

Africa Waits

by Achmed Abdullah
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THE NIAM-NIAM

CHAPTER XX

HE chose a path at random. He walked on for a while, found it crazy, sardonically zig-zagging—and knew, all at once, that he was lost.

His horror grew. Despair came. Then, gradually, it faded into a dull indifference, something like a decay of his senses, his heart, his soul.

He shrugged his shoulders. Listlessly he sat down. He was grimly amused as he realized that his own death did not even strike him as dramatic. It seemed to be somebody else who was dying; somebody whom he liked in a curiously impersonal manner.

This somebody else thought of his former life: America, Paris, Africa. Thought of politics, Hitler, Roosevelt, de Gaulle, Eisenhower, Churchill. Thought of auction bridge and golf and salmon fishing—and women.

Thought of a girl whom he had met just the other day.

Nice little American girl. What was her name? Nancy something-or-other.

Didn't matter.

But how lovely she had been, with her wheat-colored hair, her red lips, her frank, boyish eyes! He loved those eyes. Loved the whole girl.

"Oh!" He gave a cry of pain as a horned beetle bit him on the wrist.

"Damn the double-damned luck!" he yelled.

Then he laughed, a little hysterically.

"Ho, ho!"

And it seemed to him that the wilderness was echoing his sounds.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho..."

their hands were against everyone; knew, therefore, better than to employ kindness just then. Kindness would be interpreted as weakness.

He shook the man until the jujū amulets rattled and danced and clacked.

"I shall kill you, O pig and father of piglings," he announced almost casually, "unless you..."

He paused; and at the word "unless" an expression of hope eddied up in the medicineman's eyes. There was, evidently, a chance of bargaining for his life.

"What do you wish?" he demanded.

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HOLD EVERYTHING!



"This must be some of that loose talk we were warned about!"

manded. "Tell me—and it is done!" "Very well, I shall grant you life. On one condition."

"Name it!"

"Show me the quickest way to Lake Tchad and the Meeting of the Elephants."

"The Meeting of the Elephants—Lake Tchad...?" came the pygmy's stammering echo.

There was no fear in the words such as the American had heard on the lips of the Yorubas, back at Yebba. There was only astonishment; a rather amused astonishment. It was clear that the Niam-Niam knew nothing about the hykmoot ameez or, at least, was not in awe of him.

Then the medicineman laughed shrilly, as he had before.

"Cancel!" he said.

"No tricks!" warned Lincoln, releasing him and drawing his revolver.

(To Be Continued)

In the final defeat of the axis, our traditional weapon of economic pressure will prove once again one of the most decisive factors.—Dingle M. Foote, British economic warfare ministry parliamentary secretary.

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Where's Elmer?

ANSWER: Utah.

NEXT: Home, sweet home is a dangerous place!

FAMOUS WRITER

Answer to Previous Puzzle

HORIZONTAL

1,7 Pictured author

11 Rectify

12 Music drama

14 Negative

15 Dispatched

16 Passage

17 Road (abbr.)

19 Avenue (abbr.)

21 Electrical term

22 Fish

23 Cease

25 Presently

26 Doctor of Theology (abbr.)

27 Within (abbr.)

29 Convent worker

31 Of the thing

32 Spain (abbr.)

34 Morindin dye

35 Dry, as wine

37 Chaos

38 Tidy

41 Vault

44 Baking chamber

46 Charged atom

47 Woody plant

48 Bone

VERTICAL

2 Toward

2 Hours (abbr.)

24 Palm lily

25 Tin (symbol)

28 Nothing

30 Sneeze

31 Indian

32 Clip off suddenly

33 Flower

34 He is now living in

Kussnacht, Switzerland

35 Pilfered

36 Symbol for cobalt

37 Audacity

38 Single thing

40 Any

41 Crown

42 Color

6 Street (abbr.)

43 Biblical pronoun

45 Verso (abbr.)

47 Weary

48 Shoe part

52 Philipping peasant

53 Before (prefix)

54 Small boat

57 Epistle (abbr.)

58 Pair (abbr.)

59 From

Out Our Way



BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON

Our Boarding House



TURNING A PAGE BACK TO 1906

With Major Hoople



TURNING A PAGE BACK TO 1906

THERE was, quite suddenly, silence; and, as suddenly, he knew that the echo of his laughter was real, was coming up from the ground, from the waist-high grass.

At the same fraction of a second, he saw a flash of color gliding away. Still at the same fraction of a second, his hand, answering the hurry call from eye and ear to brain, shot down and clutched something that wriggled and twisted.

His hand came out of the grass, and in its grip appeared a tiny figure, fantastically hideous, but human, and still, on its broad, toothy mouth, a physical indication of the merriment which Lincoln had heard.

Lincoln held the captive at arm's length. He knew at once what he was: one of the Niam-Niams, the tribe of pygmies, who, despised as well as feared by the other Negroes, live in the depths of the jungle.

The man had smeared his small, muscular, naked body with a thick layer of ochre and orange in an extravagant pattern. His face, flat-nosed, the ears pulled out of shape by great pieces of bone inserted into the lobes, was daubed with white. From a string around his neck depended a mass of clanking barbarous jujū amulets.

By all this the American knew that the other was a medicineman, thus a big man; indeed, a very big man, perhaps more important to his own people than Lincoln was to the United Nations.

The Niam-Niam continued twisting and wriggling. He chattered furiously—and a notion came to Lincoln: these pygmies were familiar with all the wilderness trails. Therefore, if he could make the little man understand and obey... but first he'd have to keep still and listen.

So Lincoln yelled at him in a mixture of Negro dialects he had picked up here and there, daubed with white. "Moyekorol! Moyekorol! Hey—" angrily—"don't you understand your own bloody lingo? Oh—for cryin' out loud! N'juhah—n'kuna."

"Saluam aleykoom!" suddenly shrieked the Niam-Niam.

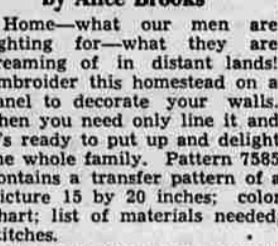
"Oh—you know Arabic?" the American rejoined in the same language.

"Yes, yes!"

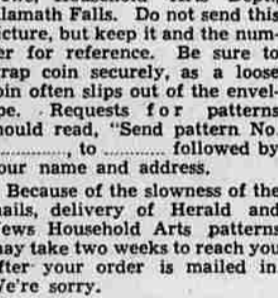
Years earlier—the small savage explained—he had been captured by Moroccan raiders; had been exhibited in circuses in Tangiers and Fez; had finally escaped, and, somehow, found his way back to his native jungle.

LINCOLN's grip tightened. He felt sorry; felt ashamed of himself. But he knew these dwarf aborigines; knew that, since every hand was against them,

George always makes circular garden beds so he can work in the shade!



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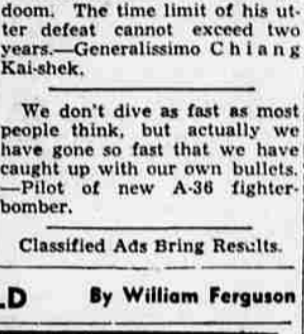


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Red Ryder



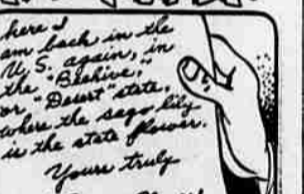
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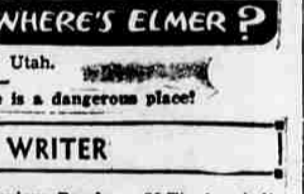
Red Ryder



Red Ryder



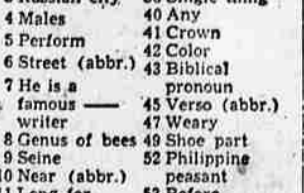
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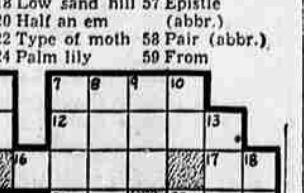
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Freckles and His Friends



Freckles and His Friends



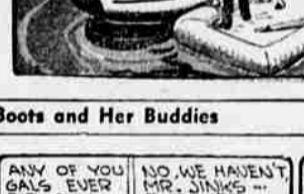
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Freckles and His Friends



Wash Tubbs



Wash Tubbs



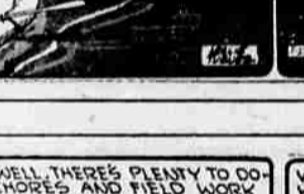
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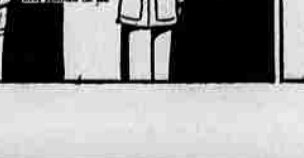
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Boots and Her Buddies



Boots and Her Buddies



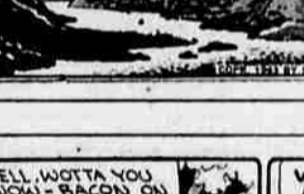
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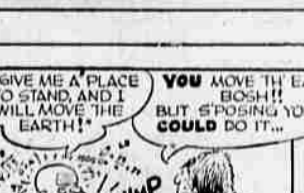
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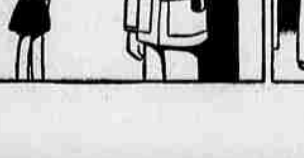
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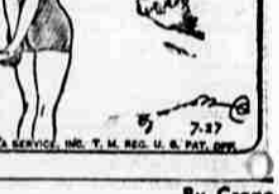
Little Orphan Annie



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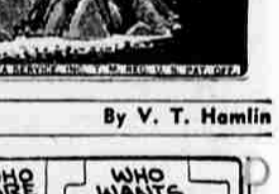
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