GHOST PLANE

By ARTHUR STRINGER

W.N.U. SERVICE

THE STORY SO FAR: To keep Norland Airways in business, Alan Slade has agreed to fly a so-called scientist named Frayne and his assistant, Karnell, to the wild Anawotto country of northern Canada, where Frayne expects to find the breeding ground of the trumpeter swan. Slade suspects Frayne of having other plans than swan-hunting, but he has paid them enough to enable Slade's partner, Cruger, to buy a Lockheed they have been needing. Meanwhile, Alan goes with Lynn Morlock, daughter of the local doctor, to give first aid treatment to a flyer named Slim Tumstead, who has been hurt in a fight. He learns that Tumstead knows about the new plane and about Frayne. While Slade is on his way north with Frayne and Karnell, someone holds up Cassidy, night watchman for Norland Airways, and steals the Lockheed. All Cassidy can tell Cruger is that the thief wore a mask and that he headed north in the plane. Now Slade and his passengers are flying into a head wind, and Frayne has just complained that they are not making good time.

Now continue with the story.

CHAPTER VI

"It is very empty country," the swan-hunter observed.

"Fine and empty," said Karnell, who looked up slightly startled by an admonishing elbow dig from his companion.

"It'll be better in an hour or two," Slade told them. "We'll be coming out on scrub timber and heavier ridges. Then you'll see your last mine camp or two along the Ashibik."

He went on for half an hour of silence, conscious of the two heads bent over the chart, the mumble of voices, and the repeated studious peering through the poised binoculars.

"Weather's clearing," he cried out, half an hour later, when he sighted blue through the torn wisps of gray. "That means less wind to buck."

But a glance at his fuel-gauge suddenly lowered his spirits.

"We can't make the Anawotto," he announced as he retarded his throttle to conserve fuel. "We'll have to land at Lake Avikaka and fill up."

Slade, pointing to his gauge, could see Frayne's face tighten a little with annoyance.

"What is at Lake Avikaka?" questioned his passenger.

"Just two old sourdoughs who have a camp there on the fringe of Nowhere."

"Sourdoughs? What are they?"

"Just two funny old birds who happen to be friends of mine. I keep a gas cache in their back yard."

He could hear the two voices conferring. It gave him the feeling of being excluded from something that might be of importance to him.

"That's the Kasakana there, just ahead of us," Slade explained, "the stream that looks like a twisted wire. We'll have about sixty miles of it. Then we'll land just where it empties into Lake Avikaka."

Frayne, tight-lipped, inspected his chart.

"Who are these—these old sourdoughs as you term them?" he asked.

"Just two old lone-fire prospectors who've panned gold and staked claims all the way from Arizona up to the Circle," Slade explained. "With an itch," he added, "to be always pushing out to what seems like the last frontier. They're pretty good old scouts. You'll like 'em."

Frayne's expression failed to confirm that claim.

"For what do they prospect?" he exacted.

"Gold, of course," answered Slade. "They won't interfere with your swan-hunting."

Frayne's side-glance seemed in search of possible second meanings.

Slade looked for some sign of life from the cabin between its sheltering rock shoulders. All he saw, as he nosed cautiously down to the lake end, was a gray plume of smoke from the shack chimney. It impressed him, in the midst of the gloomy ridges furred with stunted timber, as a sort of pennon of valor, a flag defying the forces of nature.

It was a brave little outpost, the flyer repeated as he swung lower. But he could catch no glimpse of either Minty Buckman or Zeke Pratt. And it was seldom he found them far from that cockeyed old windlass and hoist of theirs.

Then his heart lightened. They must have heard him, after all.

For two ragged old figures emerged from the shack door and ran about the rock slope in small circles, waving arms as they went.

One figure wore an apron of butcher's linen which he tore from his shoulders and whirled in the air while the other executed a creaky dance step about him.

"Those old wilderness waifs are sure glad to see us," Slade observed as his ship landed and lost headway.

Frayne did not share in his excitement.

"We go on to the Anawotto," he suggested, "as soon as you have refueled?"

Slade, stiff and tired, rose from his seat.

"Not on your life. We bunk with these bushwhackers tonight. I want a hot meal and seven hours of sleep."

Two ragged old figures emerged from the shack door and ran about.

"But your friends," said Frayne, "are not my friends."

"But come and meet 'em," said Slade, leaping ashore with his mooring line. He was halfway up the bank when the two old sourdoughs descended on him. They circled about him and slapped his shoulders, shouting with shrill and childlike excitement at the unlooked-for break in their solitude.

"How are you, puddle-jumper! By crickety, it's Lindy!"

Slade knew, even before he felt their hearty handclasps, that he was among friends. They may have looked uncouth in their patched and ragged Mackinaws. But in the crow-footed old eyes above the grizzled whiskers he could see open affection.

"Bring me them darnin' needles, son?" questioned Zeke when the body-slapping was over.

"Sure thing," said Slade, producing a package from his jacket pocket. "And that oilstone you've been hankering for." Then he lowered his voice. "How's the color been showing?"

"Swell," said Minty. "We struck a vein that'll make your eyes bug out. But keep it under your hat, son."

Slade glanced toward his plane.

"I've got a couple of visitors for you," he announced.

The two old faces promptly hardened.

"What're they after?" was Minty's quick inquiry.

"They're after swans' eggs," announced Slade.

"Swans' eggs?" said Zeke. "That don't sound natural."

"I know it, Zeke, but we've got to take their word for it. They're headed for the Anawotto to dig out the breeding ground of the trumpeter."

Zeke, from under his shaggy brows, inspected the strangers.

"How'd you know they ain't field scouts?"

Slade smiled at the concern on the seamed old face.

"I'll bring 'em up," said Slade. Solitude, he had long since learned, always left a bush-worker morosely suspicious of unidentified intruders. He had even known some of those lone-fire gold-seekers to greet the casual prowler with a flurry of buckshot.

Yet he himself was a little puzzled, when he reached the landing stage, to find that Frayne had decided to have his man Karnell remain in the plane cabin.

"You're the captain," said Slade. But his meditative eye passed casually over the gas drums that stood on the spruce rack which made them so easy to roll aboard. And it was always better to be safe than sorry.

He was whistling as he climbed into the cabin and busied himself for a minute or two with his instrument board. Then, as his two passengers conferred at the water's edge, he quietly abstracted the motor's breaker assembly and slipped it into his pocket. He felt that it was as well, all things considered, to know that his Snow-Ball Baby was definitely bedded down for the night.

"You'll like these two old codgers," Slade persisted as he followed the reluctant-footed Frayne up the shore slope.

Frayne, however, remained silent and abstracted as he entered the shack where the smell of frying bacon mingled with the aroma of three sourdough bread-loaves just turned out of their baking pans. He noted the glowing cookstove and the orderly dish shelves, the spring traps and the shooting irons in the shack corner, the wall bunks with their abraded Hudson Bay blankets, the floor rugs of wolfskin, the home-made table and chairs darkened by time and smoke. Everything bore an air of frontier roughness, of ingenious expediencies in a land of strictly limited resources. But the general result was one of craftily-won comfort, of security obtained through toil and persistence. Even the meal the two old-timers prepared for their guests was an ample one.

But as the meal was made away with an odd constraint hung over the men seated about the rough table.

"I see you have a radio," Frayne observed as he sipped at his second cup of coffee.

Minty's saddened eye regarded the instrument.

"She's been dead for seven months now. Battery's plumb gone. And this-here air-robber's freight-charges 're so high we jus' can't see our way to a new one."

Frayne, Slade thought, looked relieved.

"You are very much alone here," he observed.

"You're tellin' me," said Minty.

"But we don't reckon that as a drawback," amended Zeke, "seein' the two of us have kind of a hankerin' for elbow room. Only time I feel right lonesome is when there's folks around. Then I git a feelin' o' bein' hemmed in."

Frayne's eye wandered to the shelf that held a pestle and mortar, a long-handled quartz-roaster, a dust-scales under a cracked canopy of glass, an assortment of variously mineralized rock of all colors and shapes.

"How long," he inquired, "have you been here?"

"Well over two years now," acknowledged Minty.

"Have your labors been rewarded?" was the next casually put question.

Slade could see the two pair of crafty old eyes suddenly become expressionless.

"Not by a long shot," protested Zeke. "I natcherally git a little out o' my winter trappin', and this shorthorn mate o' mine brings in enough game meat to keep us goin'. But we ain't had what you'd call a strike."

"Reckon we never will," said Minty.

"It's been hard goin'," chimed in his bunkhouse mate.

"How do you do your mining," asked the man of science, "without power and machinery?"

The two old sourdoughs exchanged glances again.

"Oh, you'd scarce call it minin'," ventured Zeke. "Most we do is strip a bit along the back slopes or hawk a speck o' float gold from the Kasakana sandbars."

"Then it's gold alone you are interested in?" was the next question.

"That's right, stranger. And we've been that way for forty-odd years now," Zeke conceded.

"All the way from the old Rio Grande up to the Porcupine," added the dreamy-eyed Minty, "not omittin' the Klondike. Now your main interest, this young cloud-clipper tells me, is swans' nests."

"My only interest," amended Frayne as he pushed back his chair. "I am an ornithologist."

The word seemed to puzzle Minty.

"Why, I seen a black-billed swan on the lake here three days ago," Zeke announced. "He sure was a beauty."

"It is the trumpeter I am in search of," said the ornithologist.

Zeke scratched his head.

"And what'll you do with him when you git him?"

"It is my wish to obtain their eggs," said the other, "before they are extinct."

Minty got up and crossed to his ore shelf.

"Speakin' of eggs," he said, "could you be spottin' the bird laid this one?"

His cackle was slightly derisive as he produced an ellipsoid mass of black and burnished material almost as big as an ostrich egg. The luster of the oblate spheroid with the feathering of light streaks made it look as if it had been polished by hand.

"It looks like tar," Frayne casually observed.

"Tar my eye!" croaked Minty as he placed the burnished spheroid on the scarred table end. "You're missin' it by a mile."

"Then what does it happen to be?" inquired the swan-seeker.

"If you was more of a minin' man," Minty was saying, "you'd know it was pitchblende."

Frayne shrugged and let his wavering glance come to rest on the pictured bathing beauties tacked above the wall bunks.

"The eggs I am in search of," he finally observed, "are of another color."

"But they won't hatch what this'll hatch," averred Zeke, bent over the table end.

Frayne, almost reluctantly, let his gaze return to the black spheroid.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Star Dust

STAGE SCREEN RADIO

By VIRGINIA VALE

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

THE nation's largest radio stock company is behind the weekly production of the WPB's new program, "Three Thirds of a Nation," heard Wednesday evenings on the Blue network. Produced in cooperation with the Hollywood Victory committee, clearing house for war-time appearances of the Associated Actors and Artists of America, the program has at its disposal the resident membership of all Southern California. Castings weekly draw from a reservoir of more than 10,000 screen, stage and radio actors, all volunteers.

The Tone family, Franchot and Jean, will soon be working at the same studio. Franchot has signed a term agreement with Paramount; it calls for four pictures during the next two years. Jean Wallace Tone, a "Louisiana Purchase" beauty, is already there.

Ann Harding is returning to the screen in Metro's "Odor of Violets," a mystery drama soon to go into

ANN HARDING

production. Edward Arnold has the principal male role. Donna Reed, one of Metro's abundant crop of starlets, is also in the cast.

You may not recognize Chester Conklin at once in "I Married a Witch"; playing a bartender at a country club who's in much of the opening action, he appears without that famous walrus mustache.

An evening gown that Priscilla Lane wears in "Silver Queen" is going to be melted down and given to the Ambulance corps when she's through with it. It's a 17-pound silver dress, and will eventually become wiring and dental plates for soldiers.

The diamonds that Marlene Dietrich wore in "The Lady Is Willing" are facing the camera again, this time in "Ellery Queen Across the Atlantic." The picture teams Margaret Lindsay and William Gargan. The story requires a collection of jewels, that are stolen, so James Hogan, the director, got busy and rented them. Miss Dietrich got a break—she just borrowed the gems.

Those children's giggles you will hear in Walt Disney's "Bambi" are the sounds of youngsters, filled up with ice cream, enjoying some old Mickey Mouse shorts. Disney wanted spontaneous laughter, and that's how he got it.

In all the movie studios Adolphe Menjou is known as the script girl's pet. He keeps track for himself of all the tricky little details which the girls have to watch. For example, in RKO's "Syncopation" Menjou and George Bancroft do a lot of smoking, which means that lengths of cigars and ash must be matched in scenes which may be filmed weeks apart. Menjou carries a pocket rule, measures cigar and ash at the beginning of each scene, and calls his results to the script girl.

Claudette Colbert has signed a three-year contract calling for one picture a year with RKO. Her first assignment will be the leading role in the screen version of Pearl Buck's "China Sky"—she'll play an American doctor.

Stepping into the title role of the "Bulldog Drummond" series, back on the air after an absence of several months, Santos Ortega follows in illustrious footsteps. George Coulouris, the last incumbent, is on tour with that very successful play, "Watch on the Rhine." E. E. Mathews was the first actor to assume the role, and John Barrymore, Ronald Colman and John Howard did it on the screen.

ODDS AND ENDS—Robert Preston learned to be a proficient machine gunner while on location with "Wake Island" . . . Victor McLaglen of RKO's "Powder Town" has invented a 40 foot tank and submitted it to the war department; he's a veteran of the Boer and the last World war . . . A new adventure strip about a war correspondent will be based on the real life adventures of William L. Shirer during his days as a Berlin radio operator . . . Joan Edwards of "Your Hit Parade" has won the pool three weeks running in guessing the ten hit numbers . . . Other stars may go in for unusual pets, but Mary Martin keeps good laying hens.

TO YOUR Good Health

by DR. JAMES W. BARTON

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

BAD BREATH

A few years ago I followed a controversy as to whether bad breath was due to food particles left between the teeth or to some disturbance in the stomach and intestines.

Dr. Barton

It is admitted that bad breath can be caused by mouth and nose conditions such as infected teeth and tonsils, and by the dry form of catarrh. But what causes bad breath when mouth, nose and throat are free of infection?

Drs. Burrill B. Crohn and Rudolph Drosd, New York, in the Journal of the American Medical Association, state that heretofore patients with bad breath have consulted nose and throat specialists and dentists who searched for decaying teeth, infected gums, and infections of throat and sinus. The teeth, the gums, the tonsils and sinuses are the cause at times only and cases due to nose and throat conditions are becoming less in number due to better knowledge of the importance of a healthy mouth, throat and nose.

Experiments were made as to the best method or methods to prevent the odor of garlic on the breath. These research workers found that it was not the mouth nor the stomach that was responsible for the odor of garlic on the breath but the intestines, particularly the small intestine into which the partially digested food is poured from stomach.

Why is the small intestine responsible for bad odors on the breath, because oil of peppermint and oil of wintergreen were also used in the tests and these two oils acted exactly the same as garlic?

These research workers state that halitosis is due to the fact that fat foods eaten are not handled properly or are not handled completely by the liver and it is these incompletely digested fat foods, lying in the small intestine, that cause the odor. They point out that patients with peptic ulcer taking much milk daily often have a bad breath. "If these patients are given a diet of cereal, eggs and lean meat, the odor disappears."

Keeping liver more active by bending exercises would squeeze out more bile. More bile would help digest fats in small intestine.

Giving Patients Right Impressions

One of the mistakes made by physicians until recently was that after examining the patient and finding no cause for his symptoms, they said, "There is nothing physically the matter."

The very fact that the word "physically" is used is likely to make the patient feel that his physican's opinion is that he (the patient) just imagines he has these symptoms.

As a matter of fact the physician knows that the symptoms are present but, as they are not due to any organic cause, there is nothing for the patient to worry about.

In a letter to the editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association, Dr. Andrew Hart Jr., Charlottesville, Va., states: "Most physicians have little difficulty in recognizing anxiety states and the fears of patients that they have heart, blood vessel, liver, kidney or other disease. But even when by thorough examination these 'neuroses,' as they are called, are established, some physicians still allow patients to leave their office without explaining why the symptoms are present, although not due to organic disease. Nervous disorders are always accompanied by disturbances of the various organs and processes of the body." We all know how the heart beats rapidly, the blood pressure rises, the stomach, intestines and bladder are upset under fear or anxiety. At first these disturbances interfere only with the action of processes and organs, but they may persist and cause changes in the structure or tissues; that is, organic disease. This was pointed out some years ago by Prof. W. B. Cannon.

In addressing his fellow physicians, Dr. Hart says: "It takes time to listen to their many complaints, patience to brook their 'resistance,' and a very definite plan to combat or fight their aggressiveness and lead them away from an emotional to a rational and realistic outlook on life." He points out that if the doctor is too busy to undertake treatment he should tell patients where advice may be had.

QUESTION BOX

Q.—Is there any other treatment for diabetes than insulin and diet?

A.—There is at present no treatment other than insulin and diet for diabetes.

Q.—Can a chiropractor correct a chronic tonsil condition?

A.—I'm sorry but I know nothing about chiropractic, so I have no right to judge it. I would suggest that as a check on the matter you consult a throat specialist. He will not operate if it is not necessary.

Things to do

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