

# Africa Waits

by Achmed Abdullah  
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## REUNION

### CHAPTER XXIII

SOME minutes later, there could have been seen, on the flat roof top of the coffee house, silhouetted black against the dazzling moonlit sky, a Negro beating a wooden drum with scientific rhythm, sending its tone waves droning and sobbing into the east, where other drums took up the telling—until, finally, it reached the ears of a little pygmy medicine man who was squatting in a hut by the side of a delirious American.

Zaman Khan's knowledge of psychology was crude, yet shrewd. Had he been within arm's length of the Niam-Niam, he would have bullied and threatened him, even beaten him with the kurbash. But distance was the little savage's safety. Therefore, flattery was indicated; and most flattering and soul-satisfying was the drum message which called the pygmy greatest among all the medicine men, called him a wizard without a peer whom the trees obeyed and the rocks and the winds, called him a sorcerer more powerful than the elephant in mating time, wiser than the owl, and as much to be feared as the swamp buffalo.

Would the Niam-Niam, being also generous and great-hearted, do his best for the foreigner whose fate rested in the hollow of his hand? Would he, furthermore, send back by drum talk a description of the location of the nearest jungle path connecting with the hut where the sick man lay? He, Zaman Khan, who was dispatching this message and was the medicine man's most devoted slave, knew that the knowledge of these jungle trails was a secret ore, restricted to the mighty ones among the bush folk. So he gave oath that—by Allah and by Allah and by Allah—he would not use the secret, precious knowledge except this once, to hasten to the side of his friend.

THE Niam-Niam listened. "There is none greater than I," he announced, "in all the wilderness. Even the Moslems acknowledge me master. Hereafter my tribesmen shall call me Lion, shall give to me whatever tribute I demand. Thus there is this woman whom I have desired for a long time."

He smiled. Presently, once more, the drum talk spanned the distance; and, half an hour later, with Nancy in the driver's seat and the Afghan beside her, studying another roughly drawn map, the Ford clanked and wheezed into the African night—a night which was drowning in a shimmering wave of stars, shot through with a huge, zodiacal light. Yet, clanking and wheezing, the car gripped the hard-baked ground. It plunged forward enthusiastically, like a sentient being, eating up the miles; and Nancy Brown, who belonged to that new American generation which was as keen to the individuality and the idiosyncrasies of machinery as the older generation had been to horseflesh, rode the steering-wheel as she had never done before.

On through the night. A short rest. Then on again. A look at the tank. Plenty juice—thank God! And more petrol, in cans, stowed away in back.

Both the girl and the man were silent. Their hopes and prayers ran parallel. Then, finally, the edge of the jungle; and a pygmy popping out of the grass—not the medicine man, but another Niam-Niam whom the latter had summoned.

He made cliky noises; pointed into the wilderness. They stopped, jumped out of the car, followed where he led, came at last to a hut.

THERE, where he had been squatting on the threshold, rose a small, ochre-smearing savage. Without a word, but with as much pride in his achievement as any great American doctor, he stabbed a finger into the cool shadows of the hut. The man whom he had nursed and called back from the gates of death with his queer jungle craft, lay there, pale, emaciated, but breathing regularly, sleeping calmly. Momentarily, Nancy felt like throwing her arms about the little

savage and kissing him. The Afghan must have read her mind. "What," he inquired, "does a monkey know of the scent of jasmine?"

"What do you mean?" "I mean that you should give the sweetness of your lips to those who appreciate. To me, for instance, since the saheb is asleep." She smiled happily.

"I must give the little man something."

"I have a string of beads in my pocket."

"Beads," she interrupted, "for saving a man's life? I guess there's

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## HOLD EVERYTHING!



a drop of Scotch in your Afghan blood." She drew a diamond ring from her finger and gave it to the Niam-Niam. He broke into joyous, high-pitched laughter; was out of the hut into the jungle.



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By William Ferguson

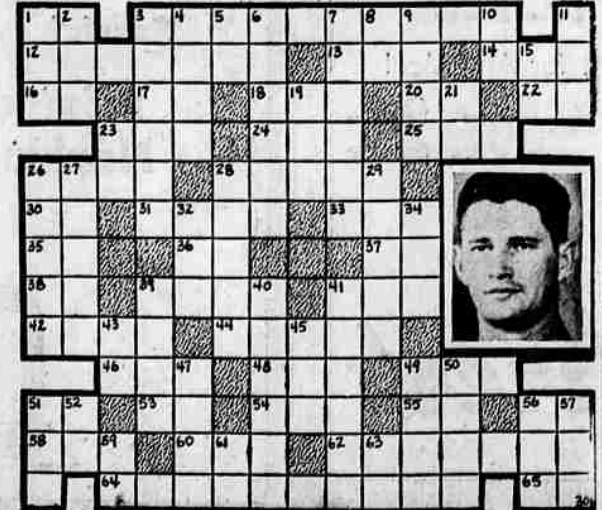


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## AMERICAN ACE

- HORIZONTAL**
- Upward
  - Pictured U. S. flyer,
  - He battled Japs over the Islands
  - Talent
  - Sincere
  - And (Latin)
  - Civil Engineer (abbr.)
  - Abstract being
  - Within room
  - Upon
  - Peruse
  - Decay
  - Male swan
  - Small horses
  - Consent
  - Either
  - Facile
  - Seize
  - Music note
  - Exists
  - Toward
  - Symbol for thoron
  - Thin board
  - Males
  - Assembly
- ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE**
- 15 Proceed  
16 Neither  
17 Negative  
18 Coast Guard (abbr.)  
19 Direction  
20 The South Pacific was his combat  
21 Ore analysis  
22 Devoured  
23 Be sick  
24 Tunisian cape  
25 Shut violently  
26 Red fruit  
27 He is a pilot  
28 Behold!  
29 January (abbr.)  
30 Ethiopian grain plant  
31 Narrative poem  
32 Have life  
33 He is an  
34 Perform  
35 Belongs to it  
36 Golf peg  
37 Diminutive of Albert  
38 Like
- VERTICAL**
- Employ
  - Plan
  - Humorous
  - Sign
  - Theatrical
  - Force
  - France (abbr.)
  - Pertaining to the ear
  - South American (abbr.)
  - Put on



## FUNNY BUSINESS



## Out Our Way

By J. R. Williams



## Red Ryder

By Fred Harmon



## Freckles and His Friends

By Blosser



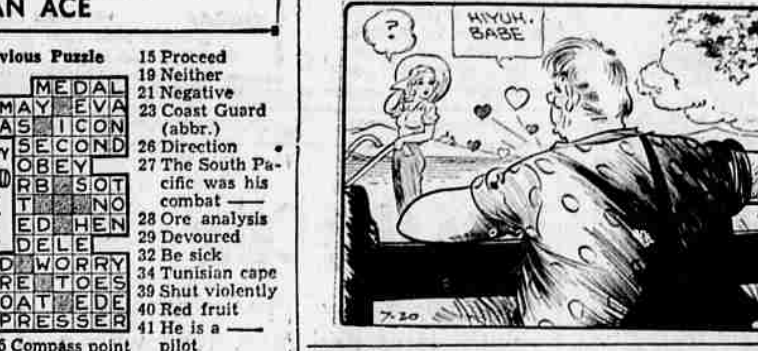
## Wash Tubbs

By Crane



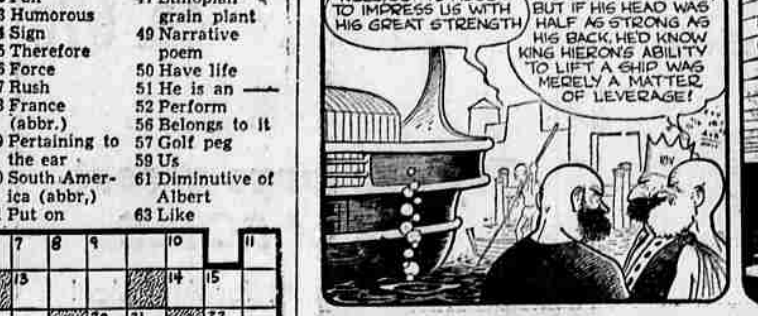
## Boots and Her Buddies

By V. T. Hamlin



## Allep Oop

By Martin



## Little Orphan Annie

By Harold Gray



## Our Boarding House

With Major Hooplo



## Red Ryder

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## Freckles and His Friends

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## Wash Tubbs

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## Boots and Her Buddies

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