

FORBIDDEN VALLEY

by William Byron Mowery

SYNOPSIS: On the trail of the Russian international troop, Tom Karakhan, Curt Ferguson and Paul St. Claire have reached Russian Lake in the Canadian Northwest. They have rescued Sonia Nichols from a drunken half-breed, but Sonia and Curt have quarrelled because Curt has approved the downfall of the Romanoffs. At a picnic on the lake above Curt plays on old Russian tunes, and Sonia sings the words. At least, Curt is sure she is a Russian.

Chapter 14

SONYA APOLOGIZES

SONYA must be a Russian, exiled by the revolution and therefore bitter against it. That was why she had fared out at him when he mildly praised the Leninists. Her manners indicated that she had come from a well-to-do family, possibly from the aristocracy.

But what about her brother? Ralph didn't appear Russian, or an alien at all. His name was English and he seemed to be an ordinary Canadian citizen. Of course he could have changed his name, and it was possible that he had lived in the Dominion longer than Sonia; but even so they were vastly different people to be brother and sister.

Altogether there was something odd about the relationship of those two, something that he could not quite fathom.

Old John took the trout from the balsam slab, divided it, and an Indian girl handed the portions around on strips of birchbark, with an oilcan and piece of bacon to each portion. As Curt passed out his cigarettes and chocolate squares, he purposely stopped with Nichols, crouched down, and fell into talk with the entomologist.

"I understand you're not staying at Russian Lake much longer, Ralph."

"No. Mr. Higginbotham here has hired two guides for us and we're leaving tomorrow morning."

"Making a trip into the bush?"

"Yes, up the Lilluar."

A young trapper cut in bluntly: "Nichols, if you try to go into the Kioshoes ranges, it'll be just too bad, that's all. Those Kioshoes ain't any tame territory. What I mean, I'd rather fight a grizzly bear with a pine branch than argue with them boys. When I first hit this country four years ago, I thought this talk about 'em was mostly nonsense, but I found out different!"

"You may be a scientist, Nichols, an' after nothing but harmless bugs, but they won't know you from a human being, an' they don't have any more use for you than for any white man. You'll get to the pass all right, but if you go any further you'll float back down, so full of arrers you'll look like a pincushion! Ain't I right, John?"

"They don't let whites in," old John corroborated. "They'll give a man a fair caution, an' if a prospector happens to stray inside, they'll take 'em out peace'bly. I'm flat meanin' to say they shoot squar' with a person at first, an' then if he don't take warnin' they shoot straight."

The city sportsman winked knowingly at Sonia. "Scare talk, Miss Nichols. They've repeated it so much that they've got to believing it themselves. You'll find those Smokies as tame as tabby cats."

Sonia quietly ignored the sportsman and spoke to the men who knew what they were talking about. "I don't deny there's a danger. But we're going to try and get on friendly terms with the Kioshoes. If they understand we're altogether peaceful, they probably won't object. And we do want to work in that country. One week in there would be worth a year in a country that's been combed and combed."

CURT took no part in the discussion. By linking up Jamieson's account of the wild Lilluar tribe with Sonia's sketch of their history, he could see the whole story of the Kioshoes pretty clearly. Their hostility toward white people undoubtedly sprang from the brutal treatment they had received from the Russians. In so isolated a tribe, traditions would hang on for generations.

Now Sonia and Ralph were going into that pot of trouble, with no protection except a pair of guides who would desert at the first real danger. For a city girl and man to venture into territory where experienced bush-jumpers stayed strictly out was sheer suicide, and not a very pleasant kind of suicide at that.

At eleven-thirty the first spatter of rain broke up the party. The Indians faded into the darkness; the factor ambled home; the missionary wrapped his black robe about him

and left the wolf cub in each jacket pocket and trotted for his tent.

Curt wanted to ask Sonia if he might walk up to Higginbotham's residence with her, where she and Ralph were staying; but he was afraid of getting snubbed. While he wavered, Sonia said good-night to Mrs. Hodkins and turned to him.

"I've been wanting to apologize to you, Mr. Ralston." She was really sincere about it—no contrite, in fact, that she would not look him in the eyes but stared at a button on his jacket.

"Why, it was as much my fault as yours," he insisted, as they started up toward the factor's house. "I threw out a big wild statement and you caught me up on it. But honestly—he was thinking of her javelin-sharp words—"I'd hate to ever get into a real quarrel with you."

"Am I that bad?"

"Oh, you're positively formidable! To change the subject, there's something I'd like to say, if you won't bite my head off."

"I promise. What is it?"

"Well, if you don't mind an unsolicited opinion, I believe you and your brother ought to think twice before you start north into Kioshoes territory. I don't know anything about the Kioshoes myself, but I do know that some of these northern Dinnahs can't be judged by the bands closer to civilization. "But we've thought twice already, Mr. Ralston, and we've decided it's worth the risk."

She said it so conclusively that Curt dropped the subject. If he was to stop them, he would have to think up some way more effective than argument.

At the door of the residence they chatted a few moments about the party, and then Sonia bade him good night. Curt turned away reluctantly, looking back once for a glimpse of her as she stood outlined in the shaft of light from the door.

HE told himself when the Karakhan hunt was over he was going to look her up, find out who she really was, and try for a better acquaintance. He would be a poor detective if he could not trace Ralph and her.

The rain came on in earnest shortly after he reached camp. A high wind lashed the pines, woke up the lake and tugged at their tent; rain fell in gusty sheets; flash after blinding flash of lightning banged into the timber and rolled bellying across the lake.

Sitting on their sleeping pokes, he and Paul waited for the time when they could begin their work. Not long after the storm began, Curt felt a trickle of water on his hat brim. He reached for his torch and looked up. About two feet down from the ridgepole a neat hole the size of a pencil had appeared in the canvas. On the opposite wall and at the same height was another hole.

"Look Paul—how'd those get there? No stick would blow clear through both—"

A livid white flash lit up the tent as plain as day. An instant later—tip-plant!—their nest set of aluminum dishes, lying on a box near a flap-front, suddenly exploded in a dozen directions, as though possessed of some diabolic magic.

In the rolling thunder Curt heard the half-muffled bark of a rifle. Somebody's shooting at our tent! It's that breed!"

They grabbed elickers and automatics, and leaped outside. Throwing themselves down behind the firewood, they waited for the next spurt of rifle fire to stab the darkness.

"Watch back in the timber, Paul. I'll watch down toward the fort. He's in one of those directions. He's not out on the lake or around the post anywhere."

A minute lengthened to three, five. Curt had never known it to rain so hard as just then, or to lighten so tremendously. One moment they were blinded by a dazzling glare; in the next the dark dropped like a pall.

They lay there for ten minutes, praying for just one glimpse of a rifle flash. But the sniper did not shoot again.

"We might as well go back in," Curt suggested finally. "I ought to've taken your advice and left him over on the island. We saved him from a soaking and then got it ourselves."

"Sometimes we're going to have a show-down with that slinker. He's going to kill us or we're going to kill him."

It was exactly Curt's own thought. It was exactly Curt's own thought.

Curt and Paul go on a strange expedition tomorrow.

form of coarse gray wool and wooden shoes, carried as sole baggage a blanket in a sailor's kitbag. Their wrists were chained. Soldiers, with bayonets fixed and rifles cocked, marched them through the prison door and across the grass-grown path—seldom trod, but always one way—known as "Guiana walk." Police held back relatives and the curious.

Boy Scout Court of Honor Monday Eve.

A Court of Honor for the Boy Scouts of the Medford district of Crater Lake Council will be held Monday evening in the auditorium of the court house at 8 o'clock. Many awards in the various merit badge subjects will be made, and a number of Scouts

will appear for second class and first class advancement. Don Newbury, chairman of Court of Honor, will preside as judge, with Larry Schade acting as clerk of the court. With the winter months, activities in the Boy Scout troops are beginning and the boys are busy with many projects and merit badge work. Each troop is planning Christmas boxes of food, clothing and toys to be distributed at the holiday time. As a part of the year's program, Troop No. 8 of the Washington school is planning the organization of a band. Troop No. 3 of the Roosevelt school is taking week-end hikes to the surrounding hills in search of a suitable cabin site. They are seeking a place that will provide good skiing in winter and good hiking in summer. The other local troops, and those in Eagle Point, Gold Hill and Jacksonville are also busy with similar projects. The announcement comes from headquarters that all applications for Monday's court of honor must be in at the office before 5 o'clock. Each and every scout is urged to attend with his parents and friends and the public is cordially invited.

GLASGOW, Mont., Dec. 1. — (AP) — General Edward M. Markham of Washington, chief of army engineers, left today for Portland, Ore., to inspect the Bonneville dam, after having viewed and approved work done thus far on the Fort Peck dam project. He is expected to return to Washington in a few days.

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S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



TAILSPIN TOMMY—One Of The Ironies Of Fate!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—A New Surprise

By EDWIN ALGER



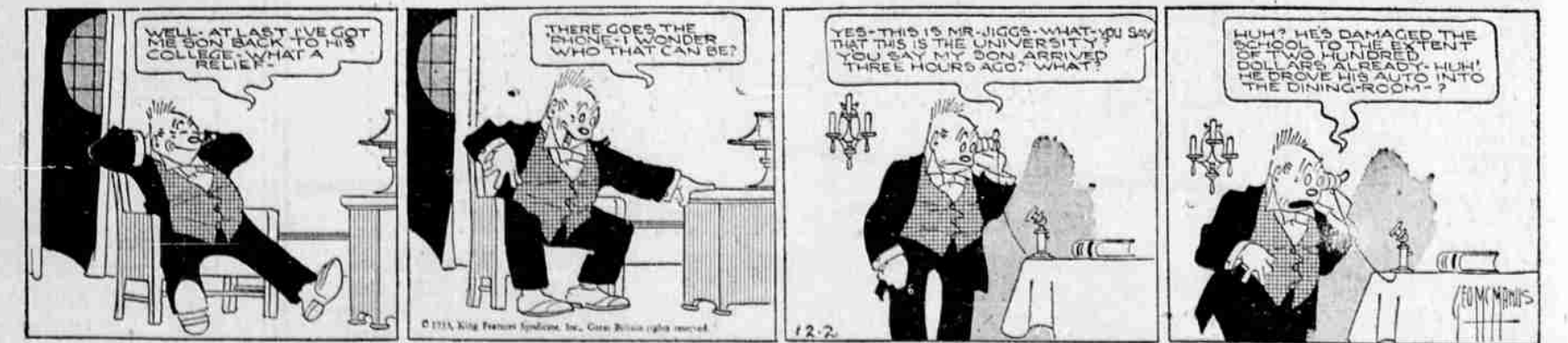
THE NEBBS—The Low Down

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



CONVICT CARGO OFF FOR FRANCE'S DRY GUILLOTINE

By RICHARD MASSOCK

ST. MARTIN DE RE, France, Dec. 2 (AP)—The convict ship La Martinere examined its heavily barred cages with its second cargo of banished prisoners in two months and sailed Friday for the "dry guillotine" of French Guiana.

The human freight, after two weeks of seasickness, will find itself 4,000 miles from the homeland, with slight chance of ever seeing it again. There, hemmed in by tropical jungles, infested by snakes and wild animals, the voyagers will join 874 who shut out of the island penitentiary here September 29 for the same destination.

Gathered in large part from France's far-flung colonies of Africa and the Orient, the exiled convicts included Hindus, Arabs and Chinese. Black men, brown and yellow mingled with Europeans of assorted nationality convicted of crimes committed on French soil.

A gigolo, condemned to expiate the playing of a woman who had unwillingly shared his affections with another, marched to the ship with hardened criminals who killed unmercifully for money.

There were 280 convicts aboard on the way they will be joined by 400 more from Algiers.

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