

SNOW LEOPARD

by CHRIS HAWTHORNE

CHAPTER XXIII

"Was there a pigtail, a slant eye and a yellow face grinningly alive in the family during her father's time and her own? Bannister! He was a white man with ideals and a fixed code to rule his life. Would he find out when too late, that there might be something abhorrent in the girl to whom he had offered his love?"

Yes, she must go on now—on, on to the Sira (Sire) valley; even if she went with the aqualid caravans and ate camel's meat and drank rank water from goatskins.

To Karen, prophecies always meant something big, something dramatic. What inspiring or appalling episode was to mark the climax now approaching? Was the stored-up wrath of the gods to fall upon her? Was she to be immolated in some dreadful, barbaric manner to atone for the sins of her forebears? Or was she to embody and make real the hopes of all these wretched wanderers?

Had she better yield? Quit the ship at Gibraltar like a good little girl and go home? Did she not owe enough to her father to spare him the anxiety of her peril? She forced herself to smile at this—perhaps there would be no alternative. For once in her life she had met a man who was wholly unman-

ageable. Tantrum or no tantrum, Captain Anderson would put her ashore, a miffed queen thrust into a bag like a rabbit!

Karen was out on deck again when Captain Anderson came upon her like a blue and gold whirlwind. But he was grinning expansively and registering all the emotions of a man who had just heard the best news of his life.

"You're free to go on to Alexandria, Miss Sire!" he shouted. "Your father has changed his mind. I wired him that your temperament was interfering with the compass and making the barometer behave like a tube of liquid monkeys. He's arranged to take care of you at Alexandria." It was fatal. The prophecy was more potent than her father's will. Some hidden hand was guiding her destiny, Karen felt assured.

Far back in the wake of "Karen Sire's family greyhound," the Albino was making her run across the Atlantic, gliding through glassy seas at maximum speed. Bannister and Toole were aboard, bent on overtaking and passing the Thesalonians.

From a sheet of newspapers bought at the pier they learned the latest developments in the murder of Prince Jura Bai. His own secretary had been placed under arrest on a homicide charge made by Police Captain Boyle. It seemed that the man could neither produce an alibi nor give any acceptable reason for going into hiding after the murder. He had been arrested (drunk) in a night club, Toole fairly roared at this.

But there was another little item which did not make Toole laugh. It had no apparent association with the killing of the prince, simply stating that an unidentified man, shot dead, had been dumped out of an automobile right under the windows of detective headquarters in Centre street. It was the physical description of the victim that interested Toole. He read it to Bannister, who listened without comprehending.

"My source of information on the Whippies," the detective explained. "Jeff closed it but he was a little late."

"Oh, your stool pigeon?" "Yes. Sorry about that guy—he never took a nickel for the tips he gave me. You see, I got him out of college once."

"College?" "Sling Sing. He was a probationer when he worked for me."

"He risked and lost his life out of gratitude?" "One Armed" Toole nodded a sober assent. "Those words ain't carved on the tombstones of many stool pigeons," he sighed.

How remote the murder of Prince Jura Bai seemed to Bannister! Yet only a few days had passed since that hurtling body had fallen at his feet like a being from another world. From the clouds, also, Karen Sire had appeared, more seraphic than human—a goddess materialized, an elusive, tantalizing, soul-stirring creature who even now seemed hardly real to him. She was like a fiery over a swamp, a shifting beacon on a treacherous waste, but he was following her with the determination that there would be no turning back.

Toole's head, clear of the swirling romance that precluded sane thinking in Bannister's, had been occupied with more practical things. He had learned much about Alexandria where he expected to have his next encounter with "Big Jeff" Whipple and his murderous valet. On the second day out he and Bannister had a talk with the Albino's captain.

"There's going to be the devil to pay in Alexandria," the captain told them. "Something like a new religious cult is forming among the half-breed pariahs of the Near East. They're trying to get together and develop a nation of their own. It seems that they have ob-

tained concessions to occupy a desert part of Tibet. In addition they assert territorial rights from remote days and claim to have documents to prove them."

"Documents—territory—rights," Bannister repeated, glancing at Toole.

"If they've got all that," Toole laughed, "why should you expect trouble?"

"Simple enough. There are several interests involved—political, religious and industrial. Do you know that we have a large shipment of agricultural implements aboard? Some rich nut in New York is helping the cause. But the danger lies in the fact that such movements always bring wild men out of the woods. The Near East is full of malcontents. They are eager to turn any form of unrest to their own advantage."

"Is there any date fixed for this business of the Promised Land?" inquired Bannister.

"There is a fixed date in a prophecy made centuries ago. The whole affair is full of lure to the oriental imagination. It's the mystery that always catches 'em."

"What's the mystic about it?" "The captain laughed good humoredly. "Well, the non-terrestrial aspect of the scheme would appear somewhat thin to the Anglo-Saxon mind. It includes vast changes in the face of the land, made by miraculous intervention."

"No miracle would be necessary to accomplish that," Bannister remarked. "It's an irrigation job."

"Quite right," admitted the captain. "At first it seemed to me a heartless scheme to dump this rabble down in the desert and leave the wretches to starve and bleach their bones. As the land lays now they would have no more chance of thriving than a colony of fleas on a rusty bicycle."

Bannister reminded him that the Mormons made a desert to blossom as the rose, and that with-out the aid of modern machinery.

"Right again!" exclaimed the captain, "but the central thought here is altogether too fantastic. They expect a visitation from the sky—a ruler that will come in an aerial chariot. And that ruler is going to be a woman. She will be glorified—she will cleanse them and give them caste. You see it's a religion of yearning. It has the earmarks of a cunningly manufactured cult to appeal to the hope, less ones of the earth."

"Did you hear anything more about this heavenly dame?" Toole asked, trying to gear the talk down. "Is she black, white or yellow?"

The captain paused as though perplexed by the query. "Am I being kidded?" he asked with bland humor. "Well, from what I can hear, she hasn't appeared yet, but she's pictured as a white goddess."

"With red hair?" It was Toole who spoke again.

"All goddesses have golden hair, haven't they?" the captain parried, appealing to Bannister.

The young geologist brought his feet back to the deck. "I have seen only one specimen of celestial mold," he said slowly, "and she has golden hair."

From the deck level far below came tinkling strains from a mandolin. Presently a melodious voice arose, singing "O Solo Mio." The captain walked away and joined another group at the rail.

Toole nudged his companion but Dick would not move until the song had ended. Then he turned suddenly and fetched the detective a terrific wham on the back. It was returned with a violence that denoted a common state of feeling.

The mystery was clearing. "There was a woman in it," the captain had said. She had golden hair! All their clouded conjectures of the last few days took definite form. Karen was the center of this whole strange scheme! No wonder her father had tried to keep the absurd truth from her. No wonder he had choked off publicity, following the murder of Prince Jura Bai.

Bannister laughed. A sudden weight that had rested over his heart lifted. So this was Karen Sire's secret—the cause of her agitation over the leopard robe, the clasp and girdle!

(To be continued)

6-MEN SEEK NEW "PUBLIC ENEMIES"

WASHINGTON, July 30.—(AP)—Federal agents quietly pursued two top-flight "public enemies" today as they received the congratulations of associates in the guilty plea of Alvin Karpis, last of the "big money" kidnapers.

The two—candidates for the role of "public enemy number one" abandoned by Karpis when he was sentenced yesterday to life in prison for the abduction of William Hamm, Jr., St. Paul brewer—are described by J. Edgar Hoover as a "notorious bank robber" and a "new kind of kidnaper."

Kidnaping for profit—the Karpis kind—is on the decline, according to Hoover, director of the federal bureau of investigation. All the "big money" kidnapers have been arrested, or killed. But federal agents are concentrating now on another type of kidnaper, who seizes police officers or spectators as a shield for his flight after committing some other crime.

Joseph Hanley has twice been accused of taking hostages to cover his flight from crime scenes. Two days after his indictment in Sioux City, the government charges, the 31-year-old Sioux City, Ia., fugitive and Harold Harpin, seized Sheriff Herman G. Bredenstein and his deputy, Dean S. James, at Nishnabotna, Mo., and carried them in the sheriff's car to South Sioux City, Neb. The pair were arrested, and Harpin was sentenced to 25 years, but Hanley escaped on Aug. 5, 1935.

Like Hanley, Maurice "Blondie" Denning is alleged to have played the kidnap game in his robberies. Denning, who ranks with Hanley at the top of the government's "wanted" list, is under indictment for five national bank robberies in the midwest, has been identified in three state bank robberies, and is "suspected" of participating in five other assaults on banks, according to Hoover.

Hoover said that bank employees or spectators were "kidnaped" in six of the robberies for which Denning has been marked.

REGISTRATIONS OF MOTOR VEHICLES UP

SALEM, Ore., July 30.—(AP)—Motor vehicle registrations in Oregon during the first six months of 1936 have already surpassed the record for any previous year, Secretary of State Earl Snell reported.

Snell said a total of 302,481 registrations had been handled by his office, as compared with 291,083 during all of last year. The 290,000 mark was not reached last year until November 27.

Fees paid during the six months period reach a total of \$2,351,176, exceeding the same period last year by \$267,391.

Snell pointed out that registrations during the last half of 1935 were 27,479, indicating the total by the end of this year would be more than 330,000.

SNAKE SLAYERS' PAL DRAWS LIFE

LOS ANGELES, July 28.—(AP)—Charles Hope, former sailor, whose confession as an accomplice led to the conviction of Robert S. James, master barber, for first degree murder in the rattlesnake bite-bathtub drowning of the seventh Mrs. James, was sentenced today to life imprisonment in Folsom state prison.

COAST GUARDSMEN SAVE TWO WOMEN

ROCKAWAY, Ore., July 30.—(AP)—Fern Womacke, 18, White Salmon, Wash., and Mrs. A. T. Long, 27, Westfir, Ore., owed their lives today to the work of two coastguardsmen who braved a strong undertow to rescue them from the Pacific's beating surf.

The women were being washed

seaward when Floyd Peacock and William Tobias noticed their plight and rushed by truck to the nearest vantage point. The men swam through the breakers, carrying ropes and life preservers, and brought the women safely to shore.

So strong was the sea that more than an hour was necessitated to effect the rescue. Mrs. Long was revived by artificial respiration.

NAZARENE CHURCH CAMPAIGN OPENED

Evangelist E. E. Taylor and wife, assisted by five young people, are now conducting an evangelistic campaign in a tent one block north of the Roseburg post office. The Church of the Nazarenes, under whose auspices they come, is a going and growing concern. According to the report of the Federated Council of Churches, it is the most rapidly growing evangelical church of today. At the last general assembly, held at Kansas City, the last week of June, the report showed that the last four years had been one of the best quadruplings in all-around growth in the 30 years' history of the church. It now has a membership of over 130,000, eight schools and colleges, a fully paid-for publishing house at Kansas City doing a large business for the church, and turning some \$30,000 annually in profits back into the general church treasury. It is organized and carrying on the work of spreading the gospel in every state in the union, the provinces of Canada, the British isles, with its mission stations on every continent, Japan and some of the other islands of the sea.

More than one-third of the membership consists of young people, until it has often been called a young people's church. It has twice as many enrolled in its Sunday schools as there are members of the church. It teaches two works of grace, "The New Birth" for the sinner, and entire sanctification or "Heart Cleansing," for the Christian, and in its general rules insists upon a definite experience of salvation and clean living, according to the word of God in the lives of its membership. There are now 55 churches in this North Pacific district, including western Oregon and Washington. A few in and around Roseburg desire to see the church established here.

WIFE OF ADVENTIST LEADER INJURED

GRANTS PASS, July 30.—(AP)—Mrs. W. C. Raley, wife of a Glendale, Calif., Seventh Day Adventist church official, will be confined in the hospital here for another week or ten days, her physician reported today.

Mrs. Raley suffered severe shock and cuts on the face and hip requiring several stitches to close in a head-on collision Monday morning on the Redwood highway south of here. A charge of reckless driving was placed against James Dickinson of Kansas City, Kan., driver of the other car.

Mr. Raley, secretary-treasurer of the Inter-American division of the Seventh Day Adventist church, and Mrs. Raley were on their vacation en route to New York.

WOMAN ASPIRES TO LEGISLATURE

MEDFORD, Ore., July 30.—(AP)—A petition for the placing of the name of Mrs. Aerial Burton Pomeroy of the Central Butte district as an independent candidate for the legislature from Jackson county at the November election was filed with the county clerk yesterday. The petition contained 25 names. A total of 1,917 signatures are required for nomination by petition.

Mrs. Pomeroy has announced as one of her platform planks a legislative inquiry into the conviction of L. A. Banks, former orchardist, now serving a life term in the state prison for conviction of second degree murder.

STEIWER ANSWERS DEMO GOVERNORS

CHICAGO, July 29.—(AP)—Senator Frederick Steiwer of Oregon said today the attack on Gov. Alf M. Landon's acceptance speech by six democratic governors last night showed "manifest weakness."

The senator's comment, first from republican national headquarters here, was made in a press conference. Steiwer declared, "If Mr. Farley's publicity organization cannot come nearer to the issues than exhibited in those addresses, then the new deal boys are doomed, and the campaign will run away and leave them within 30 days."

He declared that Gov. Landon's speech, delivered in Topeka July 23, was "well received" and "resulted in building up his previous strength."

"This is exemplified by Farley's strategy of organizing six complainant governors in a concerted

attack on the speech," said Steiwer.

"The manifest weakness in their position is that the campaign will not be won by trivial comment on speeches, but on the grave issues of the Roosevelt administration. The people will not be distracted by little charges that Gov. Landon's speech was not sufficiently definite."

When Mrs. Tom Moore of Pleasant Hill, Kane, drove to town for grasshopper poison, some of the insects rode along and ate three holes in her dress.

Mrs. Ralph Partin of Lufkin, Texas, finds that hydrangeas may be kept fresh for a week by submerging the cut flowers under water each night.

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