

8 August, 1935 (cont'd)

A fruitful day, albeit one that's not yet quite over.

After our lunch with Wassily, some discussion re: what to do next. Though I favored trying to find and follow Singh as soon as possible, Susie convinced me the hospital should be visited soon. B\*\*\*\*\* and F\*\*\*\* hired a car and drove out to the Yellow Mtns. to look into Fr. E's claims about what happened there. (No word since they left, but due back later today or tomorrow.)

Talked w/Fr. H\*\*\*\*\*, who finally let slip his (strong suspicion) that Fr. E\*\*\*\*'s death was suicide, and would not brook any suggestion that suicide in the service of averting further supernatural deaths could be seen as a noble act. Bloody Catholics think they know bloody everything.

Spoke also with the whore. Little rough round edges, and no appeal to me. A Westerner, but pimp a Chinese, and the one who slashed her. Swore off working for the Green Gang ever again, and of a war between the gangs and the Reds on the horizon. Is Singh working for the Reds? A Sikh Commie? More in heav'n and earth than imagined by the likes of me, I suppose, but...

In any case, seems like a good time to be anywhere save Shanghai.

Business at the hospital concluded, a long and complicated discussion ensued, wherein Susie attempted to convince us that we ought to be looking anywhere but for Singh. The minds of women are perplexing, and I worried she might get in the way, but I could tell Mr. B\*\*\*\* would object if I suggested she stay at the hotel where it's safe for her.

Finally, I convinced the others to follow my plan... namely to find and shadow Singh. Of course, he was nowhere to be found, the light off in his window at the Pension M. Went in anyway, but someone among us was too noisy, and the French drunkard running the Pension heard us and, being French, went straight into a bloody harangue about how Singh had checked out and it was OUR bloody fault. She, evidently, had been on a TOOT... or, is it 'in' a toot? 'Beneath' a toot? Damn the Yankee slang, she stank of her liquor, in any case.

I turned on my charm, by which I mean I scared her stiff, and she admitted to knowing more about Singh than previously admitted: that he was tied up with the underworld with some cockeyed gangster named "Wrong Eye" who apparently lumbers about Shanghai in the summer in a long, fur-trimmed coat. (Mad bastard, by the sound of it.) Whilst I kept her busy, Susie crept into the woman's office and went through the records, confirming the claim that Singh had left without paying his bills.

That done, we returned to the hotel, ready to retire for the night, but ran into Wassily on the way. Asked after Singh whom he told us had been seen in the French Concession, in the company of someone matching the desc. of Wrong Eye. Went, and found Singh's desiccated corpse in the arms of an old Chinese beggar woman who'd apparently claimed him and planned to use him as a prop in her begging. Though could not retrieve body, not even for money, did speak of how he was found, and how a man in a fur-trimmed cloak was leaving the scene.

Ran into Wassily once more, and told him we wanted to find Round Eye. Considered searching for him at the Black Lotus, but he told us Wrong Eye frequents a Russian establishment, the Volpa Tearoom, during the day.

Retired to our rooms for the night, still uneasy but at least with a lead to follow up on tomorrow.

P August, '35

Woke and set about disguising ourselves, with my aid and expertise: Mc. B. as a Chinese lady, Breen as an elderly gent, and myself as a fedora-wearing Yank businessman. (Looked like someone out of a fool Hollywood talkie, I did.)

With that, led by Wassily to Volpa Tearoom, where we sat & waited. A few others within, but the most noticeable

was a pent at the center of the room, whom Breen whispered to us looked very much like one of his language teachers... a Japanese. Then in comes Wrong Eye, plonks himself down beside him, and they sit in silence, like an old couple. Stayed that way for a bit, before murmuring to one another, and then finally something changed hands: a small packet, wrapped in red silk. THE MIRROR, thought I, and thank Christ, correctly so.

Soon after, the pair took their leave of the place and we followed at a discreet distance. S\*\*\*\* seemed to hesitate, as if perhaps someone ought to follow Wrong Eye, but I had my sights set on the Japanese. I tailed him closely, with B\*\*\*\* and S\*\*\*\* a bit behind me. B\*\*\*\* somehow got lost along the way but the lass kept up well, thank Christ, for she was the one who pulled the thing off.

As for me, I noticed what looked like the Japanese embassy up ahead, and so ran as quickly as I could to run into the fellow before he could find refuge. He panicked, pulling a gun on me and backing me into an alley, all questions & threats as I tried to bluster and convince him I was merely a bumbling Yank. No good: he insisted on interrogating me, gun in my face. But whilst he was busy with that, little S\*\*\*\* crept up behind us and filched the red-silk-wrapped packet from his pocket, with him completely unaware until she was out of reach. Then she

distracted him, and I tussled with him, putting all my wits and strength into disarming the bastard and hammering him over his head with the handle, leaving him laid out in the alleyway as the lass and I fled into the crowded, noisy streets.

Found Breen in the street where we'd left him, proudly clinging to some good calligraphy paper he'd bought while we were risking our necks & retrieving the damned object of our hunt.

Unsettling bloody thing it is, too: old mirror, but not fashioned from glass, by the looks of it, and set in a frame of jade carved with what B\*\*\*\* says is ancient Chinese writing, in characters he says he's never seen before.

Feel as if we were lucky, damned lucky. But also feel certain what happened was seen, probably by more than one onlooker. Considering sending Wassily a message misguiding us, and am tempted to hire some people (hotel staff?) & dress them our clothes, send them off as a decoy. We need QF and BT back with that car, and just get out. Thinking perhaps boat out of Ningpo could work, especially if we misdirect others to seek us in Nanjing or elsewhere.

We're not out of Shanghai yet, and I fear the mirror itself may not be the agent of the desiccations... what if some

dark shuk follows it around, or is attracted to it? What if... Christ, I dare not think it. We must leave this place, and trust to Armitage and his fellows to know what to do with the evil thing.

I find myself, now more than ever, longing for to be in Millie's arms, hungry for her mouth.

#### IDEAS FOR MISDIRECTION:

- \* Note to Wassily, asking best route to Nanjing? (Where we AREN'T going!)
- \* Call Vasserman (police detective) and tell him we're off to follow a lead in Tsingtao, something involving Germans and ROC spies?
- \* Hire a quintet of nobodies to dress in our clothes and go in a car to someplace we're not going?
- \* Arrange delivery of a package (some trinket from Breen's countless things, perhaps his hand-mirror or some such) to the Shanghai Municipal Police, wrapped in red silk and addressed to Wasserman? Add a note advising Wasserman not touch, as it is a dangerous artefact? Surely someone there is corrupt enough to report it and pass it on. Could buy time.
- \* When QF and BT return, we must perhaps simply get in their car and drive like hell out of the city.

\* Or perhaps we disguise and law low in the city... but  
that seems riskier than any other route, and prefer not to  
try it.