

THE FORGOTTEN FLEET MYSTERY

by Van Wyck Mason

SYNOPSIS

Geneva Benet approaches the... at Paruxtown on the Chesapeake...
 "Any work to be had around here?" Colby demanded of the dining room in general.
 A grizzled oysterman at a nearby table paused with loaded knife half way to his mouth and winked at a group across the room before he said.
 "Work? You-all kin maybe git a job on them there Shippin' Board vessels."
 "Shut yo' big mouth, Dan," snapped the blousy proprietress. "He may be a stranger, but he's got some rights."
 Donald Colby set down his coffee cup and grinned engagingly.
 "Ma'am," he observed, "when you speak of 'rights,' you strangely interest me. The rights of man are a rara avis in this country."
 Etta Pike, suspicious of mockery, regarded the gaunt gallant figure with disfavor. "Rights? You talk like a Bolsheveek. Well, all I says is that—"her voice trailed off into incoherence as she commenced to retrieve a small fleet of "side" dishes from a distant table.
 "What about that job?" Colby demanded of the frizzled oysterman, who, however, seemed loath to talk further on the subject.
 "Aw, 'tain't nothin' much Etty's right—and yore a furriner."
 "Never mind that," the ex-soldier's dark blue eyes narrowed a little. "I need a job—badly."
 "Well, they need a watchman down to Point Patience—Some old liners is laid up there."
 "Watchman? Why all this mystery then?" Colby demanded through a cloud of smoke rising from a battered pipe.
 Patrons exchanged glances when he who had first spoken went on, his eyes kept studiously on his plate.
 "Oh, I reckon there ain't nawthin' to be scared about, only—well, only there's been some trouble on them old German ships."
 "Why don't yo' say 'murders,' Bill, and be done with it?" demanded a surly looking man. "Ain't none o' the three been heard of, have they?"
 "Murders?" Colby's lean features contracted a little. "On old German liners, eh?"
 "Yes. Three of old Cappen Benny's watchmen just dropped from sight. Mis' Burgess has been near crazy since Tom vanished a week ago from the Wilhelm."
 "Disappeared without a trace?"
 "Yep. It was the same with Hank Lewis and Fred Colquitt—though they had guns and was on the lookout. They went on duty and then—they wasn't to be found nowhere. No noise, no struggle, but somebody or somethin' surely get 'em."
 The various guests ceased eating and Colby was aware of a curious tension—rather like that time in Bolivian when he'd sat in on the court-martial of a spy.
 "Some folks 'llows it was haunts," volunteered a pimply youth.
 Colby's head tilted back in a short laugh. "Mighty potent ghosts"

when in through the back door of Etta Pike's Elite Lunch Room and Shore Dinner drifted the usual odors of Paruxtown at low tide.
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you raise in tidewater Maryland." "For a fact, Mister," the youth insisted. "Old Missis Claybourne on the plantation jest below 'flowed she seen funny blue lights a-shinin' out of the Cecelie's ports the night Tom Burgess was took."
 "Blue light?" Some of the levity departed from Colby's manner and he eyed the youth sharply.
 "Yessuh—more than once she—" "The grizzled oysterman abruptly interrupted the process of cooling his coffee in a saucer.
 "Shet yer fool head, Willie—don't talk sech nonsense. Like as not Tom got enough of his lady's tongue and skipped; them others likely got shangaied on an oyster boat—there's plenty of 'em short handed this season."
 "Shanghai local boys? Bill, yore crazy. It's more likely Willie's haunts than that."
 "Well, there you are, Mister—a swell forty dollar a month job goin' beggin', since Tod Ferguson quit—or got fired," he added meaningly.
 "Oh, so Ferguson was on those boats? Why did he get fired?"
 "You ask a heap 'n' questions, Mister—and since them murders we're kind of watchin' strangers in town—"
 "Don't worry, I'm bound for Baltimore tonight." Colby tossed a half dollar on the table. "Thanks for the tip—but forty a month doesn't interest me—not even with the prospect of meeting a busy Patuxtown haunt."
 Once outside, the tall wanderer found that the fog had become a woolly, all-smothering blanket from the depths of which sirens, horns and whistles moaned disconsolate as lost souls in the Seventh Circle of Inferno. It was with difficulty that he found his way at last to a ferry pier which also did duty as a bus terminal.
 "You all is pow'ful early fo' de tattered dungarees." "She don't

SCOTT'S SCRAP BOOK By R. J. SCOTT

EXPLOSIVE RIVETS ARE BEING USED EXTENSIVELY IN AIRPLANE CONSTRUCTION

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE LIFE SPAN OF SMALL BIRDS?

COMBINATION BOAT AND BALLOON - PATENTED IN 1895 BY HENRY BADGLEY OF FAIRFAX COURTHOUSE, VIRGINIA

QUICKER AND EASIER METHOD THAN THE OLD

Rationing Board Grants Only 14 Applications

Applications granted by the local rationing board during the past week were not as large as usual, numbering only fourteen as follows:

Anderson Transfer Company, Waynesville, common carrier, 4 truck recaps; Hardy Carver, Cove Creek, hauling farm products to market, one truck recap; R. L. Davis, Cove Creek, hauling logs, lumber and acid wood, 2 truck recaps.

Frank Carver, of Waynesville, ice hauler, 1 truck recap; Z. V. McElroy, Cove Creek, hauling employees on logging operation, 2 passenger recaps; John Hipps, Waynesville, cattle buyer and shipper, 1 passenger recap; Thomas W. Ferguson, Clyde route 1, hauling farm products to market, 1 passenger recap.

Howell Freeman, Waynesville, licensed taxi driver, one passenger car recap; State Highway Patrol, Waynesville, state

highway patrol, one passenger tire; J. R. Marcus, Waynesville licensed taxi driver, 1 passenger tube.

Cruso Mutal Electric Company, Waynesville, electrical construction and maintenance, 2 truck tires and 3 truck tubes; Ollis Allison, Waynesville, route 2, hauling livestock and farm products to market, 2 truck tires and 2 truck tubes; Town of Waynesville, sanitary and street maintenance, 1 truck tire; Carr Lumber Company, Lake Junaluska, supply truck for logging camp, 1 truck tire and 1 truck tube.

CORRECTION

Last week The Mountaineer stated that the property of the Buchanan cemetery was given the community by George Buchanan. The site was given by M. R. Buchanan, father of George and Fred. The latter has been keeping the cemetery cleared since the death of George.

Women are working beside men building tanks at foundry.

HOW TO GET EXTRA SUGAR FOR CANNING!

Uncle Sam wants you to can and preserve fruits and berries and will let you have EXTRA SUGAR for this purpose.

Take all of your sugar ration books to your local ration board. Without removing any stamps from your books, your board will enable you to get an extra supply of sugar for canning.

Your grocer will then fill your requirements with your old friend

Dixie Crystals
Pure Cane Sugar

CHAPTER II

crowd parting at that impermitted the scared stranger's eyes to follow Geneva Benet's troubled features. His taut smile signified that he looked suddenly when he said:
 "Sister, how did you like private war?"
 "I flamed back into the delightfully tanned oval of the face.
 "Thank you," she murmured. "Ferguson got what served, but—I hope you killed him."
 "A man in the uniform coat on the wide-eyed girl a lining, curiously intent look, then slowly stirred the fallen oysterman's head with a worn boot

leave fo' half a hour yet." "I know it," Colby explained gravely, "but the smell of crabs once past their debut is to me distressing. Mose, most distressing. Like a lot of people, they're nice when you first meet 'em, Mose, but deuced unpleasant if they stick around. Quite a philosopher, aren't I?"
 "Ah thinks yo's been philosophizing a bottle, Mista Man," grinned the roustabout.
 "No, Mose," drawled the spare figure in the old uniform coat and cap. "I have but drunk of the warm wine of life—it is victory and a full belly which has rendered me thus."
 "Yassuh, yassuh, I reckon so." The negro grinned uncertainly, then rolled his clattering hand truck off into the fog again.
 From the freight house office a single bulb drew a pallid ruler mark across the rough wood of the wharf. Not far away the persistent hooting of a receding ferry made the night resound. Save for

jerked a curt nod and turned away, but as his hand fell away from the cracked and dimmed visor of his military cap he felt hers on his arm.
 "Don't go," she burst out, her eyes alone successfully penetrating the gloom. "I do need help. Maybe you wouldn't be afraid."
 "Afraid?" Colby's mouth tightened.
 "Yes. I brought two men all the way from Lenardtown to work for my father, but when they heard about the job they were just like all the others—and I had so hoped—they—oh, dear—they went back."
 "On that?" The tall seaman's eyes flickered interrogatively in the direction of the departed ferry.
 "Yes." She looked away with a shrug eloquent of complete contempt. "They were afraid."
 Into ex-Colonel Donald Colby's blue eyes crept a new expression. "Young lady," he demanded crisply, "shall we talk?"
 (To be Continued)

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ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 I, T. L. GREEN, Administrator of the estate of Lonzie Messer, late A. D. C. to Gen. Gonzala Gutierrez, do hereby give notice to all persons having claims against the estate of the deceased to present them to the undersigned at my office in Waynesville, N. C., on or before the 11th day of June, 1942, for their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will make immediate payment. This notice will be published in the Mountain News, a newspaper published in Waynesville, N. C., on the 11th of June, 1942.
 T. L. GREEN,
 Administrator of Lonzie Messer's estate.
 1191—June 11-18-25-July

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 We do your washing?
 We make a drudge of yourself with this tiresome
 We have a service that will perfectly fit YOUR needs—at really small cost.
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 PHONE 205

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Victory Demands Healthy Americans

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Get more out of living... more fun... more pep to do things and go places! You'll feel always up to par if you get the habit of eating more butter, ice cream and drinking more milk. Start ordering from your milkman today! You'll be feeling grand in just no time at all!

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