FORBIDDEN VALLEY

by William Byron Mowery

SYNOPSIS: Curt Tennyson has come to Edmonton from a winter in the sub-Arctic, intending to take a new, and good job. Instead, to help his former chief in the Royal Mounted, A. K. Marlin, he starts on the most difficult man hunt of his career—trailing Igor Karakhan, international crook. At Vancouver Curt discovers that Karakhan had known Helen Mathieson, and from her he learns that a flyer named Gunnar had taken Karakhan on many airplane trips, and that just at the time the Russian had disappeared, Gunnar had made a suspicious departure from Vancouver.

Chapter Eight

INTO THE NOR.H

CURT went on eagerly:

"Now, why did Gunnar lie about his clearance and take on such a big load? And why should a private plane, which wasn't schedule-bound, venture up on a day when the commercial companies canceled their flights and no planes could get in? I'll tell you why—Jim Gunnar had important business on hand that day!

"And one other question: Where did this youngster, who was just an ordinary barnstormer—where did he suddenly get the eighteen thousand dollars for a new plane?"

Baldwin and Holden exchanged glances of dismay. They had worked nine months on that case and here came along a person who had struck a hot scent almost at once. However much they wanted to see Karakhan arrested, Tennyson was showing them up too badly.

"Don't jump to conclusions," Baldwin argued. "Gunnar might just have been flying a plane-load of whisky to an Indian camp or smuggling something across the border. A lot of foreigners are taken into the States by air from here."

"Maybe so. I'm merely saying that the trip looks suspicious to me. Holden, did that record give you any hint of where he did go?"

"Nothing whatever. The plane just went away into the fog."

"You're sure there's no clue?"

"Dead sure. You can see for yourself. I made a copy of the clearance record."

Curt looked at the hastily scribbled sheet. Gas and oil were the first two items. Then followed a few trifling purchases—cigarettes, chocolate bars, a box lunch.

"That lunch," he commented, "ought to have put a person wise that Gunnar intended to stay in the air for several hours. You don't take a lunch along on a forty-five minute crow-hop." His finger moved on down and stopped at an entry which read NC-5, 50c. "What's this item, Holden?"

"Some gadget for the plane, I suppose."

Curt believed so, too, but the infinite patience in him took nothing for granted. He reached the phone, got the airport and asked the parts man what NC-5, 50c meant on a bill.

"That? Oh, that's for a Geology Service map—them strip maps that you hang inside the cabin on roller and roll up or down as you fly along. That NC-5 chart covers the section from Chilcotin north to the Grand Trunk. Is that all you wanted to know?"

"Quite all," said Curt. "Thanks."

Baldwin whirled angrily on Holden. "What a blighted timbertop, you. 'Dead sure—nothing whatever'—when the record held a clue like that! And you even copied it!"

Holden's face reddened. Curt interposed: "It's all right, Holden. I caught that because I know something about planes. Arn, send a constable down to get one of those NC-5 charts, won't you?"

WHEN the chart came, he spread it on a table for a careful study. The map covered a strip 75 miles wide by 400 long, ending at the Grand Trunk Railroad in northern British Columbia. Red dots showed where pilots could secure gas, and stars where some sort of mechanical service could be expected.

In that thinly settled country there were only two stars and fourteen dots.

Before leaving, that afternoon, he wrote night letters and sent them to all the places that he could reach by wire.

When he walked into Mounted headquarters the next morning, a pile of yellow envelopes lay on Baldwin's desk. Baldwin picked up one lying by itself and handed it glumly to him.

"You're an uncanny devil, Tennyson," he growled. 'If I had your luck I'd be Premier."

The telegram came from one of the starred places, a little town called Tellacet, at the junction of the Grand Trunk and the Lilluar River. A thrill ran through Curt as he read the electric words:

Plane you described landed here on afternoon seventeenth Stop Carried pilot and passenger Stop Left on morning eighteenth Stop Destination unknown.

Within an hour Curt and Smash were flying north in their ship, heading for Tellacet.

At the Edmonton hotel Marlin was surprised to have Smash Desplaines breeze in on him one afternoon three days later.

"Hello, Smash! Where's Curt?"

"Over in northern B. C. At a little jerk-water called Tellacet. He sent you this letter."

Marlin slit the envelope hastily. Good news this soon? Impossible!—even for Tennyson.

The message was in the numeral code of the Silent Squad. He sat down at the table and began deciphering it. The laconic sentences staggered him as he worked them out.

Dear A-K:

Baldwin and I picked up Karakhan's trail at Vancouver. A flyer called Gunnar brought him north to this place. Karakhan then sent Gunnar out by train and went on north by himself in the plane. I suppose he was too cautious to let anybody know his exact destination.

I have reason to believe that he's hiding somewhere in the Lilluar Mountains. A hundred miles north of here is a post called Russian Lake, the jumping-off place for the Lilluars. I intend to go there and try to trace him farther. Since a plane in that country would arouse suspicion, Smash will stand by here at Tellacet with the plane, to be on hand if needed; and the rest of the work will be done by canoe.

By the way, don't mention Karakhan to Smash. He knows I'm hunting a man, but it isn't wise to trust him with any particulars.

After he hands you this, he is flying over to Athabasca to get Paul St. Claire and fetch him here. I need help on this, and Paul is the only person on earth whom I can trust absolutely. If this turns out to be a wilderness hunt, Paul will be worth ten ordinary men.

So far at least it was a woman.

Curt.

A THOUSAND yards off the north shore of Russian Lake, Curt and Paul stopped paddling a few minutes and gazed ahead at the trading post, looking the place over before they landed.

The post lay at the mouth of the Lilluar River, a big mountain stream which had its origin 300 miles north, near the Yukon headwaters. As far offshore as they were, its tumultuous current tugged strongly against the sides of their canoe. Small and unimportant, the trading station consisted of a gaunt frame mission, a whitewashed Mounted Police cabin and a red-roofed Hudson's Bay store—representing man's three angle : institutions of religion, law, commerce.

Five trapper and prospector tents were strung out down the landwash; several shacks stood back at the wood's edge, and the leather tepees of a dozen Indian families reached up along the river bank beyond the mission.

Curt turned his eyes from the trading post to the blue-hazy distance up the Lilluar valley. "Lord, what a country, Paul!" he mused. The wild spirit of it awed him. Range after mighty range marched north out of sight, all of them topped with glaciers and huge snowfields, their slopes cut by moraines and avalanche paths and mile-deep canyons. It was a primordial country, as lonely and appalling as anything he had seen in the sub-Arctic.

The sun had already slanted down behind the northwest ranges. In the evening hush the lake was as still as a mirror, but far-away west a mass of black thunderheads promised a rainstorm before many hours.

A small group of people, gathered in front of the Bay store, were looking at the canoe and poling; and several men had strolled out upon the little pier to meet it. The post was so wilderness-buried that two strangers in a boat caused a big stir.

Paul gave the canoe a stroke to keep it headed straight. "I wonder whether Mam'selle Luck or Dame Malheur is waiting for us yonder, partner?" He spoke in French, as he always did with Curt.

"That's what I'm wondering, Paul. We're walking into a big blank question here. We haven't a ghost of an idea where Karakhan is hiding. He may be close to this place or two weeks' foot-slogging back in that God-forsaken Strong-Woods. See those people there? Well, any of them may be a spy of his. He's almost got to have a contact man. We'll have to watch every step we take."

Paul nodded, scrutinizing the post with his sharp eyes. A slender young métis of twenty-three, he belonged to the old and fine clan of Athabascan St. Claires, descendants of the proud "Timber Cree" and the old French explorer—fighter, lover and far-wanderer. Born to the Strong-Woods, he was as bush-wise as a pine marten or a timber wolf. Between him and Curt a deep silent partnership had grown up during their year of foot-loose wandering.

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Tomorrow. Curt and Paul find a girl in danger.

Countess Carlisle Hurt In Air Crash

SHANGHAI, China, Nov. 24.—(AP)—Countess Carlisle, niece of Sir Miles Lampson, British minister to China, was reported seriously injured in an airplane crash on Chusan island, northeast of Ningpo, today. No one was killed.

Lincoln Reynolds, Viola, Cal., the American vice consul to Foochow, was said in advices reaching here to have been slightly injured.

CWA FUNDS FOR SCHOOLS URGED

SALEM, Ore., Nov. 24.—(AP)—District school boards having school building repairs and grounds improvements that can be done with hand labor are urged to take advantage of the federal financing plan embraced in the civil works program, by C. A. Howard, state superintendent of public instruction, who instructs the boards to submit their proposals immediately in writing to their county relief committees.

The types of improvement recommended by Howard are interior and exterior painting and calcimining, general building and roof repairs, fence and equipment repairs and improvement of grounds.

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BAUCOM TRAGEDY SPOT IS MARKED

GRANTS PASS, Nov. 24.—(Spl)—In honor of B. M. Baucom, state patrolman, killed July 1 in line of duty, a marble marker has been erected seven miles north of town at the spot where he was killed, J. G. Bromley, maintenance engineer for the highway department, said Thursday. The marker was erected by the highway department.

The marker is a large marble block, 3 feet long, 3 feet wide and 4 feet high, and was secured at Marble mountain. A plaque, bearing Baucom's name and a few words of eulogy will be provided by the state police department.

Baucom, whose home was in Medford, was shot by John Alvin Barrier and Harry A. Bowles when he had stopped them on suspicion of driving a stolen car.

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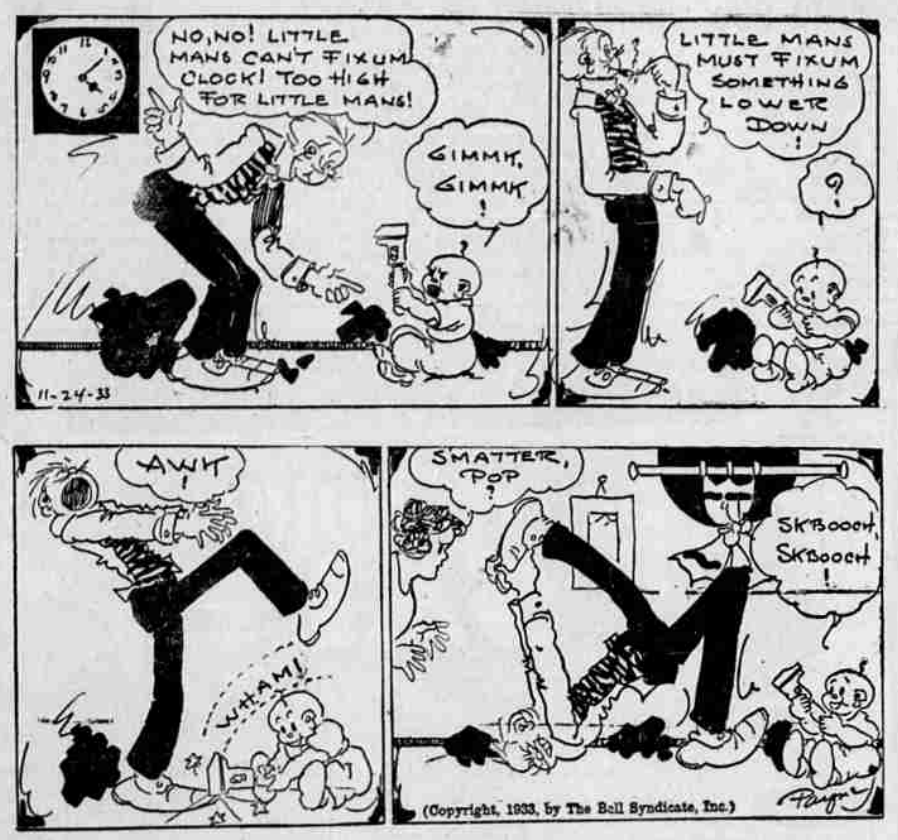
S'MATTER POP— By C. M. PAYNE



SUBURBAN HEIGHTS By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Brownie "Travels On!"

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORRESTER

BOUND TO WIN—Good Riddance!

By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—The Dreamer

By SOL HESS

BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus

There's No Guesswork in Tribune A. B. C. Circulation