GHOST PLANE

By ARTHUR STRINGER

W.N.U. SERVICE

THE STORY SO FAR: In order to save Norland Airways from bankruptcy Alan Slade agrees to fly a so-called scientist named Frayne and his assistant, Karnell, to the Anawotto river in search of the trumpeter swan. With the proceeds Slade's partner, Cruger, has bought a plane, a Lockheed, which is stolen while Slade is away. Suspecting that the disappearance of the plane has something to do with Frayne, Slade returns to where he left the swan-hunter, only to find him apparently doing nothing but hunt swans. There is no trace of the plane. That leaves Slade with only one clue, the "devil bird," or "ghost" plane which the eskimo, Umanak, first heard and which appears to come from Echo Harbor. On his way back to report to Cruger Slade stops to see his old prospector friends, Zeke and Minty, and learns that the gas cache he keeps near their cabin has been robbed. Now he and Cruger are talking and Slade is outlining his plans.

Now continue with the story.

—11—

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CHAPTER XI

Slade's first impulse was to proclaim that he'd be looking for a ghost plane.

"All right," Cruger said out of a prolonged silence. "You win. Give that Anawotto country the once-over. We're going bust anyway, the way things are."

Slade's lips thinned with resolution.

"I'm going to find that Lockheed," he affirmed.

Cruger remained unimpressed.

"When do you start?" he inquired.

Slade disregarded the note of mockery.

"As soon as I have a look around this burg," was his slightly abstracted reply. "And then a look around McMurray."

"For what?"

"To find a friend of mine," was Slade's unexpected reply, "who got hurt in a fight—Slim Tumstead."

"I didn't think you played around with camp bums," said Cruger. "What's your fighting friend got to do with this trip into the Anawotto?"

"I don't know yet," was Slade's quiet-voiced reply. "But it's going to help a little to know just where he's hanging out."

The cabin on the Kasakana, nestling between its shouldering hills, stood a place of peace as the sun mounted high above the spruce ridges and the spoonbills and waveys fed in the water shallows.

But that air of peace departed once Zeke Pratt had rolled out of his wall bunk and reached for his scarred old larrigans. From one of them, he saw, a lace was most unmistakably missing. He squinted about the floor boards. Then he groped and grunted about under the bunk end. Then his narrowing gaze centered on his camp-mate, whose smile was bland as he busied himself slicing sowbelly for breakfast.

"You took my shoelace, you Judas-souled old skillet-swabber," was Zeke's indignant accusation.

"What'd I want with your shoelace?" demanded Minty, edging away until he stood at the far side of the cookstove.

"You wanted it enough to swipe it from this-here larrigan," charged Zeke. He dropped down on all fours to inspect his companion's shoepacks. "And she's there, wrapped around your scrofulous old shinbone."

"She ain't," piped Minty.

"You gimme back that lace o' mine, or d'you know what I'll do? I'll call it quits for keeps. I don't aim to do minin' work with a human polecat who robs a camp-mate in his sleep."

"And I'm sure fed up with tryin' to live peaceful under the same roof with a rattlesnake in larrigans."

But by the time they had eaten, the hurricane had blown itself out. They were forlornly dependent on each other, in their isolation, and they knew it.

"Meat's gittin' lower'n I like to see it," ventured Minty as he hung up the flour sack that served as a towel. "S'posin' you finish up the strippin' on that new dike while I go scoutin' for a day or two."

"What'll you scout for?" demanded Zeke, secretly disturbed by the thought of being alone.

"Spotted a buck out by that old caribou crossin' yesterday," said Minty. "Reckon I'll go after him."

He had, he knew, a second reason for that excursion out over the northern ridges. He had a hankering to nose about a bit and find out what might be bringing an outsider's plane into that district of theirs.

Minty was too good a woodsman not to spot his landmarks and blaze an occasional spruce or jackpine as he pushed deeper and deeper into the broken country north of the Kasakana. He went on, hour after silent hour, encouraged by a showing of deer tracks and spoor. But he got no glimpse of his buck.

What most occupied his mind, as the sun lowered and weariness overtook him, was the problem of finding a comfortable place to make camp. And he had the needed wood and water, he discovered, when he came to a loon-haunted lake lightly fringed with spruce. He stoically made his fire, cooked his supper, and ate his bannock and bacon, washed down with strong tea. Then, lighting his pipe, he sat watching the wild fowl on the lake water.

To the silent watcher, a moment later, came a sound that was neither a throb nor a drone, a far-away sound that grew stronger as he listened. Peering north, where a belated sun still hung red above the horizon, he caught sight of a plane. It was flying low, growing bigger as he watched. It showed dark, at first, against the evening light. But as it came closer and veered a point or two into the wind it became a framework of ghostly white, heeling down in the lake and slowly losing headway on the ruffled water.

Minty, blinking at the pallid wings, realized the ship was both bigger than Lindy Slade's Snow-Ball Baby and different in outline. It floated higher on the water, and gave the impression of being bobtailed, as it drifted slowly in toward the shoreline where the spruce groves met the water.

Then Minty rubbed his eyes and blinked harder than ever. For, before he quite knew how or when, the plane had disappeared from sight.

Minty, who didn't believe in miracles, decided to look into what had all the aspects of a miraculous disappearance. He smothered his fire and rolled up his worn old four-pointer. Then he took up his rifle and quietly rounded the southerly arm of the lake, making it a point to keep as well under cover as possible.

But no sign of life, as he stopped from time to time, stood revealed to him. He seemed so alone in a world of twilit emptiness that he fell to wondering, as he pressed on, if his old eyes had been playing tricks on him.

Then he stopped short, arrested by the sound of voices.

"Why'd you have a fire on the other side of the lake?" one of these voices inquired.

"I had no fire," a more guttural voice responded.

"But I saw it as I came down," maintained the other. "And if you advertise this layout you'll last about as long here as a snowball in hell."

"I had no fire," was the stubbornly repeated protest.

Minty's first impulse was to creep a little closer. But on second thought he dropped behind the ridge and circled back through the scattered spruce boles. He noticed, as he traversed the valley that led to the neighboring ridge, how the timber had been cut away to leave a rough trail that led lakeward. He also noticed, as he skirted this second ridge, that its black-rocked surface was scored and seamed with shallow trenches, as though a prospector had been stripping and searching for color there.

Minty stood thoughtful a moment and then made his way higher up the sloping hogback that terminated in an abrupt cliff end at the water's edge. He crouched low as he went, for the cover thinned out as he ascended. But he could no longer hear voices. That troubled him a little as he moved forward to the crest of the divide. From there he could see how the lake bluff merged into a darker tangle of timber. And that timber, he saw, was a man-made canopy of spruce boles. It was an arbor-cave into which the wings of a plane could slip and lie concealed. And under the casually woven cover that arched the narrow harbor between the rock-shoulders he could make out the pallid outlines of his vanished airplane.

A tingle eddied through him as he discerned a roughly made landing platform close under the plane wings, a landing platform on which he saw a double row of ore bags. They stood there filled and tied, as though waiting for transport.

Minty's anxiety for a better view of those ore bags prompted him to move to the upper peak of the ridge. He hesitated about advancing down the open slope. And as he hesitated a sudden blast of sound broke the quietness.

He knew it was a gunshot, even before he felt the force of the bullet. The impact of that bullet, tearing through the blanket folds within three inches of his ear, twisted his startled body halfway around and sent him tumbling along the rock slope. He lost possession of his rifle as he fell. He kept on rolling and bounding down the long slope until his body collided with the underbrush that fringed the valley bottom. From the ridge top he heard a triumphant voice call out: "I got him!" But his one impulse, at the moment, was to put distance between him and that unknown sniper. He crawled into the underbrush, grateful for the thinning light that was paling to semi-darkness. He wormed forward, seeking always any deeper cover that offered. He went on until he came to a stony cross gully quartering off to the left. Once in this he scrambled to his feet and ran forward, stooping low as he went. When he spotted a spruce grove on his right he dove into it, emerging on a slope of glacial hardheads along which he dodged from shadow to shadow.

He neither stopped nor rested until he had mounted a second ridge and lost himself in a second scattering of stunted timber. There, panting and wheezing, he sank down behind a ridge of granite.

But there was still peril, he felt, in that neighborhood. He pushed on through a sludgy bed of tules, crossed another timbered ridge, and came to more open country. There he studied the stars, made sure of his course, and began fighting his circuitous way back toward the camp on the Kasakana. When tired out he slept. When the sun wakened him, he ate and went on. The second night he slept for an hour or two, and then pushed doggedly on.

The sub-arctic light of morning was returning to the land when Minty reached the shack. Zeke, he found, was still asleep in his wall bunk. He awakened him with a shout tinged with bitterness.

"Your days o' peace is over, you pillow-lovin' old profligate. There's goin' to be war in these regions."

Lynn was restless and worried. For the third time in half an hour she crossed to the door and scanned the pearl - misted skyline that stretched away to the south. She told herself that she was merely watching for a familiar blue plane with weathered wings, a plane with the Flying Padre at the controls. But her thoughts, as she did so, were on another plane, an equally weathered plane known as the Snow-Ball Baby.

Her week of watching over old Umanak had persuaded her that she was not equipped for solitude.

She turned back to her patient when she saw Umanak lift his white-swathed head in an attitude of listening.

"Devil-bird come," he muttered.

A moment later Lynn herself heard the familiar bee-hum of a distant motor.

"That's the Padre," she said as she ran to the door. A moment later she was hurrying down the slope to the waterfront.

But the long-legged figure that emerged from the cabin was not that of the Flying Padre. She brushed back her wind-blown hair to see Alan striding toward her.

He must have caught the surge of joy that swept up to her eyes, for he stopped abruptly and stood studying her upturned face. He did not speak. But his own eyes darkened as he detected the look of hunger in the questioning hazel eyes resting on his face. He groped for her hand, with his heart pounding. Then he took her in his arms.

She roused herself and forced her quickly breathing body free of the encircling arms. The hungry look was still in her eyes. But time and the world had come back to her.

"What is it?" he asked, conscious of the firmness with which she was holding him away from her.

"I've a patient there," she reminded him, pointing to the knoll-top surgery.

Slade strode after her as she moved up the slope. He remembered about old Umanak.

"How is the old boy?"

"That's what I'm waiting to find out," Lynn explained. "Everything looks all right, but, of course, I can't tell. Father'll be here, any time now, to take off the bandages."

"Will he be able to see?" Slade asked. "I mean Umanak."

"If hoping helps any," answered Lynn, "that old hunter will be following a dog team again before long."

Slade arrested her in the doorway.

"I may be out of a job earlier than I expected," he said.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Star Dust

STAGE-SCREEN-RADIO

By VIRGINIA VALE

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

LARRY PARKS, young Columbia Pictures' leading man, and eight other lads who are making their first bid for screen fame have taken over the 26-room house once owned and occupied by the late Thomas Meighan. Larry, who heads the group, has an important role in the Astaire-Hayworth musical, "You Were Never Lovelier." He says it cost only $14.75 to furnish the house—it cost Meighan more than $9,000! They've thrown four rooms together and built a theater in which they rehearse parts for pictures coming up. There is a large portrait of Tom Meighan over the living room fireplace—they picked it up in a Hollywood prop house.

The sponsors who, seven years ago, were farsighted enough to see the potentialities of an obscure radio couple and build them into the famed Fibber McGee and Molly, give radio another innovation this summer; they're substituting a

John Nesbitt and Meredith Willson

Metro news commentator and a musician in a half-hour replacement program while Fibber and Molly vacation. The commentator is John Nesbitt, the musician, Meredith Willson. The program combines music with snatches of history, literature and current events.

Walt Disney, whose "Bambi" will soon be released through RKO, has acquired the screen rights to Major Alexander P. de Seversky's "Victory Through Air Power," and will make it into a feature picture for exhibition sometime this fall.

Imagine Charles Boyer producing and acting in something called "Flesh and Fantasy." It will be his first production for Universal; he'll star in one episode, Edward G. Robinson in another, and let's hope they change the title!

Capt. Hewitt Wheless, the army flier who was cited by the President for his exploits in the Pacific war, will play himself in a short subject, "Beyond the Line of Duty," which Warner Brothers will produce for the army air corps.

This shortage of leading men has proved too much for Harold Lloyd. He's produced two pictures for RKO, "A Girl, a Guy and a Gob" and "My Favorite Spy" and has left the studio. His next picture would have been "Butterfingers," a football comedy.

Samuel Goldwyn will select six of the loveliest and most talented secretaries of Washington, D. C., for roles in "They Got Me Covered," co-starring Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour. The story brings out the part that Washington secretaries play in helping to run the government; it's said that they arrive in Washington at a rate of 5,000 daily!

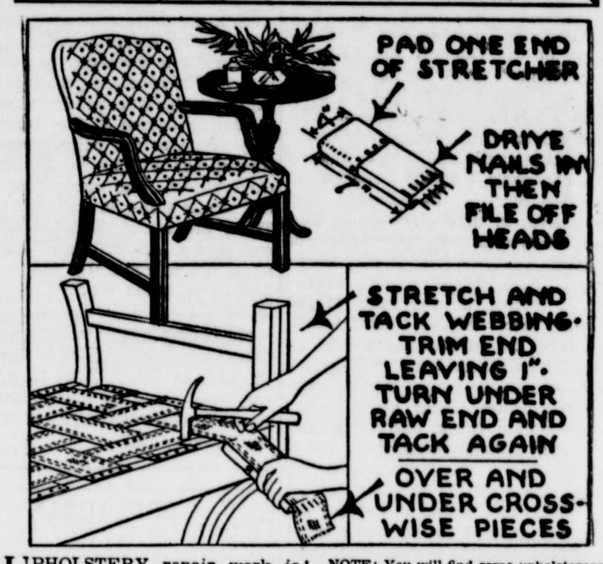
The biggest all-star lineup ever gathered for a summer radio show is the one that Bob Hawk's sponsors have booked for Friday nights; it's a 60-minute show featuring Xavier Cugat's orchestra, Connie Boswell and Margo, Lanny Ross and a new comedian, Herb Shriner.

Richard Denning, male lead in "Beyond the Blue Horizon," has held many of filmdom's stars in his arms. He made the test with Veronica Lake which won her her role in "I Wanted Wings." Paulette Goddard got her Paramount contract after making a test with him; Ellen Drew's test set her for "If I Were King"; Mary Martin's put her into "The Great Victor Herbert," her first film role. A closeup of his chest substituted for one of Bob Hope's; his back did the same for Bob Burns'. Now he's getting a chance, all of him, in the Lamour picture.

ODDS AND ENDS—Paramount plans to present the Quiz Kids in feature films following the completion of their present series of short subjects at that studio . . . Ruth Hussey takes another step toward well-deserved stardom with the role of Mrs. Andrew Johnson in "The Man on America's Conscience" . . . Eddie Albert will play opposite Lupe Velez in "Ladies' Day," a comedy of the woman's side of big league baseball . . . Patricia Morison wants a horse—but don't send her one unless it's a 14-hand Palmino . . . Metro has bought "Cabin in the Sky," one of last season's most successful musicals.

NEW IDEAS for Home-makers

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS



UPHOLSTERY repair work is rather costly hand labor. However, if you can clear a corner where you may work on it a little at a time, it is easy to do. Use boxes or an old table to rest the piece on at a comfortable working height. Remove the outside covering first, keeping it whole to use as a pattern; then remove padding, springs and webbing, writing down everything you want to remember about how they were placed; also the amount of webbing used. When the last tack is out, re-web the bottom of the seat, as shown, with strong new webbing and a homemade stretcher. Use No. 4 tacks or regular webbing tacks, and a tack hammer.

NOTE: You will find some upholsterers' tricks clearly sketched in Book 7, and the new Book 8, of the series prepared by Mrs. Spears for readers, shows you how to make a simple chair frame. To get a copy send your order to:

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Drawer 10
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Enclose 10 cents for each book ordered.

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Household Hints

Try cooking meat loaf in muffin tins. It looks better and cooks more quickly.

• • •

Use the tab in opening and closing slide fasteners. Don't force them. Before washing a "zip" garment close the zipper. Guard it in pressing so the teeth will not be thrown out of alignment.

• • •

When you want to thicken gravy put the flour and water into a wide-mouthed jar, with a screw top and shake well.

• • •

Wipe greasy pots, pans and dishes with paper before washing.

• • •

Clothes iron much easier if they are hung up carefully, pinned securely with plenty of clothespins and shaken occasionally to remove wrinkles.

• • •

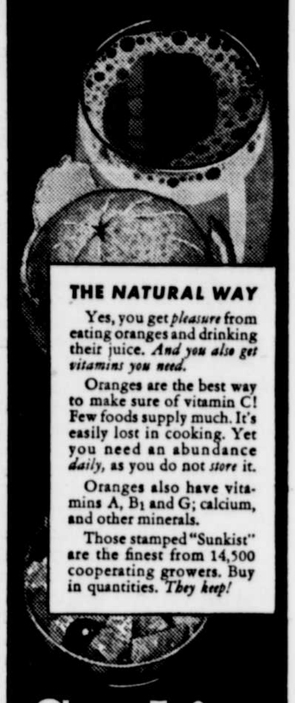
If your bread is too fresh to slice easily, put it into the refrigerator to get thoroughly cold.

Arousing the Diety

In Japan, most religious worship consists only of visiting a temple for a few minutes to say a prayer, either alone or with a small group. When entering their sacred edifices, Shintoists clap their hands and Buddhists ring a bell in order to arouse the enshrined deity and get his attention.

Delicious Vitamins

YOURS IN ORANGES



THE NATURAL WAY

Yes, you get *pleasure* from eating oranges and drinking their juice. *And you also get vitamins you need.*

Oranges are the best way to make sure of vitamin C! Few foods supply much. It's easily lost in cooking. Yet you need an abundance *daily,* as you do not *store* it.

Oranges also have vitamins A, B_1 and G; calcium, and other minerals.

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