

FORBIDDEN VALLEY

By William Byron Mowery

SYNOPSIS: At Russian Lake, the Canadian "Widow" who is searching for Igor Karakhan, in international crook Curt Pennington, meets and saves from a drunken half-breed a Russian girl known as Sonya Nichols. She is determined to press on into the land of the dangerous Kioshee Indians, against Curt's advice. Curt is charmed to find that his new enemy, the half-breed in the case is Karakhan's "controlling man"; he obtains a map of the Lilluar territory from an old trapper, however, and determines to protect Sonya as best he can.

Chapter 17 OUT OF THE FOG

TWO mornings later, at her camp forty miles up river Sonya awoke at daybreak, parted the tent flap and looked out. Ralph and the two guides were still rolled up in their sleeping bags.

Through the gray smoke mist rising from the cold waters of the Lilluar, pairs of nesting teal and ducks zipped overhead, their swift wings whistling long after the birds were swallowed up in the mist. Overhead in the tall pines little vireos and flame-colored warblers, nitting through the branches and darting out into the air, were already busy with the feeding problem.

Stepping down to the water edge, she propped her mirror against a stone, bathed her face and hands, and braided her hair. Back at the campfire, she raked some coals out of the ashes, got a fire going, and cooked bacon, trout, scones and coffee. Ralph and the two guides still showed no signs of waking, so she took a small bucket and started up a mountain torrent to a thicket of red raspberries.

Not long after she reached the patch, she happened to glance back at camp and was startled to see a canoe nosing out of the river fog, a canoe with two men in it. They glided ashore, beached the craft and walked up to her fire, with their rifles in the crook of their arms. And then she recognized them as Curt Ralston and his young partner!

They were a welcome surprise, out of the fog. For several reasons she was never gladder to see people than those two. But what were they doing up the Lilluar? They hadn't mentioned that they intended to come north from Russian Lake.

Through a screen of boughs she watched them a minute. They did not wake Ralph or the guides. Curt pointed at her breakfast keeping warm in the ashes, and looked around for her, evidently knowing she was up.

She stepped out to the timber edge. Curt saw her there and came up along the torrent.

"You're awake early," he greeted with his likable smile.

He was casual enough, as though just meeting some chance acquaintance; but Sonya saw the man's tribute to her in his eyes and noticed how his glance clung to her face and hair. She felt sure he had not come upon her camp by accident but with some definite purpose.

"I couldn't sleep with a morning like this just outside the tent," she answered.

"Your breakfast looked so good that Paul and I almost grabbed it and broke for the woods."

"You will stay and have breakfast with us, won't you?"

"If you'll let me give you a hand with that berry-picking."

"All right."

He took up her bucket, and they went back along the torrent to the patch.

"I didn't know Paul and you were intending to come up this way," she remarked, bending down a tall briar.

He answered her unspoken question. "We're prospecting up the Lilluar."

SONYA did not know whether to believe him or not. Ever since meeting him she had been trying to figure him out. He certainly didn't appear to be a prospector. He was miles above the type.

Except for her father, she had never met a man whose quiet efficient power impressed her as much as his. She hated to think that he was just a drifter, leading a carefree existence. That was all right for the men at Russian Lake, but he had better stuff to him.

"Paul and I are going up as far as the pass," he volunteered presently. And then he came out with the purpose of his visit. "If there's no objection on the east side of the fence, our parties could sort of be neighbors. In this country people usually throw in together that way."

His offer, as fine as it was unexpected, nearly took Sonya's breath. She wanted to snap it up instantly before he could change his mind.

Two days of river travel had showed her how little she and Ralph knew about the Strong-Woods and how worthless those laxy guides were. With Curt leading the party she could feel safe, and if anybody could get on good terms with the Kioshees, he was the man to do it.

"If the idea doesn't appeal to you," he said, "please don't be hesitant about saying so. You mustn't let us break into any of your plans."

"Oh, but it does appeal to me!" "You like it, then?"

Sonya hesitated. In Curt's tones and his manner she could see that he was interested in her. On a lengthy wilderness trip together where they would be thrown into constant intimate association, he might come to like her a very great deal. It wouldn't be right to allow that.

"But you'll be traveling so much faster than we," she objected.

"Oh, no; we'll be taking it leisurely, scouting for food as we go. To be frank, I don't believe you and Ralph are used to water-dogging on a mountain river. Till you get on to the hang of things it mightn't be a bad idea to have a couple of experienced people along. Also, if those guides don't prove dependable, you wouldn't be left in the lurch."

"Your offer is magnanimous, Curt." She stammered just a little over his first name. "I don't know anybody else who'd have made it. But we'd be a positive nuisance."

"Your company and Ralph's would be a real pleasure to us both. Talk it over with him, won't you?"

Still wavering, Sonya looked down into the torrent, where a number of tiny trout were darting about in a pool like little flashes of sunshine. She knew that the safe unselfish thing was to refuse. But then she thought that if she steered their association carefully she could guide it into a comradely friendship. And she did need his help so badly. With her it might make all the difference between success and abject failure.

"We might—we could try it," she assented finally. "At least we can start out together, and if it doesn't work we can always split up."

As they went on filling the pall Curt congratulated himself on having neatly solved a tough problem. He would be going up the Lilluar on his own business, and at the same time Paul and he could look after Sonya's safety.

And he would have her company for a week, a week of wilderness travel with her. At the pass, when she and Ralph came face to face with the Kioshee danger and realized how serious it was, they would undoubtedly turn back to Russian Lake. That would free him and Paul, to go on inside and nail Karakhan.

THE report to which Karakhan had just listened made him uneasy. His cigarette, forgotten, burned to ashes at his elbow, and his fingers, long and sensitive as a musician's, topped the rough table thoughtfully. Looking past LeNoir, he stared out the cabin window at the lake, pondering the "breed's" story.

The account might be a lie. LeNoir might just be trumping up a non-existent danger in order to jack his pay higher. But then the story might be fact.

With fifty hard canoe-miles behind him since dawn, LeNoir leaned back against the log wall, watching his chief sharply. This man of the steel-cold eyes and calm voice—one could never so much as guess at his thoughts.

One only knew that he was greatly wanted by the Yellow-ripes, that he had buried himself in these mountains to shake off the log wall, watching his chief sharply. This man of the steel-cold eyes and calm voice—one could never so much as guess at his thoughts.

About his getting drunk, his fight with Curt and his shooting up their tent, LeNoir had wisely said nothing. He knew his chief too well. Karakhan would not hesitate to pump a bullet into any person who endangered him by going on ahead.

In his way LeNoir was altogether loyal to Karakhan, who had been very generous to him in the matter of money. The "breed" and a code, such as it was. He had bargained to protect the Cossack, and he was giving everything he had to that job, for he was hard-set in his loyalties as in his feuds.

(Copyright, 1933, William B. Mowery)

Karakhan, tomorrow, senses a serious danger.

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The states described as having exceeded their quotas were Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 5. (AP)—Secretary Stokes today expressed the opinion that 18 states and the District of Columbia had been allotted public works funds in excess of amounts believed by the administration to be equitable.

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WHEAT CROWN TO CANADIAN FARMER

CHICAGO, Dec. 6.—(UP)—King of North American wheat growers for the

next year is Frank Isaacson of Elfron, Sask.

Isaacson won his crown today in competition with 200 exhibitors of the continent's finest grains at the International Livestock exposition. It was the fourth consecutive year in which a Canadian grower has won the coveted honor.

The winning exhibit, just a few handfuls of the hard red spring wheat

of the reward variety, became probably the most valuable grain in North America because of the importance attached to the "wheat king" title among growers of seed.

The same type of grain was exhibited by Herman Treile of Alberta, who won the championship in the preceding three years.

IRISH REPUBLIC IDEA IGNORED BY BRITAIN

LONDON, Eng., Dec. 6.—(AP)—Great Britain's answer to Irish Free

State President De Valera's question as to what Great Britain would do if a Free State republic were declared was a refusal to consider such a contingency.

J. H. Thomas, dominions secretary, told a packed house of commons that the government treated such a contingency as involving a purely hypothetical assumption which the

British government declined to entertain.

WOMAN IN BATH DIES WHEN LIGHT TOUCHED

LADYSMITH, B. C. Dec. 6.—(UP)—When she touched a light globe while standing in her bathtub, Mrs. H. Bickerton was instantly electrocuted at her home here today.

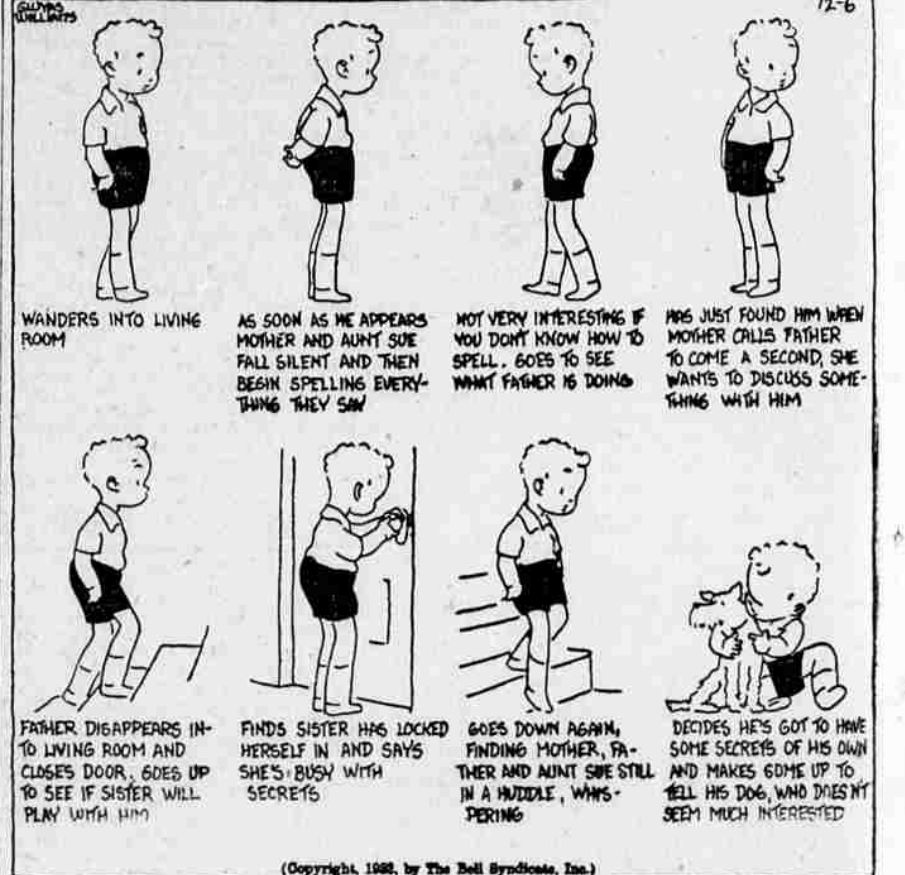
S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



CHRISTMAS SECRETS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY—No Sign Of Brownie's Wrecked Plane

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—An Unexpected Visitor

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—It's Just Too Bad

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



OREGON OVER PWA SHARE SAYS ICKES

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