GHOST PLANE

By ARTHUR STRINGER

W.N.U. SERVICE

THE STORY SO FAR: Alan Slade has agreed to fly a "scientist" named Frayne to the Anawotto river to look for the breeding ground of the trumpeter swan. It is bleak country, and Alan suspects Frayne of having something up his sleeve, but Norland Airways needs the job. Slade and his partner, Cruger, have been having trouble competing with the larger companies, and Frayne has paid enough to enable Cruger to buy the plane they need. When he thought Norland was going to have to quit, Slade applied for overseas service with the army air corps. His application was rejected, but his disappointment has been lessened considerably by the brighter outlook for the business and by the fact that Lynn Morlock, the local doctor's daughter, has decided not to go to England with her Red Cross unit. Now he has gone with Lynn while she gives first aid treatment to an outcast flyer named Slim Tumstead, who has been hurt in a fight. They learn that Tumstead knows about Frayne and about the new Lockheed. It is a few minutes later, and they are talking about their plans for the future. Lynn feels that she must think first of her father's happiness.

Now continue with the story.

"Quite an arsenal you're taking in," he observed.

CHAPTER IV

"But you mustn't forget," Slade contended, "that you have your own life to live."

"That's what I'm trying to remember," was Lynn's vibrant-voiced reply.

They came to a stop in front of the hospital steps.

"Some day," he said with a wave of recklessness, "I'll make you see it my way."

If it sounded like a threat it brought no touch of concern to the hazel eyes searching his face. A smile even hovered about her lip ends.

"You've got a harder job than that," she retorted, "if you're flying in to the Anawotto tomorrow." Then the smile disappeared. "By the way, I saw that ornithologist who's flying in with you. He was asking me what I knew about the country north of the Kasakana."

"Is he as screwy as he sounds?" asked Slade.

"He's far from screwy," was Lynn's slightly retarded answer. "He struck me as being cold and hard and shrewd. And I can't figure out what he's after. It rather makes me wish someone else was piloting him into that wilderness."

Slade was able to laugh, as they shook hands.

"Don't lose sleep over that," he proclaimed. Then he laughed again. "I've flown some queer nuts into the North."

Slade, hurrying down to the air harbor, could see his moored plane being warped in to the landing dock. On the dock itself he could make out Cassidy, of the Norland staff, and two strange figures, one more massive than the other. But what held his eye was the amount of duffel piled along the dock's edge.

As Cruger had told him, they were giving him a load all right. Even Cassidy's broad face broke into a smile as he handed him the scales-slip. For Slade's glance, at the moment, was directed toward the two men already interested in getting their equipment aboard. He resented the offhand way in which the bigger of the two strangers was clambering about his ship. The worn wolfskin coat that covered the wide shoulders of this stranger made him look shabby and subordinate.

When the pilot turned to his second passenger he experienced a sense of disappointment touched with shame. For there seemed nothing sinister about the straitened and scholarly figure confronting him. That figure even failed to look foolish. Slade saw a man considerably less aged than he had expected, a man with sloping and narrow shoulders and an abstracted gaze that looked out on the world from behind bifocal glasses.

Slade stepped closer.

"Quite a load you're giving me," he ventured as the man in the bifocal glasses continued to divide his attention between the duffel pile and a checklist in his hand.

The abstracted eyes lifted and regarded him for a moment of silence. It was the glasses more than anything else, Slade decided, that gave the stranger his look of deliberation.

"Why does that interest you?" the stranger inquired. His tone was mild and without hostility. But the voice, low-toned and remote, seemed marked by an exotic precision of intonation. It persuaded Slade that he was neither an Englishman nor an American.

"This happens to be my ship," the pilot explained as he rested a fraternal hand on the sun-faded fuselage.

"Ah, then we shall see much of each other," said the other. His smile was friendly but abstracted. "I am Doctor Frayne. And this is my camp-mate, my good man Friday, Caspar Karnell."

No responsive word came from the big-bodied man in the wolfskin coat. He merely stood above the cabin hatch, his eyes expressionless.

"Caspar is not—shall I say?—voluble," observed the Doctor. A mild and forebearing smile wrinkled the scholarly face behind the glasses. "And that, I might also explain, is why we travel together."

Slade, after an inspection of the bland emptiness of Karnell's face, nodded his understanding.

"They tell me I'm to take you in to the Anawotto," prompted the bush pilot.

"That is my desire," answered Dr. Frayne. "It may so happen that we shall winter up north."

"Down north," Slade corrected. "We speak of it here as down north."

The man with the abstracted eyes ventured a shrug.

"With time," he said, "I shall become better acquainted with your country." His movement, as he swung a bag of what had every aspect of mining tools up to his companion, was almost a dismissive one.

"Prospecting?" questioned Slade.

"I am not interested in prospecting," was the deliberated answer. "I am a naturalist."

As though in confirmation of that statement he lifted a case of mounted bird bodies up to his waiting companion. Then again the forced smile showed itself.

"It may impress you as a foolish profession. But for many years now I have given my time to the study of bird life."

Slade glanced down at the Mannlicher-Schoenauer, the two holstered Lugers, the pair of shotguns of different gauges and weight that rested between a scattering of cartridge cases.

"Quite an arsenal you're taking in," he observed.

For just a moment the opaque eyes regarded him.

"I am not unfamiliar with the North," Frayne announced with a patience that seemed coerced. "It is well, in case of the unexpected, to be able to live off the land."

"Of course," agreed Slade as he watched the firearms being stowed aboard. They were followed by a tent bale and sleeping bags, by condensed foods with foreign labels, by camp equipment and a box of signal flares and cased instruments and even two carrier pigeons in a hooded cage.

"You're filling me pretty full," observed Slade.

Frayne's face remained expressionless.

"Any inconvenience that I may cause," he said, "I profoundly regret. I had hoped, on arriving here, to purchase a plane. But they are not to be bought, I find."

"There's use for 'em just now," observed the pilot. "We're in the war, you know."

The eyes behind the bifocals became less opaque.

"But here at least," observed the man of science, "I shall not see it come between me and my research."

"The office tells me you're after trumpeter swans," said Slade.

"I am seeking the nesting ground of that noble bird," acknowledged the ornithologist. "They are extremely shy and hard to find in the brooding season. That is why I go into an empty country like the Anawotto."

Slade, not unconscious of the pedagogic note, felt the need of proving that his interests extended beyond gas engines.

"Ever try for them around the Red Rock Lakes in Yellowstone?" he asked. "They started a refuge for trumpeters there not so far back."

"A refuge which will be a failure," was the prompt response. "Your trumpeter is a child of the wilds. He cannot be adjusted to confinement."

His new friend, Slade admitted, seemed to know his bird life all right.

His eye-squint deepened as he noticed two heavier cases being lifted aboard. "By the way, are you taking radio or wireless in with you?"

"Why should I do that?" Frayne questioned. "It is with the lady swan I wish to converse."

"But how'll you come out?" asked Slade. "How'll we know where to pick you up?"

Frayne's gaze again became diffused.

"That may not be necessary," he finally explained. "We shall perhaps work our way through to what are locally known as the Barrens and come out along your Hudson Bay coast. It is a country you may happen to know?"

Slade smiled.

"I know it all right. As much as a white man can know such ice-fringed emptiness."

The bush pilot found himself being inspected with a new interest.

"That is extremely good news," averred his passenger. "As we fly north, I hope you will give me information about a country that is still distressingly unknown to me."

Slade resisted the temptation to observe that it wouldn't be so unknown to him by the time he'd wintered there.

"But you won't get swans as far east as the bay," he pointed out instead. "At least, not trumpeters."

Frayne's smile became more friendly.

"Already," he announced, "you are helping me. And there is another point on which you might enlighten us. Is the Anawotto River navigable?"

"No, it's not navigable," answered Slade. "It's blocked by too many falls and rapids. That's what's kept the country closed. Even Tyrrell couldn't get into it."

"But there were no planes when Tyrrell made his survey," observed the scholar.

"It's sure empty country," asserted the pilot, who had his own memories of the Anawotto.

"That," murmured the swan hunter, "is entirely to my liking."

"But you're not entirely to my liking," was the thought that hovered about at the back of Slade's head. Lynn, he felt, was right. Yet he was their Santa Claus, as Cruger had expressed it. He had paid well for service, and he'd get service.

Slade dismissed that thought and turned to study the silver-winged Lockheed that rested on the waters of the Snye. It looked spick and span in its new coat of aluminum.

He realized, as he swung about, that the man in the bifocal glasses was also studying the Lockheed.

"An attractive ship," the scientist observed. "It was my intention to own her. But in that I was forestalled by your friend Cruger."

Slade smiled at the sharpened note in the other's voice.

"You have to scramble for 'em, nowadays," observed Cruger's bush-hawk partner.

"So I am learning," announced the swan-seeker. He said it casually. But some newer timbre in the speaker's voice made Slade think of a gun pit smothered in tree branches.

The brief northern night was at its darkest when Cassidy, newly made watchman for Norland Airways, shut off the radio. He sighed as he reached for his thermos at the end of the deal table and drained it of its last cupful of coffee. Then, lighting his pipe, he stepped out into the open and blinked about through the darkness.

He wished he could be having a second thermos of coffee. But there was no bright-lighted eating room in that third-rate outfit on the edge of Nowhere. Its air lanes were as short of ships as its administration building was short of paint. All it was, in faith, was a rough-and-ready jumping-off place for a lot of lunatics who wanted to dig holes in a wilderness where the frost went deeper than the gold. It could never be classed with those high-toned airports he'd heard many a far-traveled pilot talking about.

No, Cassidy decided as he made his rounds, this was a melancholy place for a man of spirit. He didn't like the quietness of the hangar where the twin-motored Grumman amphibian stood surrounded by the engine entrails the workmen had left scattered about. He was glad to move down to the dock edge, where there was a little sound of water-riffles against the floats of the Postcraft that would be going out in three hours' time. Beside it, the only remaining ship in the harbor, loomed the new Lockheed that looked more like the ghost of a plane, in the uncertain starlight, than a workaday framework of metal and linen well covered with aluminum paint.

It startled him, as he stood watching it, that anything so quiet could give birth to movement. But as he watched he saw a shadow detach itself from the shadowy fuselage. He saw that shadow drop to the near-by float, and then leap, quick-footed, to the dock edge.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Household News

by Lynn Chambers

Refreshments for the Class of '42!
(See Recipes Below.)

Commencement Time

There's a last-minute flurry of hair brushing and straightening of ties as Jane and Billy get ready for their graduation exercises. Yes, this is really the year the children are getting through with school. It's hard to believe, isn't it? It seems like just yesterday that they started school!

Your role is that of sitting back and beaming at their accomplishments, but, just as important, providing the children with a party and refreshments after commencement.

Simplest way of taking care of refreshments is setting up a table in the porch or dining room. Then fill this with assorted breads and cold cuts, add a few relishes for good measure, and you have the makings of a successful party. The informality of this setting will please the children, and at the same time relieve you of extra serving. Let the children help themselves and take their own time about it, for there will be plenty of conversation to go with refreshment time.

Provide white, whole wheat and rye bread so there will be variety from which to choose. It's smart to have this already sliced for the youngsters and it looks better on the table.

The meat platter provides an attractive assortment of sandwich filler. Arrange in clockwise fashion, the following: chicken pattie, cooked tongue, meat loaf and liverwurst. You can let the imagination of your guests run freely with making their own sandwiches, but in case they run out of ideas, you might suggest some of these:

Chicken pattie and boiled ham with sweet pickle relish and lettuce on whole wheat bread.

Meat loaf with tomato ketchup on white bread.

Liverwurst and chicken loaf on whole wheat bread.

Tongue and sliced cucumbers with horseradish and mustard on rye bread.

Balance the sandwich spread with a salad of some kind. If the youngsters are boys, they will go for slices of tomato on lettuce. For girls or a mixed group, a molded fruit salad will be tops:

Pineapple Carrot Salad Ring.
(Serves 6 to 8)

1 package lemon gelatin
1 cup water
1 cup pineapple juice
1 cup sliced pineapple
4 to 5 grated carrots (raw)
Lettuce or endive
Mayonnaise or french dressing

Heat water and pour over gelatin. Add cold pineapple juice and set aside to cool. Add grated carrot and pineapple cut in tidbits. Place in individual molds or a large ring mold which has been rinsed in cold water. Let jell, then turn out on a bed of crisp lettuce or endive, and serve with dressing. If a large mold is used, the outside may be garnished with fruit such as sliced oranges, pineapple, and apricots.

This Week's Menu

Commencement Refreshments
Platter of Assorted Cold Cuts
Assorted Bread *Fruit Dreams
*Honey Lemonade
*Chocolate Covered Sugarless Cake
*Recipes Given

No party is complete without confections of some kind because there are moments when you actually want to nibble on something sweet. Here is a recipe featuring dried fruits noted for their high sugar content. They're easy to fix and full of taste.

***Fruit Dreams.**
(Makes 60 squares)

1 14-ounce package pitted dates
¼ pound nutmeats
¼ pound figs
¼ pound apricots
1 teaspoon grated orange rind
1 tablespoon orange juice

Put dates, nutmeats, figs and apricots through the meat grinder. Knead orange rind and juice into the mixture. Roll with a rolling pin into a square sheet ¼ inch thick. Cut in squares and dip into powdered sugar.

If your sugar ration does not extend to making cool drinks with sugar, here is a lemonade made with honey. To make a really "partified" drink, add a scoop of lemon, orange, raspberry or pineapple sherbet for the lemonade. Use carbonated water instead of plain and garnish with berries or fresh cherries.

***Honey Lemonade.**
(Makes 1 serving)

1 lemon
1 to 3 tablespoons honey
1 cup water

Extract the juice from the lemon and add the honey. To this add cold water and ice to chill. Serve this in individual glasses with a slice of lemon on the rim of each glass. Or, if you prefer using a punch bowl, set the drink in that (increasing the recipe to take care of as many people as you are having), and let blobs of sherbet float on top of the lemonade.

Cake 'n' ice cream have high rating among the younger set, so for this occasion I would suggest the following cake:

***Chocolate Covered Sugarless Cake.**

2¼ cups sifted cake flour
2¼ teaspoons double-acting baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup butter or other shortening
2 teaspoons grated orange rind
1 cup light corn syrup
2 eggs, unbeaten
½ cup milk
1½ teaspoons vanilla

Sift flour once, measure, add baking powder and salt and sift together three times. Cream shortening with orange rind; add syrup gradually, beating well after each addition. Add ¼ of the flour and beat until smooth and well blended. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Add remaining flour in thirds, alternately with milk in halves, beating well after each addition. For best results, beat cake very well after at each stage of mixing. Add vanilla. Bake in two greased 8-inch pans in a moderate (375-degree) oven 30 minutes or until done. Cover with:

Chocolate Chip Frosting.

Place cake layers on a baking sheet, having one layer top side down. Cover tops with semi-sweet chocolate chips, using 2 packages. Heat in a moderate (350-degree) oven 6 minutes or until chips are just softened. (The cake may be frosted while warm. Heat only 3 minutes.) Remove from oven. Spread softened chips over bottom layer, letting chocolate run down sides. Arrange top layer and spread as before. Then spread sides evenly.

Have you a particular household or cooking problem on which you would like expert advice? Write to Miss Lynn Chambers at Western Newspaper Union, 210 South Desplaines Street, Chicago, Illinois, explaining your problem fully to her. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your reply.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Lynn Says:

Did you know that it is perfectly proper to wash the American Flag? Of course, you know it is disrespectful to display a badly soiled one, but perhaps you were a bit worried about trying to wash it.

A recent survey made by professional laundries reveals that flags made of woolen material should be washed and rinsed as other woolens: squeeze the flag through rich suds whipped up with a mild soap and warm, softened water of not more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Rinse in two or three changes of lukewarm, soft water.

Cotton flags should be rubbed lightly, but only lukewarm soft water should be used for the suds. Both wool and cotton flags should be air-dried.

Textile experts at professional laundries also point out that flags raised outdoors naturally deteriorate more quickly than those displayed indoors. If a flag launders well, its service period is increased with frequent washing.

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NR TO-NIGHT; TOMORROW ALRIGHT

The problem of what to send a service man has been solved by the men themselves. Tobacco tops the list of gifts service men prefer from the folks back home, according to numerous surveys. If you have a friend or relative in the armed forces—Army, Navy, Marines, or Coast Guard—who smokes a pipe, or rolls-his-own, a pound of his favorite tobacco is very much in order. A big favorite with many service men is Prince Albert, the world's largest-selling smoking tobacco. Local dealers now are featuring Prince Albert in the pound can for the men in the service.—Adv.

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