

GHOST PLANE

By ARTHUR STRINGER

W.N.U. SERVICE

THE STORY SO FAR: To help his partner, Cruger, keep Norland Airways in business, Alan Slade agrees to fly a "scientist" named Frayne and his assistant, Karnell, to the Anawotto river in search of the trumpeter swan. With the proceeds Cruger has bought a new plane, a Lockheed, which is stolen while Slade is away. The plane must be found, or Norland Airways is through. When he returns Slade starts out again, with only two meager clues, to recover the plane. The first clue is the "devil bird" the eskimo, Umanak, believes comes from Echo Harbor. The second is Slade's hunch that the lost plane and the swan-hunter, Frayne, are somehow connected. He flies back to where he left Frayne, only to find that Frayne is apparently just hunting swans. There is no sign of the lost plane.

New continue with the story.

CHAPTER X

He would be glad, he knew, to hear the roar of that engine again. He even quickened his pace as he recognized the cove where his ship was anchored.

Then his gladness vanished and a tingle of apprehension went through his body. For as he glanced down at the waterfront he saw that his mooring lines had been cast off and his plane was adrift. He could see it moving in the freshening breeze, circling slowly about until the pontoons grounded on a gravel-bar.

His response to that discovery was both immediate and unreasoned. He went sliding down the ridge side and splashing through the shallows as he rounded the cove end. The intruder aboard the plane must have seen him as he went.

Slade could make out a wide-shouldered figure clambering down to a float, a figure that hesitated for only a moment and then leaped into the shallow water and waded ashore. Once ashore he slipped away into the spruce slopes and was lost to sight.

Slade's first impulse was to race after him. But the most important thing, he remembered, was his plane. He went splashing out and climbed aboard. There his quick eye inventoried his instrument board, assessed engine and controls, and discovered no damage to his ship. His smile was grim as he replaced the breaker assembly which was essential to the life of his motor. Its absence, he suspected, had kept that wide-shouldered intruder from taking off and disappearing into the unknown. And that wide-shouldered skulker, he had every reason to believe, was Frayne's man Karnell.

Indignation was still burning through Slade's body as he gunned the motor and rose into the air. He circled twice over the lakeside spruce slopes, searching without reward for any sign of life there. Then he veered back and circled twice over the island-studded water where he knew Frayne's observation post to be. But the only sign of life he caught from that quarter was the sudden wing-flutter of a huge male-trumpeter, who interrupted his watchful driftings to lift his long neck and fling a cry of defiance up at the cloud-cleaving wings of his rival. Slade caught the sound of that trumpeted challenge, even through his engine roar, as he turned south and headed for the camp at the mouth of the Kasakana.

Slade had the feeling of being in more friendly territory when he saw Lake Avikaka once more under his floats. But no welcoming figures emerged from the shack as he circled over it in the evening light. No kindly old voice called out to him as he moored beside the landing stage.

That left him both puzzled and depressed, until his ear caught the sound of a distant detonation. He knew well enough the meaning of that blast. It meant that Zeke and Minty had foregone their usual supper hour to keep on with their mine work, delving like badgers along some new drift or pounding rock at the bottom of some new test pit.

Slade, standing back between the shadowy ore piles, could see Zeke crimp a mercury cap with his teeth and stick it into a dynamite cartridge before disappearing in the pit mouth. It was that old sourdough's fixed rule, he remembered, never to use powder until down to hard rock. Their methods may have been those of a passing generation, but they had found something worth while. For after a second detonation and a second scrambling down the pit mouth Slade could hear Minty's cackle of triumph as he inspected a fragment of blue quartz which Zeke's tremulous fingers held just under his nose.

"She's rich, all right," cried Minty. "You can see her with the naked eye."

"She's the best yet," Zeke agreed as he continued to squint at the ragged quartz slab. "And now we know she's there, you old thimble-ripper, it's about time to call it a day."

It was then that Slade called out to them. That call, through the long-houred evening light, caused Minty to wheel about with a startled grunt at the same moment that Zeke's long arm swung out to catch up a rifle that had rested unseen against the windless frame.

"Put it down, you old quartz-chipper; put it down," was Slade's cry as he advanced toward them.

The two taut figures relaxed. The



A figure that hesitated for only a moment and then leaped into the shallow water.

hostility went out of their faces. But Zeke's eyes remained troubled.

"You mustn't do things like that, Lindy. I might've given you a air hole through the esophagus."

"I'd rather you gave me a meal," said the new-comer, as they shook hands and headed toward the shack. "You're too old to keep to a sixteen-hour day like this."

Minty pointed an accusatory finger at the flyer.

"So you're givin' us the go-by these days?" he questioned.

"What does that mean?" asked Slade as they trudged backward.

"Weren't you in this neighborhood two nights ago?"

Slade stopped in his tracks.

"Why do you ask that?"

"'Cause I heard you when you came down to pick up them gas drums. And I heard you the day before, over the hills," Minty asserted.

"Wait a minute," cried Slade. "You don't mean my gas is gone?"

"You know it's gone, you night-prowlin' puddle-jumper. But why in heck did you tote off them two dozen old ore bags?"

Slade studied the two old faces so wrinkled with concern.

"You say you heard a plane?" he questioned.

"We sure did," said Minty. "And heard it more 'n once. What's more, I seen it."

"This," said Slade, "is going to need a little looking into."

Zeke agreed with him.

"We don't want no strangers snoopin' round this territory," he proclaimed.

"How about that nincompoop in specks who's nosin' out swans' nests?" questioned Minty. "He's the only outsider within a crow flight o' this camp."

"But he has no plane," said Slade. "And no need for one."

"Well, he'd better keep clear o' this claim," croaked the embattled Minty.

"But two can play at that game, Minty," Slade pointed out. "And there's something going on between here and Echo Harbor that needs a bit of looking into."

"I seen a plane all right," maintained the scowling Minty. "But I can't figger out why he'd be flyin' across empty country."

"Or what in heck he'd swipe two dozen ore bags for," added Zeke.

Minty's apprehensive eye rested on the young flyer.

"Looks to me, son, as though you was the bird to do some needed scoutin' round here. That Snow-Ball Baby o' yours could cover the whole Barrens while Minty and me was footin' it through fifteen miles o' muskeg."

"You're right, Zeke," Slade acknowledged. "And after I swing south tomorrow I'm coming back to do a little investigatin along the Anawotto."

Slade, hightailing it for his home port on the Snye, headed southward with a sense of something unfinished, a contradiction unconquered, a problem unsolved. His first move, after landing and having a few hurried words with the redoubtable Cassidy, was to hurry over to Cruger and his plain-boarded administration building.

"What held you up?" was that official's curt demand.

"Stolen gas," said Slade. "There's somebody robbing our emergency caches."

Cruger, at that announcement, wheeled about on him.

"At what stations?"

"At Wolf Lake. And later at Avikaka."

The pilot could see his chief's mouth harden with exasperation.

"So we're getting it from all sides!" exclaimed Cruger. "You know, of course, we haven't spotted a trace of that lost Lockheed?"

Slade nodded.

"I talked with Cassidy, down at the dock. I'd a question or two I wanted to ask him. It didn't help much."

"Nothing from Cassidy has helped much," said his partner. "But a plane can't be carried off like a snatched pocketbook. It can't be hidden away and it can't be sold and it can't be passed on to others."

"Then what's the answer?" asked Cruger.

"That's something still ahead of

us," said Cruger. "Every ship in this Dominion has to pass governmental inspection and carry a license. It can't make a move without being checked and counter-checked. It couldn't land across the Line without customs permits and it couldn't stay there without being reported."

"It's a pretty big country," was Slade's altogether unsatisfactory reply.

"Not to a cloud-dodger who can go from here to Aklavik in fourteen hours," contended Cruger, who added, not without acerbity: "And keep his eyes open!"

Slade was willing to let that pass.

"Did you ever stop to think about motives," he asked, "in the swiping of that Lockheed?"

"I'm not a mind-reader," retorted the older man. "But I know this much: a crack-pot who'd high-jack a plane like that would always be ready to take chances in the air."

"He must have known how to fly."

Cruger's eye became meditative as it went up to the wall map.

"You mentioned the Avikaka," he said. "That's well on toward the Anawotto, isn't it?"

Slade acknowledged that it was.

"About as empty country as you've got on your run?"

"It's not on my run. But it's empty, all right. Mostly bird life and barrens. It's the district I dropped your swan-hunter in."

Cruger's gaze became reflective.

"Oh, yes; the swan-hunter. He told us he wanted to stay anchored there until after the freeze-up."

"And perhaps later," said Slade. "I saw him on my way south. All he seems to want just now is to be left alone."

"It just doesn't add up," said Cruger.

Slade tried to make his smile a casual one.

"How about me trying to make it add up?" he suggested. He had, as he stood there, been doing a bit of rough and ready mathematics of his own.

"What could you do?"

"After dropping my pay load at Conjuror's Bay," Slade suggested, "I might scout around where I felt it would do the most good. I mean, scout around in earnest."

Cruger's glance went up to the wall map again.

"The field's too big," he said, "no one man could fine-comb that territory. And in a couple of weeks we'd have you to look for."

"I'd take a chance on that," said the man with the Viking eyes.

"But you wouldn't even know what you were looking for."

"Don't be too sure of that," was the delusively casual reply. "I've a hunch or two I'd rather like to sound out."

"About what?"

"First, about that Anawotto country."

"This company can't operate on hunches," Cruger averred in a voice that was less friendly than his gaze.

"And that's a fine country to get lost in."

"I don't think I'd get lost," Slade said. "I know the lay-out there a little better than most bush hawks. And if I went in I'd go with camp equipment and extra fuel and rations."

"And grow whiskers and go native," observed Cruger, "and leave us with two planes out of service!"

Slade ignored the note of mockery.

"I usually get back," he announced.

Cruger's face lost its frown.

"You do," he acknowledged. "But a trip like that would mean two-way radio, to keep in touch with us."

"I wouldn't want radio," said Slade. "That would be spilling the beans to everyone between Edmonston and Point Barrow. What I'd rather have would be a belt ax and a magazine rifle. And an extra mosquito bar. The flies are bad in that section these days."

"Sounds to me, Lindy, as though you wanted to follow up that looney-bird-lover and look for swans."

"No, I won't be looking for swans," said Slade. "It will be for something bigger than a trumpeter."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

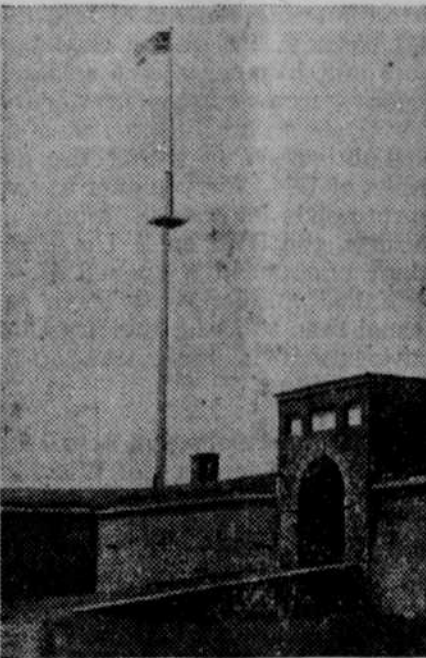


Our National Anthem
(It was written 128 years ago this month. For more than a century and a quarter Americans have been singing it. But how many of them know the OTHER THREE stanzas?)



Francis Scott Key watched the British bombard Fort M'Henry throughout the night of September 13, 1814. Then "by the dawn's early light" he saw that "our flag was still there."

THIS INSPIRED HIM



This flagstaff stands on the same spot where stood the flagstaff from which was flown the banner that inspired Francis Scott Key to write THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

O, say can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there,
O, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On that shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes;
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream;
'Tis the star-spangled banner, O, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terrors of flight or the gloom of the grave;
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O, thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heaven-rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause is just,
And this be our motto—"In God is our Trust!"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Key's poem was first printed in the Baltimore American on September 21. Later it was distributed in handbill form and set to the music of an old English drinking song, "To Anacreon in Heaven," composed by John Stafford Smith. The man who joined the words of "The Star Spangled Banner" and the tune of "To Anacreon in Heaven" was Ferdinand Durang, an actor then serving in the American forces near Baltimore, and he and his brother first sang it in public in the old Holiday Street theater in Baltimore late in September, 1814.

Little Girls Go to School in Jumpers and Jacket Dresses

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



MORE than ever designers are alert to the need of outfitting the little daughters of the household so that they may be sensibly gowned at the same time that they are made to look "pretty as a picture" at play, in the school room and all the day through.

One of the trends that are adding infinitely to the interest of juvenile fashions is definite acceptance of cottons for all-year-round wear. The cotton vogue has developed to such an extent, it is possible now to plan an entire wardrobe in terms of smart cottons.

For back-to-school wear there is nothing smarter than the handsome richly colorful plaid ginghams which are being made up into autumn suits for grown-ups as well as children. Styled after the manner of the two-piece shown to the left in the above picture, these plaid ginghams suit the younger generation to perfection. It is especially gratifying to any little girl's pride to know that her jacketed dress is as smartly and painstakingly styled as those of her elders. The pleated skirt and the jacket, too, have an air of sophistication that pleases fashion-minded little girls. Additional interest is created by using the plaid vertically for the skirt and horizontally for the jacket. The neckline is softened with a notched collar of spanking white pique.

The little girl shown centered in the group probably feels triumphant after her first day in first grade because she could wear one of her new cottons, and of course she just beamed with pride when teacher said her mother deserved an "A" for choosing washable cottons for a little girl's school clothes. This tiny tot likes the jacket styling of her costume, too, for it is done quite after the manner of big sister's best-beloved gingham gown.

School playgrounds encourage rough and tumble activities, but a jumper dress of blue cordurella (fine

pinwale corduroy) like that worn by the youngster shown to the right in the above picture can survive almost any hard knocks because of its robust construction and still look neat and in perfect condition after repeated launderings. Pinwale cordurella is certainly the ideal fabric for children's wear. It is inexpensive, it comes in beautiful colors and it is altogether likable for its many attractive qualities. Note the smart styling of this little jumper. It is intriguingly cut in princess lines.

Other trends that are outstanding in the styling of the new fall juvenile frocks include blouse and skirt two-somes, the skirt usually a gypsy-like dirndl, although there is also a big showing of tailored cloth skirts even for very tiny tots. Boxy jackets and skirts also reflect adult styling in that they have a cunning suit effect. Skirts may have a full look, but that is no sign designers have ignored new fabric conservation rulings. It merely signifies an adroit, subtle handling of material to give an illusion of fullness. Put to the test the measurements will be found to be within the inches allowed.

More slacks suits will be worn by children than ever before. They are showing cute models in versatile versions, some of wool flannels, but most of wool fabric blends to take the place of all wool. These come in reds, navies, browns and in combinations of bright colors finished off with dark pipings and other trimming details. They have the cleverest little jackets and sweaters to match.

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

College Chic



Isn't it easy to stretch a budget to include the many different changes that are needed for 'teen-agers to keep up with the crowd. Clever, thrifty girls are learning to "make their own" from modern patterns which are easy to follow. In this way they find it possible to have a really extensive wardrobe at reasonable cost. At the same time, they are feeling patriotic as well as practical, because our government is encouraging home sewing as a conservative measure. The dirndl is, of course, their pet, and here it is in a suit of soft rayon crepe. It goes to the head of the class for casualness and comfort. Note the brief jacket. These new short lengths are the latest news in chic.

That Old Favorite Is Back—Woolknit

There's no end to the smart knitted apparel that is making a record showing for fall and winter. The fashions turned out have that well-bred look, and they include everything from jackets and separate coats to suits and one-piece or two-piece dresses that are the most eye-alluring creations imaginable.

To mention a few highlights, there are wool fleece coats to be worn casually now being shown in the machine woolknit displays. One-piece coat dresses, finished off with grosgrain bindings and grosgrain-covered buttons and gore-flared to perfection, simply fascinate with their clever styling and their rich colorings. The jacket suits have all the fine tailored look that a suit should have.

Then there are clothes for wardens who will be patrolling during cold days and nights, action-free practical fleece coats and sweaters of every conceivable type.

Detail Brightens Simple Classic Wool Designs

After being garbed in a uniform for hours and hours at a stretch while on defense duty it is in the natural course of events that women should feel the urge for pretty feminine dress to wear in their few leisure hours. And that is just what has happened.

Merchants having sensed this need are making it a point to supply the demand with pretty frocks for informal occasions. Designers are touching up classic wools with a bit of embroidery or a dash of glittery detail or a contrasting yoke done in pastel sheer.

This Jiffy-Knit Jacket Costs but One Dollar



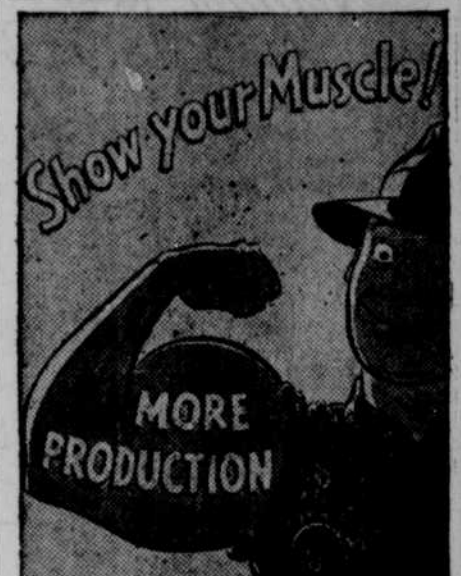
HERE'S your cotton jiffy-knit jacket! Costs about a dollar—looks exclusive—has an easy pattern stitch, and is warm enough for chilly evenings!

Pattern 7350 contains instructions for jacket in sizes 12-14, 16-18; illustrations of stitches; materials needed. Send your order to:

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