

THE FORGOTTEN FLEET MYSTERY

by Van Wyck Mason

CHAPTER XV

Colby regained Geneva's side, very serious of expression. "Is there ebony anywhere else? Try to think."

Several mints of thought ended in a discouraged sigh from the girl. "Maybe," Colby suggested as they wandered out into the smoking room, "we're going at the thing the wrong way."

"What do you think?" she demanded.

"I think I saw a piece of carving in here that may help."

The girl started, then looked about. "The mantel? That won't do, it's oak."

"Just the same, let's take a good look at it."

They halted to stare upward, playing their flashlights over four female figures probably intended to represent the four major continents. From the Greek goddess representing Europe their gaze wandered to an American Indian woman, and then to a stalwart negroid maiden whose thick lips seemed carved in an enigmatic smile. The fourth and last of the nymphs was a serene, slant eyed figure personifying Asia.

"The third maiden," cried Geneva in the hushed voice of overwhelming excitement. "Look! She's a negress."

"And look at this," Colby said and, stooping, recovered a sliver of wood. The sensation he had experienced outside of Cabin 313 returned a hundred-fold. "Vogel must have been at work," he announced as he stepped forward. "You can see he had started to use his jimmy."

With their flashlights creating futuristic designs through the mote filled air, Colby dragged forward a chair and mounted it to better study the black girl.

"Looks like the right track at last," he pronounced in a voice that shook with excitement. "Want to find out now?"

"Yes. I'll hold the light."

Panting, dust covered and fascinated at the prospect of success, Colby had no warning of Mears' presence in a far doorway until the dry click of his pistol's firing pin was followed by a feeble report. Geneva screamed and remained in the paralysis of complete astonishment.

Colby leaped down off the chair, snatched at his own automatic and unfortunately fouled it in the lining of his pocket. The shadowy ambusher levelled his weapon and again tried to fire, but Colby's removal of the powder thwarted that. Mears then flung the pistol clattering into a corner and rushed at Colby, roaring threats and with murder written in every line of his deceptively uninspired face.

Colby leaped back, but still his gun would not come out so, bracing himself, he shot through his pocket and expertly sent a bullet smacking among dingy flannel letters sewed to the watchman's jersey front. In the middle of the dim library Mears seemed to trip and his hand flew to the wound as usually happens in the case of a badly wounded man.

An expression of vast amazement widened his eyes, the jersey watchman swayed a long instant, then turned half around before crashing full length onto the dusty floor. A piece of change fell from his pocket and went rolling off with a tiny tinkling sound.

"Shoot without warning, would you?" Oblivious to the fact that his uniform coat was smoldering, Colby stood quite still a minute, a dangerous, dramatic figure peering down at his fallen assailant while a thread of gray smoke wandered up from his pistol muzzle.

"How awful! How perfectly horrible," choked Geneva Benet

and turned aside, her slim body shaking as though jostled by the hand of an invisible giant.

"Sorry—the swine gave me no choice." Quite deliberately Colby wet his fingers and extinguished the smoldering cloth, then strode over to bend above Mears. He could see by the light of the lantern that the fellow was not quite dead.

"It was you who shot Connolly, wasn't it?"

Silence.

"Come on, admit it—there was a .35 caliber wound in his back—and yours is the only .35 on board."

"Yes." It was just a breath of a voice that replied and the eyes were dreadfully fixed. "After he killed—Vogel."

"You were in with Vogel?"

"Yes. Met him—Tuxtown: Offer—five thous'n—let him—aboard. Night—fore last—hid him on—Amerika. At first didn't—know what—after. I—I—" Quietly, definitely, Death cut short the murderer's confession and Colby started to rise, but remained frozen in his tracks when a voice spoke from the doorway—Ferguson's voice.

"Better not move, Soldier!"

"Careless fool! Bungler!" reproachful inner voice shrieked in Donald Colby's ears. Why had he not more promptly re-secured Hans? Now he'd pay for that omission with a vengeance and, what was worse, another would have to suffer for his stupidity. The ex-soldier straightened jerkily, like a badly motivated toy.

"What a pleasure, Mein Herr," Ehrenbreit's thin, inadequate looking figure jerked a sardonic little bow, then he advanced into the room, a baleful flicker in his yellowish eyes. Ferguson and the others remained in various entrances to the smoking room in which the faint bitter reek of burnt smokeless powder still tintured the air.

On the signal from Ehrenbreit Tug sidled forward, took Colby's Colt and Geneva's small .25 automatic. During this operation Colby stood quite motionless, overwhelmed by a flood of bitter self-reproach.

Ehrenbreit spoke suddenly, sharply, dissipating the deadly silence. "What were you doing in here?"

Colby's tongue crept out to wet his lips. "Fighting with Mears—didn't you hear us?"

"What about?"

"He tried to shoot me—"

"He had the right idea," Ferguson growled. "C'mon, Herrmann, let's not wait—we'd better turn on the heat right now."

"Nein," the German snapped, "this man he knows something."

"Ja," Hans agreed, "dot fellow perhaps mit Vogel was?"

"At's a idea," Tug admitted.

"Well, Herrmann, how about it?" "Seize them both," Ehrenbreit stepped back and the lantern on the floor drew a golden ray from his pistol barrel.

When the quartet commenced to close in Geneva Benet aroused herself from the semi-stupor of nervous exhaustion. "He—he doesn't know—he never did."

"Shut up you!" Ferguson dealt the girl a stinging slap. "You're too damned smart, by half—"

Barely in time Colby restrained an offensive which could have been nothing but suicidal, so, livid with fury, he watched white welts appear on Geneva Benet's smooth cheek.

Ehrenbreit, prison paled features contracted in a hard smile, said, "I am, mein Herr, inclined to agree with Hans." He fixed on the prisoners a long, searching glance. "I am not by nature a violent man, but Ferguson is

NOTICE SERVING SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION
IN THE SUPERIOR COURT STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, COUNTY OF HAYWOOD, TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE,

vs.
JEROME J. BRIDGES (widower); BESSIE BALL and husband, AUES; and wife, MRS. JAMES BRIDGES; FLORA DAVIS and husband, GUDGER DAVIS; YANCEY BRIDGES and wife, MRS. YANCEY BRIDGES; BENJAMIN BRIDGES and wife, LENORA BRIDGES, and HAYWOOD COUNTY.

The defendants, Jerome J. Bridges, Bessie Ball, Augustus Ball, James Bridges, Mrs. James Bridges, Yancey Bridges and Mrs. Yancey Bridges, will take notice that an action entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Haywood County, N. C., to foreclose tax and special assessment liens on real estate situate in the aforesaid county and state, and the said defendants will further take notice that they are required to appear at the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of said county in the Courthouse in Waynesville, N. C., within thirty days after the 14th day of October, 1942, and answer or demur to the complaint in said action or the plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in said complaint.

This September 14th, 1942.
C. H. LEATHERWOOD,
Clerk Superior Court.
No. 1238—Sept. 17-24 Oct. 1-8.

How Nazis Execute Russians



This photo was found by Russians in the pockets of Kurt Seidler, a German soldier killed on the Russo-German front and shows how the Nazis execute Soviet citizens. They line the victims up in front of a trench and kill them with machine gun fire. Note the trench and the bodies already in it. A cloud of dust spurts on the embankment as the five latest victims are shot down. This picture was flashed by radio from Moscow to New York. (Central Press)

and he would very much like to—vell, do unpleasant things to you, so I invite your confidence—you shall share vell if the jewels are found—that I promise."

"I would talk if I could," the hollow-eyed prisoner declared and mustered a convincing smile, "but I never even spoke to Vogel—he was dead when I first saw him. Supposing that Mears," his eyes strayed to the dead man's awkwardly sprawled blur of a body, "had learned from Vogel what you suggest, would he be likely to tell me about it?"

"Ja, but Vogel might haff told die fraulein?" Hans suggested rubbing his bruised throat.

"If she knew, she'd have grabbed the jewels long since and beat it," Colby pointed out. "She doesn't know any more than I do."

"Hey, boss," Ferguson strode forward a little, "how about it? Do I get him now?"

"Nein, not yet, lieber freund, not yet." The German who had stood tugging at his stiff gray mustache now shook his head slowly while a tight cruel smile twitched his lips. There was something subtly menacing about this straight, wasted figure—something that disturbed Colby far more than the blunt ferocity of Ferguson or the callous deadliness of Tug.

"Ja! that last night out Kraus must have rehidden those jewels. One or the other of you knows," Ehrenbreit said, "or else what is this doing here?" He kicked the jimmy which had lain in plain sight. "Ja, Hans iss right—that vardammt Graus sent Vogel in his place—Vogel hired Mears and this one." An expression of overwhelming rage distorted the speaker's face. "Ferguson, mein bub, how shall we make them talk?"

"I got just the right idea—no noise, no trouble and plenty er—convincing. If they get obstinate, why they won't be found t'll we've high-tailed a good ways away. Listen, Herrmann, how's this?" He drew Ehrenbreit aside while the other two being suspicious and alert continued to cover the downcast prisoners.

"Gut, sehr gut," Ehrenbreit's beard glittered in the lamplight as he nodded emphatically. "Ve will take them down there at vunce." (To Be Continued)

Winter Peas Raise Value Of Next Crop

If handled properly, every acre of Austrian winter peas should be worth \$10 to \$20 an acre in increased crop yields the first year, says E. C. Blair, agronomy extension specialist of N. C. State College.

Farmers are now planting these peas, many of which have been furnished by the AAA through its grant-of-aid plan. Blair said the seedlings should be made in September, the earlier the better. He warned that peas planted in October and November will not be large enough to turn under until May.

Austrian winter peas may be planted after corn, cotton, tobacco, peanuts, cowpeas, soybeans, and other crops. They may be turned under in time to plant corn, and in some counties in time for cotton. It is not advisable to plow them in for tobacco. They may be turned under for peanuts, soybeans, and cowpeas on sandy soils.

Blair advised sowing 35 to 40 pounds of seed per acre on land where the peas have not been grown before. Twenty-five pounds per acre is sufficient when the peas are drilled in, or 30 pounds when broadcasting on land that is well-inoculated.

The agronomist said the seed must be inoculated, unless they are to be sown on land that has already been inoculated. Land inoculated for garden (May) peas does not require inoculation for Austrian winter peas. County agents will furnish information to farmers on this treatment.

Blair pointed out that it pays to fertilize the Austrian peas, using 200 pounds per acre of 0-10-10 in the Coastal Plain, and 200

per acre in the Piedmont and Mountains. The fertilizer application to the next crop may then be reduced by these amounts. Lime is needed on highly acid soils.

Composts May Relieve Fertilizer Shortage

With many valuable fertilizers cut off because of the war, North Carolina farmers can turn to conservation of fertilizer materials from minor sources and help relieve shortages, says Dr. E. R. Collins, extension agronomy leader of N. C. State College.

Composts or mixtures are being made constantly through the rotting of leaves, twigs, roots, and other organic matter. Various substances may help supply organic matter and also often supply nitrogen, phosphoric acid, potash, and other elements needed by growing plants.

"For example," Dr. Collins said, "in butchering hogs on the farm, various parts of the carcass are frequently wasted. These are val-

uable fertilizers. Kitchen waste good for composts, too, if cannot be fed to animals. "Dry leaves, weeds, sweepings from the house and barn, grounds, fruit peelings, sawdust, wood ashes are other examples," the agronomist continued.

Compost may be made in many ways. Dr. Collins said the most common is to make layers of stable manure and waste and absorbent material such as dried leaves, peat, and sod. The pile is kept moist and turned several times during the composting process. The side of the pile may be covered with soil.

Where possible, the State lege man went on, at least manure, but if this quantity not be obtained, a small amount should be used to inoculate heap with the bacteria of decomposition.

Where very fine material is sired, well-rotted compost may be screened, and the parts which not thoroughly broken down moved.

pounds of 0-14-7 in the Piedmont and Mountains. The fertilizer application to the next crop may then be reduced by these amounts. Lime is needed on highly acid soils.



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ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of Henry R. Winchester, deceased, late of Haywood County, N. C., this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at Waynesville, N. C. on or before the 2nd day of September, 1943, or this notice will be pleaded in bar thereof. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate settlement.
This September 2, 1943.
R. L. PREVOST,
Administrator.
No. 1231—Sept. 3-10-17-24-Oct. 1-8

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