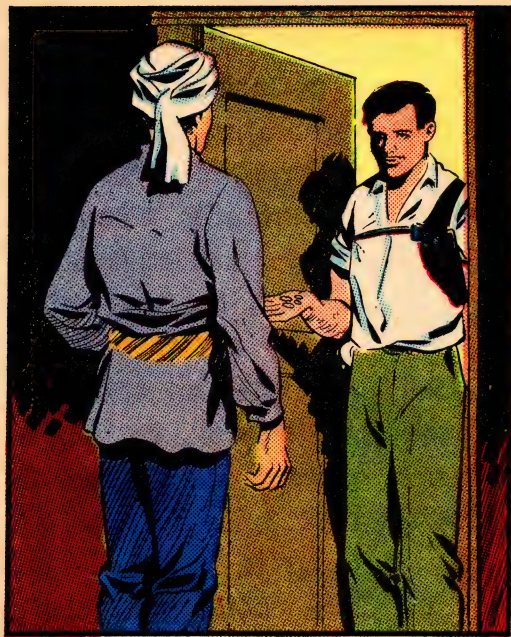
Then he remembered that the driver had been a mute, absolutely unable to speak.

To remind him of this fact, the driver pointed to his chapped lips, which opened and closed soundlessly.

"Did we forget to tip you?" queried Solo. He pulled a few rupees from his pants' pocket.

The man shook his head.

"Then, what is it?" continued the agent. His voice had become raspy with impatience.



“Did We Forget To Tip You?”

The mute pointed solemnly behind Solo.

Napoleon started to turn to see what was behind him when his practiced caution alerted him to possible danger. He instantly crouched down—just as a knife whistled through the air and sank into the opposite wall, sending a shower of loosened plaster cascading to the floor.

“You boys from T.H.R.U.S.H. play dirty pool, don’t you?” Solo exclaimed. He rolled toward the



Solo Ducks in Time

doorway and grabbed for the driver's pantaloon-like trousers, hoping to pull him to the floor. But the driver calmly kicked Solo under his chin, flipping him backward like a pancake being turned on a griddle.



A Vicious Kick



Solo Regains Consciousness

CHAPTER 2

THREAT FROM T.H.R.U.S.H.

When Solo regained consciousness, the knife-throwing driver had departed. He had even closed the door behind him, Solo noted, ruefully rubbing his bruised chin with his fingertips.

"I wonder why that fellow didn't kill me," pondered the man from U.N.C.L.E., noticing that the knife

was still protruding from the wall. Another Shangri-La guest must suddenly have appeared in the corridor, Solo decided. In order not to arouse suspicion, the mute had apparently closed the door quietly and shuffled off. Solo was decidedly miffed at being caught unaware.

Shaking plaster fragments from his hair, he staggered to his feet and reached for the telephone. "Nice, friendly hotel," he murmured as he waited for the operator to answer. When she did, he



“Nice, Friendly Hotel!”

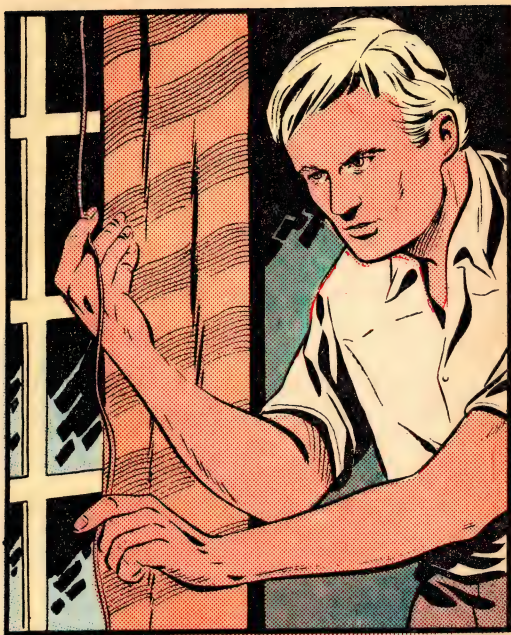
replied, "Seven-one-two, please." Solo was calling Kuryakin. Almost at once Solo's sharp ears picked up a telltale hum, which would be inaudible to most humans. The line was bugged, he realized.

He had expected it, and he was not unprepared. Dipping his hand into his side pocket, he extracted a conversation scrambler—an innocent-looking device shaped like the lid of an ordinary jar—and clapped it over the mouthpiece. This would confuse any listener.



Solo Calls Kuryakin

Kuryakin did not respond to the insistent ring at once. He was carefully checking his own room for bugging devices. His sensitive fingers had detected a "sugar lump" mike in one of the pull cords of the draperies, and he was intently trying to trace its almost invisible wiring. When the shrill ringing of the phone persisted, he brushed a thatch of straw-colored hair away from his eyes and picked up the instrument. "Swenson's Pet Shop," he announced.



Illya Makes a Discovery

What sounded like the angry chattering of an aroused baboon greeted his ears. Realizing at once that it was Solo, using a conversation scrambler, Illya reached into his pocket and removed the device's counterpart: a conversation *un*-scrambler. When he slid the ring and grid over the earpiece, Napoleon's voice came through clearly. Any T.H.R.U.S.H. agent who might be listening, however, would hear nothing but irritating static.

"Find any bogeymen under your



A Garbled Message

little ol' bed?" asked Solo.

"Just a sugar lump mike in a pull cord," responded Illya. "How's everything in the bridal suite?"

"Dull—except that I plugged a mouse that was trying to take a bite out of my ankle."

"That's par for the course. . . . Anything else?"

"Come to think of it, I was drop-kicked under the chin—as if I were a football. Why don't you amble over and help me pull a knife out of the wall?"



“Why Don’t You Amble Over?”

"Roger!" Illya replied.

Kuryakin slipped on his rumpled suit jacket, made a halfhearted attempt to straighten his always-crooked tie, and strolled down the hotel corridor to Napoleon's room. He found his companion crouched on the floor, spraying a spot on the rug with what appeared to be a fountain pen but was actually a pencil-thin pressure can containing a strong disinfectant at one end and blinding tear gas at the other.

Solo gestured toward the cold-



A Clever Gadget

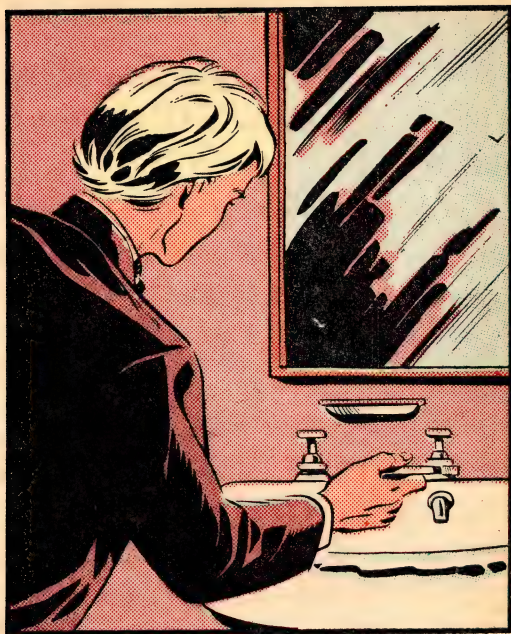
water tap in the bathroom. "Unscrew that, will you? I think I'm on to something!"

"You sure made a mess of that mouse!" remarked Illya as he stepped gingerly over the furrow in the carpeting and entered the bathroom.

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon. "Just what I thought!"

Kuryakin expertly removed the cold-water tap. "What is it?"

"A miniature radio antenna of some sort," answered Solo softly.

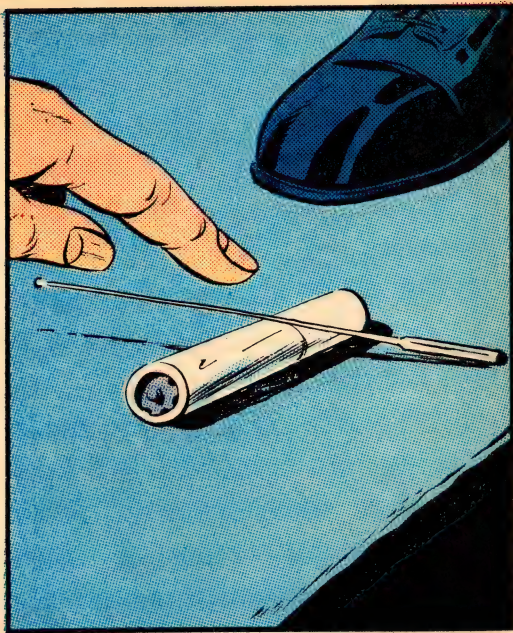


Kuryakin Removes the Tap

"If my guess is correct, it had somehow been embedded in that mouse's skull!"

"I'd say your guess is correct," returned Illya. "Look at this!" He crouched down beside his friend and placed the detached cold-water tap on the rug. Reaching down with deft fingers, he extracted an electronic signal-sender from the short metal tubing.

"Very clever, those lads from T.H.R.U.S.H.!" commented Solo. "Whoever planted that bewildered



An Electronic Signal-Sender

mouse in this room knew I would turn on the cold-water tap in order to rinse my face. Why? Because he had seen to it that the air-conditioner in this room would not be working, and an East Indian hotel room without an air-conditioner is like a furnace!"

"Very clever is *right!*" exclaimed Kuryakin. He brushed his unruly hair out of his eyes again. "Since this is the very room in which Gordon Thorpe-Smith contracted the black death, the odds are that



"The Air-Conditioner Isn't Working!"

he did exactly what *you* did: he turned on the cold water as soon as he stepped inside the door! And there was a mouse in the room."

"I can see the whole sequence in my mind's eye," muttered Solo, the lines in his face hardening. "Gordon turned on the tap, unwittingly activating this pulsating electronic device. When the tap was turned on full force, signals from this hidden device were picked up by a special receiver in the mouse's skull, drawing the rodent into the



“Gordon Did What You Did!”

bathroom as though it were magnetized!"

"Do you think the mouse *bit* him?" queried Illya.

"No, I imagine Gordon stepped on the mouse or kicked it against the wall. But infected *fleas* on the mouse probably bit him. The fleas could easily have attached themselves to Thorpe-Smith's ankles."

Kuryakin made a wry face. "I hope an infected flea didn't take a juicy bite out of *you*!"

"Fat chance," scoffed Solo. "I



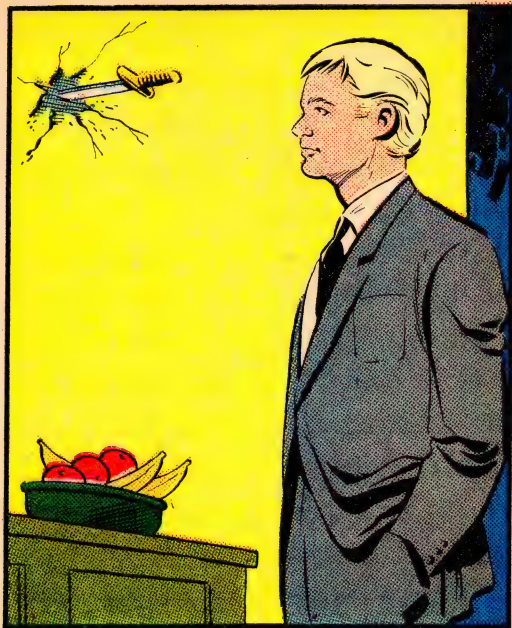
Illya Is Puzzled

shot the little beast when it was still five feet away. And I disinfected what was left before you entered the room."

"That's a nasty-looking knife," observed Kuryakin, eyeing the weapon protruding from the wall. "It sure loosened a lot of plaster."

"Most of which ended up in my hair," grumbled Solo. He ran his fingers gingerly across his scalp. "I was—"

He was interrupted by the ringing of the telephone.



"That's a Nasty-Looking Knife!"

The two U.N.C.L.E. agents exchanged brief glances.

"That must be one of our playmates at T.H.R.U.S.H.," exclaimed Solo. "I've been expecting a phone call ever since that fellow failed to finish me off!" He picked up the receiver and quickly slipped off the conversation scrambler.

"Mr. Solo?" The voice was cultivated and quiet, with a shade of a British accent.

"That's what my tailor calls me," Solo replied.



Unexpected Phone Call

"Welcome to Calcutta, my wise-cracking friend. We hope you find your room comfortable."

"It's splendid, except for the mice."

"Enjoy it while you can, because you won't be using it long."

"And why is that?"

"Because you and your friend will be dead by tomorrow evening!"

The individual at the other end of the line slammed down his receiver.

Napoleon Solo turned and faced Illya Kuryakin.



A Frightening Threat



Breakfast at the Hotel

CHAPTER 3

PADDY O'DONNELL

Illya twisted the white egg cup in his fingers, then plunged the tip of his spoon into the bright yellow yolk. He glanced at Solo across the breakfast table in the Shangri-La Hotel's shabby restaurant. "Do you realize that an egg would be a completely balanced food if you could chew the shell and swallow it?"

"I *always* eat the shell," replied Napoleon solemnly.

Kuryakin grinned. No matter how grim the situation, he and Solo could always jest. It relieved tension, and they both felt tense this morning. In the first place, they were worried about Paddy O'Donnell. T.H.R.U.S.H. had undoubtedly kidnapped him, and the tough little Irishman was probably being tortured to force him to reveal vital information concerning the U.N.C.L.E. organization. In the



Solo Jests

second place, they knew they were being watched by T.H.R.U.S.H. agents, even as they ate breakfast. As Solo had once commented, "We study their every move, and they study ours."

Lapsing into a variation of a Navaho Indian dialect so their conversation couldn't be understood, even if it *were* being recorded, they outlined their plans for the day.

"We'd better split up," decided Solo. "I'll visit the local hospitals to see if I can pick up some more



Planning for the Day

information on bubonic plague. It might furnish a clue regarding the whereabouts of our T.H.R.U.S.H. chums. I'll use the identification card stating that I'm a heart specialist from New Orleans."

"And I'll cover the waterfront," said Illya, "using the I.D. card that claims I'm a civil engineer from Toronto, Canada."

"Some engineer *you'd* make!" Solo laughed. "You can't even keep your tie straight!"

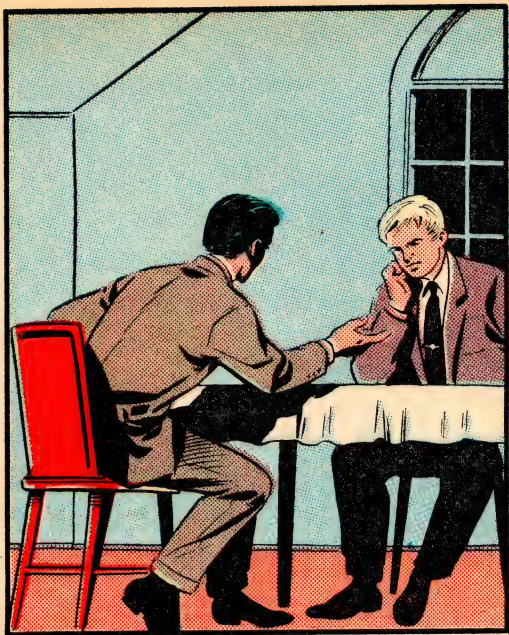
"Nevertheless," continued Illya,



"I'll Visit the Hospitals!"

"I'm going to prowl around near the docks. I'd like, once and for all, to prove my theory that T.H.R.U.S.H. agents move from country to country by means of nuclear-powered submarines."

"Whatever you do," murmured Napoleon, "make yourself *conspicuous*. The best way to grab one of *them* is to let one of them grab one of *us* first. If we can drag an overpowered T.H.R.U.S.H. agent back to my hotel room, I have ways to make him sing like a canary



Illya Has a Theory

regarding the whereabouts of Paddy!"

"Roger," said Illya, standing up and crumpling his napkin into a heap. "Shall we use our tie-clasp signals?"

"Might as well," replied Solo. "Let's establish shortwave contact at three o'clock. If your tie clasp doesn't tingle at that precise moment, you'll know that I'm in trouble . . . and if mine doesn't tingle, I'll know that you're in trouble!"



“Shall We Use Our Tie-Clasp Signals?”

"What then?" queried Illya.

"Then it's every man for himself. As you know, there's no sentimentality in the U.N.C.L.E. organization!"

The two agents left a small tip on the soiled tablecloth, then walked out of the hotel. They soon lost themselves in the swirling crowd of barefoot men on bicycles, women balancing pottery on their heads, undernourished children playing about, and sacred cows.

Ten minutes later Solo, wearing



Leaving the Hotel

thick spectacles which made him resemble a scholarly doctor, presented his credentials to the nurse who sat at the lobby reception desk in the Queen of the East Hospital.

"Oh, Dr. Sylvester!" she exclaimed, examining his face intently. "It's so nice to have you visit us. Is there anyone in particular you'd like to see?"

"Yes," replied Napoleon crisply. "Your head physician."

"That would be Dr. Von Sternberg," she murmured, flipping a



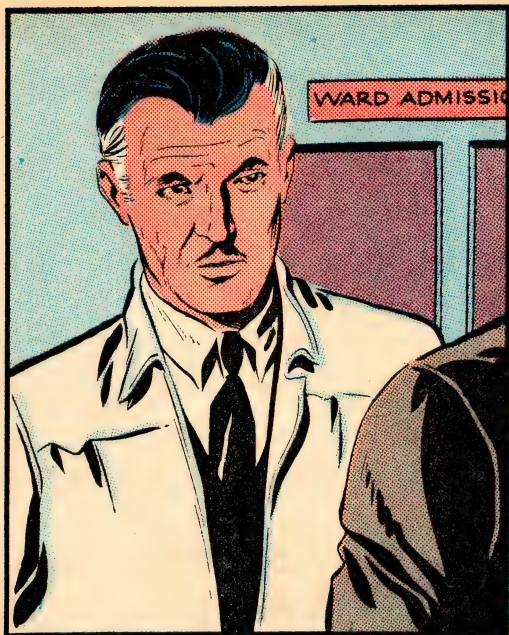
Solo Poses as Dr. Sylvester

switch on her intercom and paging the man she had just mentioned.

Despite his German name, Dr. Von Sternberg turned out to be a tall East Indian with a faint British accent.

"I'm always glad to have well-known heart specialists visit us!" he exclaimed, narrowing his eyes. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

Solo's mind did a quick analysis of the man addressing him. Six feet tall, about 190 pounds, obviously



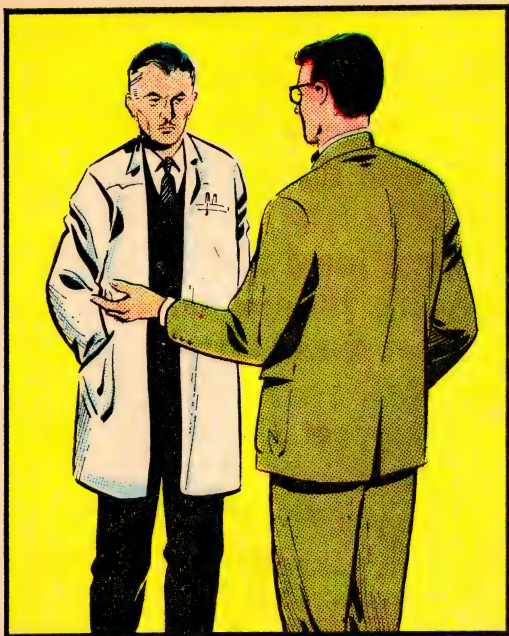
Dr. Von Sternberg

educated in England. And there was something about him the U.N.C.L.E. agent didn't like.

"Yes," he replied. "I'd like to examine some of your bubonic plague cases."

The physician looked at Solo in astonishment. "Dr. Sylvester, there've been no cases of black death in Calcutta for many years! I know, because, as a biochemist, I'm extremely interested in stamping out the disease."

"How odd," replied Solo. "I was

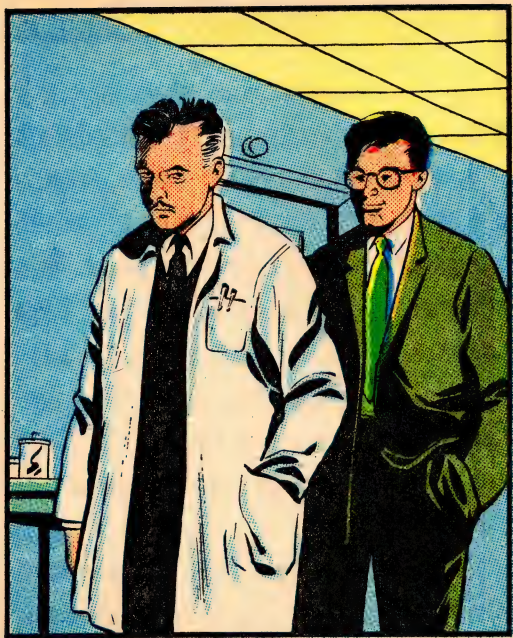


Solo Becomes Suspicious

given to understand that a man named Gordon Thorpe-Smith came down with the plague two weeks ago."

"Never heard of him," said Von Sternberg. His eyes narrowed into slits, then opened again. "However, now that you're here, I have *another* type of case I'd like to have you see. It should be of great interest to you."

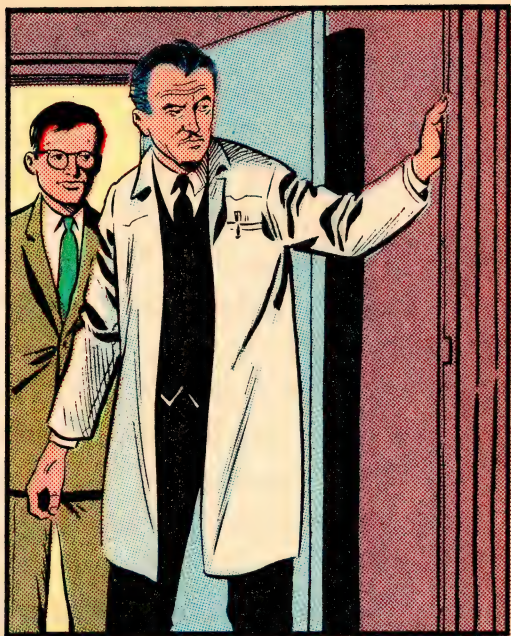
"I'm at your service," answered Solo respectfully. He was soon trailing the biochemist down a dark and



"I Have a Case I'd Like You to See!"

seemingly endless hallway.

Turning abruptly to the right at the end of the corridor, Von Sternberg pushed open the door of what appeared to be a small alcove. He beckoned for Solo to follow. The darkened room was quiet. The biochemist softly closed the door behind them, and Napoleon noted that he quietly turned the latch. Then Von Sternberg telescoped the bed screen and pushed it to one side, revealing an unbelievably thin man stretched out on a bed.



A Darkened Room

"That's the most emaciated man I've ever seen," Solo murmured to himself. He bent over to scrutinize the patient's withered features.

Dimly aware of his presence, the man on the bed turned slightly and returned Solo's stare with bleary eyes. Suddenly, however, his mouth dropped open, and his lips twitched in an effort to speak. But the attempt was fruitless. Only a cooing sound issued from his trembling mouth.

"Good heavens!" blurted out



Solo Is Aghast

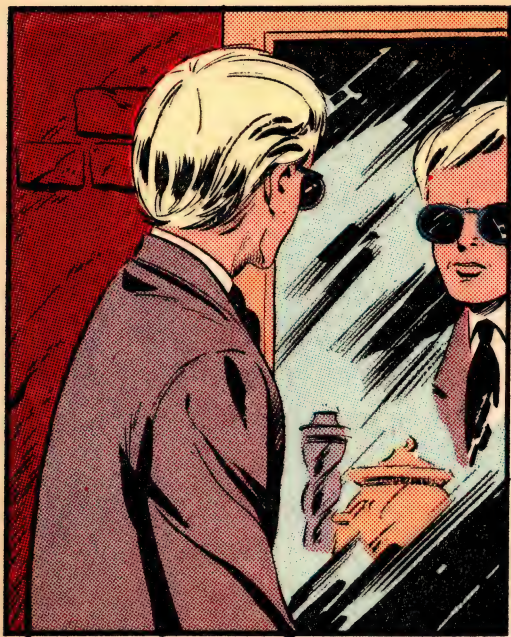
Solo, his eyes widening. "It's *Paddy O'Donnell!*"

He started to spin about, when he felt the sharp jab of a needle thrust into the small of his back. He tried to reach for the tall physician, but a wave of dizziness surged through his lithe body. His knees buckled under him, and his eyes snapped shut.

The man on the bed continued to make cooing sounds as Solo spiraled to the floor.



A Sharp Jab in the Back



Special Sunglasses

CHAPTER 4

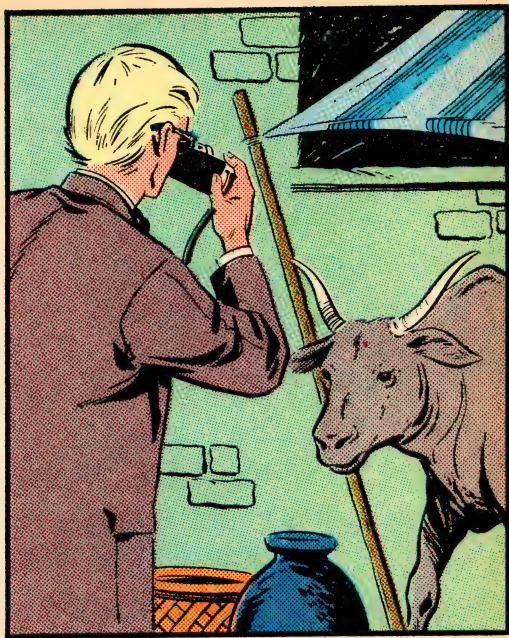
ILLYA IS FOLLOWED

Illya Kuryakin sauntered through the blistering heat of Calcutta's crowded streets, wearing a pair of sunglasses which contained a built-in rearview mirror. He paused occasionally to glance at strange items displayed in shop windows. He had one immediate object: to see to it that an agent

from T.H.R.U.S.H. followed him.

A sacred cow plodded up to him and nuzzled his tie with its cold, wet nose. Making a great show of removing what appeared to be a 35mm camera from its leathered case, the sandy-haired agent pretended to photograph the sad-eyed beast.

Fifty yards behind him the mute who had tried to kill Solo the previous evening shifted his rickety taxi into second gear and inched the machine forward. Its ancient



A Sacred Brahmin

engine grumbled and sputtered in protest. He had failed in his mission to kill Napoleon Solo. For that blunder he had received a tongue-lashing from his superiors at T.H.R.U.S.H.—and threats of a painful death if he failed again. He would *not* fail this time. To reassure himself, he patted the .38 snub-nosed revolver that caused his jacket's inner pocket to sag.

Meanwhile, by glancing into the rearview mirror of his sunglasses, Illya had detected a cab worming



The T.H.R.U.S.H. Agent Watches

its way toward him. He smiled icily when he noted that the driver was the same one who had driven him from the airport to the hotel. Obviously T.H.R.U.S.H., he thought to himself.

The sacred Brahmin cow was fascinated by the visiting photographer. It shuffled after Kuryakin when he finished his picture-taking, anxious to nuzzle his tie again. Barefoot children stepped respectfully to one side as the beast lumbered forward, the fatty hump



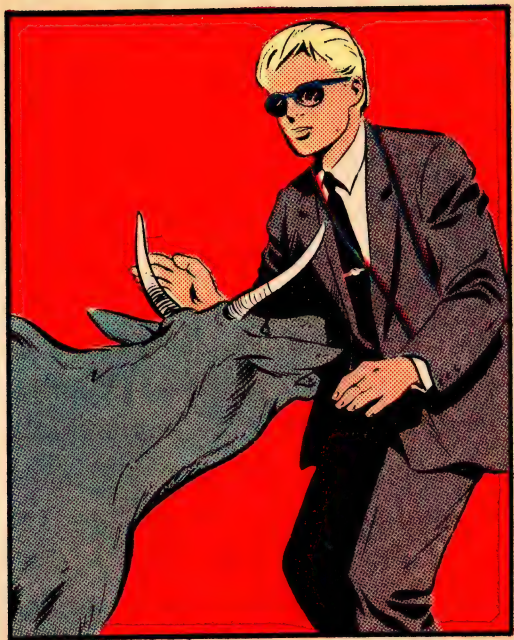
A New Friend

on its gray back flopping back and forth.

"Go away," muttered Illya irritably, motioning with his free hand.

The cow ignored him. The animal merely shoved its head forward and licked Kuryakin's shirt.

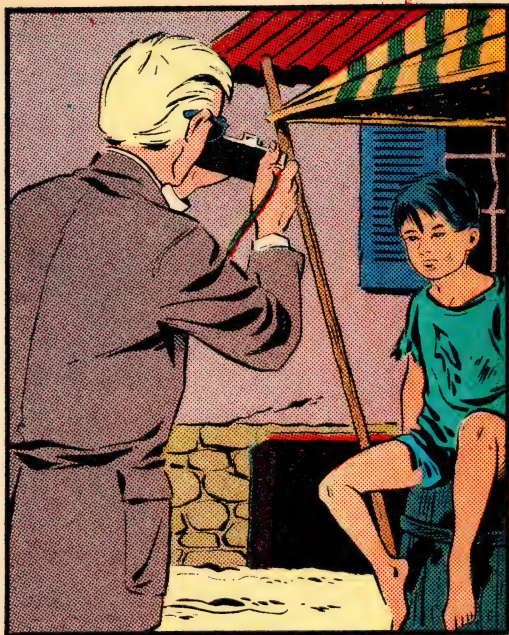
"Look, if you must fall in love, fall in love with some other *cow*!" grunted Illya. He artfully side-stepped the awkward animal and shouldered his way through a dense knot of people to a narrow street that twisted toward the



“Go Away!”

waterfront. The taxi driver continued to follow, keeping a fixed distance between himself and his picture-snapping victim.

"I wonder how Solo is making out at the Queen of the East Hospital," mused Illya. He paused to seemingly photograph a grinning street urchin, who immediately thrust out a hand for money. The agent dropped a rupee into the child's grimy fist. Then he backed into a shadow, pretended to reload the camera, and continued toward



A Street Urchin

the cluttered waterfront. If he could entice the cab driver into one of the alleys that angled off from the winding street, he would quickly overpower him and drag him back to the hotel room for questioning.

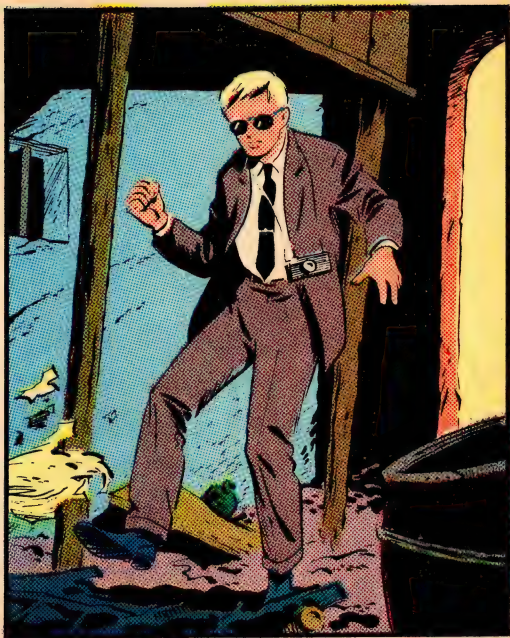
The cab driver licked his lips in satisfaction when Kuryakin turned off the street and strolled into an alley, still snapping pictures. Now all he had to do was block off the alley's entrance with his rattle-trap taxi, step out of the cab for



Illya Sets a Trap

a brief moment, as though inquiring about a fare, and pulverize the fool with his snub-nosed pistol. This time his masters at T.H.R.U.S.H. would be pleased!

"I *do* wish these people would learn something about sanitation," murmured Illya. He kicked a heap of rotting garbage to one side and surveyed the dark, narrow passageway with distaste. The alley ended abruptly at a point where two rickety buildings jammed together at a crude angle. Trash was piled



A Trash-Filled Passageway

everywhere along the alley.

A mangy-looking rat who was poking about at the base of one of the buildings stared at him with beady, bulging eyes, then scratched its way into a hole.

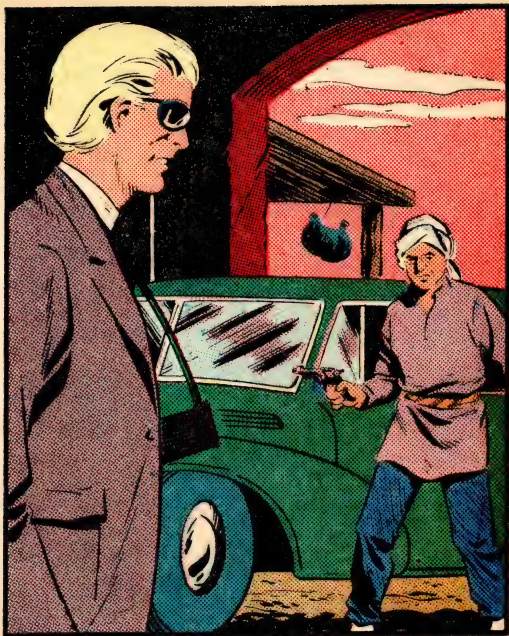
"Don't worry, my little friend," muttered Kuryakin. "Napoleon Solo is the agent who shoots rodents with firearms—not *me!*" He flicked a glance at his rearview mirror. His lips compressed tightly together. The cab that had been following him was deliberately



Rat-Infested Alley

blocking off his only exit, and the cab driver was emerging. "I do believe that that's a forty-one Buick!" mused Kuryakin idly.

As he peered through the viewfinder of the camera, as though he were interested in photographing the rat hole, Kuryakin saw the man pull a .38 from his jacket and raise the muzzle. Kuryakin wheeled about just as the man was about to jerk the pistol's stubby blue trigger.



A Blocked Exit



“Hold It!”

CHAPTER 5

AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY

“Hold it, please!” barked Illya, like an impatient cameraman commanding a restless child to sit still. He depressed a small silver button on the “camera” with his forefinger. A bright yellow gas pellet was ejected from the “lens.” It hit the cab driver squarely in the forehead.

"Don't hurt yourself when you fall," chided Illya Kuryakin as the man collapsed in a heap. Fumes from the gas pellet had rendered him instantly unconscious. As he sprawled forward on his face, narrowly missing the garbage Kuryakin had kicked to one side, his heavy chin hit the hard-packed dirt so hard that a tooth was knocked out of his mouth. It *wasn't* a tooth, however.

Shaking a thatch of wheat-colored hair out of his eyes, the



A Mysterious "Tooth"

U.N.C.L.E. agent deftly scooped up the object and examined it intently. His eyebrows knit together in a frown. He knew instantly that this was a miniature radio receiver contained in a special-formula white enamel case molded to look like a tooth. Illya whistled softly in awe. He despised the T.H.R.U.S.H. organization, but he couldn't help but admire their cleverness and ingenuity.

At that moment the cab driver stirred restlessly, opened his bleary



"It's a Miniature Receiver!"

eyes, and made an effort to sit up. Kuryakin deftly rapped him on the back of the neck with the hard edge of one hand, and the cabbie immediately subsided into a dreamless sleep.

"Might as well pocket your gun," murmured Illya. He picked up the .38 and slid it into his pocket. Then he resumed his examination of the tiny radio receiver.

So this was how the higher-ups at T.H.R.U.S.H. directed their stooges. What better way to keep



A Karate Chop

in constant touch with them than by means of a radio receiver cleverly concealed in their mouths!

"I hope you aren't suffering from hoof-and-mouth disease," murmured Kuryakin with a wry grin, "because I'm going to wear this 'tooth' in *my* mouth for a while!" He removed a fountain-pen spray gun from his shirt pocket and quickly doused the tiny radio receiver with disinfectant, just as Napoleon Solo had sprayed the scattered remains of the mouse in



Illya Disinfects the "Tooth"

the Shangri-La Hotel room.

Kuryakin gingerly inserted the tooth-shaped radio device in his mouth and worked it back and forth and up and down with his tongue, trying to position it in a comfortable corner. But no matter how he jiggled it, it felt like an enormous rock-hard ball of bubble gum. "This is, without a doubt, the most uncomfortable signaling device I've ever worn!" he muttered as he hurried toward the taxi that blocked the narrow street.



An Uncomfortable Fit

As he climbed into the driver's seat Kuryakin noticed that the affectionate cow he had done his best to avoid was curiously sniffing the vehicle. It looked as if the animal had been waiting patiently for his new friend. Illya started up the wheezing motor and raced it irritably. He glared at the cow. "Don't you understand English?" he snapped. "I want you to get lost! Stop following me. You're hardly sacred to me!"

The cow looked puzzled at the

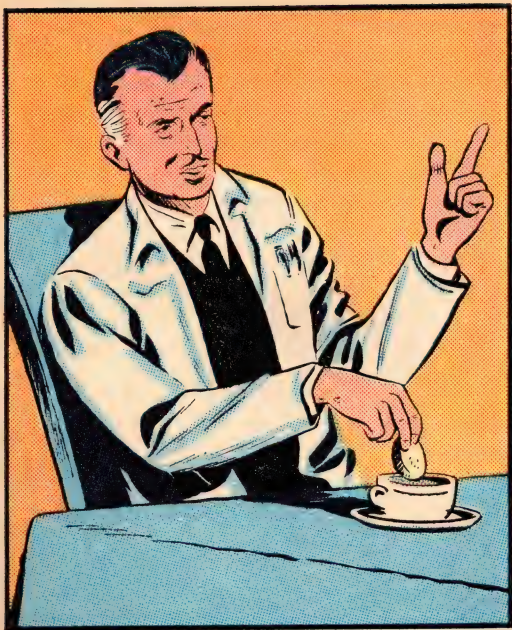


"Stop Following Me!"

outburst. It stepped back in bewilderment as the angry agent swung the cab around and then backed it into the alley. Leaping nimbly from the driver's seat, Illya flung open the taxi's dusty trunk, clicked handcuffs on the unconscious T.H.R.U.S.H. stooge, quickly stuffed him into the compartment, and clambered back behind the wheel. Then he nosed the tired taxi past the cow, through the throngs of people, and headed toward the Shangri-La Hotel.



“You Can Ride in the Trunk!”



Tea and Crumpets

CHAPTER 6

TEA FOR TWO

"I hope that needle didn't cause you too much pain, Dr. Sylvester!" mocked the biochemist. He casually dipped a crumpet into a cup of tea and leaned comfortably back in his chair.

"Oh, no," retorted Napoleon Solo. "I always enjoy needles!" He started to rise from the chair in

which he had been placed, while unconscious, by Dr. Von Sternberg. One hand automatically reached for his Walther P-38 machine pistol. His shoulder holster was still in place, but the gun with the "S" on its handle was gone.

"Sit down, *Mr. Solo!*" snapped the tall East Indian. His voice was no longer mocking; it was suddenly very hard. "I'm more at home with an electron microscope than I am with this pistol of yours that I've borrowed, but I assure you I won't



Solo Misses His Gun

hesitate to use it."

Solo noted that his side arm was resting on the biochemist's lap. He was facing a very clever T.H.R.U.S.H. agent, he realized. He nodded curtly and sat down again. "You didn't believe my Dr. Sylvester routine?" he asked casually.

"Of course not," answered his foe. He helped himself to another crumpet. "I knew who you were all along. By the way, would you like a crumpet?"



A Clever T.H.R.U.S.H. Agent

"I'm trying to kick the habit," replied Solo. "But I will have a cup of tea. My throat is dry." He stroked his chin with his fingertips. He was still groggy from the serum with which he had been injected. "And my brain feels like a handful of crumpled gum wrappers."

"One lump of sugar or two?"

"One."

"Too bad, Mr. Solo," said Von Sternberg when Napoleon had drained the cup in three gulps. "The effect is much more interest-



“One Lump, Please!”

ing when you take two!"

"What effect?"

"You'll feel a change in your face in a few minutes. The late Paddy O'Donnell had an almost instant reaction!"

"The *late* Paddy O'Donnell?"

"Yes. He died of leukopenia just after your visit."

"But he was only *thirty-five*!"

"His *cells* didn't know that!" A sly smile began to crawl across Von Sternberg's face.

Solo's head cleared for a brief



Solo Hears His Fate

moment. In his mind's eye he could see O'Donnell's shriveled face, and he could hear the eerie cooing sounds issuing from the trembling mouth. Here was a man who had been a tough Irishman less than a month before. Solo shook his head in disbelief.

"That was no sugar you dropped in my tea!" Solo accused.

"You're beginning to bore me, Mr. Solo. Of course that wasn't sugar." Von Sternberg shoved the teapot to one side. "Any second



“That Wasn’t Sugar!”

now *your* body is going to become confused—as soon as certain parasites are released from the dissolving sugar!” The biochemist laughed harshly. “Just wait and see!”



Von Sternberg Laughs



Solo Feels His Face

CHAPTER 7

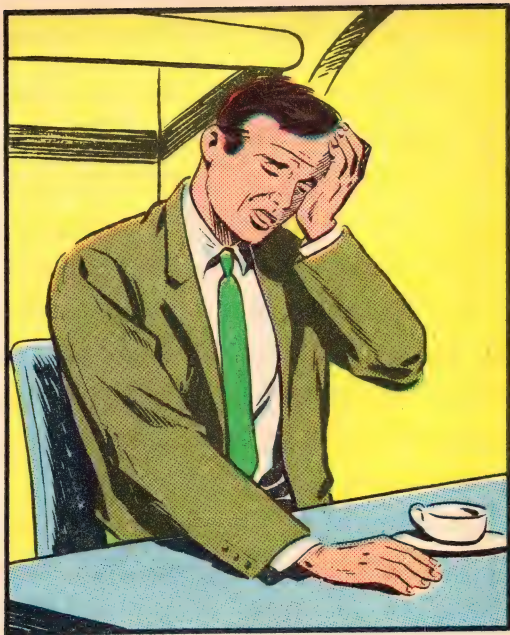
KALA AZAR

Solo quickly ran his fingers across his lean face. He noted with relief that his skin was still smooth. But his mind was becoming foggy again.

“Have you fools at U.N.C.L.E. ever heard of kala azar? It’s a tropical disease transmitted by sand flies. Only *I* have succeeded

in extracting the parasites from sand flies and keeping them alive in a white chemical compound that resembles sugar! When this substance dissolves in a person's stomach, the kala azar germs soon spread out and infect my victim's entire body causing high fever, anemia, and wasting away, among other more terrible effects."

Beginning to feel sicker than he had ever felt before, Napoleon licked his dry lips. "You mean that I'll end up looking as drawn as



“You Mean I’ll End Like O’Donnell?”

poor Paddy O'Donnell?"

"Right! And it will be a rapid process. Before the week is out, you'll be dead!"

While Von Sternberg talked, Solo was calculating the distance between his own right hand and the automatic pistol that rested on Von Sternberg's lap. He was about to lunge for it when the biochemist pressed a buzzer on the table. A door slid open and a hard-eyed man dressed in a strange naval uniform stepped into the room.

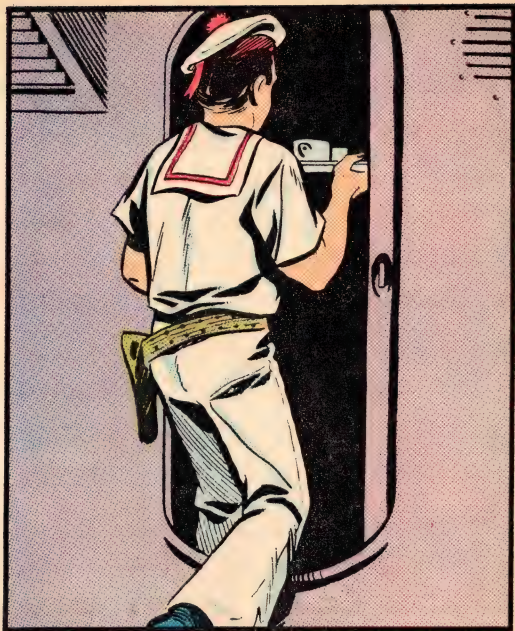


“You Buzzed, Sir?”

“Clear this tea away!” snapped Von Sternberg. “And don’t steal any of the crumpets!” The flunky snatched the tray and disappeared.

Solo decided to wait for another chance. He leaned back in his chair, wondering if the parasites were at that very moment flowing through his bloodstream. “Where *are* we, anyway?” he queried. “I take it that we’re no longer in the Queen of the East Hospital.”

“We’re in my personal nuclear-powered submarine. It’s resting on



Tea Is Over

the muddy floor of Calcutta's harbor. Overhead are the bottoms of a score of ocean-going ships. Their crews are completely unaware that we're down here."

"How did we get here from the hospital?"

"By means of a reconstructed underground and underwater tunnel. It used to be the hospital's sewage drain."

"You people at T.H.R.U.S.H. think you have the world in the palm of your hand, don't you? You



"How Did We Get Here?"

use respected hospitals as operational bases. You send your agents from country to country by means of submarines. You even—" He was about to give a further example when an agonizing stomach cramp caused him to double over in pain.

"Ah, Mr. Solo! The kala azar germs have entered your bloodstream!" The biochemist chuckled.

Napoleon gritted his teeth and sat up again. "Isn't there some way you can reverse this process?"



An Agonizing Cramp

"Of course!" Von Sternberg picked up a large syringe. "An injection of this orange fluid would soon have your internal wheels spinning in the opposite direction—as you Americans would say!" He replaced the bulky syringe on the gleaming metal tray. "But forget it! I'm not going to let you reverse the process. Besides, that would give you a splitting headache which would last a month!"

"But you're not so smart, Von Sternberg!" Solo scoffed. "If my

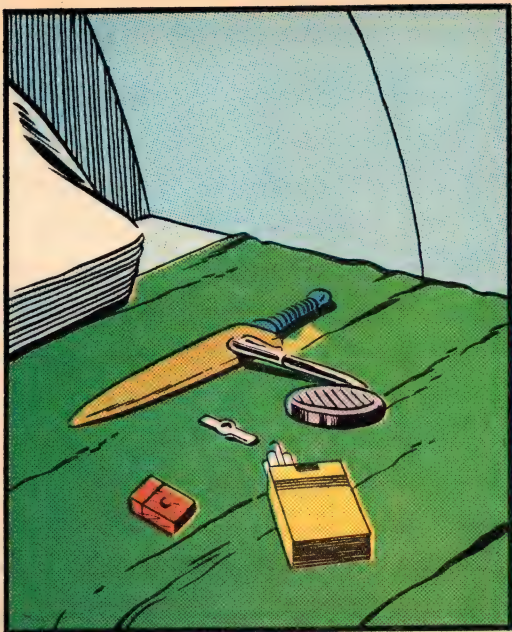


“This Would Reverse the Process!”

fellow agent doesn't hear from me by three o'clock, he'll be here shortly afterward!"

"How *could* he?" The biochemist laughed harshly. "I've removed your shortwave tie clasp and an assortment of other weapons and signaling devices that were concealed on various parts of your body!" He pointed to a narrow couch in the corner of the room.

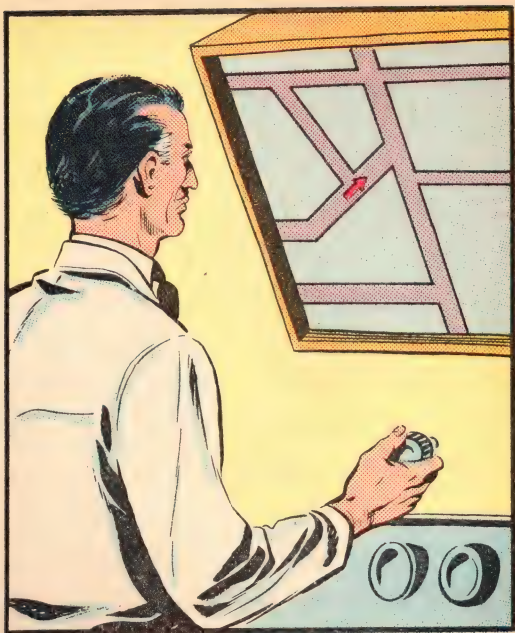
Napoleon swiveled his head and stared briefly at the couch. Then his forehead crinkled into a deep



Solo's Confiscated Weapons

frown. Heaped on the couch were the knife that he normally kept strapped to his wrist, the tear-gas fountain pen, the powerful cordite explosive in the form of a harmless eraser, the conversation scrambler, and a host of other peculiar electronic gimmicks.

The biochemist rapped on the wall, and a panel immediately slid to one side, revealing a large and extremely detailed street map of Calcutta. A metallic arrow, apparently activated by some sort of a

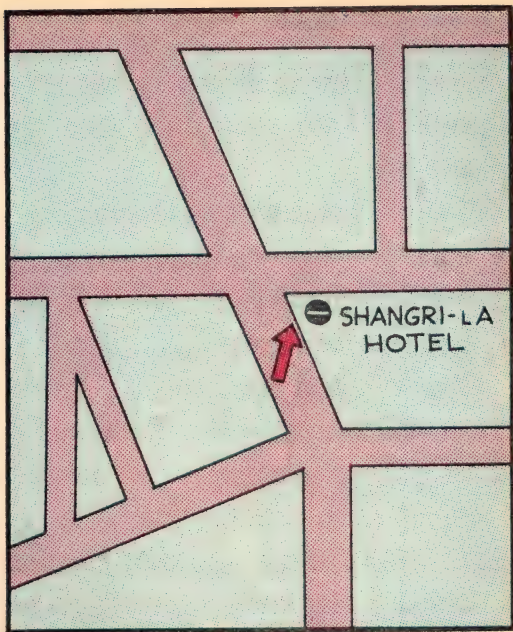


Street Map of Calcutta

magnet, was inching across the surface of the map face like an insect.

“Your friend will never get here because *our* agent—the mute taxi driver you ‘met’ before—is on the way to his hotel room to kill him.”

Solo watched the metallic arrow moving toward the Shangri-La Hotel. It turned corners and paused at busy intersections, just like an actual automobile. Neither he nor Von Sternberg knew that Illya was driving the cab and that the real

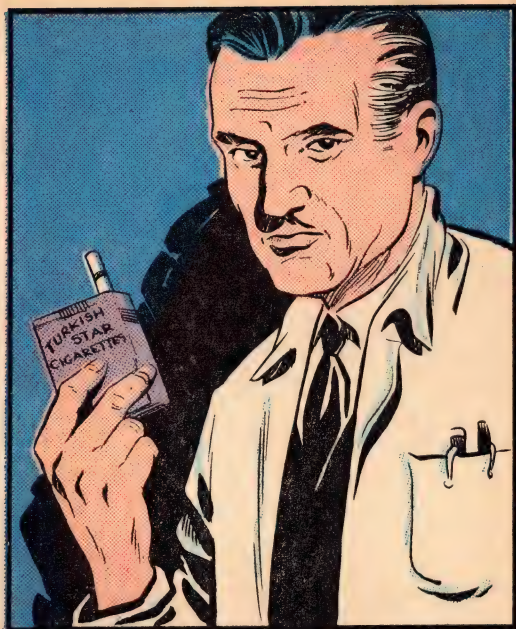


The Taxi's Destination

driver was riding in the trunk compartment.

Von Sternberg removed a small microphone from his shirt pocket; it was shaped like a package of Turkish cigarettes. "I keep in touch with our cab-driving employee by means of this shortwave set. I know where he is at all times because of that arrow you see sliding across the map."

"What good does *that* do?" asked Solo. A severe wave of nausea caused him to double up again. He



Hidden Microphone

gripped his teeth and continued, "He can't reply, because he can't speak. Though I must admit he can handle himself pretty well." Solo stroked his jaw gingerly.

"He doesn't *have* to reply," retorted Von Sternberg acidly. "All he has to do is follow my directions. He receives them on a special 'tooth' he keeps in his mouth at all times."

Solo was unable to sit up any longer. He sank to the floor on his hands and knees. He was furious



Solo Sinks to the Floor

with himself because of his growing weakness.

"Come now, Mr. Solo, I have a few more things to show you before you shrivel and die. I want to prove to you, once and for all, that we at T.H.R.U.S.H. are going to conquer the earth!" Grabbing the U.N.C.L.E. agent by his suit collar, the biochemist jerked him roughly to his feet.

The next few minutes were like a nightmare for the U.N.C.L.E. agent. Von Sternberg dragged Solo



“Come Now, Mr. Solo!”

into an enormous frigid room which was shaped like a tunnel. Stacked high on one side of the room were blocks of frozen mice. Stacked equally high on the other side were hideous blocks of frozen fleas. Napoleon Solo shuddered.

Von Sternberg explained, "This method of freezing rodents alive—so that they stay alive indefinitely—is something I concocted myself after years of experimentation. The same goes for the fleas."

Solo dutifully examined the



Frozen Death

frigid packages. The biochemist continued, "Each of the fleas is a carrier of the bubonic plague germ, *Pasteurella pestis*. And each of the rodents has a tiny electrode buried in its brain. I can guide the movements of these little fellows by means of special signaling devices right here from this submarine. In other words, after we thaw them out, these rodents don't run around at random; they go where we *direct* them to go."

Napoleon opened and closed his



Von Sternberg Explains

eyes. He was trying to stay awake, while at the same time fighting back a wave of nausea.

“In the thawing-out process we put a block of rodents and a block of fleas in the same container. As soon as the fleas have regained their ability to jump, they hop on the backs of the mice and bury themselves in their hair. You know, of course, that it is the fleas which cause the black death, not rats or mice. The latter merely serve as transportation.”



Solo Tries to Stay Awake

When they had returned to the tea-and-crumpets room in which Solo had first regained consciousness, the biochemist concluded, "As you Americans would say, 'You ain't seen *nuthin'* yet!' In addition to trying to spread bubonic plague throughout the world, T.H.R.U.S.H. has a few other tricks up its sleeve—tricks that will so demoralize entire populations, they will eagerly accept the rule of T.H.R.U.S.H. as a way to solve their problems."



The Biochemist Continues

"What kind of problems?" Solo mumbled, his chin sagging on his chest.

"We have devised a way of creating a permanent smog over Europe. We are ready to release radio-directed army ants all over South America. We have a group of midgets stirring up trouble among African pygmies. We are currently sending Unidentified Flying Objects aloft over the free world's air bases. We have— Mr. Solo, you're not listening!"



Solo Tries to Listen

He was right. Napoleon Solo was not listening. He was slipping into unconsciousness. The biochemist shook him by the shoulder and held a mirror before his face.

One of the chief agents of U.N.C.L.E. wearily parted his bloodshot eyes and stared in horror at his reflection. The skin on his face was beginning to crease with wrinkles, like a crumpled sheet of parchment.

He already resembled a mummy.



A Shocking Reflection



In the Hotel Parking Lot

CHAPTER 8

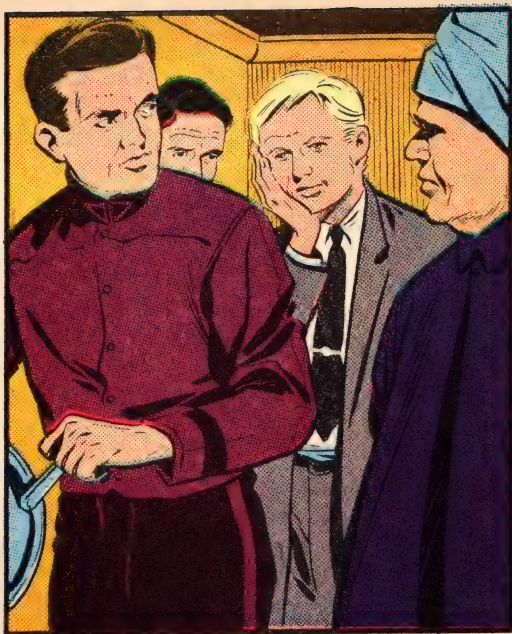
ILLYA TAKES COMMAND

Kuryakin expertly wheeled the taxi into the parking lot of the Shangri-La Hotel. "Don't go away," he murmured with a wry smile. He was addressing the taxi driver, who was beginning to regain consciousness in the cab's dusty trunk. "I'll be back as soon as I've contacted Napoleon Solo.

Then we'll have some words with you."

The man made angry thumping sounds in the trunk. He was evidently bumping the closed lid with his head, Illya realized.

As Kuryakin stepped into the hotel's elevator, he shifted his "tooth" radio receiver to the other side of his mouth. "*Ouch!*" he exclaimed at once. The other occupants of the elevator stared at him in astonishment. The "tooth" was suddenly receiving radio signals,



“Ouch!”

which felt to the U.N.C.L.E. agent like the agonizing throb of a toothache. "Ouch!" he exclaimed once more. When he reached his floor, he bowed to the passengers, stepped off, and immediately spit the object into his hand.

When he entered his room he held the varnished white molar to his ear. He noted with satisfaction that the person who had sent the "Attention!" signals was continuing to speak in English. The U.N.C.L.E. agent had been worried

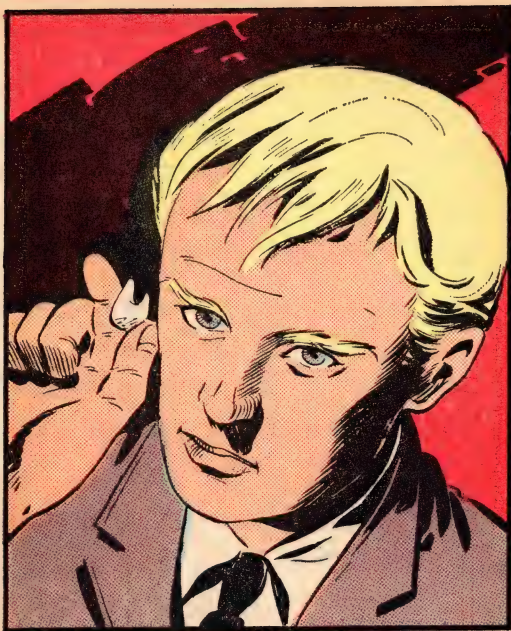


A Message

about a possible language problem. What if the T.H.R.U.S.H. officer at the other end had chosen to speak in Bengali or some other East Indian language?

Kuryakin's lips twisted into a cold smile as the voice spoke.

"Now hear this, Agent Number Six! After you kill the man known as Kuryakin—the one in the rumpled suit—you are to wait in his hotel room until five minutes past three, at which time Agent Number Thirteen will appear.

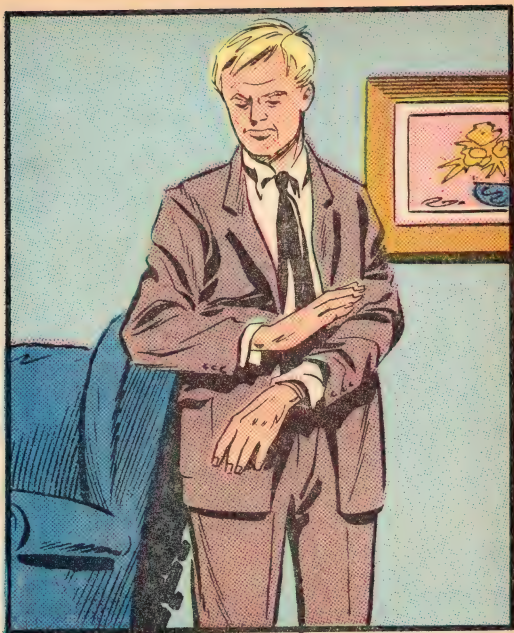


Illya Listens

Agent Number Thirteen is to pick up the explosives they always carry in their suitcases. You are to bring Agent Number Thirteen to the submarine in your cab, along with the U.N.C.L.E. agent's body."

"My suit isn't *that* rumpled!" complained Illya, glancing down at his wrinkled suit jacket.

The electronic device was silent; the voice at the other end apparently had signed off. Kuryakin was about to pop the object back into his mouth, but he decided that the

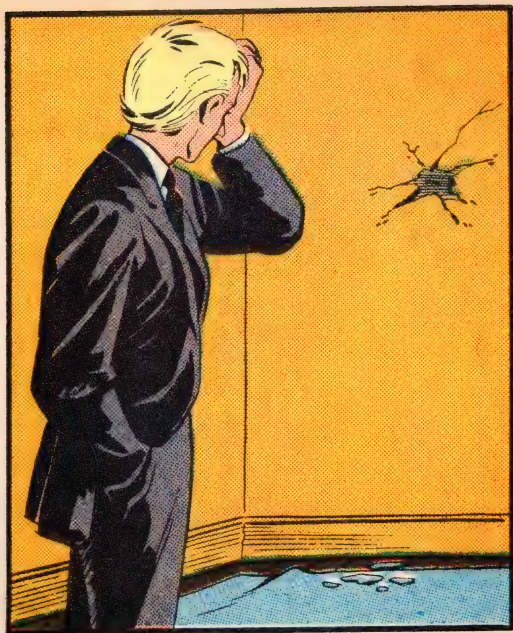


“My Suit Isn’t That Rumpled!”

knifelike pains were too great. He shrugged his shoulders and slipped the device into his side pocket.

The hands on his wristwatch indicated it was half past two. This meant that T.H.R.U.S.H. Agent Number Thirteen would appear in thirty-five minutes. Illya would be waiting for him. "I think I'll check Napoleon's room," he muttered.

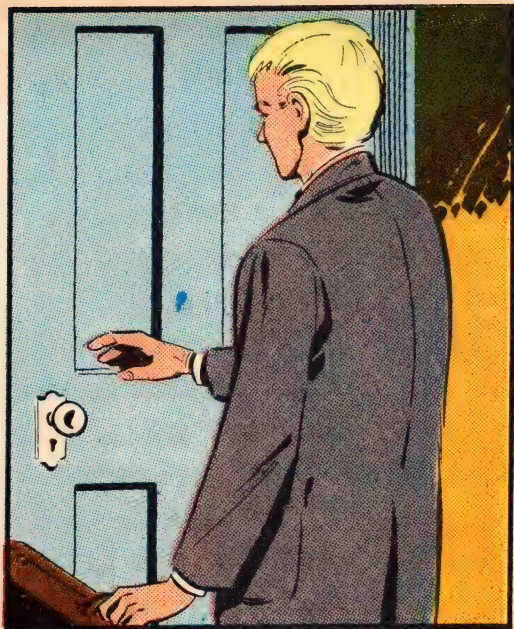
He found Solo's room just as they had left it that morning. Plaster fragments were still scattered over the floor, and the furrow



A Check of Solo's Room

in the carpet where the mouse had been atomized by a spinning bullet was still visible. Kuryakin wondered idly how it felt to be disintegrated by a .38 soft-nosed slug. Not very good, he thought.

Solo's suitcase was still standing against the bed. Kuryakin decided to carry it into his own room, so their luggage would be together in case he received no signal on his tie clasp at three o'clock. He had an uneasy feeling that this might happen.



Illya Takes Solo's Suitcase

He unlatched the suitcase and checked its contents. Nestled among the shirts were several types of compact bombs; some were triggered by heat, some were detonated by impact, and a few shaped like licorice sticks were activated by radio signals. A plastic bag containing specially formulated jelly compounds occupied one corner of the case, under Napoleon's socks. It was wired to the luggage's innocent-looking time lock.

He was about to snap shut the



Compact Bombs

case when something stirred behind him.

Agent Number Thirteen had arrived ahead of schedule.

Kuryakin instinctively ducked and spun on his heels, a split second before a pencil-size hypodermic needle sailed through the air. It shattered harmlessly against the wall.

"Here's my chance to practice Yubiwaza," the U.N.C.L.E. agent muttered. Without even a glance at his foe, Kuryakin tightened the



Agent Thirteen Arrives

three middle fingers of his right hand into the form of a fleshy dagger and jabbed this strange weapon with all his strength against a sensitive point just beneath the man's breastbone.

The T.H.R.U.S.H. agent's face turned purple from the impact, and he sagged to his trembling knees. Illya pursued his advantage. Moving with blurring speed, he struck his adversary again, this time punching a strategic nerve center with his rigidly extended



Yubiwaza Jab

middle finger. Agent Number Thirteen flopped heavily on his back, his mouth sagging open.

Kuryakin walked calmly into the bathroom and twisted the bathtub tap so that water gushed out in a thundering stream. Then he stepped back into the room to examine the man on the floor.

Agent Number Thirteen was a European who looked to be about thirty years old. He was wearing the starched white clothing of a hospital intern, and Kuryakin



Illya Fills the Tub

noted that the words, "Queen of the East," were stenciled on one sleeve.

Ten minutes to three, Kuryakin noted on the hands of the intern's expensive gold wristwatch. He hoped that in ten minutes his tie clasp would tingle from a short-wave signal. If his tie clasp *didn't* tingle, he would know immediately that his companion was in trouble.

"You're going to take me to the T.H.R.U.S.H. submarine!" Kuryakin muttered through his teeth



“You’re Taking Me to the Sub!”

as the T.H.R.U.S.H. agent regained consciousness.

"No," mumbled Agent Number Thirteen, "I—"

The U.N.C.L.E. agent did not permit him to finish his sentence. Kuryakin dragged the intern into the bathroom, plunged his reluctant head beneath the surface of the streaming water in the tub, and counted to ten. When he pulled his foe's head out of the water, he said sweetly, "Perhaps you misunderstood me. . . ."



Gentle Persuasion

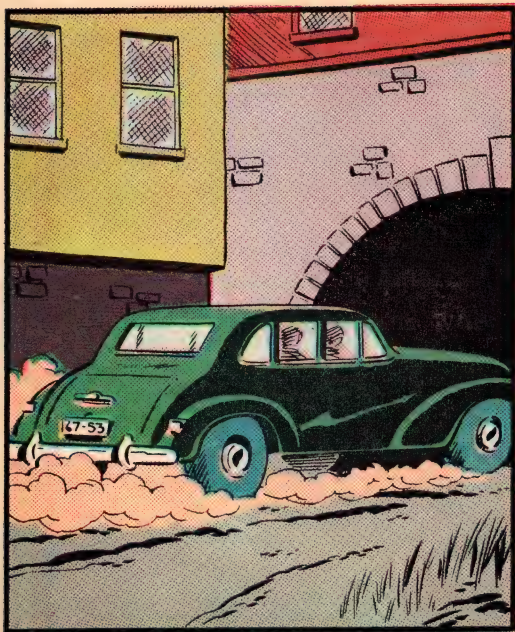
"I'll take you! I'll take you!" blubbered Agent Number Thirteen, coughing fitfully.

"That's better!" declared Kuryakin, handing the enemy agent a towel so he could wipe off his face. Illya sat down on the bed in the next room and stared at his watch. Agent Number Thirteen watched him warily from the bathroom door. When three o'clock came and went without a tingle on his tie clasp, Kuryakin rose to his feet.

"Let's go," he stated tersely.



A Convinced T.H.R.U.S.H. Agent



Abandoned Sewage Drain

CHAPTER 9

THE SUBMARINE

"This had better be the way to the submarine," Kuryakin snapped as he steered the battered taxicab into the abandoned sewage drain of the Queen of the East hospital.

Agent Number Thirteen sat beside him in the cab, his wrists handcuffed behind his back. Agent Number Six, the real cab driver,

was still locked in the trunk compartment; he periodically made thumping noises on the lid.

"It is," replied Agent Number Thirteen unhappily.

The tunnel pitched into the earth at a steep angle, then leveled off. The U.N.C.L.E. agent turned on the cab's headlights. Two dusty yellow beams probed ahead through the gloom, revealing moist walls overgrown with moss. Kuryakin inched forward cautiously.

Suddenly Kuryakin clicked off



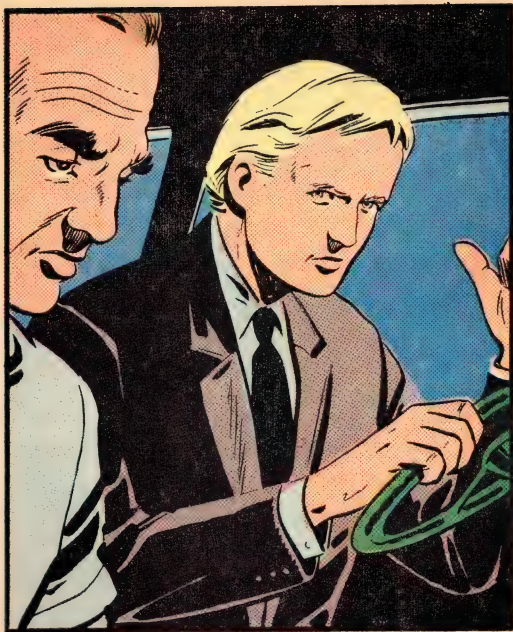
A Dark Tunnel

the headlights and killed the motor. He had detected that water from a harbor inlet rippled back and forth only a few feet ahead.

He slipped quickly out of the cab. "Don't you dare make a sound!" he whispered hoarsely to the T.H.R.U.S.H. agent.

"Don't worry," snarled Agent Number Thirteen. He slouched farther down in his seat.

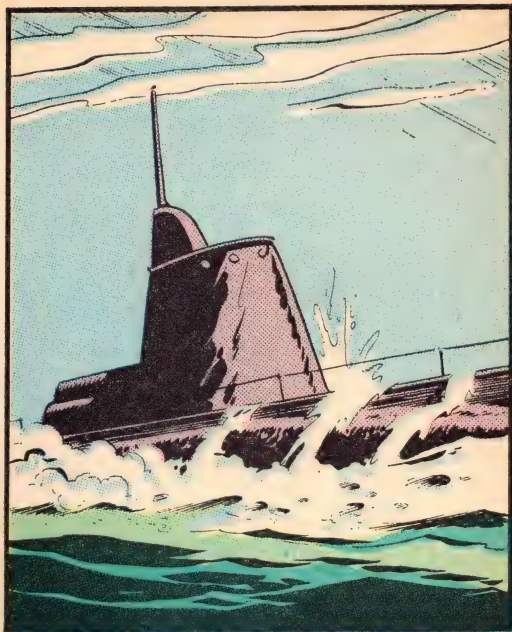
Kuryakin removed two suitcases from the cab: his own, and Napoleon Solo's case which was packed



Sudden Stop

with the deadly explosives. As he moved he was unaware of the conning tower of a submarine pushing its way upward through the water of the harbor inlet behind his back. Its barnacle-covered plates glistened wetly in the dim light that filtered down through the boards of a rotting pier above.

“This is Agent Thirteen! Here I am. *Help me!*” bellowed the member of T.H.R.U.S.H. as the conning tower hatch flipped open and a man shouldered his way into view, a



The Sub Surfaces

high-powered Baltic burp gun clasped in his enormous hands.

In a flash Illya dove back toward the cab and cracked Number Thirteen across the upper lip. The T.H.R.U.S.H. agent fell back in his seat, groaning in pain. Kuryakin then threw himself on the ground as the sailor in the conning tower raked the cab with bullets. From this position the U.N.C.L.E. agent squinted through the lens of his electronic device which resembled a camera and depressed its small



Flying Bullets

silver button. A bright yellow gas pellet was ejected. It hit its target squarely. The man in the conning tower dropped the burp gun, doubled up over the edge of the tower, and slid headfirst into the water.

Kuryakin picked up again the suitcase which contained the explosives. He then broad jumped eight feet, grabbed the upper lip of the conning tower with his free hand, and nimbly hoisted himself over the edge. Tiptoeing down a



Illya Jumps Aboard

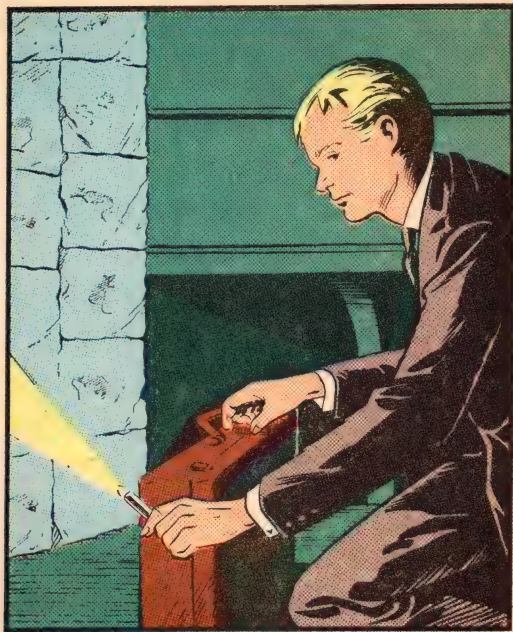
steep, wrought-iron staircase, he found himself in the center of the submarine's main corridor. The crew had obviously been alerted by the bursts of gunfire, for doors were opening and closing as the men pushed their way excitedly into the narrow hallway. Illya flattened himself against the wall and edged along the corridor until he felt the handle of a door behind him. He opened it and slipped inside. The room was dark and unbelievably cold.



He Edges Along the Corridor

Kuryakin carefully placed the suitcase on the floor and thumbed on a pocket flashlight. The glassy eyes of a hundred frozen mice returned his stare. The U.N.C.L.E. agent pulled back in repulsion, shivering in spite of himself. Quickly he bent over and turned the time lock on the suitcase three clicks. In nine minutes, if all went well, the submarine would explode.

Illya sensed that the underwater vehicle was almost deserted, for the sound of feet running toward the



Illya Sets a Time Bomb

conning tower had subsided. He pushed open the freezer door and continued his exploration of the hallway. He had a feeling Napoleon Solo was a prisoner—alive or dead, he did not know—behind one of the doorways leading off the hallway.



Exploring the Sub



A Familiar Voice

CHAPTER 10

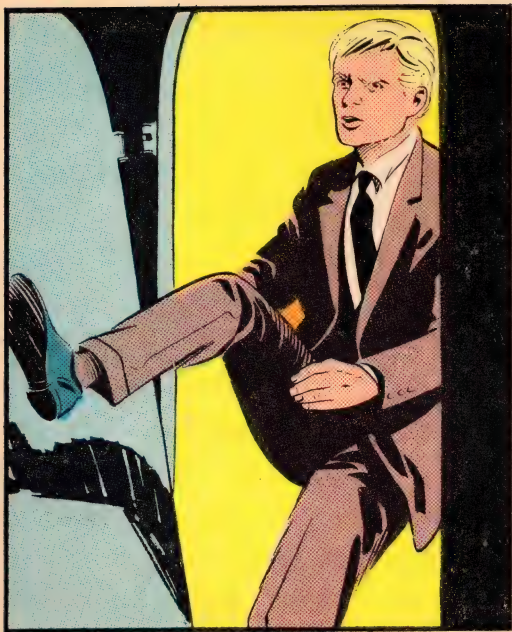
RESCUE

“Don’t mind the disturbance, Mr. Solo,” Kuryakin heard from behind a closed door. The voice had a cultivated, British accent. “My trigger-happy guards probably shot a prowler, that’s all.”

Kuryakin pressed his ear to the heavy door and listened. He felt his skin prickle when a familiar voice

said something in reply. Napoleon was still alive. That was Solo's voice; Kuryakin would recognize it under any conditions. But why did the U.N.C.L.E. agent sound like a sickly invalid? Kuryakin wasted no time. He kicked open the door with such violence that one of its hinges ripped loose.

"Join the party!" whispered a terribly haggard man, huddled in a chair, as Illya burst into the room. Kuryakin stared unbelievably at his friend. Napoleon was a



Unconventional Entry

mass of wrinkles. Then, remembering his duty, he whipped his revolver from its shoulder holster and motioned for the tall East Indian to rise and raise both hands.

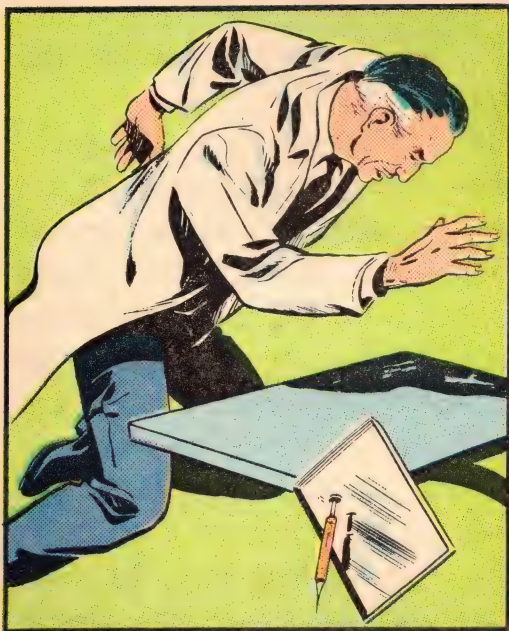
The startled biochemist slowly stood up and raised his hands. Cautiously, however, he slid one foot along the floor until he felt a button. He pressed it, and a weighted net dropped from the ceiling, slipping over Illya Kuryakin.



A Weighted Net

"Hey, this is fun!" croaked the emaciated agent.

In his distress Illya mistakenly jerked the wrong trigger on his gun. Instead of a bullet, he released a sleep dart. The fluid-filled object hit Von Sternberg in the left shoulder. The biochemist buckled up immediately, knocking over the table and tray on which the large "reverse process" syringe had been positioned. When the biochemist saw what he had done, he tried desperately to smash the plastic



Von Sternberg Falls

tube. But he blacked out before he could reach it. The syringe rolled out of his reach, miraculously unbroken. Kuryakin knew at a glance what it was—and what it could do.

“A nice situation you’ve got us into,” he mumbled as he strained to break the strands of the net. He couldn’t bear to look at the face of his friend.

Napoleon Solo rubbed his eyes with the backs of his withered hands, as though trying to clear his head. He tottered to his feet, and



Illya Struggles in the Net

promptly collapsed over Von Sternberg's prostrate body.

"Napoleon, try to crawl over to that syringe," pleaded Illya, "and give yourself a shot. Try. It may be our only chance."

Solo crawled on his hands and knees over to the syringe, picked it up with shaking hands, and awkwardly tried to pierce his wrinkled skin with its point. On the first two attempts he fumbled so badly that part of the fluid squirted over the floor.



Solo Crawls to the Syringe

“Steady there, friend,” begged Illya. He was trying desperately to rip open some of the knots in the net. “Do it right. Time is running out on us! The submarine is going to explode in less than three minutes.”

Napoleon Solo pursed his lips, squinted his eyes, and jabbed the point of the needle into his wrist. He was trying hard to force some of the fluid into a vein, but the plunger proved too resistant for his fading strength.



Solo's Strength Fades

"Here, let *me* do it!" snapped Illya. He had broken free from the net and was scrambling to his friend's side. Seizing the syringe, he pushed down its plunger and pumped what was left of its contents into one of Solo's veins. Then he pulled his friend to his feet. "Come on. We've got to get out of here!"

"You go," mumbled Solo wearily. "I'm too sick to move."

Kuryakin was losing his patience. Deftly he clipped Napoleon

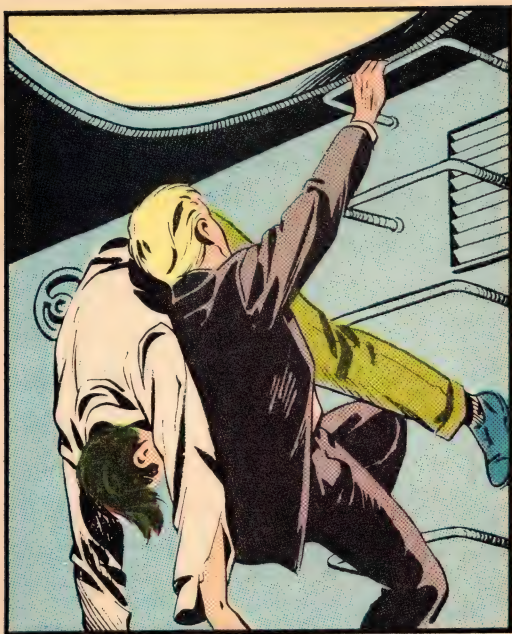


Illya Takes Over

on the jaw, then draped him over his shoulder. He knew that if he made a dash for it, he could break out of the conning tower, and run up the abandoned sewage drain, past the returning crew, before the jelly compounds were set off by the timing mechanism in the suitcase.

"You *hit* me," grumbled Napoleon as Illya struggled up the steep, wrought-iron staircase leading to the escape hatch of the conning tower.

"I never realized you had a glass



They Escape

chin," Kuryakin retorted grimly. He leaped unsteadily to the shore and staggered into the dark mouth of the drainage tunnel. He had gone only a few steps when a deafening roar slammed shock waves against him, knocking him and Napoleon Solo head over heels. The world seemed to him to be tearing apart at the seams.

While debris from the roof of the drainage tunnel showered upon them, the two U.N.C.L.E. agents staggered to their feet. Kuryakin



Explosion

flicked on his pocket flashlight and directed its beam at Solo's face. "That orange fluid works fast," he exclaimed happily. "You're beginning to look healthier already!"

"All I know is that I'm getting a splitting headache!" moaned Solo, holding one hand to his head. Then he grinned. "Too bad about all those frozen mice and fleas! Now they won't have any fun spreading bubonic plague!"

Napoleon would be all right, Kuryakin thought to himself. His



"I'm Getting a Headache!"

sense of humor had returned.

The U.N.C.L.E. agents emerged at street level a few minutes later. They strolled nonchalantly to the front of the Queen of the East Hospital and hailed a passing taxicab.

"Take us to Dum-Dum Airport," ordered Illya. He leaned back in his seat contentedly.

The driver looked at him in astonishment. He himself was trembling with fright. "Wasn't that an awful earthquake we just had?" he moaned. "It overturned



‘Taxi!’

half the boats in the harbor.”

Solo shrugged his shoulders. “If you’ve seen one earthquake, you’ve seen them all!” he replied.

Both men chuckled as the cab careened wildly through the streets, heading for the glistening Air India plane that was loading international passengers.

A sacred cow, watching them pass, caught a glimpse of Illya’s face. An observer would have sworn that the animal shrugged its hump and turned sadly away.



Mission Completed

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What evil T.H.R.U.S.H. plot would Napoleon
and Illya run into here?

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