

# 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 Anawotio 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 Anawotio," 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 Anawotio," 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."

"Not 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 child-like excitement at the unlooked-for break in their solitude.

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

Slade knew, even before he felt their hearty handclaps, that he was among friends. They may have looked uncouth in their patched and ragged Mackinaws. But in the crowded 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 Anawotio 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 prospector 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 expedients 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-rober'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)

## Farm Topics

### Farm Building Must Have Board's Permit

#### WPB Recognizes Need of Limited Construction

County war boards of the United States department of agriculture will co-operate with the War Production board in handling applications for authorization to begin construction work on farms, the War Production board announced.

The United States department of agriculture is co-operating with the WPB in formulating policies under which county and state U. S. D. A. war boards will make recommendations covering farm residential and agricultural construction. Projects recommended by these boards will be forwarded to the War Production board for final approval.

Order L-41, issued by the War Production board, prohibits the start of unauthorized construction projects which use materials, labor and construction equipment needed in



the war effort, and places all new publicly and privately financed construction under rigid control.

The War Production board recognizes that a limited amount of construction by farmers is necessary to maintain and increase production to meet agricultural goals and that certain off-the-farm facilities are also needed for the production, handling and processing of farm products.

A farmer planning to begin construction which needs authorization should consult his county United States department of agriculture war board.

All farm projects, including residential, agricultural, and off-the-farm construction, such as warehouses, processing plants, creameries, etc., will be considered first by the United States department of agriculture county war boards. Applications for projects recommended by these boards will be sent to state war boards and then to the department of agriculture.

The department will consider the recommendations and send to the War Production board for final approval those which are deemed essential.

So far as residential construction is concerned, farm dwellings are covered by the same regulations as other residential construction. If farm residential construction, during any 12-month period, costs less than \$500 per farm, no authorization is necessary. Likewise no authorization is required for construction begun prior to April 9, 1942; for maintenance and repairs; or for reconstruction or restoration of farm residential construction damaged or destroyed after December 31, 1941, by fire, flood, tornado, earthquake, act of God or by public enemy.

### Take Care of Your Milking Machine as Parts Are Hard to Get

The milking machine is essential to wartime agricultural production, and must be cared for properly because shortages of rubber and metal will not permit normal replacement.

The following rules for the care of rubber milking machine parts are suggested:

Use two separate sets of liners, alternating them each week. Rubber needs "rest."

Keep liners tight in teat-cup shells.

Keep milker rubber parts clean and free from all butterfat, which causes deterioration.

Rubber cuts easily when wet. Use care in assembly and disassembly of units.

Do not use chlorine solutions of a strength exceeding 250 parts per million, for excessively strong chlorine solutions will injure rubber.

If lye is used in the care of rubber parts, be sure that it does not remain in contact with the metal parts.

### Battling Soil Erosion

Legume crops such as alfalfa, clover, soybeans and lespedeza are being used with increasing success as "heavy artillery" in fighting the battle of soil erosion. Legumes keep the topsoil in place, deposit nitrogen in soil and provide it with needed supplies of organic matter. To do their best work, legumes should be reinforced by intelligent soil management such as the use of fertilizers high in phosphorus and potash.

## Smart White Accents Bring Costumes Up to the Minute

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



ALL signs point to a continuance through fall and winter of the high fashion rank accorded during the past few months to pretty, flattering and "feminizing" white accents on dark costumes. The vogue for dark dresses and suits highlighted with lovely, lacy neckwear and various other frilly, immaculately white touches is particularly apropos at the immediate moment in that it so beautifully solves that tantalizing problem of smart and timely dressing through the "betwixt and between" season which leads from summer into fall.

For the touch that is warranted to lend a new lease of life to summer-on-the-wane clothes that you are loath to give up as long as warm days persist, regardless of what the calendar has to say about it, there is nothing that surpasses the refreshing prettiness of dashes and splashes of billowy, frilly white. That is why so many fashion-wise women have taken to collecting a "neckwear wardrobe," just as the college girl once collected sweaters.

What with suits registering as fashion "firsts" on the fall style program, one of the most-to-be-desired items you can put in your collection of lacy fineries is a dainty dickey of exquisitely embroidered organdy like that pictured above to the right in the illustration. Note, particularly, the cunning self fabric bow tie fastening, a new note in last-word chic. A dickey of this patrician type is a choice possession that will prove to be "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." Incidentally, we might add that reports from neckwear departments say there are more calls for dickets to wear with suits this season than ever before. One of the clever diversions milliners are indulging in is the trimming of hats with dramatic lingerie touches, ruches and frills especially. You can see by the picture how effective the result is.

The jabot of hand-crocheted lace pictured at the top left is another

item that should be included in every neckwear collection. It will prove a standby when an extra touch of allure is needed. You will be wearing it with your suit, and it will prove definitely "right" with your one-piece frocks and your blouses.

As inspiring and as spirit lifting as a good repartee is the bright and piquant set of scalloped organdy collar and cuffs illustrated below to the left in the group. A handsome set like this is a miracle worker when it comes to imparting a dressy afternoon look to a simple daytime frock.

To set off a pretty face and to add glory to a dark dress, the adorable collar at the lower right in the above illustration possesses a fetching way all its own. Spanking white and crisp and immaculate, it will add a lilt to your walk and a gayness to your spirit. The handsome Venise lace that edges it helps to make the vote unanimous that it is one of the prettiest collars brought out this season.

Speaking of lacy accents, here's news for fall that really is news. It's in regard to the new velveteen suits now being shown in smart autumn fashion previews. The all lace blouse of Alencon or Chantilly to wear with it is cast for an important role. Froths of lace in pretty confusion cascade down the front of some of the blouses. They will add grace and daintiness to fall and winter suits for cocktail and on-into-the-evening affairs. Sports blouses will be good, also, and neat, trim and spic-and-span looking. Colorful wool lace blouses are also scheduled for fashion prestige.

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

### Fall Coat



There is a movement among women, which is gaining momentum with each passing day, toward buying apparel of enduring quality and the genteel smartness which reflects discriminating selection. The simple good taste characteristic of the better fall coats is exemplified in the model pictured above. The Forstmann woolen of which it is tailored has quality in look and in velvety texture. For the rest, the appeal of this coat centers in the gentle modulation of its superb lines and in the color, for color is scheduled to play a most important role in coats and suits this fall.

### Show Wash Cottons For School, Dates

The vogue for tubable cottons goes on at a rapid pace. Back-to-school wardrobes, especially, include cottons, many which look like wool being made up into suits and even coats.

Jaquet suit-dresses of richly colorful plaid gingham are high style for town wear, and black linen or shantung costumes are holding good and will continue to do so until really fall days set in.

Young folks who eagerly don "after duty" dresses, when uniforms are laid aside after hours of war work, take keen delight in the crisp organdies, dotted swisses and smart plaids that make up so pleasingly into dance frocks.

The honors for loveliness go especially to the new crinkled seersuckers that are beautifully flower-printed and are so sheer and tissue-like they are exquisitely dainty and feminine. These are for the most part made with wide swirling skirts, or are ruffled in triple tiers for the skirt.

### Velvet Trim

Very new and attractive are the new black wool coats that are colored and cuffed with velvet. Some of them are tied with a sash of velvet to one side. Other new models have velvet yokes or plastrons.

### Felt Flowers

The newest felt hats are sporting cunning felt flower trims. The flowers are cutouts in multi-colors. These are attached to the off-the-face brim so that the petals are left free and away from the background.

## CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

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From an old French word "mes" derived from the Latin word "missus" meaning a course at a meal, comes the Army's name "mess" for its breakfast, dinner, and supper. Favorite meal with the soldier is chicken dinner—his favorite cigarette, Camel. (Based on actual sales records from Post Exchanges.) A carton of Camels, by the way, is the gift he prefers first of all from the folks back home. He's said so. Local tobacco dealers are featuring Camel cartons to send anywhere to men in the armed forces.—Adv.

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