

Go warily, Dikar; you must search the heart of the enemy for the golden key to freedom

WEST POINT has been taken, and there Dikar's Bunch now lives, with the people from the Far Land who have banded together to fight for America's freedom. As yet the Asafrics have not attacked; but the leaders at West Point realize that they must act swiftly or the Americans will be trapped.

Then, on a foraging expedition, Dikar makes a frightening discovery: Someone within the walls of West Point is a spy for the Asafrics. The spy escapes in the woods before Dikar can identify him; but Dikar suspects that he's one of the Beast Folk.

Later at a council meeting Dikar reveals what he has learned, wondering whether the spy is one of those present. At that same meeting it is announced that Normanfenton has been chosen by the Secret Net to act as Provisional President of the New America.

This concludes a two-part serial

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Sunrise Tomorrow

By ARTHUR LEO ZAGAT

It will be his gigantic task to lead the revolt against the yellow tyrant.

THAT night Dikar himself receives a task of great difficulty and peril. Walt, who is Normanfenton's trusted lieutenant, tells Dikar that Benjamin Apgar, a man high in the councils of the invaders, is in reality a loyal patriot. Apgar has given valuable information to the Americans, but lately his contact with the Secret Net has been mysteriously cut off.

So this is the plan. Disguised as an Abyssinian and speaking pidgin English, Dikar is to go down to New York in the company of one Gary, and attempt to reach Benjamin Apgar. Dikar agrees to attempt this dangerous undertaking, and Walt makes him up in his disguise. But when they reach the place where they are to meet Gary, they find there his dead body, his head crushed . . .

CHAPTER V

MAGICAL CITY

DIKAR shoved Walt out of his way, darted past the body in the road, leaped at the bank and clawed up; hands, feet, finding holds

by instinct. The bushes above were loud with the noise of someone running away.

Dikar got to the top, twisted toward the sounds; a red streak jetted across the night and shot-sound banged in Dikar's ears. He threw himself at the black figure the light-flash showed him. His shoulder pounded into a form that went down and he went down on top of it, his knees finding a body, crunching it into the ground, his fingers finding a flailing arm, clutching it.

"Got you," he grunted. "Give up or I'll tear you to little pieces."

The man under him went limp. "Dikar!" It was Paine's voice. "Get off me, Dikar. I've got to see if I've winged him."

"Him?" Gary was right. Paine was a Mudskin. An Asafric spy. "What are you tryin to put over on me?" Gary had tumbled to Paine, had said he was going to watch him, so Paine killed him. "What 'him' are you babblin' about?"

"The one who murdered—God, man! You don't think *I* did that!"

"Didn't you?"

"No, damn you. I—" All of a sudden there was light on Paine, on the dead leaves under him. Walt was standing over them and the light came from the thing he held, and he was looking, sideways, at something to which he moved the light.

It was a man lying across a bush. His hands were clutched to his breast and they were red with the stain that spread in the gray-blue cloth under them.

Walt's light moved up a little. Eyes, open but sightless, stared out of a knobby, rock-jawed face. "Morgan, eh!" Paine exclaimed. "Buck Morgan! I saw him silhouetted against the sky, clubbing Gary."

Walt bent, picked up something. Dikar shoved himself up off Paine. Walt said, "How did you happen to see that, Paine? How did you happen to be down here to see it?"

Paine held up a hand and Dikar pulled him to his feet. "I didn't have the pass quite ready when Gary came to my quarters to get it, so I told him to go on down and make his final arrangements with you and I'd bring it in a couple minutes.

"I wasn't much longer than that, but I was just too long, because I was only in time to see the murder, outlined against the stars. Morgan must have heard me, because he started to run.

"I slanted to meet him, shot—and then Dikar hit me like a ton of coal. Buck Morgan's the last one I'd have thought to be a renegade."

Dikar recalled how, in the woods, he'd decided that the spy was a Beast Man, on account of the way he covered his trail.

"This is his revolver, then," Walt was saying, holding out what he'd picked up from the ground. Its handle was bloody, hairs stuck to it. "He clubbed Gary with its butt. But I can't understand why. It would have been smarter to let Dikar accomplish his mission if he could, tip off the Asafrics to ambush us on our way to the raid so they could wipe us out."

"He couldn't take a chance on being able to reach them," Paine broke in, "with the outposts on the watch for him after Dikar's warning. Besides—Wait! Here's what he was up to.

"I saw him deliberately shove Gary over the bank. He expected to pick you and Dikar off as you heard the fall and came out of the boathouse. Then he'd grab the motorboat, shoot down to New York, and expose Appgar. That one piece of information would fix him

well with Hashamoto, and he wouldn't have to risk his neck here any longer."

"Sounds reasonable. . . . There's your gun." Walt pointed past the bush. "Dikar must have hit you like a charging bull to have sent it flying that far."

"I'll say he did." Paine hobbled over, picked it up. "But we're wasting time. Dikar's got to get started soon or it will be daylight before he gets down-river."

"Right!" Walt snapped. "Let's get going." He started leading them back the way he'd come up, around the steeper part of the bank. "With Gary gone, I'll have to go with him, and—"

Paine shook his head. "It's a hundred-to-one bet against Dikar's getting back safely, but that's a dead sure thing compared to the chances of the one who goes with him. Apgar won't dare free a deserter, even if that bluff goes over. Therefore, friend Walt, I'm the one to go."

"No—"

"Walt!" Dikar interrupted, feeling proud he was an American as he heard these two quarrel about who should die for the Cause. "Listen, Walt. You're Normanfenton's best helper. He needs you here. As long as someone has to go with me, it has to be Captain Paine."

"I guess you're right," Walt sighed. Then, looking at Paine, "Do you know the River?"

"I know the River."

THE River was as wide and empty as the sky, and Dikar could tell where River left off and sky began only by the black crouch of the hills between them. Stars sprinkled the sky with tiny lights, sprinkled the River, but there were no lights on the land, nothing to show that anyone lived there or ever had lived there.

The wind carried the smells of the land to Dikar, the green smells of grass

and trees, the dark brown smells of earth—a smell of wood burned, of the cold ashes of homes the Asafrics had burned down.

Dikar stared at the blackness that was the land till his eyes ached. The boat purred down the River, very quietly, and the lap of water against the sides of the boat was a quiet sound. In a while Dikar's eyelids closed. He drowsed and woke, and nothing was changed, not sky nor River nor black crouch of the hills, nor the still shape of Paine hunched silent over a little wheel in the front of the boat. Dikar's eyes closed again, and he slept.

And sleeping, Dikar shivered with chill. He stirred and awoke, and he was lying face up to the sky. The sky was no longer black but gray, the stars faded.

He lifted. Paine was no longer a black, still shape in the front of the boat, but a man in blue-gray only a little darker than the sky. The chill that had waked Dikar was the dawn-wind, and the River was paling with the dawn.

"Paine!" Dikar exclaimed. "Captain Paine! I thought you were going to put me on land before it got light!"

Paine's head turned, his face narrow in the dawn-light, his eyes burning. "I fell asleep at the wheel," he said, thin-lipped. "And when I woke up, I saw—" He gestured out over the water.

There were other boats on the water, little ones and boats unbelievably huge. The Asafrics in them looked at Dikar's boat and looked away. "There was nothing left except to brazen it out," Paine said, despair in his voice. "Nothing left except to run down to a pier in the heart of the city and try to get away with our story that I'm a deserter whom you're bringing in."

"I don't see how you could have fallen asleep when your life depended

on your staying awake," Dikar growled, but even though this was a dreadful thing Paine had done, his thoughts were not on it.

He was gaping at an enormous wall of rock that rose straight up from the edge of the River, gray rock so high that a lonely figure moving atop it seemed no bigger than Dikar's fingernail. The wall was like the Drop that circled the Mountain, but higher, and it went on and on along the River, as far as the eye could see.

"You've got the pass handy, Dikar," Paine said. "Haven't you?"

"Yes." Dikar touched the pocket in his green uniform where he'd put it. In doing this he turned so he saw the other side of the River. His breath caught in his throat.

THERE was some green along that edge of the River, but beyond the green—buildings. Not a few, as at West Point, but so many that they were like a forest of buildings, as many as the trees in the woods. The smallest was as high as the tallest tree in the Mountains.

But they could not be Buildings, piling higher and higher ahead there. They could not be anything men had made. Slender, graceful, they lifted to the sky, white in the pale dawn-light, and blue-gray, and dark-red as the leaves of autumn, and some touched with gold. High they soared till they were misty with height, till they were clouds piling in the sky, tipped with color by the sunrise; till they were like nothing Dikar had ever seen or ever dreamed of, a glory rooted not in the earth but in the heavens.

"What?" Dikar gasped, pointing. "What—?" and could say no more.

"The City," Paine answered. "New York." In that instant the risen sun

flooded the City with golden fire, and there was one slim building that rose higher than the rest, an enormous finger pointing at God. The sunlight struck through it and Dikar saw that it was only a broken black tracery against the light.

The boat leaned over, was sweeping around in a long curve, driving straight for the shore. And Dikar saw now that there was scarcely a building whole in all the city, that some leaned crazily and some had great gaps bitten out of their sides. Here and there were spaces where there were no buildings at all.

Then the City was too near, too high, for Dikar to see it. He could only see that they had passed the green strip along the River, that they were shooting straight for a squat, ugly-looking building that stuck out into the greasy waters, a building that would have looked huge to him yesterday but now was small and dirty and mean.

Men were running out to the river-end of this building. Blacks in the green Asafric uniform, and they were carrying the long guns called rifles.

The boat bumped against the end of the building. The Blacks were lined along it, their rifles aiming at Dikar, their little red eyes cruel. An Asafric with only a revolver in his hand leaned over and said something Dikar could not understand.

Paine grabbed a rope that hung down and twisted it around an iron something that stuck up from the side of the boat. The Asafric yelled at Dikar. Dikar made sounds back up at him, a jabber that meant nothing to Dikar himself.

The Asafric looked mad. "W'at kind talk yoh big fella fool make? W'at kind brown-skin Black yoh be, make funny talk Ah no can un'stan?"

Dikar's heart skipped a beat. The Asafric had called him a Black. "Good

talk w'at ah make." He was getting away with it. "Talk mah people. Ah be Abyssin."

He put a foot up on the edge of the boat, reached to pull himself up to where the Asafric was. "Not so fas'," the latter grunted, jabbing his revolver almost in Dikar's face. "W'at name yoh come heah in boat? W'at name yoh hab dis white fella soldier along ob yoh?"

"W'at name it yoh business?" Dikar decided he might as well be fresh. "Tagloo no tell his business only to off'ser. Yoh bring off'ser, Tagloo tell him."

"All right, Sergeant Skoom! I'll take over." The voice was like a woman's. It belonged to the man with whose high-cheekboned, slant-eyed yellow face looked down at Dikar. "Here you! I am Lieutenant Sing Fong. What's all this?"

DIKAR snapped his hand to his forehead, snapped it down again and stood straight, arms stiff at his sides the way Walt had told him to do when he talked to an officer. "Name ob me Tagloo, sah. Sebent' Foot Reg'ment, Fourt' Comp'ny." His borrowed uniform had on it a badge with those numbers.

"Dis white fella soldier desert f'om Wes' Point. He say he know how we can take fo't easy but he only tell Major Apgar, so my cap'n, Tsi Huan"—that was the name of Jubal's captain and it was signed to the pass Dikar was fumbling out of his pocket—"send me tak' him to de major, nobody else."

The officer took the pass, squinted at it. He made a little sound and kept looking at it. He was doing that for an awful long time. Dikar got all tight inside. The lieutenant's yellow, long-nailed hand strayed to the handle of his revolver. "Come up here. Both of you."

Dikar jumped up to the floor of the building, turned and helped Paine up, stood straight and stiff again, not letting his face show anything. The Black soldiers closed in around them. Sing Fong folded the pass—and stuck it into his own pocket.

"So you're to be taken to Major Apgar." Something, the little smile that played about his naked-looking mouth, the way he purred, maybe, reminded Dikar of a cat he'd seen, at West Point, playing with a bird it had caught and maimed. "No one less."

"Yaas, Lieut'nant." If Dikar jumped into the water—No. Fast as he could swim, the bullets from the Asafrics' rifles would be faster. "Dat be Cap'n Tsi Huan's ordeh."

"Just a minute, Lieutenant," Paine broke in, talking for the first time. "Let me tell you—" *Spat!* Sing Foo's fist lashed into Paine's mouth, so hard that he staggered backward, would have fallen if one of the Asafrics hadn't pounded a rifle butt into his back, straightening him up again.

"It seems to me," the officer remarked, casually, "that you American dogs should have learned by this time to speak to your masters only when you are spoken to. Straighten up. Stand at attention."

Captain Paine's eyes were those of a snake about to strike. "I think you will regret that," came from between his bloody lips, "when I have reported it to your superiors." He has courage, Dikar thought. He has more courage than I have.

Lieutenant Sing Foo's cat-smile deepened. "One more word from you," he murmured, and I will have your tongue torn out. Then he was barking: "Sergeant Skoom! Detail a guard of three privates and take these men to headquarters. You may use my car."

CHAPTER VI

HIS EXCELLENCY THE SPIDER

THE car was a little truck with high iron sides, painted green. A machine gun stuck out over its back. There were two seats. Paine was in the back one between two Black privates and Dikar was in the front between the other private and Sergeant Skoom, who was doing all the things that made the car start and stop and go the way he wanted it to go.

It went very fast along wide spaces between the buildings. The buildings rose high above, so that it was as if they were at the bottom of deep ravines, very long and very straight with places on each side where people walked.

There were a lot of other cars going between the buildings, little ones like this and big trucks. These had only Asafrics in them but among the people walking there were many whites.

The whites were all stooped over and gray-faced, shambling, the women and children as well as the men. When an Asafric, yellow or black, came swaggering along, the whites made way for him even if they had to go out in the space where the trucks ran to do so. The Asafrics laughed a lot and talked very loudly, but the whites talked very low, if they talked at all, and they never laughed.

Some of the whites had the burned star on their brows and the eyes of these were empty as a dead man's. But that emptiness was better than what was in the eyes of the other whites.

This was fear. Men and women and children, the whites who lived in this city were afraid, and Dikar knew that they had been afraid so long that they had forgotten what it was not to be afraid, because he saw some of the things they feared.

Dikar saw a couple of white men carrying heavy bundles from a truck into a building. One of them stumbled and fell and the Asafric who was watching kicked him, and blood came out of his mouth. Dikar saw a bunch of Americans shuffling wearily along, chained together two by two, and the Asafrics who walked beside them had long whips that lashed out and cut rags and skin from their backs if they went too slowly.

The car passed a big flat space of ground covered by yellowing grass. Instead of trees, poles grew up out of the ground and each pole had a cross-piece sticking out from its top. From each cross-piece hung something that once had been a man but now was a bundle of rags and bones, swinging in the wind.

The smell in Dikar's nostrils was a smell of filth and rottenness, of sick bodies and sick minds; the City that from the River had looked so glorious was a place of desolation and despair.

Dikar tried to close his eyes, so that he would not see these things, but he could not keep them closed. He looked up high, so as not to see the people, and saw a building whose windows were smashed and blind, its insides gutted by fire. He saw another that was nothing but a black network of broken iron, rubble piled in the great hole above which it stood.

All of a sudden there was beside him a wall that went up and up so high that Dikar had to bend his head back as far as it would go to see the top. It was the unbelievable building that had seemed from the River to be a finger pointing at God.

The car slowed and stopped right in front of this great building, and Sergeant Skoom was telling Dikar and Paine to get out.

They obeyed.

SKOOM walked first, and then Paine and Dikar and behind them the three Asafric privates with their rifles ready to shoot. In this way they went into the building, into a room bigger than any Dikar had ever seen.

It was all stone, with a gold-painted roof and shining black walls, but all the stone was cracked and pieces were broken away everywhere so that the iron bones of the building showed through. And the room stank with the smell of Asafrics.

There were a great many Asafrics standing around, talking and laughing, but the room was so big they hardly seemed to be making any noise at all. An officer, a little man with a sharp, yellow face and shiny hair black as a crow's feathers, came toward them.

Skoom told them to stop and he went ahead to meet the officer, jerking his hand to his head and down again. He talked so low Dikar couldn't hear what he said, and the officer's narrow, slanted black eyes looked past Skoom at Dikar and Paine.

The way the officer looked at them made Dikar feel afraid.

The officer went to the wall and talked into a little box that hung on it. Then he came back to Skoom and said something; Skoom's hand jerked up and down, and he came back to Dikar and Paine, his purplish, thick lips grinning.

"Yoh hab one big fella luck ob de debbil," he said to Dikar. "Yoh go see Viceroy Hashamoto hese'f."

"Hashamoto!" Dikar felt the strength go out of his body. He licked his lips, managed to say, "I no go see Viceroy. Cap'n Tsi Huan say I take white fella deserter to Major Apgar, nobody else."

"Dat all right." Skoom grinned. "You go see major too. He wid Viceroy w'en Lieutenant Sing Foo telefoam

'bout yoh, an dey gib order bring yoh to Viceroy's quahtehs."

"But my white fella pris'ner say he not talk only to major," Dikar persisted. "He say—"

"That's all right, Tagloo," Paine broke in. "I'd rather the Viceroy heard what I have to say. Much rather."

"Come 'long," the sergeant said. "Ah no care w'at you radder or not radder. Come 'long befoh ah make yoh."

They started moving again, and Dikar felt a little better because Paine had said it was all right. Just what Paine was going to do, Dikar couldn't think, but he was very smart and must have worked out something to do.

They went through a door. It closed behind them. The space they were in wasn't much bigger than just enough to hold the six of them and another Asafric who was already in it. All of a sudden Dikar felt very heavy, his feet pressing hard down on the floor.

The hissing sound was sudden and frightening. But the snake noise stopped before he could get the knife out, and the door was opening again.

Sergeant Skoom must have made a mistake, Dikar decided, must have led them into the wrong place and now he was taking them to the right one. They went out again, but this was not the big room. It was a very narrow, long space, its roof white and much lower, doors all along both sides of it. Way down at the end there was a window and Dikar could see the sky through it.

In the short time they had been in the little room, everything outside it had changed.

Dikar's skin was tight and he was shivering. This was a more fearful magic than the electricity. For the first time he wasn't sure the Americans could lick the Asafrics. If they could do things like this . . .

SERGEANT SKOOM had stopped in front of a wide door at the end of the narrow space and was knocking on it. A muffled voice came through, and Skoom said something in his own language. The sergeant took hold of the handle on the door and pulled it open. The others went through it, and stopped short, and Skoom closed the door behind them.

Sergeant Skoom stood very straight and stiff, jerking his hand to his head, and the privates were frozen figures. There was a kind of greenish color under the Blacks' skin, and their eyes were scared. They were in a room three times as big as Headquarters at West Point. There were a lot of tables and chairs and benches in the room, all of different shapes and bright-colored, and the floor was bright-colored.

The same voice, no longer muffled, said something again. It came from a man who sat at a table far at the other end of the room, a little white man dressed in the green uniform of the Asafrics, his face pinched together like the shell of a nut, his nose hooked like an eagle's beak, his eyes very sharp and bright.

"Major Apgar say yoh two come." Skoom pushed Dikar and Paine, started them walking across the floor.

Another man sat behind the table toward which they walked. He was shorter even than Major Apgar, but he was almost as wide across as he was tall. His yellow face was round, and his eyes were drowned in the flabby bulge of his cheeks. His nose was bashed flat. He had no eyelashes nor eyebrows, and there was no hair on his face, on his great round head or on his soft-looking, swollen body that was covered only by thin, bright red cloth that gaped open down the front.

He was like a spider hiding under a

leaf to which one string of its web was fastened, a spider bloated with the flies it has eaten.

Major Apgar was watching Dikar and Paine come across the floor, but Yee Hashamoto, Asafric Viceroy of America, was looking at the maps that strewed the table. He had a very small red mouth in his great, yellow moon of a face.

Dikar reached the nearer side of the table and stopped short, his hand going up to his head and down as Paine stopped alongside of him. Hashamoto's head lifted and his eyes looked at Dikar, and Dikar knew how a fly must feel, caught in a web and seeing the spider eye him from under the leaf. To escape that feeling he looked past Hashamoto at the wall behind him.

There was a door in that wall and it was a little open. Dikar's nostrils flared. From that door a smell came to him—a strange one to be in this place—the odor of flowers.

Major Apgar was talking to Dikar, his voice as cold as the winter streams on the Mountain.

He was talking in the language of the Asafrics. "Ah no can un'stan w'at de major talk," Dikar said. "'Cause ah be Abyssin—" He checked at the look on Apgar's face, and knew before the next words came from those thin lips what they would be.

"But it was in the Abyssinian dialect that I spoke," Major Apgar said, and there was a sudden gasp from Hashamoto. "I recognized that you were—You're *not*!" The major was up out of his seat, his pupils widening. "What are you? What—?"

"I'll tell you." This was Paine, and Dikar swung around to him in surprise. "This man is no more an Abyssinian than I am. He is an American spy."

He's given me away, thought Dikar,

because I can't be saved, but that will save him and give him a chance to talk to Apgar alone.

"An American." A little pink tongue licked Hashamoto's lips and he looked even more like a spider. "Ahhh—and you?"

"An American too, but a loyal subject of your Excellency. No, wait!" Paine's uplifted hand stopped what the Viceroy was about to say next. "Wait and listen. You've been wondering how the Americans' underground operatives have been finding out your most secret plans. I can tell you where they're getting them from, whom they're getting them from. His eyes went to Major Apgar. "It is—"

"No!" Dikar shouted. He sprang, and his hand clamped the betrayal in Paine's throat. "You'll not tell!"

His fingers squeezed; his other arm went across the small of Paine's back. There was a shout somewhere, and a thud of feet running toward him, but Dikar was shoving Paine's purpling face away from him, was bending the upper part of him back over his rigid arm, while the lower part of Paine was clamped against Dikar's straining body.

Shouts somewhere, and a click of rifle bolts, and Apgar yelling. "Don't shoot, you fools. You'll kill the Viceroy." But there was a grating of bone against the swelling muscles of Dikar's arm and a scream shrill and terrible, tore through Dikar's throttling fingers. Paine's back snapped across Dikar's arm, like a dead branch.

Dikar let the body drop and saw green uniforms, black faces, leaping at him, saw clubbed rifles flailing. He roared and sprang to meet them, but a rifle butt pounded into his chest, staggering him back, and another paralyzed his arm. Blows rained on Dikar; he was pounded to the floor.

Dikar rolled on the floor and with darkening sight he saw an iron-covered rifle butt driving down at his head.

CHAPTER VII

TO SAVE A TRAITOR

"NO!" CAME a high, thin cry. "Don't kill him." The rifle butt hung, strangely motionless, over Dikar's head, and in the dizzy dark there seemed to be a flutter of blue above him. A woman's voice cried again, "Don't kill him," and the smell of flowers was very strong in his nostrils. The darkness welled up into Dikar's head and he went down, down into dark depths of pain.

Dikar swung up out of the dark and somewhere above him Hashamoto was saying, "You were right, Lisa. You were very right to stop these fools from killing him. He must know the traitor's name, and he will tell me. Oh, yes."

The darkness faded out of Dikar's eyes. He could see Sergeant Skoom leering down at him, little eyes redder than before, and the other Blacks, rifles clubbed and ready to beat Dikar down if he moved. He could see the gold braid on Benjamin Apgar's green uniform and a gross leg that must be Hashamoto's because it was covered with scarlet cloth.

"Of course I was right." The woman's voice was throaty now. "If I hadn't been coming to see what was keeping you and started to open that door just in time to hear what the other American said, this spy would be dead now and the rebels would keep on learning our secrets."

She hadn't just started to open that door, Dikar thought. It had been open all the time. She'd been listening. His head rolled, and he saw her, a soft blue robe fluttering about her slender, deep-

breasted white body, her hair a cloud of yellow sunshine about her delicate features. With the movement pain reached deep into Dikar, wrenched a groan from his throat.

"He's coming to," Hashamoto said. "Put irons on him, Sergeant. Quickly."

Skoom knelt, grabbed Dikar's arms. Agony rushed through him, and he went down again into the darkness.

When he could see again he was slumped in a chair, iron cuffs on his wrists, on his ankles. Skoom was standing stiff in front of Hashamoto and the Viceroy was talking. "You will say nothing of this to anyone, nor will your men. Understand?"

"Yaas, Excellency. Ah understand."

"You had better." Very cruel was that round, yellow face. "If the traitor is warned and escapes, I shall know just whom to blame and that will be unpleasant for you. You may retire now to the corridor outside this room and wait there for further orders."

Skoom saluted, turned sharply away and marched out of the room, the other Blacks following. The three, Hashamoto and Apgar and Lisa, watched them go, none speaking until the door closed behind them.

"Now," Hashamoto murmured. "Now we shall ask our friend a question or two." He came toward Dikar and a humming sound came with him. The humming sound was caused by something in his pudgy hand. It was a very thin stick as long as Dikar's arm, and it shone in the light like the blade of a knife and quivered because it was so thin. The quivering was what made the humming sound.

Benjamin Apgar watched the scarlet-clothed, bloated form as it padded softly toward Dikar, and Apgar's wrinkled face was expressionless except for the eyes; they had the look of someone

who was drowning and did not know how to save himself. And in Lisa's violet eyes there was, strangely, that very same look.

Yee Hashamoto stopped, three paces from Dikar's chair. "Stand up," he commanded, low-toned. "Get up on your feet."

DIKAR'S jaw set in a stubborn line. Then his face relaxed. He had thought of something: These iron cuffs on his wrists could crack a skull. He heaved, every muscle a separate agony, twisted, and was up out of the chair—

The thin stick whined, flashed down in front of Dikar. He dodged back, almost fell, managed to keep his feet. The stick hadn't touched him.

The jacket of his uniform hung loose. The buttons from it were rolling across the floor.

Wheen! Dikar didn't even see the stick move that time, but he felt chill on his back. Green cloth fell down between his legs. *Wheen! Wheen!* Two slashes! He was naked above his waist except for the sleeves on his arms and two rags that hung from his shoulders. The thin stick had stripped him, but had never touched his skin.

"I have not lost my skill with this," Yee Hashamoto murmured, stroking it between the fingers of his free hand. "A sweet toy." Its humming was the noise a wasp made flying in the summer sun. "I can slice an inch of flesh from your body." Spittle was bubbling at the corners of his tiny, red mouth. "And another inch and another, stripping your skeleton clean while you live inside of it. I can deal the Death of the Thousand Cuts, which takes so very long to kill."

The floor heaved up and down beneath Dikar. If only the yellow spider would come nearer. No use to spring at

him. That gray-white stick would meet one, would slash across one's eyes.

"But there will be no need for me to prove my skill," Hashamoto murmured. "I am quite sure that you are going to tell me the name of the traitor on my staff."

Dikar looked at him. Queer. The room was spinning.

"Are you not?" The stick rose, humming. "Answer me."

"No." Was this hoarse croak his voice? "No, I am not," Dikar croaked and sprang at the Viceroy, his manacled arms lifting. But he thudded to the floor, tripped by the irons on his ankles. He thrust fists against the floor, and was too weak to lift himself.

Fire burned across his back—the lash of the humming stick. A foot thudded into Dikar's side, turned him over, and he was staring up at an expressionless moon-face.

The thin stick hummed, hanging above Dikar, and there was a red smear on its shine and it dripped red drops.

"Who is hē?" Yee Hashamoto murmured, his face expressionless. "What is his name?"

All the pain in Dikar's body seemed to drain into that one place where the stick had touched him. If Apgar tried to stop this he would only give himself away, and he must not do that. He had helped the Cause, he would help it again.

"You can kill me, but I won't tell you."

"I shall kill you, but not before you tell me." The stick hummed, lifting.

"Yee." It was Lisa's blue robe Dikar saw above him now, and Lisa was saying, "It's going to take a long time to make him speak, Yee." Her slender, white hand was on Yee Hashamoto's fat arm. "And once more you won't have time to take me flying. Turn him over to Ben Apgar."

The yellow man brushed Lisa's hand from his arm. "This man knows the traitor's name; I want that name. You understand, Lisa? This is no time for pleasure flying."

"You promised me, Yee. You gave me your word that nothing would keep you from doing it today."

"Then I break my promise."

"Again!" There was sharpness in Lisa's voice, sudden violent fire in her eyes. "This is the fifth time. Remember what I promised *you* yesterday when the report of trouble in the South and West came in and you said you couldn't go."

He was looking at her strangely. "What?"

"THAT if we didn't go today, I was through. Go ahead with what you want to do." She was walking away, her blue robe whispering about her slenderness, "Take as much time as you want."

She reached the door through which she had come in, faced around, one hand on the door handle, the other at her throat. "Take all day, all week to do what Ben Apgar could do as well as you. Better perhaps." The skin at her throat was as white as the down on a pigeon's breast and looked as soft, as warm to the touch. "But don't come looking for me when you're done, because I won't be here."

"Lisa." Hashamoto's creased neck swelled with his anger. "You talk like that to me? You dare? There is still a whipping post, Lisa. I can still send you back to it. I can still have you flogged to the death from which I saved you."

"Of course you can." She smiled thinly. "And the whole army will laugh at you." But Dikar saw the flutter in her throat that told how terrified she was. "The whole army will laugh, whis-

pering how even a white slave-woman preferred death on the whipping post to the attentions of the Viceroy.

"No, my dear. Whether you have me publicly flogged to death or privately murdered, the secret will leak out, and if you let me live, I will tell it. All your officers will be greatly entertained. When you give them an order they will salute, and turn from you and snicker, thinking of how a helpless woman despised you. Where will your discipline be then? Where will be your face?"

There was a choking sound in Hashamoto's throat.

"And when, on the other side of the world," Lisa went on, mercilessly, "your Emperor hears the echo of your army's laughter—One minute, my dear Yee. I give you one minute to come to me," Lisa said, and was gone.

After the door closed, there was only the hum of Hashamoto's thin stick and sound of his heavy breathing. Then Benjamin Apgar began to speak, low-voiced.

"The little devil. But she'll do it, Excellency. Nothing in God's world can keep her from doing it."

"Nothing—" Yee Hashamoto, Viceroy of all America, was a fumbling fat man. He spread his hands wide, said, "It was once said: 'It is safer to put your honor in keeping of man who hates you than in hands of woman who love—' Can I trust you, Benjamin Apgar?"

"In all the years, your Excellency, that I have served you, have you ever found reason to distrust me?"

"No." Hashamoto held out his stick, and queerly, it did not hum. "When I return, Major Apgar, I shall expect to hear the name of the traitor."

"You may expect it," Apgar answered, taking the stick, and Hasha-

moto was going across the room and out of the door.

"Poor Lisa," Apgar sighed. "She did not have the courage to die to save her own soul, but when it was her country—"

Trying to get up, Dikar saw the crumpled, shapeless thing that he had made of Captain Paine, and suddenly a lot of things were clear to him. Paine was the spy, not Morgan. Paine, not Morgan had slipped up behind Gary, clubbed him. It was Morgan who'd seen that murder, and Paine had shot Morgan.

The revolvers—if they had stopped to think about how they lay, the bloody, hair-matted one near Paine, the other so much farther away.

The plan to kill Walt and Dikar, to steal the boat and come down the River to tell the Asafrics about Apgar—no wonder Paine had figured it out so quickly. He hadn't had to figure it out; it had been his own plan. He hadn't fallen asleep over the wheel at all. If Lieutenant Sing Fong had let him talk . . .

"But Lisa only postponed the inevitable," Apgar was saying. Dikar looked at him. "She will have to let Hashamoto come back some time, and then—"

The major's thin hand, like a bird's talons, held a revolver and it was pointing down at Dikar. "I'm sorry, son." The nutlike face had a queer smile on it. "But this is the most Lisa has gained for us—a bullet in your brain, another in mine."

CHAPTER VIII

NO TYRANT RULES THE SKY.

ODDLY, Dikar was not afraid. "Wait," he said. "Listen. To make sure that he does not make me tell you

secret, you must shoot me, of course; but you must not shoot yourself. You're needed, Major Apgar. America needs you now more than it ever did."

"Needs me?" The revolver wavered; ever so little. "No, son. I can do no more for America, now that I am no longer in touch with the Secret Net. I can do no more, and I have lived in hell too long, and I'm tired." It was almost as if he were pleading with Dikar for the right to die. "I have earned my rest."

"There can be no rest for anyone till America is free again." Dikar rocked up to squat on his haunches and the room started to circle again, the floor to heave, but at length the blur cleared. "I came here to tell you what you can do. What you must do. That is why I came looking for you."

"For me—yes. Yes, of course. I'd forgotten." Apgar pulled across his brow the edge of the hand that held the gun. "The lieutenant did report that you insisted on seeing me, and Hashamoto thought that so strange he had you brought up here. You have a message for me?"

"I have. From the President of the United States."

"The President!" Apgar looked startled. "He's escaped! But even if he has, what good? I saw him only last week, a dirt-crusted, bedraggled thing climbing the bars of his cage and eternally singing the *Star-Spangled Banner* in a shrill, cracked voice."

"The man you saw was the president of a dead America. The man who sent me to you is the Leader of a new America, an America that is only just now being born. Listen, Major Apgar."

In a voice hoarse with pain Dikar told about Normanfenton and the Second Continental Congress, and a light began to come into Benjamin Apgar's

face, and he was a tired old man no longer. Then Dikar told of the plan the Congress had made and Apgar turned quickly to the table, snatched up one of the maps Hashamoto had been studying.

"Here's the very place," he cried, smacking his hand on it. "The munitions depot at Dover, New Jersey, only eighty miles from West Point. You say you have captured plenty of trucks when you took the fort? With those we can make it there and back in one night."

"There's a well-paved highway between that isn't too well guarded, and Dover's garrisoned by only two companies. Blow up the explosives stored there and Hashamoto will be so enraged that he will forget all about his careful plans. Look here."

Apgar gathered the other maps in both hands. "The Viceroy has decided merely to keep watch on West Point while he dispatches bombing planes and troops to put down the insurrections in— But what's the use?" The excitement was abruptly out of him. "We can't get word to Fenton about all this. There's no way."

"There is," Dikar broke in. "There must be. Think, Apgar. Till the Viceroy gets back you're still a major on his staff. You still can give orders that will be obeyed by every Asafric. There must be some way."

"Wait! Maybe— Lie down there. Lie down and groan, and pretend to be just on the point of fainting." Apgar was stuffing the maps into an inside pocket of his coat as Dikar obeyed. "And pray that this will work. It will be a miracle if it does, but miracles sometimes happen."

Then he was calling in a loud voice, "Skoom! Sergeant Skoom!"

The wide door at the other end of the room opened. "Heah, sah."

"Bring your men in here," Apgar snapped. "On the double-quick, and make sure that door's locked behind you."

THEY came in, their feet thudding on the floor, their rifles jangling. "Line them up at attention," Apgar snapped. Skoom barked orders and the three privates were standing in a straight line across the floor before the major, with Skoom a step or two in front of them.

Dikar moaned, scrabbling the floor with his fingers. This was not all pretense of suffering, for every movement brought him agony.

Above him, Major Apgar was talking to the Blacks in their own language. Dikar could not understand, of course, but he learned afterward that this was what Apgar was saying: "You heard enough, before you were sent out of here, to know that someone has been betraying us to the American dogs, and that this carrion whimpering at my feet knows who the traitor is.

"He has been persuaded to tell us the name, but the man is so highly placed that the lightning of the Viceroy's wrath cannot strike him like a bolt from the skies. The Emperor's permission must be obtained before so much as a hand may be laid upon him.

"General Yee Hashamoto has gone to arrange for this, but meantime there is danger that the traitor may learn that he is discovered, and flee. It is needful, therefore, that this pig of a spy be hidden from knowledge of all till the Viceroy is ready to act swiftly. This is the task Yee Hashamoto has laid upon me, and upon you.

"The words you hear now come from my mouth but the voice is the voice of your Viceroy. The orders you hear are to be obeyed no matter who gives you contrary orders, unless it be the Vice-

roy himself, by my mouth or by his own. Is that understood?"

"It is understood, sah," Skoom answered. "We understand and obey."

"Very well. We are flying the prisoner to a camp in the northern woods where we will guard him till the traitor is safely in jail. Skoom! Unlock those irons from the prisoner's feet but leave those on his wrist.

"You, on the end there! You are of a size with him. Remove your tunic and clothe him in it. You will lock the outer door when we depart and remain here, opening to no one until the Viceroy relieves you. You other two will come with us and you will shoot down anyone, officer or enlisted man, who attempts to speak with the prisoner, or to hinder us."

CURIOUS eyes followed them as they walked out through the enormous stone-walled room. But the Asafrics quickly saluted when they saw the forbidding frown on Major Apgar's face; they did not attempt to speak to the Blacks or to their iron-cuffed prisoner.

Outside, Dikar was ordered into the back seat of the car between the two privates. Apgar sat in front with Skoom.

The car started off. Apgar leaned over and spoke to Skoom. Skoom grinned and touched something on the wheel he gripped. Dikar jumped as a siren started to howl and looked up into the sky for planes; then he realized that the howling came from the front of the car, and that the car was going faster.

The other cars and trucks were scattering from in front of them, like minnows when a trout darts at them from beneath a shadowy rock; and they were going so fast that there were tears in Dikar's eyes and he could see only a

gray blur of buildings speeding past.

Then, suddenly, there were no building, but blue sky and a wide, white road and a white lattice of iron rising into the sky, with water far beneath. A few moments later the car was running across an enormous flat field, and it was slowing, the siren moaning to silence.

Across that field, as far as Dikar could see, stretched lines and lines of planes, huge planes shining silvery in the sunlight and medium-sized ones red as the breast of a tanager and little ones black as crows. And buzzing like bees about the planes were hundreds of Asafrics.

The car rocked to a stop near a line of the small black planes. Major Apgar sprang to the ground. A yellow-faced officer came running and stiffened to attention.

"I want one of your fastest pursuit planes," the major snapped. "One that is ready to take-off at once."

Slant eyes glanced at Dikar, shifted back to Apgar. "The major has a flight order from the field-commandant, of course."

"I have not. But I have a verbal order from the Viceroy, and I'm in a hurry."

"But Major Apgar"—the officer looked puzzled—"the Viceroy—"

"Are you questioning an officer of the Viceroy's personal staff? Do you dare?"

The lieutenant paled. "No, sir. By no means, sir."

"Then give me a plane and be quick about it."

"Yes, sir." The officer wheeled about, pointed to one, at the end of the nearest line. "That is my own and I know she is one of our fastest." A number of Asafrics were swarming over it. "We are just finishing the morning checkup on her, and—"

"Get those men out of her and turn her over to me. Quickly."

"Yes, sir." The officer started away. Major Apgar turned to the car, said, "All right, Skoom, get them out of there." Skoom jabbered to the privates and they grabbed Dikar's arms, hauled him out to the ground. Then they were all hurrying toward the little black plane.

A WHISTLE shrilled somewhere, loud, ear-piercing. All over the field Asafrics were stopping what they were doing, were looking upward. Dikar's little group reached the plane where the last Asafric was tightening something on a wing, and the lieutenant was saying to Major Apgar, "I must tell you that we've just received warning that a line squall is coming down from the north. All but absolutely necessary flights have been called off."

"Damn the squall," Apgar growled. He glanced up into the sky and Dikar saw a tiny muscle twitch at the corner of his cheekbone. "I'm not calling this one off." Dikar looked up too and saw a plane, bright green as leaf-buds in the spring, coming down on a long, swift slant. "Here. Give me your goggles."

"Yes, sir." The officer handed something to the major. "But I shall need them, flying you—"

"You're not flying us. There will be no room for you. Skoom!" Apgar whirled to the sergeant. "Get everyone into the plane. Snap to it."

Skoom was jabbering to the privates. He was pointing to the green plane which had landed now and was running along the ground, straight toward them. "Skoom!" The major snapped. "Do you hear me? Get the prisoner into the plane."

The sergeant said something, started toward him. The green plane had

stopped, about a hundred yards away. The Asafric workmen were carrying a set of short steps to it, placing the steps against it, just under a door in its side. The door was opening.

Apgar's voice was sharp, angry, behind Dikar—the sergeant's answer sullen-sounding. The privates' fingers were tightening on Dikar's arms. The door of the green plane opened, and a figure in glittering uniform stepped into the sunlight—a bloated figure with a round, moon face. Yee Hashamoto!

The sudden roar of an engine drowned out the voices behind Dikar. The Viceroy glanced that way.

Dikar saw Hashamoto's tiny mouth open, saw his fat arm lift to point at them. The Asafrics were turning, were starting to run toward Dikar and the black plane. Hashamoto jumped down off the steps and came on, yelling.

"He's seen us," Dikar cried. "He knows who we are." The Major was in the black plane, and Dikar shouted at him: "Get away. Leave me and get away."

Skoom had hold of Dikar's arm with one hand and was pulling a revolver from his belt with the other. But Dikar's sudden leap tore him from the Black's grasp. He lifted his arms, clamped together by the cuffs, brought them down. The manacles struck Skoom's head savagely. The sergeant was falling and Dikar was leaping over his fallen body, and Apgar was dragging Dikar over the side of the plane.

The plane was moving, but shots were barking all around, and Dikar could hear Hashamoto's bellow above the engine's roar. Dikar dragged himself upright and saw the soldiers closing in on the plane, the little guns in their hands spitting fire. Right ahead Dikar saw the green plane; a flutter of blue appeared in its open door, and

a delicate face framed by hair like yellow sunshine.

But the black plane was sluggish to rise. It drove forward, only a few feet above the ground, and there directly in its path was the green plane, terrifyingly near. Then Dikar saw the ground drop suddenly away and in that same instant a rending crash threw him violently to one side. Another shock and he was being whirled somewhere between the earth and the sky.

IT SEEMED an endless time before Dikar was no longer being wrenched about, but at last he was carried steadily, and the shot-sounds, the shouting, seemed far away under him. He dragged himself up, somehow, till he could look over the plane side. He saw sky, looked down and saw the field skimming away. The little men down here were running about like ants.

"The miracle!" he heard Benjamin Apgar yell. "The miracle has happened. Our landing gear's torn away but we're still in the air, and we've got a chance now to get away."

Wind whipped Dikar's face, but still he stared down at the field. He could see a heap of broken green and a spot of blue near it that was very still.

"She did as best she could what she was best fitted for," Dikar whispered to himself, "an at Evenin Council the Boss of us all will say to her, 'Well done, Lisa.'" Then he felt a quick impact of terror that left him weak.

He'd realized suddenly that he was in the air, high in the air, and that there was nothing to hold him there, nothing but this shivering, frail thing they called a plane.

Dikar's legs buckled under him and he fell to the plane's floor, groveling. He'd been scared before but never like this. Never like this.

"The storm warning must have turned Hashamoto back." Apgar's voice came to him, from far away, it seemed. "And he landed just at the wrong time for us, but we got away in spite of— Oh! Maybe we haven't got away yet. Look!"

The sky was filled with sound, with a rumble of thunder. Dikar's face, his palms, his whole body, were wet with cold sweat, but this seemed to have somewhat purged him of his terror. He had strength again to lift his head and look back the way Apgar had pointed.

Far back, far below, the field had shrunk so small that Dikar's hand might almost cover it, but black specks were streaking up from it, rising swiftly into the fathomless blue of the sky, and Dikar knew that these were the planes of the Asafries pursuing them.

"Can they catch us?" Dikar demanded, turning to the weazened little man who crouched in the front of the plane, his hands clutching a stick stuck up from its floor. "Can you get us away from them?"

"I don't know," the answer came through the roaring in the sky. "But I'm going to make a damned good try."

CHAPTER IX

THUNDER IS A FRIEND

FAR ahead gray-black clouds piled up in the sky, the clouds of the storm that had turned Yee Hashamoto back, but about them the sky was clear as the water of a Mountain stream, as crisply cold.

Beneath, fold on fold, the hills that had crouched blackly ominous in the night were patterned with squares of green, darker and lighter, and yellow. Fine white lines that were broad roads meandered among them and from the bottom of a long crease in the hills

glinted silvery-blue a ribbon no wider than Dikar's arm. The great River.

"Can you fight with a machine gun, Dikar?"

"I never have," Dikar answered Major Benjamin Apgar's question, looking at the red marks where the iron cuffs had ribbed the skin from his wrists. The cuffs were gone because, luckily, Apgar had taken from Skoom the key to them before they left headquarters. "But I can try, if I have to."

"Well, you're going to have to, all right. Look back."

Dikar obeyed. The black specks hung in the blue, far back, just as they had hung since they'd started out. No! One was a little larger, a little nearer the others. It was growing, very slowly, but still growing so that already Dikar could make out its spread wings, the blurred circle at its head that gave it strength to fly.

"This is one of their fastest pursuits," Apgar said grimly. "But that one is faster. It's going to catch us long before we reach West Point."

"What do we do then?" Dikar asked, quietly.

"We fight. See that machine gun behind you? Sit down on the floor beside it. There is a little tube, just at the level of your head. Close one eye and look through with the other."

Obeying, Dikar gasped. The leading Asafrie plane had jumped forward miles, was almost on top of them. He jerked his head away. No. It was still back there, only a little nearer than it had been before.

"That's the sight," Apgar was saying. "You see those crossed hair lines? Where they join, the bullets will hit on your mark. The handle under the near end of the gun will move it."

He went on, telling Dikar how to aim the machine gun, how to load it, how

to fire it, and by the time he had finished the pursuing plane was as near, almost, as it had seemed when Dikar first looked through the sight.

Bluish lines streaked the sky; there was a loud *rrrrrt, rrrrrt*. There was a bright spot on the wing beside Dikar. Others! The Asafric plane was roaring at him. The *rrrrttt* was behind Dikar, nearer.

He turned. It was coming from the machine gun in front of Apgar, and beyond, between their own plane and the up-slanting hills, was the Asafric plane. Black-goggled men crouched in it. The hills and the plane swung up, over, down again in front of Dikar. He caught the Asafric plane on the cross-hairs of his sight, pressed the trigger; he heard and felt the machine gun's harsh sound, and then the plane and the hills were gone. . . .

SUDDENLY the Asafric plane was whirling away, spinning crazily and dropping, flames bursting from it, and the plane he was in was tossing frantically no longer. Apgar was calling back, "All right, Dikar? Are you all right?"

"Yes," Dikar gasped, not quite sure, for there was fire across his one shoulder and there was sticky wetness on his forehead when he lifted his hand to it. "I think so." Turning, he saw that one arm of Apgar's hung limp by his side, its sleeve darkening. "But you're hurt!"

"No," Apgar said. "Not bad." The light within his face was even brighter; his eyes were shining. "I've not forgotten," he cried. "It's been years but I haven't forgotten how to handle a plane in a dog-fight."

"A dog-fight? I didn't see any dogs."

Apgar laughed and for an instant Dikar thought he heard one of the Boys of the Bunch laugh, so young and

joyous was the sound. But then Dikar saw that the sky was all black-gray, close ahead, saw lightning streak the high-piled clouds.

"The storm!" he cried. "We're flyin' right into it!" And the sky was filled with thunder, but the thunder was from behind. Dikar wheeled, saw that the planes of the Asafrics, those that were left, were much nearer and coming fast. "The planes, Apgar! The other planes. We're going slower, and they're catching us!"

"The fight held us up and crippled us," Apgar's answer was blown back to Dikar on the wind. "The storm waits ahead, Dikar, and the death lies behind. But be damned to them both, for between them, see is West Point."

Dikar looked down and saw the gray buildings of West Point nested very small in the encircling hills. A great shout of joy rose in his throat. .

A white cloud puffed, just below the plane, and another little white cloud; the plane rocked and straightened, and rocked again, and sharp thunder struck at Dikar.

"They're shooting at us." Apgar pounded the stick with his good fist. "In West Point they're shooting at us with their Archies. We can't get down in the face of their fire."

Thunder rolled in the storm ahead, and thunder rolled from the planes coming behind, and sharp thunder struck at Dikar from the little white puffs beneath.

"They think we're leading a squadron of Asafrics to attack them, Dikar. They think we're the enemy. After all we've gone through, to be killed at last by our friends— We have no way to let them know who we are."

"Yes we have," Dikar cried. He was tearing off his green uniform, coat, trousers. "We have one way." He was

naked as when he roamed the Mountain. "Circle, Apgar! Circle above that flag down there."

"What—what are you going to do, Dikar?"

"I know they have tubes there by the Archies, through which they can see far and far. I'm going to let them see me, and they'll know who I am because I'm naked."

"But they can't see you, here in the cockpit, from below!"

"They'll see me where I'm going," Dikar flung back, and he was climbing up out of the place Apgar called the cockpit. He was climbing out on the wing torn by bullets, and the wind took hold of him.

THE wind, stronger than any storm wind Dikar had ever known, fought to tear him from the wing. Thunder rolled from the storm clouds, from the black planes, from the Archies below; and the thunder tossed the plane, shaking it, trying to shake Dikar from its wing, to cast him down and down till he smashed on the Plain below, between the gray buildings of West Point.

But Dikar clung to wires with both hands and would not let the wind tear him from the wing, would not let the Archies shake him from it. Dikar leaned far out, and below him the flag whipped in the storm wind, red and white and blue. Dikar let go with one hand, his feet clinging to the very edge of the plane, and leaned far out and waved his free hand to the little men on the roofs from which the Archies barked their thunder.

And suddenly the plane was not tossing any longer in the thunder of the Archies, and a faint sound of cheering came up to Dikar from below. The white puffs of the Archies were bursting far behind now, were bursting about the

black, pursuing planes. The pursuing planes were lifting above the reach of the Archies, but Dikar's plane was sliding down the breast of the wind to the Plain that was hemmed in by the gray buildings of West Point.

Somehow Dikar tumbled back into the cockpit. Thunder clapped, deafening, but it was only the thunder of the storm. "Great stuff, son," he heard Apgar exclaim, and then Apgar groaned. "We have no landing gear."

"No landin—" Dikar gasped. "What does that mean?"

"It means that I've got to take her in on her belly. Miracle! We'll need a dozen miracles to live through this. Hold tight!"

There was only sound, vast sound blotting out all else. And then silence, darkness—light in the darkness, little yellow tongues of fire, licking toward Dikar.

Dikar could not move, could not get away from the fire. Something was holding him.

Thunder! A clap of thunder that burst the sky. Then a hissing like a thousand snakes—the hissing sound of rain. The air solid with rain that beat down on Dikar, that beat down and drowned the flames.

Wet hands were dragging Dikar out of the wreck of the plane. Dimly he saw faces in the rain—Walt's, Normanfenton's. He saw vague figures gathered about a limp form, carrying it. The rain-curtain parted. The form was Benjamin Apgar's, and his eyes were open, and he was smiling. He was not dead. Benjamin Apgar was alive, and the plans, the maps, were safe.

"Dikar!" Marilee's voice was crying his name. "Oh, Dikar." Marilee was sobbing his name. Marilee's arms were around him, her lips were on his, and his head was on Marilee's breast.

It was sweet to sleep with his head pillowed on Marilee's soft breast.

Dikar awoke. He was on his bed in the little House that was his and Marilee's, and night pressed black against the window. Out of the night came a thunder.

"The trucks, Dikar." Marilee was here by his bedside, gray eyes grave on his, smiling at him. "They're starting out for the raid on Dover."

"Starting!" Dikar pushed at the bed to get up, "I've got to—"

His hands were strangely clumsy; they were great white bundles, wrapped in cloth. The white stuff wound his body. Marilee's small hand pushed

Dikar down on the bed. She was so strong suddenly—or was he so weak?

"You're not going anywhere, my dear," Marilee murmured. "You're staying here with me. You've done your job for today."

"For today. But tomorrow—"

"Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. There will be many tomorrows for us, Dikar, and each tomorrow will have its task for which you are fitted, and each task you will do well, because you are Dikar."

"But best of all there will be a new Tomorrow for America, a grand and shining Tomorrow for a free America, the long night of slavery ended, the sunrise come at last."

"Please, God," Dikar whispered. "Let there be sunrise, Tomorrow."

THE END

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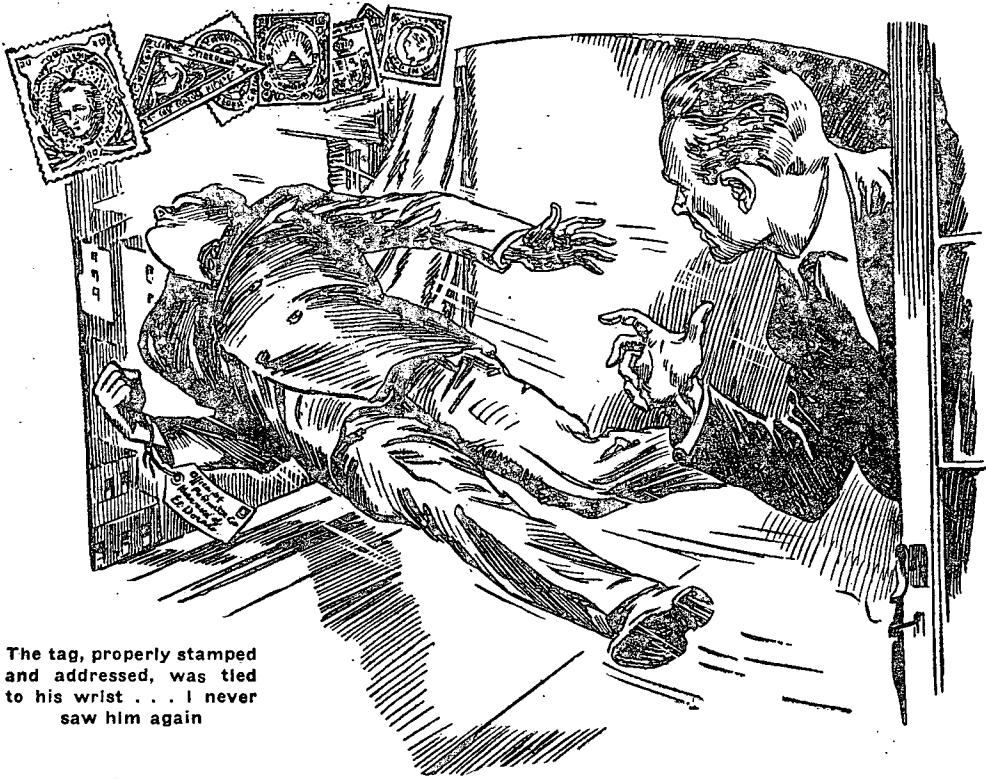
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Introducing Murchison Morks, the improbable and intolerable, whose collection of stamps could whisk you painlessly out of space and time. With a discussion of procedure which any postmaster general might study with profit

By ROBERT ARTHUR

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"**N**OW these triangulars," Malcolm said proudly, pointing to a glass frame behind which were five stamps in faded shades of red, blue, green, yellow and black, "make up probably the rarest and most interesting complete set known to philatelists. Their value is not definitely established, since they've never been sold as a unit. But—"

It was at this point that Morks interrupted. I had known he would. Malcolm had gotten further in his narration than was usual, with Morks around. But Morks—his full, and quite improbable name is Murchison Morks—had been bending forward to peer at the stamps, and it took him a moment to straighten and turn.

"They are certainly rare," Morks said in that modest, melancholy way of his which is as impossible to stop as the flow from a broken bathroom tap, "but I once had a set of stamps