

FORBIDDEN VALLEY

by William Byron Mowery

SYNOPSIS: Curt Tennyson and Paul H. Clair, trailing the International Brotherhood of Loggers into the Canadian Northwest, have joined parties with Ralph and Sonya Nichols, presumably entomologists on their way to study the insects of the Lilliuor country, home of the extremely dangerous Klooshees Indians. Curt is much taken with Sonya, but finds she has lied about being an entomologist. He determines to question her, but she gets the jump on him and tells why a man of his gifts should be a prospector, as Curt has claimed to be.

Chapter 20
SONYA'S SECRET
"YOU know I'm Russian," Sonya went on. "If it were possible, I'd go back to Russia and try to play some part there, however small. When I fared out at you that evening, it was just my narrow personal feelings. But I can't go back. I'd probably be imprisoned the minute I landed. And besides I've been in Canada twelve years and feel Canadian, and a person can do something here too."

"When I say 'useful,' Curt, I don't mean professional uplifters and fussy reformers who go around prying into other people's way of living and trying to make everybody conform to their own standards. Heavens no! But there are roles where men can do a real good. Men with a conscience, I mean—and you've got a conscience."

Curt wished he could tell her of that evening in Edmonton when he had thrown away the Consolidated offer and taken on the Karakhan hunt. She would applaud that, where Ronnie had called him a fool and had utterly failed to understand his motive. He recalled Sonya's words, "idling around pleasantly," and he knew that that was how she would regard his plans to return north, if she knew about them.

Near five o'clock they came to a little bay, went ashore, gathered firewood and cleared a place for the two tents. It was the prettiest camp site of their trip.

They sat down under a pine to wait for the other canoes. Curt plucked nervously at the leaf of a maidenhair fern. He could stave off his talk with Sonya no longer.

"There's something I'd like to understand, Sonya. It's none of my business, except that I've got a friend's interest in you and Ralph—" Sonya interrupted: "I know what you're going to say—that we're not entomologists. Ralph told me you asked him about that beetle. I know you were suspicious and would find us out sometime."

"On the contrary, I told Paul that you must have some pretty substantial motive."

"I'm glad you have that much confidence in us, after finding out how we lied." She picked a lichen curl and unrolled it in her small brown fingers. "It is a substantial reason, Curt."

"I don't question that. But I do question your secrecy about the whole thing when the trip is so dangerous. If I knew what you're trying to do, I might be able to give you a hand."

Sonya shook her head. "I don't believe you would. In fact, I know you wouldn't."

"Are you afraid I'd go barging into your plans like a bull in a china shop?" I wouldn't."

"She still shook her head in refusal. "I'd like to tell you. But I simply can't. It's in the very nature of my motive that I must keep it to myself."

"I can't conceive of any such circumstance."

"Then you'll have to take my word for it, Curt."

He felt provoked at her. It was possible that she or Ralph had heard some wild tale about a rich lode or placer in the Lilliuors or that she wanted to make a study of the Klooshees themselves, but he could not believe either of these guesses.

"There's something else—still less of my business, I suppose, but Sonya, why do you pretend this relationship to Ralph?"

"That caught her a surprise. A color flew into her cheeks. "Pretend—relationship—what do you mean?"

Curt was certain of his ground. He plunged boldly: "Ralph is no more your brother than I am, girl. He's no relation to you at all."

"Why—why, how can you make an assertion like that?"

He lied: "Paul overheard you once. He didn't mean to listen, but he couldn't help it."

"How much else did Paul hear?" Her tones were quick, frightened. "When was this?"

"Two evenings ago. He didn't hear anything else."

Sonya breathed easier. Curt realized, too late, that he had made a mistake. There was something else, and she was afraid for him to know it. If he had pretended he knew, he could probably have got it out of her. She admitted reluctantly: "Yes, you're right; we're not related. I'll tell you why we made this arrangement. If I'd been alone, I couldn't have come in here at all. I wouldn't even have got as far as Russian Lake. Ralph's a good friend. I knew I could trust Ralph implicitly. He's a gentleman through and through. Under the circumstances our arrangement was entirely sensible. It was the only recourse I had."

But all that told him nothing about her mission in that country. Curt swung the talk back:

"Sonya, I'm not playing cards with you, or trying to meddle in your business, or looking for any advantage to myself. You may be justified in going on north. In that case I'll give you all the help in my power. But I've got to know what you're doing."

He paused a moment, then added point-blank, "And you've got to tell me."

Sonya refused flatly. "I'm sorry, Curt. I can't do it."

There was no use to argue. He was irritated by her stubborn silence and jealous that Ralph should share her confidence while he was barred out.

"I suppose you're going to wash your hands of us now," she said.

"You intend to go on above the pass?" he demanded. And when she nodded: "You're tumbling dynamite, if you only knew it."

"I do know it. But there's a chance that we can get on friendly terms with the Klooshees."

"A mighty slim chance, from what old John tells me. You can't go on without Paul and me."

"We will."

She said it quietly, but Curt knew she meant it. Her prosaiveness was almost grim. Short of tying her up hand and foot and taking her back to Russian Lake he could not stop her.

"If we can make friends with the Klooshees," she said presently, "there wouldn't be any danger at all. That's the crux of the whole matter. You've had a good deal of experience with Indians. Curt, I believe you could manage it." She leaned towards him, a plea crept into her voice. "I know I don't deserve help, after refusing to take you into my confidence; but won't you, anyway, Curt?"

As he saw the situation, he was forced to take his choice of helping her or letting her go into that country without protection. By themselves she and Ralph simply did not stand a chance. That great blue cleft up river would prove a one-way portal into Klooshees territory.

Perhaps he could work himself into the good graces of the Klooshees. If so, the whole danger would blow over, as she had said. At any rate Paul and he would be guarding her.

They could go cautiously, keep their eyes open and bring her back to safety if trouble started popping.

He did not like the prospect. She would be exposed to anger, however careful he and Paul might be, and he would be sadly handicapped on the Karakhan hunt. But the alternative was to let her go through that pass unprotected, defenseless; and that was something he could not do.

Sonya was watching him, hanging upon his decision. Curt saw her fingers trembling as she waited. He thought it fine of her that in those moments she made not the slightest attempt to sway him by her charm or her powers as a girl.

"I'll make a bargain with you, Sonya," he said finally. "It's this: I'll take you in there and do everything I can with those Klooshees, but if I see that a friendly contact isn't possible you're to let Paul and me bring you back out, and you'll go on south to Russian Lake. Will you agree to that?"

Sonya clasped his hand. "Curt, that's awfully splendid of you!"

"You promise, then? You'll turn back when I give the word, and you go on south to Russian Lake?"

"Yes, I promise."

(Copyright, 1933, William B. Mowery)

Curt's party meets, tomorrow, the terrible Klooshees.

STEIWER HELPING ON SEWER LOAN

Answer to the telegram sent Senator Frederick W. Steiwer Thursday.

regarding progress of Medford's application for sewage disposal plant funds, was received Friday by City Superintendent Fred W. Scheffel. It was from Senator Steiwer's secretary, Robert B. Parkman, and announced that the senator was out of town, but that a note urging favorable action by the committee, bearing his signature had been attached to the Medford application.

The application is now in the hands of the committee in Washington, D. C., and Mr. Parkman states he has been unable to obtain any indication as to when final action would be taken.

SEWING LEADERS MEET ON MONDAY

Mrs. Mabel C. Mack, county home demonstration agent, announced Saturday that the sewing leaders meetings will be conducted in the court house auditorium Monday and Tuesday, December 11 and 12, opening at 10 o'clock. Covered dish luncheon will be served at noon.

Mrs. Mack will be assisted in conducting the meeting by Mrs. Anzela Sager, state clothing specialist from Oregon State college. Two leaders from each unit will attend, with garment finishes as the subject.

On Monday leaders from Applegate, Ashland, Bellview, Central Point, McLeod, Phoenix, Prospect and Trail are to attend, and on Tuesday leaders from Eagle Point, Evans Valley, Lost Creek, Rogue River, Roxy Ann, Sams Valley and Siskiyou.

Real estate or insurance—leave it to Jones. Phone 696.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



THE FAMILY ALBUM—MATCHES

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Reward For Merit!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Dan Jeppard

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—The Snare

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



GLACKAMAS PUTS MONKEY WRENCH IN ROAD PROGRAM

PORTLAND, Dec. 9.—(AP)—Declaring it can not let the comparatively small amount of \$70,000 stand in the way of completion of the Portland-Oregon City super-highway, the state highway commission late yesterday reversed its demand that Clackamas county purchase the necessary right of way in the Milwaukie district for this thoroughfare.

The commission indicated direct action would be taken if the county continued to refuse to co-operate. It was suggested the state would acquire the needed property and then sue the county for damages.

The commission intimated the state will demand that Clackamas county purchase the right-of-way on the contention that the state already has a large sum invested in the road and cannot afford to let a \$70,000 job hold up the project.

The Milwaukie job is ready to award at the December 27 meeting, the commission announced.

Twelve mowing machines costing \$1800, and a \$1000 machine to paint traffic stripes on pavements will be purchased by the commission.

Warrants called. School Dist. No. 2.

Warrants numbered from 453 to 537 are called for payment. Interest to cease December 8, 1933. Warrants payable at First National Bank, Medford, Oregon. BESSIE SNYDER, Clerk Dist. No. 2.

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