

FORBIDDEN VALLEY

by William Byron Mowery

SYNOPSIS: Curt Tennyson repulses the friendly advances of Sonya, whom he has befriended in the Canadian wilderness, because he knows that the girl is planning to desert his party and to join her Karakhan, the millionaire crook whom Curt is tracking down. Curt and his partner Paul know that as soon as Sonya leaves with Le Noir, Karakhan's comical man, Le Noir will send the remorseless Kioshees Indians to destroy them.

Chapter 38

DEPARTURE

Curt stood up and gave Sonya his hand to rise. As his glance met hers he saw tears in her eyes, saw her lips trembling. "All right, Curt," she said quietly, with a humility that shamed him. She glanced down at the ground, started to say something more, checked herself and turned away to her tent.

He walked the clips into his pocket and thrust up to the little store fort which he and Paul had rolled together. Paul was carefully inspecting it and plugging chinks so that no arrows could sift through. They did not count on having to use the defense, but their situation was delicate. Le Noir was a crafty fellow, and it was wise to guard against the unforeseen.

As the upper tip of the island Ralph was sitting at the water edge occasionally drawing in a fish on the hand-line he was holding. He looked lonely and disconsolate. Curt wondered whether Sonya had really told him the truth about her trip. Ralph was an unselfish soul, but to bring the girl he loved into that country and help her to get it, a dark blur moved away from shore. Curt covered his face with his hands to shut out the sight of it. When he looked up again, the blur was gone.

Paul touched his arm, moments afterward.

"We'd better be somewhere else in an hour from now. This island is going to have visitors." Curt pulled himself together. "Yes, we'd better go," he said jerkily. "We'll take what we need of our outfit and get away to one of these islands, and then split up."

"Francis and Jocku haven't come back."

Curt turned toward the caribou island, barely visible in the deep dusk. It just then occurred to him that he had not heard the guides shoot. Their silence was strange; they had been gone long enough to make two such trips.

He hurried to the lower end, launched the remaining canoe and dashed down lake. A few rods offshore he called in a guarded voice: "Jocku! You and Francis get out of there. Come alive! We haven't any time to waste."

No answer came back. His voice sent the little band of caribou tearing through the swamp birch to the other side of the island, but neither Francis nor Jocku answered.

The explanation dawned on him with a crash. He remembered, too late, that the guides had sat off by themselves all day, talking in low tones, and that Jocku had acted queerly when he came to make his request. Now he saw through the whole ruse. Their trips after a caribou had been a scheme to secure a canoe and get away. These two had deserted!

He whirled the canoe around and started back to camp, swearing at the evil luck that dogged every step he took. The treachery of those natives was little short of disaster. He had counted heavily on them to take Ralph back south; and now they had sneaked away, the pair of cowards, and Nichols was left on his hands. If he and Paul were outnumbered with Ralph on their swift shadowy trip, they would not stand a ghost of a chance.

Before he had gone very far he heard a rifle shot down stream. He stopped short, listened. A mile south, down where the river narrowed to a bottle neck, a flurry of shots sounded. The dull thud of the guns was unmistakable—the heavy bear Winchester of Jocku and Francis. Those two guides were in trouble; they'd run into an ambush!

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he was startled by the low quavering call of an owl six hundred yards out upon the lake. He dropped the rock, stood listening. Le Noir? It couldn't be; the red star was nearly two hours high. But then the call came again, no nearer but louder; and he distinctly caught the falsetto quality of it.

"Hell! It's Le Noir, Paul! He's come early for her!"

Paul nodded. "Yes, it's he. Siam-Klale and he must want to get the whole business over with tonight!"

They crouched down behind the rocks and waited. Curt's eyes were upon the tent, where Sonya would come out. He had not imagined that her going would be an ordeal, he had even thought he would take a savage pleasure in being free of her for good; but now when she actually was leaving, it seemed impossible to let her go.

When she stepped outside the tent and looked around cautiously to see where Paul and he were, he rose up, overwhelmed by the impulse to go down there and keep her from leaving. Paul checked him, took a part of the burden of decision upon himself.

"Don't partner! You'd be sorry. Let her leave. She'll be in no danger. Remember, we are following her and can see that she gets safely out."

Sonya hurried on down the island. In the owl dusk her slender form grew fainter and fainter till Curt no longer saw her. A canoe gripped on the pea-gravel as she tugged at the craft to get it afloat. A dark blur moved away from shore. Curt covered his face with his hands to shut out the sight of it. When he looked up again, the blur was gone.

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stopped. The other shot four times more. Then, faintly in the taut silence, a long-drawn yell wafted up river, more a scream than any articulate word. Piercing, vibrant with terror, it sent shivers through Curt. It was a man's death cry.

All his anger changed to heart-felt pity. "Poor devil!" he said softly. "They got it. The Kioshees had a party at that narrow, to cut us off if we tried to break away."

He whirled on ashore, goaded by the memory of that cry. Paul had heard it too, and knew what it meant. Working swiftly, they made ready to leave. They left the tents standing, abandoned most of the supplies and all the heavier things; took nothing but guns, blankets and food for a few days.

"Carry this stuff to the canoe," Curt directed. "I'll go get Ralph."

As he hurried up the island, he tried to figure how he might salvage something out of the wreckage of his plans. Perhaps they could take Ralph several miles up some tributary river where the Kioshees were not likely to come, and secrete him in some cave, with food and camp necessities, to be picked up later when they had finished with Karakhan. It was possible.

"Ralph! Come along with me. We're pitching away from this place on the jump."

Ralph got up quickly. "Why, what's the matter?"

"I'll tell you later. Let's get into the canoe and put distance between us."

"Where's Sonya?" Ralph queried, winding up his fish line.

"Don't ask questions now, man, for Lord's sake! And let that line go. Come on, we're leaving."

He hit the sentence off. Out upon the lake to the west a "merganser" called. From north and south came answers. Curt stared in the direction of that first call. For a moment he saw nothing. Then his eyes picked up five blurred motes, out at the limit of vision. He peered sharply at them. Canoes? Five Kioshees canoes!

He spun around with Ralph and ran down toward Paul. If only they could get out upon the lake, they might make a running battle of it and lose themselves in a maze of reedy islets half a mile east.

At the lower tip of the island his partner's gun ripped the night silence with a sharp crack. When he reached Paul, the latter was kneeling down and clipping a fresh magazine into his smoking rifle.

"Look! Paul grabbed his arm. 'Six of them! Coming in at us!'"

Curt looked where he pointed. Three hundred yards offshore half a dozen sinister shadows were looming out of the dusk. Paul's volley had checked their headlong dash, they had scattered to make the target harder; but they were coming straight on, aiming for that lower tip.

"Lord—they've got us!" Curt gasped. Before they could possibly get their canoe launched and out of the shallows, those dancing shadows would be upon them. By a margin of minutes, the precious minutes lost in hunting for Jocku and Francis, they had failed to get away.

A few stray arrows, already swishing into the sand around them, emphasized the point.

"Let's get back to our rocks," he ordered. "Nothing to do now but shoot it out."

They turned and ran for the shelter.

(To be Continued)

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

By Frederic J. Haskin

What question can we answer for you? There is no charge at all for this service except three cents in coin or stamps for return postage. Do not use postcards. Address your letter to the Capital Journal Information Bureau, Frederic J. Haskin, Director, Washington, D. C.

Q. Who said, "Cowards die many times before their deaths"? F.D.B. A. Shakespeare uses the line in Julius Caesar. The following line is, "The valiant never taste of death but once."

Q. Why do linotype machines when they commence to make "pi" write certain forms like "shrdlu" repeatedly? A.T. A. When a linotype operator has set a part of a line, then for some reason wishes to reset it, he usually runs down "pi" to fill out the line, and he or the make-up man is supposed to remove it before making up the type into pages. In running down "pi" the operator simply runs his finger straight down the keyboard, which results in any of the following six letter combinations: etain, shrdlu, cmfwyp, vbkgkj, etc. He repeats the combinations as many times as necessary to fill out a line.

Q. How long has it been since liquor was served as a part of the Navy ration? V.H. A. An Act of Congress, approved July 14, 1862, provides "And be it further enacted that from the first day of September 1862 the spirit ration in the Navy of the United States shall have ever ceased and thereafter no distilled spirits, liquors, shall be admitted on board vessels of war, except as medicine."

Q. Will oiling rubber boots help to preserve them? J.A.R. A. The Bureau of Standards says that rubber boots should not be oiled. Grease, oil, wax, etc., are deleterious to rubber. The only care which rubber boots require is to wash them with water and store them in a cool, dark, and reasonably dry place when not in use.

Q. Are there legends other than the one about Rip Van Winkle in which a person awakens after a slumber lasting for years? W.F. A. There are numerous tales of the kind. Epimenides, the Greek poet, was supposed to have slept fifty-seven years. Such legends hang around the names of King Arthur, Charlemagne, Barbarossa, the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, Tannhäuser, Sebastian, Roderick, Peter Klaus, and many others.

Q. Who will be the captain of the Notre Dame Football Team for the year 1934? S.W. A. A captain will be appointed for each game and then a captain elected at the end of the season.

Q. What does Citizenship A.D.I. on a discharge from the Marine Corps mean? B.J.L. A. It signifies "Citizenship American Declaration of Intention."

Q. Do land animals ever swim long distances? A.H. A. Except in such emergencies as inundations, land animals, except the polar bear, otter, and beaver never voluntarily swim far. In 1924 an English stag took to the sea to escape the hunt and had nearly crossed the English Channel when it was picked up off Dunkirk by a trawler but this was not a voluntary feat.

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Sundown Stories

A FURTHER DELAY

By Mary Graham Bonner

Willy Nilly had fixed the Cow's hoof and she was lying on the floor, chewing her cud. Willy Nilly wondered how he would ever be able to fix up the place, with Bossy Cow taking up all the room. They had to scramble over her if they wanted to move.

"I've simply got to fix up this place," he said after a while. "The pipes must be mended. The wood must be dried so we can have a good fire. I must see that there are no bits of glass or china around, as I don't want any one to have his feet hurt."

"But I have a small room upstairs. Mrs. Cow and I think you could just get into it. You may stay there until your hoof is well and until we get this place fixed."

"Moo, moo," said the Cow, "that would be very pleasant. And if it won't be bothering you too much perhaps I could have something to eat."

"Certainly," said Rip, the Dog. "You may lie on the bed up there and make believe it is a meadow, and I'll bring you up your supper on a tray. That will be style, all right!"

The Cow grinned. "Ah, I can see how pleasant it is going to be here," she said, and started to limp up the stairs.

But as she reached the top and turned to go through the little hall that led into the bedroom she called out:

"Come and see what has happened! I can't go any further. I'm stuck."

Willy Nilly looked up the stairs, and there, sure enough, was the Cow. She could neither move forward nor backward.

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