

# FORBIDDEN VALLEY

By William Byron Mowery

**SYNOPSIS:** Curt Tennyson and Paul St. Clair are on the trail of Igor Karavane, wealthy crook. Posing up the Lullbur into the territory of the dangerous Kioshees Indians, they overtake Sonya and Ralph Nichols. Sonya is on a mysterious mission and to determine the peril in which she finds herself, Curt is much interested in Sonya, and determines to help her. They escape an ambush by the Indians, and camp on an island. Curt hears suspicious duck calls out of the darkness.

## Chapter 23 NIGHT ATTACK

FIFTY yards away a canoe stopped and hovered motionless. A figure stood up in it and stared down toward the island. For perhaps five minutes the craft hovered there. Then it slowly backed away, blurred to nothingness, disappeared.

"Spying out our camp!" Curt breathed to himself.

Gradually the pink glow faded from the mountain peaks. A big cloud hove in sight over the eastern range. Curt watched it anxiously, afraid it would come on west and blot out the moon and plunge the lake into darkness just when he and Paul might have to beat off an attack.

Moccasined footsteps came up the west landwash. Paul, he thought. A moving blur shaped itself to a human figure. Then he saw it was not Paul.

A dozen steps away the figure stopped, looked around for him.

"Sonya," he called quietly.

She came on to the little barricade. "Is one allowed to talk to the guard?" she asked whimsically. She crouched down with him. "I brought you one of my blankets and a tincup of coffee. I raked enough sand off the fire to heat this, but I didn't expose the coals."

Curt squeezed her hand. "It was sweet of you—all the trouble, dear. But you'd better take the blanket. This mountain air gets chilly when a person isn't moving around." He put the blanket about her shoulders.

"Thanks, Curt. The air does have a bite in it."

She did not free her hand or object to his endearing word. Her nearness and that shock of golden-brown hair so close to his shoulder almost robbed him of his restraint.

"Tired?" he asked gently.

"A little."

He put his arm around her and made her snuggle against him. "Isn't that better, dear?"

"Lots, Curt!" But then she caught herself up and admitted more cautiously, "I mean—lots better than the cold rocks."

His lips touched her hair, her forehead. "Sonya, look up at me."

"Don't, Curt—please—"

a whisper of protest from her as he sought her lips. She would not allow him. "Dear, you must not." She reached up her hand and touched his hair, running her fingers over it. "Curt, you've been so good, you're so unselfish and generous—I'd hate myself if I caused you any pain."

"Pain—to me? Why Sonya, you couldn't do that!"

"But I could! You'll want me—more than ever now, Curt—to be more than a friend; and I don't—can't—Oh, I wish we could continue to be just the good friends we have been."

Curt started a little. "Can't?" he repeated. "Do you mean that we—that I can't be more than a friend?"

"Please Curt, I'd rather not talk about it."

"You've never told me anything at all about yourself. I don't even know your name, your real name."

"Does that matter?"

"Or where you came from, or where you're going when this trip's ended. Is that fair, Sonya?"

"It's grossly unfair. I've treated you unfairly all along, Curt. But I can't help myself. When this trip is over, maybe then I can afford to be honest. I don't blame you for asking questions, but... I think I'll go back to the rocks down there."

"Please don't," Curt begged.

She leaned her tired head back against his shoulder, but Curt felt she was far away from him, alone with her own thoughts. He seemed shut out by a granite wall of aloofness. For days he had been vaguely aware of some barrier between them; now he felt it forcibly and unmistakably. "Can't"—had she really meant that portentous little word?

Moccasined footsteps again, quick footsteps, very near the sentry box. Sonya hastily freed herself, and drew apart from Curt.

"Here, Paul!"

The young Canadian came up to them. "A party just landed on the willow island. They lifted off four canoes, and they're over in that brush."

The news startled Curt. "Only four canoes?" he asked.

"Only four. I think they are carrying two men apiece. One turned broadside to the moon's reflection and I saw it distinctly. It carried just two."

"That means we've only got eight men to deal with. Those eight we saw today. We ought to stand them off without much trouble." After a few moments' thought, he directed: "You go back to your post, Paul. If they start across, try to stop 'em by shooting over their heads. If they keep coming on, ricochet your bullets through their canoes. I'll stay here and watch for others. They may be planning to box us from two sides. If that party over there is the only one, I'll help you turn 'em around and head 'em the other way."

When Paul had left, he suggested: "I'd better take you back to the boulders, Sonya. It's safer there. We'll likely have some swift work for a minute or two."

"I'd rather stay here, if you'll let me. I can help, too, if it comes to a real fight."

Her hand crept inside her blouse, and came out with some black metallic object. Curt saw it was a small automatic, a little purse-size thing, but nevertheless an effective weapon for close work. Once on a portage when he had lifted her down from a pile of windfall he had felt something hard beneath her blouse. It must have been this same gun.

She must carry it with her all the time now.

"ON THE willow island he saw nothing, heard nothing. The minutes dragged by interminably. He almost wished the fight would start. Anything was better than waiting, waiting."

The big cloud had drifted on out from the eastern range till it was only a little distance from the moon. But a strong up-current from the valley had seized it and it hovered uncertainly, sending out feathery wisps this way and that.

Down toward the camp a pattering noise suddenly arose. It sounded as though the tents and canoes were being pelted with small stones.

Sonya touched his arm. "Curt, what's that?"

"Arrows! They're shooting up our camp. You see, they expected to kill or wound part of us before we got out of our blankets."

"Why, Sonya gasped, 'you must've known—that's why you made us stay away from the tents!'"

"I didn't know they'd do it, but I suspected they might, so I played safe."

The patter of arrows kept up for two or three minutes, then stopped.

"Maybe they think they killed us all or that we sneaked away before they got here," Sonya suggested.

"That's an idea. I'd better let 'em know we're still around, or they might come across to investigate."

He called down to Paul, using the jargon so that the Kioshees would understand:

"Are the mosquitoes bad there with you, friend? It seems to me that a whole flock of them are buzzing out of those willows yonder."

Paul took the hint and answered, with a scornful laugh: "They are bad, yes; but their buzzing does not annoy me much. They are nothing for a man to worry about."

At the two voices, the Kioshees let loose a storm of darts. The attack would have worn itself out harmlessly if the two guides had obeyed orders. But Francois jabbered something in excited voice to Jocku. An instant later their heavy "bear" Winchesters split the silence with a blaring kroom.

Over on the island a man cried out, the long-drawn cry of a man hard hit.

Curt sprang to his feet. "You damned crazy loons!—stop that shooting or I'll come down there and shoot you!"

They did break off, then. He thought his threat had stopped them, but he found out later that Paul had sprung back to the rock nest and alarmed them at the point of his gun.

About twenty minutes afterward Paul came walking up the landwash.

"Gone?" Curt asked.

"Yes. They're over on the mainland by now."

The good news left Curt cold. The crazy hang-banging of those two cowardly 'breeds had exploded his last hope of making friends with that band.

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Tomorrow Curt cares for a badly wounded man.

# SCRIBBLED NOTE WORTH \$90,000

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13.—(AP)—It was only an 11-word message, scribbled with a stub of pencil on a crumpled telegraph blank, but the District of Columbia supreme court today ruled it was worth nearly \$100,000.

The message read: "Minnie Keyes: You have been good to me. All is yours." Here's the story. Leonard A. Hamilton, a taciturn man, boarded with

Minnie Keyes at her home here for 30 years. Last March 12 a doctor told him he had only 24 hours to live. The message was his will, and two friends who visited him just before he died were witnesses. Miss Keyes found the crumpled paper wrapped around a stub of a pencil under the mattress. She almost threw it away, but didn't.

Lowell resigned today in a letter to General Hugh S. Johnson at Washington which the board charged that "effective and prompt enforcement of the NRA is not desired either by the state recovery board or by the authorities at Washington." The seven members of the board, including U. S. Commissioner Richard B. Wash, chairman, signed the resignation, copies of which were sent

# NRA BOARD QUILTS JOB IN DISGUST

LOWELL, Mass., Dec. 13.—(UP)—The entire NRA compliance board of

to Edward A. Filene, Boston merchant and head of the Massachusetts recovery board and John C. Donohoe, chairman of the Middlesex county recovery board.

Dance at the Hogue Elk Saturday night, December 23. Picture frames made to order. K. D. Ross Co., 22 S. Grape.

# S'MATTER PO?—

By C. M. PAYNE



# TAILSPIN TOMMY—To Know—And Yet Not To Know!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



# MOTHER'S PRESENT

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



# BOUND TO WIN—What They Saw

By EDWIN ALGER



# THE NEBBS—What? Another Orchid?

By SOL HESS



# BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



**Catfish In Bathtub Ground For Divorce**  
ST. LOUIS, Dec. 13.—(AP)—All because of a catfish, Mrs. Katie Lenz has been given a divorce from Arthur Lenz, a huckster, after 26 years of married life.

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