The Crimson Wizard-Armada of Death The World Hears Peter that every possibility be observed and protected against. Quill as Red Fleet Sails

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS OF THE DRAMA

of destroying battleships. ALLAN TYLER, chief of secret

SONYA DANILO, beautiful and mysterious figure in plot against Peter Quill and his lightning.

PETER QUILL, a hunchback, inventor of invisible lightning with affinity for explosives and capable MAIDA TRAVERS, radio singer, battleships.
MAIDA TRAVERS, radio singer,
beloved by Lambert.
IVAN MOLOKOFF, assistant engineer of radio station.
PETROVICH, embassy attache. MICHAEL RACLOV, assistant of

so brief that it cannot be com-

puted. So it was this night

with the Red fleet splitting the

waves of the North sea in its

The whole world stood by.

The world stood by in its radio

stations. London's great station

became the center of this ethe-

real, this impalpable nerve

fiber. A hush fell when London

"London is calling all world

This startling announcement

came into millions of ears at

precisely the same moment.

And at precisely the same mo-

ment every radio station the

world over cut its programs and

listened. Orchestras were sud-

of universal note were stopped

in the moment of their most elo-

quent periods. Dancers in a

thousand restaurants found

themselves strangely without

was hushed, the eyes of millions

fixed upon them as if something

There came a quick succes-

It was the roll call of the

cities of the world. Each city

sion of voices out of the night.

ghastly might leap out.

"This is Chicago!"

"This is New York!"

"This is Warsaw!"

"This is Paris!"

denly silenced in the middle of

began calling.

drive toward the Atlantic.

By SPECIAL AGENT

(Copyright: 1938: The Chicago Tribune.)

ETER QUILL sat in the steel turret of the Red flagship. Leningrad was far behind in the shifting fog of the Gulf of Finland. Peter Quill's penetrating gray-blue eyes had never once wavered from the icy water of the sea. The shrieking of a polar wind from off the Finnish coast did not disturb his endless vigil.

Sometimes the steel door of the turret would clang behind radio stations!" him. Peter Quill would swiftly lift his hand and draw a cover over a small cabinet which stood before him. Under this cover no curious eye could see a glittering array of levers. Then a Red naval officer would apologize, deliver some message, and retire. Sometimes it would be exquisite phrases from Brahms a steward with food. When the or Beethoven or Liszt. Orators food had been set down and the steward had retired Peter Quill would unmask his curious cabinet. But he would always gaze into the sea ahead.

Peter Quill ate little. His rhythm. Every radio receiver tray of food would be taken away. Again he would gaze into the sea. Peter Quill's face, which was furrowed and pitifully distorted, had become truly a study in horror. The skin was white and terribly drawn over cheek and jaw bones. Deep shadows fell away from the nostrils, down past the thick, repulsive lips, and to his wrinkled neck. The distorted body seemed to have reached the end of its endurance in supporting a head as large as a giant's. The clawlike hands moved incessantly over the keyboard as if in a thousand caresses.

The cabinet of death! This was the strange invisible lightning which Peter Quill alone could create and alone direct. The secret of its creation and of its use lay deep in that mysterious mind which had discovered it. The strange mind of Peter Quill worked its magic within that huge, rolling head

Behind the flagship of the Red fleet there trailed the straining battleships. This long train of steel monsters had steamed southwest through the Baltic sea. There was no secret of its mobilization. The eyes of the world were upon this fleet, anxious to know its destination. The Red fleet turned northwest through the channel under the very brows of Copenhagen and emerged into the Kattegat.

The steel door behind Peter Quill clanged. An officer appeared. Peter Quill hastily drew the cover over his death cabinet. "We shall soon be in the North sea," said the officer.

Peter Quill's eyes never left the sea. "Will there be a fog?" he asked. "We must have fog."

'A fog?" "Yes, fog. There is no surprise in a fog. Watch for a fog." The officer went away. Peter Quill lifted the covering from his cabinet. He stared into the first light mists of the Skagerrak. The fleet passed out upon the North sea and laid a course for the north of Scotland.

When the officer appeared again in Peter Quill's steel tower he said: "Comrade Petrovich and Sonya are aboard the American transport. The transport has docked at Kirkwall. Kirkwall is in the Orkney Islands."

Peter Quill did not turn. "I must have the radium tubes," he said in cold, measured tones.

"We shall get them," said the officer. The officer clanged the door behind him and walked straight to the quarters of the radio telegraph. He wrote a brief message in Russian.

II. Peter Quill was cut off from the world in his steel turret. But the world was filled with Peter Quill. The radio can do this. The radio waves can bring Paris to Chicago in a space of time

A heavy fog lay over the North sea. Peter Quill had his wish. The radio messages between the American transport and the London station were still in progress when there came a weird interruption. It was music; music in wild, fear-

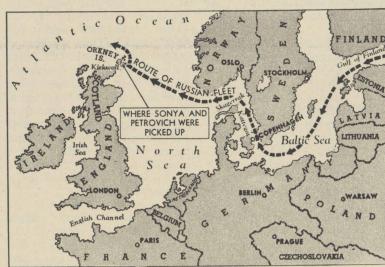
"What's that music?" The voice of the transport commander was peremptory.

rogation before he could think.

The music swirled eerily over of demon's laughter, an echoing keen derision. "It is dance dance to. . . This is Moscow your international radio . .

Suddenly the music went off the air in a crackle of static. Commander Jones of the transport was the first to sense this. "This is Jones at Kirkwall," he shouted.

Jones hardly waited for him to finish. "We're getting something strange here," he said. Some one is speaking Russian. We can't understand it. Wait! I have an idea. I'll have it recorded by phonograph. It's probably in short wave. When



Route of the Russian fleet, Mediterranean-bound.

strangest of beings, Peter Quill, the Crimson Wizard.

On went the call of cities. Calcutta, San Francisco, Cape Town, Hammerfest, Honolulu; ears were straining in the dazzling heat of India, in the cool breezes of the Golden Gate, in the sea mists of South Africa, the freezing ice caps of the Arctic circle, and in the lazy sundown of the South Sea isles.

Then there came an unexpected response. "This is Kirkwall." From the London radio station there came the astonished question: "Kirkwall? What Kirkwall?"

The reply was immediate. 'This is the United States transport America. We have just docked at Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands, Scotland."

So this was the destination of the transport with its marines. The London radio was quick to recognize it. "Welcome, America!" it shouted. "And thank you for a fast voyage. We shall have four squadrons of pursuit planes and bombers to help you within a half hour. Will you please keep a lookout against the landing of any Russians in

that sector?" The free nations had been swift in their response to a common need for defense. There was little likelihood that Russian soldier's or marines would land. But that small likelihood stood out as a threat. The free nations sent troops to guard every dangerous coastline. No one knew the objective of the Red fleet. It was imperative

message. It was this:

will pick you up from the landing field just south of the har-

bor. group about the receiver remained as if fascinated. The Russian message was repeated over and over, as if by repetition the Red flagship hoped to make sure that this order would reach its destination. Petrovich did not remain to hear Commander Jones determine upon making a phonographic record. Yet it was this delay that made it possible

"Quick, Sonya!" he called. "We are going ashore." "What, now?" said Sonya.

ful rhythm.

And then that same question came flying from every remote crevice of the world. This must have been so, for every radio transmitter the world over was at rest; and every receiver was open; and every announcer must have repeated the startled inter-

the air waves; and with it a kind "ha, ha, ha, ha," The music faded and there came a voice with a strong Russian accent: "What is the music?" The tone was of irony and bitterness and music . . . Russian dance music . . . which you shall broadcasting dance music to help you find the soviet fleet. . The fog hides the fleet, you say? . . . Yes, it is a fog . a Red fog . . . and this is a Red broadcast . . . a Red broadcast to tangle and snarl

"Yes, Jones, this is London."



was standing by in that dead I have the record finished I'll silence to catch word of that repeat it to you, London. Then you can have it translated

> It was too late. And it is very simple to explain how this could Comrade Petrovich had heard the Russian words. He was in the group of officers gathered about the receiver in the radio room of the transport. This he could easily do. In his disguise of Y. M. C. A. worker he had gone freely about the ship and had made many acquaintances. When the radio began working that night it was not many moments before the officers all knew that affairs of importance were at hand. Those who were at liberty hurried to the radio deck. And, listening there, Petrovich had caught the first transmission of the Russian

"Petrovich . . . Petrovich go on land immediately a plane from the fleet

Petrovich slipped away. The for Petrovich to move swiftly to Sonya Danilo's cabin.



lose. Come quickly. I'll explain afterward."

Sonya snatched her mantle and service cap. Together they hurried down the gangplank. The guard at the dock did not notice them. They were not in the military service. They might pass off the ship without question. Their return would be another matter. The guard would demand their passes then. They left the dock.

The snarl of an airplane was heard overhead.

"There they come," said Petrovich.

" Who?"

"Never mind. Hurry." Petrovich seized the girl by the arm and almost swung her off her feet in his anxiety to make haste. In a few moments they reached the airport. The plane was just landing. The pilot slowly swept the field with his searchlight. Petrovich plucked off Sonya's mantle and waved it. The pilot saw him and held the searchlight at one side. Petrovich and Sonya gained the side of the plane and clambered aboard. The motors had not been shut off. The propelcaught a glimpse of collapsible pontoons drawn back under the wings. The plane could alight in the sea. The motors went into high. The plane took off, circled the field, and was lost in the north.

of the message had come back correspondence transmitted by to Commander Jones. At the same moment an attendant from the airport reported the flight. century ago these same messages The dock guard reported the straggled over the newborn and departure of the Y. M. C. A. sec-

ee

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laboratories.

"We haven't a split second to retary and the Red Cross nurse. "Admiralty!" Jones called so loudly that the microphone trilled. "We've been fooled. The delay in translating . . . that strange plane . . .

London became anxious. "What are you saying about a strange plane?"

"Not a strange plane; a Russian plane."

"A Russian plane?" "O, what a blunder! While

we were fooling with that Russian translation a Red Cross nurse and a Y. M. C. A. secretary went ashore. Do you know who they were?"

London replied slowly and Jones bowed in humiliation as he listened: "Yes, if the translation is correct you have just let slip Petrovich and Sonya Danilo, two of the most dangerous spies in the service of the Red Circle."

Then London added, "But it's

good riddance, commander." "No," said Jones. "And I can tell you why. Sonya and Petrovich took with them the radium tubes for Peter Quill's invisible lightning. Peter Quill is with the Red fleet. With his deadly machine he is master of lers were whirling. Petrovich the oceans. My compliments to the British navy, but we're lost."

IV.

amazing rapidity in the air waves. A century ago the affairs of nations could be com-By this time the translation municated only by tedious sailing vessels whose voyages dragged on endlessly. A half halting cables. Today the re-

motest mountain cabin is instantly alert to events as they The world, then, was as close,

as intimate, and as sensitive to this thing called radio as if all the world were sitting about the same table in the same room.

Music was playing again. This was contrary to the agreement of the world broadcast.

London instantly came on the air. "What station is playing music?" The question was repeated over and over.

The music faded slightly. Then a voice: "This is Warsaw . . . we are playing-



Maida sings to Eric.

World events crystalize with ask you not to play music. We have agreed to stand by in pur-

suit of the Red fleet." Warsaw: "Please, London, every one will want to hear this music. . . . Calling Paris . . .

calling Paris . Paris answered on the instant. Then came the voice of Warsaw: "Is Mr. Eric Lambert in the

Paris studio?"

Petrovich. And as instantly came the voice of Eric Lambert: "Yes. . . Lambert . . . this is

(Tribune Studio photo.)

Sonya Danilo, disguised as a Red

Cross worker, left the transport with

Lambert . "Listen, Mr. Lambert. And listen, every one!

There was a moment of tense silence. Then the music came up again. And with it came the voice of a girl singing. There could be no mistake! Nor could Lambert restrain an astonishment which a whole world of netted radio was awaiting with straining ears.

"Maida! Maida!" Lambert shouted the words into the Paris microphone.

The song stopped. In its place there came a delighted and almost hysterical laughter. "Eric. Eric! It is I, Maida!"

"But Maida, how did you escape?"

"In a parachute, darling. Five thousand feet down through the darkness. . . . Poor, mad Peter Quill "

Warsaw was fading out. There was a last excited call from Eric Lambert: "Listen, Maida! Wait there for me. I'll have an airplane in an hour. Do you hear me? I'll get a plane . . . "

There was no more music. In its place there came the angry snarl of airplane propellers. Against this rising roar there was the voice of a flight commander:

"This is X-35 patroling Scapa Flow, Orkney Islands. Fog still heavy. Red fleet not in sight."

To the listening world this was the curtain drawn aside. The stage was the North sea. Radio has taught the ear to see. All the world fixed this seeing ear London: "Sorry, we must upon that one spot of all the earth's surface. The scene was a vague tumult of fog and of rocky shores and tumbling waves and moaning airplanes and of a Red fleet creeping mysteriously through the vast blanket of deepening mist.

As the voice of one flight commander faded out with the whirr of his propellers another imme-(Continued on page nine.)

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