

THE SACRED DAGGER

by Rita Mohr Norton

YESTERDAY: Anne Willard is waiting for the return of a truck from Chuka with, of all things, two birth charts. These are connected in a strange way with the release of her parents, who are being held prisoner by the Nagaras, a neighboring Asiatic tribe whose particular charge is the fabled city of Shy-a-Nago. It is this city all Anne's party wishes to find.

Chapter 23

"The Dagger Guards You"

THE truck returned from Chuka with the birth charts made out in the Chinese manner.

"They are favorable," said Philip, finding Anne in the mess hut alone shortly afterwards. She had lit a fire in the fireplace for cheerfulness. He locked the papers in his desk, a bit embarrassed at being party to such proceedings. Consulting the stars! A little too much like child's play. The others would be amused if they knew. Anne comforted him.

"The Nagaras cannot doubt our sincerity on this point at least. When do you suppose they're coming for us?"

"I don't know. We've been seeing signal fires in the hills lately."

"If they don't come soon we should start out to meet them. Follow the trail father and mother took. Do something to get in touch with them. It is terrifying to receive no word day after day."

Philip was pacing back and forth before the fire in his usual nervous way.

"I hate to tell you this, Anne, and I don't know what to make of it, but there's a rumor in Chuka that Russian archeologists have made contact with the Nagaras and are advancing themselves as the 'avatars of Destiny' come to fulfill the prophecy."

"What does that mean?" Anne demanded, and she did not have the heart to tell him Peter's report that Blaz had made a trip to Russia.

"I don't know."

The others came in then and were told the rumor.

"Things are going from bad to worse," said Philip pessimistically and no one contradicted him. A knock sounded on the door.

A communication had been brought by special courier from Chuka. The Amban notified Philip that the government was sending an official inspector to join the expedition.

"An official spy," sneered Larry. "He'll probably be a Mandarin with a big retinue," sighed the doctor. "I'll have to put a guard over the spring or we'll be drinking bathwater—and worse."

Larry laughed shortly. "What they are after is a hand in the treasure."

"But isn't that taken care of in the concession contract father made with the governor?" Anne asked.

Philip shook his head. "Not specifically. We didn't know anything about Shy-a-Nago when we came. Neither did the officials."

"We don't know yet," declared Larry. "I sometimes think it's all a pipedream."

"If only father and mother are safe!" The men looked at Anne sitting there. They had even graver doubts than she.

Beth rose, suppressing a yawn. "Let's go to bed. This has been an exciting day. They all wandered out to their tents. Anne knew that each girl was anxious to see her alone to learn whether she was willing to tell any more that Blaz had said in his letter. She had been dodging them all afternoon. Now she felt an overpowering urge to get out among the trees and absorb their peace."

Visit In The Dark

WHEN the camp had quieted down, she took a blanket and pillow and slipped out. Daddan sat up when she appeared in her dark coat. There would be no moon.

She turned her electric torch on him. "I'm going to sleep out for a while," she said in a low voice. He gave her his bright look.

"Yes, I know."

"If you know so much, shall I have pleasant dreams," she asked jestingly.

"Don't be afraid, whatever comes."

She laughed. Daddan might spoof her, but she couldn't tease him.

"Wear the dagger." She had turned away and now looked back. He repeated. "Wear the dagger."

"Why, Daddan?"

"The dagger guards you."

"Don't you think I'll be safe?"

"Yes, but wear the dagger." Her persistence impressed her in spite of herself and she went back and strapped the belt around her waist.

Quietly, so as not to disturb the guards, she walked up through the cottonwood grove where the trees were thickest. In a few minutes she heard voices—Diana's tinkling laugh and a man's low tones. Anne didn't care, but the thought of infidelity sickened her. She was wondering how it could circle round them without revealing herself when they came walking towards her, made visible by Diana's white dress. Anne froze behind a tree. They passed close enough for her to recognize Philip and to hear Diana say, "I'll send a message

to be wireless to father at once."

Anne wondered what plans they could be making that would include Diana's father. After they disappeared, she went on to the place she had been seeking, an open patch of sod next to the hill, where a benevolent old willow tree with a thick bole and wide arms stood somewhat apart.

She lay down flat on one half of her blanket and drew the other half over her.

Anne's eyelids drooped and then she slept.

She did not know what awakened her. A sound. A touch on her hand. Or just the presence of the two who crouched at her side in their dark robes.

She sat up, stifling a scream and pushed the blanket from about her. One of the pair smiled.

Anne recognized the priests who had given her the dagger at Jus Masar.

"You," she whispered when they made signs for quiet.

"Is all well with you?" the man asked.

"Yes," she answered excitedly. "Have you come to take me?"

He shook his head. "Not yet. We wait till the stars are favorable."

"Are you taking good care of my parents?" she demanded.

The woman answered: "Good care."

"They are well?"

"Well."

"Did they send me a letter?"

"It is not allowed."

"Then why are you here?"

The man frowned.

"The story came—that you were dying on the desert—and another would carry the dagger."

Anne reached in the sheath and drew out the knife, glad she had obeyed the lama. They both scrambled back from its nakedness. Anne rose and put the dagger away again.

"You see," she said, "everything is all right here. You have no cause to distrust us."

"We see," they answered.

"What became of the companion condemned to die with you?" the man asked.

"He went his way and I went mine."

"Did he respect the dagger?"

"He did," she answered shortly. Suddenly voices and lights arose from the yard encircled by the huts and tents. Anne heard Beth call. "I tell you her coat has not been slept in." And Diana's voice: "Her coat is gone."

"I've been missed," said Anne. "We go."

"Not yet," she cried, but they disappeared into the shadows of the little hillside like one cloud into another. Anne stared after them a moment, then picked up her blanket and pillow.

"Here I am," she called as she approached the excited group in the court yard. "I've been trying to sleep out doors."

Blaze Again

A PLANE flew into camp next morning while all the members of the expedition were at breakfast, with the exception of Diana who always slept late.

"Remain where you are," said Philip sharply as the others would have risen to flock to the landing field. "I presume it is Gregory Sherwood carrying out his threat. Please remember how the Chief feels about this interference with our activities. Sherwood does not come as a friend to the expedition."

No one disagreed with him on that, but Beth voiced her disappointment.

"He's still a human being and a white man and it's pretty thrilling to have that kind of company in this hole, no matter what his intentions are."

Philip ignored her remarks. "As acting head of this expedition I shall meet him first. Finish your breakfast." He rose and went out on the porch and shut the screen door firmly behind him.

The others smiled ruefully at each other. They didn't like his manner but there was no disloyalty.

Diana had evidently heard the plane and dived into clothes. She appeared in the enclosure formed by the tents and huts. Philip called her to him and sent her inside. Beth grinned at Anne.

When Philip walked out to the group of chairs under the cottonwood trees in the center of the enclosure to meet the visitor, human nature could stand no more. Those inside the house moved discreetly towards the door and windows where they could see and hear without being seen.

Sherwood's tall form led. He was dressed in spruce, olive green whipcord, and did not look as if he'd spent a week trying to eat and drink Dao Tai under the table. In fact, he appeared very trim and fit and sure of himself.

Anne thought, her mind hardening against him despite her racing heart.

Mackey followed, carrying a brief case.

Sherwood and Oliver exchanged a crisp greeting and handgrip. Then the former spoke in his clipped voice.

"Dr. Oliver, I've been commissioned to you by the governor of the Province as his official representative. I am here to observe the work of the expedition and assist where I can."

"You're too late," Philip interrupted him sharply. "There's a man on the way from Chuka to represent the government."

Sherwood reached for his brief case. "You must have misunderstood. I am the man they meant."

To be continued

On the Radio Chains

STATIONS:

Where to find them on the dial
KEX, 1190, Portland; KFI, 640
Los Angeles; KGA, 1510, Spokane;
KGO, 810, San Francisco; KGW
620, Portland; KJR, 1000, Seattle;
KNS, 1070, Los Angeles; KOA
850, Denver; KOIN, 970, Portland;
KOMO, 950, Seattle; KPO, 630
San Francisco; KSL, 1160, Salt
Lake.

Time shown is PST
Friday.

5:00 p. m.—Janet Jordan, KGO,
KJR; Walt Time, KPO, KOMO,
KGW; Quiz, KEX; Buddy Maleville's
Orch., KNS; Eyes of the World
KOIN; Americana, KSL.

5:30 p. m.—Drama Behind the
News, KGO, KJR; Uncle Walter's
Dog House, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Play-
house Drama, KNS, KSL, KOIN; Ac-
cordian Club, KEX.

6:00 p. m.—Hollywood Premiere,
KSL, KNS, KOIN; Romance and
Rhythm, KGO, KEX; Wings of Des-
tiny, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Scandi-
navian News, KJR.

6:30 p. m.—All Out for Health,
KPO; First Piano Quartet, KGO,
KEX, KJR; Something to Think
About, KGW; Comedy, KOMO.

7:00 p. m.—Fred Waring in Pleas-
ure Time, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Amos
'n' Andy, KNS, KSL; KOIN; Your

Happy Birthday, KGO, KEX, KJR;
Dance Time, KJR.

7:30 p. m.—Death Valley Days,
KPO, KGW, KOMO; Great Moments
From Great Plays, KNS, KOIN, KSL;
Richard Himber's Orch., KGW; Flash
Finger, KOMO.

8:30 p. m.—Chuck Foster's Orch.,
KPO; We're Building a House, KGO;
Know Your Band, KPO; Baseball
Game, KEX; Port Lewis Life, KOMO.

9:00 p. m.—Ozzie Nelson's Orch.,
KPO; Jim Blade's Orch., KJR; Paul
Sullivan, KNS; Chuck Wagon Days,
KGO; Your Major Speaks, KGW;
Leon F. Drews, LOIN; Highlight
Hour, KOMO; Symphonic Serenade,
KSL.

9:30 p. m.—Weekly Spectator, KPO;
Bill Henry, KNS, KOIN; Skinny En-
nis' Orch., KGO; Frontiers of Indus-
try, KGW; Dancer, KOMO; News,
KSL.

10:00 p. m.—Reporter News, KPO,
KOMO, KGW; Jay Burnett, KGO,
KJR; Ray Noble's Orch., KNS, News,
KOIN; Freddie Nagel's Orch., KSL.

10:30 p. m.—Eddie Nelson's Orch.,
KGO, KGW, KOMO; Al Donahue's
Orch., KGO, KJR; Behind the Head-
lines, KEX; Masterworks of Music,
KNS; Portland Police, KOIN.

Saturday
5:00 p. m.—Paul Carson, KGO,
KJR, KEX; Barn Dance, KPO, KGW,
KOMO; Lud Gluskin's Or., KNS,
KOIN; Supper Strings, KSL.

5:30 p. m.—Summer Symphony,
KGO, KEX, KJR; News, KOIN, KNS.

6:00 p. m.—Summer Symphony,
KGO, KEX; Uncle Ezra, KOMO,
KGO, KGW; Scandinavian News,
KJR.

6:30 p. m.—Jual Arivu, KOIN;
Grand Ol' Opry, KPO, KGW, KOMO;
Andrini Continental, KEX, KJR;
T.L. World, KGO; Saturday Night
Sheepfold, KSL.

7:00 p. m.—Truth or Consequences,
KPO, KGW, KOMO; Your Marriage
Club, KNS, KOIN, KSL; The Dance,
KGO, KJR, KEX.

7:30 p. m.—Tavern, KNS, KOIN,
KSL; Arturo's Orch., KPO,
KOMO, KGW; Ray Heatherton's
Orch., KGO, KJR, KEX.

8:00 p. m.—News, KGO, KOMO;
Your Hit Parade, KNS, KSL, KOIN;
Musical Potpourri, KPO; Bobby
Byrnes's Orch., News, KGO, KJR,
KEX.

8:30 p. m.—Don Kaye's Orch., KGO,
KEX, KJR; Bliss Morgan's Orch.,
KGO, KOMO; Defense for America,
KPO.

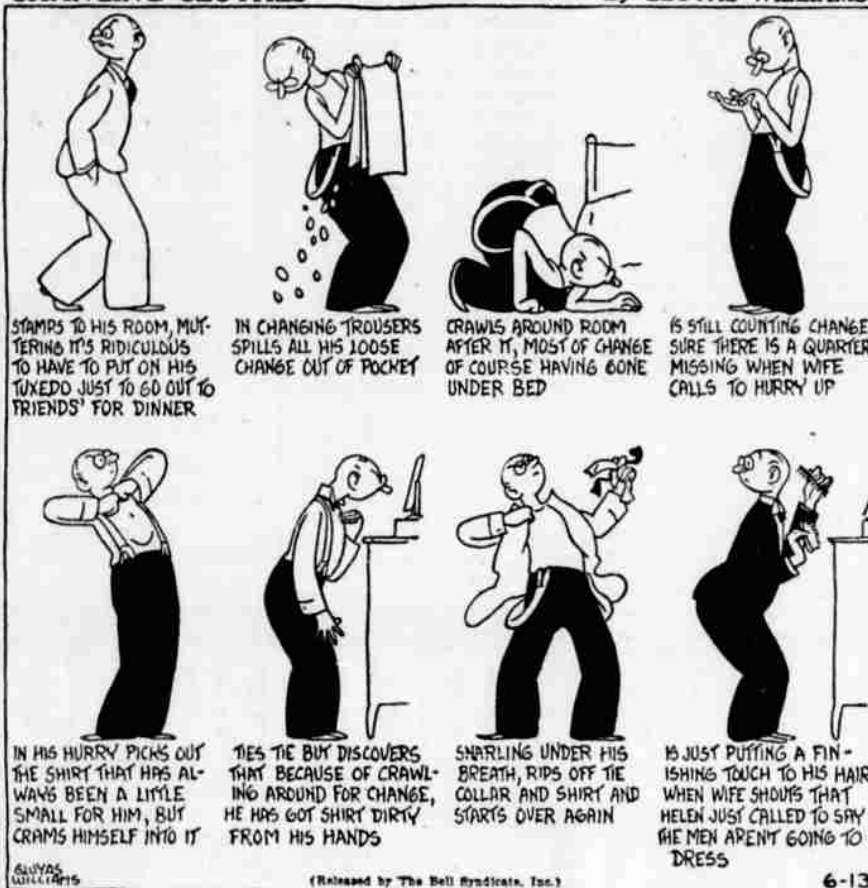
9:00 p. m.—Jim Blade's Orch.,
KGO, KJR, KEX; Al Donahue's
Orch., KGO, KJR; Tiny Hill's Orch., KSL;
Editorial Speaking, KOIN; Defense
for America, KNS; Rendezvous,
KOMO.

9:30 p. m.—Eddie LeBaron's Orch.,
KPO, KGW, KOMO; Bishop and the
Gargyle, KGO, KEX; By the Way,
Bill Henry, KNS, KOIN; News, KJR,
KSL.

10:00 p. m.—Chuck Foster's Orch.,

CHANGING CLOTHES

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



L'L ABNER Their Hero!



TAILSPIN TOMMY Safe... For the Time Being!



THE NEBBS Make Yourself at Home



FAMOUS LADYBIRD SUNK BY STUKAS

Alexandria, Egypt, June 13.—

(P)—Britain's famous gurgboat Ladybird, 625 tons, and the monitor Terror whose 15-inch guns helped shatter Italy's shore defenses in Libya, have been sunk,

by Stukas dive bombers, the British navy announced today.

The 8,000-ton Terror was caught at dusk recently off the Libyan coast and made the target for 500-pound bombs. Her big and small guns put up a terrific barrage, causing the Germans to miss, but a near miss crumpled the monitor amidships.

The Ladybird went down in Tobruk harbor, Libya, "burning like hell" and firing against the screeching stukas until her last dry gun slipped under the water, it was said.

CLATSOP DEPUTY HELD IN SHORTAGE

Astoria, Ore., June 13.—(P)—

Sheriff Paul Kearney said Forrest B. Smith, Clatsop county clerk's deputy, was in custody today pending investigation of

filing fee shortages estimated at \$700.

Verne Stratton, newly appointed clerk, said the fees, for filing mortgages upon migratory chattels such as automobiles, had not been turned over to the secretary of state as required by law.

Sweden's first rock wool producing plant, the second such factory in Europe, is now in operation, according to the department of commerce.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

by JOHN HIX



By AL CAPP



By HAL FORREST



By SOL HESS