

# FORBIDDEN VALLEY

by William Byron Mowery

**SYNOPSIS:** Curt Tompson, trailing the crook Igor Karakhan into the Canadian wilderness, has picked up Sonya Nichols and a companion. Sonya will not tell him her mission. Curt has found a letter to Sonya, and although he has found she is a Russian prince's he has no clue to her purpose. He returns to find that his partner, Paul, has learned that Sonya is to meet the villainous LeNoir, Karakhan's contact man, that night.

## Chapter 30 THE RENDEZVOUS

WHAT did Sonya want with LeNoir? He was the Cossack's contact man, was that fact the reason she wanted to see him? "Why's she meeting LeNoir?" "She's giving him a letter." "A letter? To whom?" "Paul hesitated, shuddered; but there was no help for it, and he took the step. "It's a letter to Karakhan." Curt stiffened, like the granite he stood against. He shook Paul roughly by the arm.

"Does she know Karakhan?" "She knows him very well. Forgive me, partner, but you had to know." Curt turned slowly and stared down toward the tents as though trying to catch a glimpse of a girlish figure yonder in the darkness. After a time he turned to Paul again. His voice shook. "Don't make a mistake about her sending a letter to Karakhan. Are you positive of it? Dead positive?" "To the extent," Paul said quietly, "that I have a copy of the letter itself. Last night I saw her writing in the tent. She was so secret about it that I knew she was writing something important. I watched through one of the arrow holes and saw where she hid the note when she finished; and after she'd gone to sleep, I went in and got it. I sat here behind these rocks, and made a copy by your electric torch; and then I returned the letter."

"What does it say? What did she tell him?" Paul reached into his jacket and brought out a paper, carefully wrapped in canvas. "You had best read it yourself. Then you'll know."

He gave Curt the pages, and saw his partner stare at them with fascinated dread. Why didn't he snay on the flash and read them? What he afraid?

In the southwest-sky Antares had sunk down till it hovered on the peakline, looking not like a star but some distant light on the mountain top. Time for her meeting with LeNoir, he thought.

"What are we going to do about this rendezvous?" he asked. "It's our chance to find out where Karakhan is. They're sure to drop a word about his hiding place."

"I suppose we ought to do something," Curt agreed dully. It seemed that locating Karakhan had become of no importance.

Across the channel Paul heard the fluttering call of an owl. It did not fool him.

"There's LeNoir signaling to her. That's the signal he was to use. Aren't we going to shadow them? We'll find out more in ten minutes than we could in a month otherwise."

Curt thrust the letter into his pocket unread. "We ought to follow her. I'll do it. I want to hear what they say. Paul, there's something to this that you didn't get the truth of. There's got to be."

The "owl" signaled again. Paul glanced down toward the tents, heard nothing of Sonya, saw nothing of her.

"We'll have to give her a clear road," he suggested, "before she'll cross that channel. Suppose I go down to the tents and make her believe I'm turning in? If she's there by the canoe, I'll drop the remark that you're tired and almost asleep. You can stay here, and when she starts, you can follow. I'll bring you a canoe to cross with."

Curt shook his head. "LeNoir would see a canoe. No, I'll get across. Just leave me your blankets and the flash."

PAUL snatched down the island, and Curt waited alone. A queer unnatural frame of mind had come over him. Sonya, meeting Teeste LeNoir, conniving with him against the two who had defended her.

It seemed that only a little less preposterous than her knowing, intimately knowing, Igor Karakhan. He could no longer deny that she was acquainted with the Cossack and that her trip was somehow connected with the man. But her motive in this affair might be innocent, even commendable.

Footsteps came up the landwash.

presently. Through eyes narrowed to slits he saw Sonya's faint moonshadow fall across his feet. She stood there a few seconds, looking at him; then, to make doubly sure, she bent down, so near that he shut his eyes to keep her from seeing that he was awake. He had the strength of will to sit motionless, feigning that he was oblivious of her when every nerve in him was trembling at her nearness.

She straightened up at last and went back down the landwash. When she was gone Curt took off his jacket and moccasins, laid his rifle, automatic and flash on top of them and crept to the water's edge. Taking care to make no moon ripples for the sharp eyes of LeNoir to catch, he struck out for the other island, and landed at its upper tip.

As he turned to look back, a long mottle light the opposite shore and came dancing across the fifty-yard channel. It merged with the shadows of the willows and was swallowed up.

In a kind of daze, as though he were an actor in some ugly dream, Curt worked his way down through the shoulder-high brush. When he heard cautious voices ahead he dropped to hands and knees and crept on, foot by foot, till he came up behind a thick clump within twelve feet of Sonya and LeNoir and could hear their words distinctly.

"I have never heard of this man you speak about," LeNoir was arguing. "There is no such man in these mountains. For the fifth time, non!"

Sonya stamped her small foot impatiently. "For the tenth time, oui!" She dropped her imperious tones, became persuasive, coaxing. "I understand how carefully you must guard the secret of his hiding place from all strangers. Will you not believe that he and I are fellow-countrymen and intimate friends? Has he not mentioned me a dozen times to you?"

"He has not mentioned you once," LeNoir came back too quickly. Sonya caught him up. "You have made the admission of knowing him! Now perhaps we can talk!"

THE detective in Curt admired the deft way she had led LeNoir into her trap. It was clear that Karakhan did not know she was coming to him. It meant that Karakhan had not sent for her at all. That there was something here which Paul hadn't found out.

LeNoir growled at being trapped into admitting that he knew Karakhan.

"What is it you want?" he demanded. "For you to take him this letter. Only that. When he reads my note he will give you more money for bringing it than for all the help that you've been to him since last fall."

At the mention of money LeNoir pricked up his ears. But still he hung back warily.

"What more do you want of me?" "Nothing more. You see, I am not asking you where he is, or endangering his security in any way. He will give you more money for bringing it than for all the help that you've been to him since last fall."

"You are not entirely without understanding," Sonya answered. "Yes, I am joining him there—and remaining."

Behind the screen of willows Curt rose on his elbow, and a cry choked in his throat. "And remaining"—those two shameless words of hers stabbed him like a knife. She was joining Karakhan in his wilderness refuge!

"I'll be waiting for your return," Sonya continued, to LeNoir. "Each night when the red star sets I'll listen for your signal. Now, one other thing. These Indians are planning to attack my party. You have influence with them. You must keep them from doing that. Ralph is my friend. Mr. Ralston and his partner have been good to me, too. I'd be sorry if they met any harm."

"I have little influence," the "broad" evaded. "But perhaps I can do something."

"You must," she insisted. "And now I'll go back to camp. Those two yonder may discover I am gone."

LeNoir detained her. "Will you say nothing," he stammered, "about Russian Laka, when I came over to the island? You will say nothing to M'sieu Karakhan about that little indiscretion?"

"Nothing at all," said Sonya. (Copyright, 1933, William B. Mowery)

Monday, Curt reads Sonya's damning letter.

## OILSKINS COMING FOR MEN OF CCC

There are 1000 sets of oilskin clothing en route to CCC camps of this district, it was announced at headquarters here today. The clothing is coming in response to the radio message sent out by the district commander, when he realized that there was going to be a lot of "that certain kind of weather" here this winter. The message was sent December 13. The three coast camps are already equipped. The 1000 sets on the way will be distributed among the outside workers at all of the remaining seven camps. Additional outfits will be received later for complete equipment of all camps. The sets come from San Francisco and Seattle.

Beckelhymer In—Mr. and Mrs. Ed Beckelhymer of Union Creek were business callers in Medford yesterday.

shortage of turkeys is shown insofar as the Portland market is concerned. "There is a famine of hen turkeys and small toms," the market report said, "and prices are firm to higher as a result. Buyers are freely offering up to 18 cents a pound for best dressed hens, and 16 to 17 cents generally for toms with very small birds as high as hens in a nominal way, as few of these are available."

## TURKEY SHORTAGE SEEN IN PORTLAND

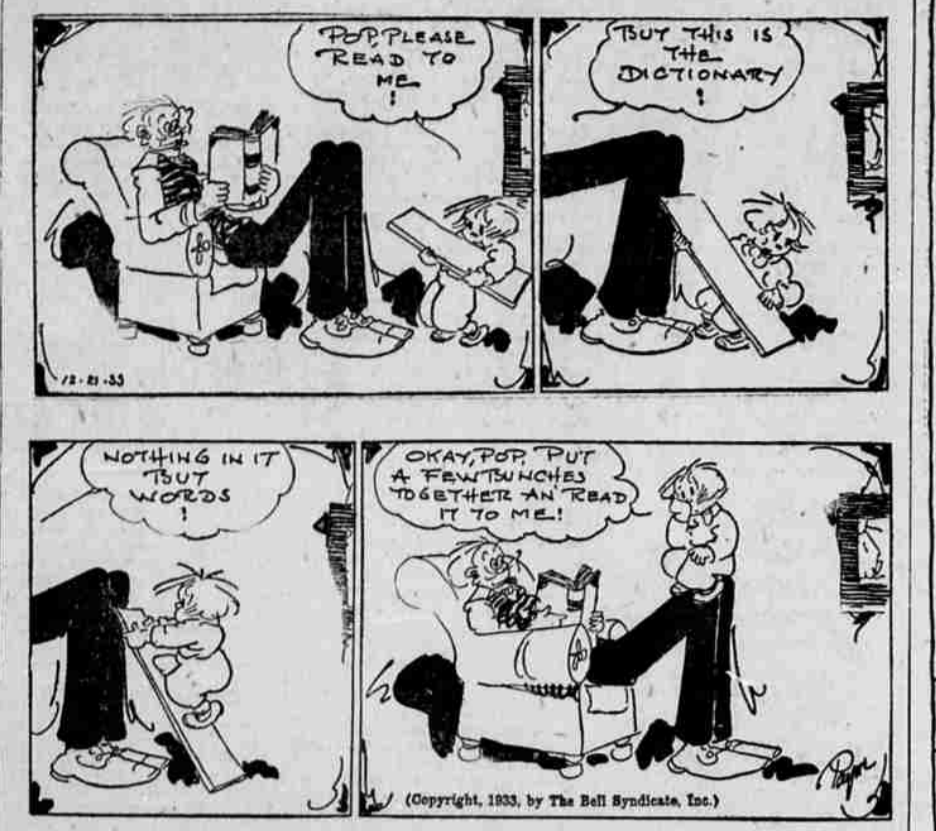
PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 21.—(AP)—The Journal said today an acute

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 20.—(AP)—Net prices paid producers for dressed turkeys delivered, San Francisco: Prime turkeys (dressed) young toms, under 17 pounds, 18 to 19c; over 17 pounds, 17 to 18c; young hens, 18 to 19c; old hens, 17 to 18c.

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## S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



## THE MINUTE THAT SEEMS A YEAR

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Diagnosing the Crash!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



## BOUND TO WIN—The Job At Last!

By EDWIN ALGER



## THE NEBBS—The Fox And Geese

By SOL HESS



## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



## HOME CHRISTMAS FOR 298 CONVICTS

MONTGOMERY, Ala., Dec. 21.—A hot breakfast tucked away, 298 long terms stepped through prison gates today and struck for home to spend the holidays with loved ones, as the Christmas gift of Governor B. M. Miller, for meritorious service. Those rewarded with Christmas paroles, all of whom have served more than two years, included 65 white men, eight white women, 201 negroes and 24 negro women.

## SALVATION SEEN IN LUMBER CODE

PORTLAND, Dec. 21.—(AP)—Uniform support of NRA lumber code will soon restore the industry to its former firm financial basis, Frank Hanson, president of the Eastern & Western Lumber company, testified today in the suit brought against the code authority by the Willamette Valley Lumber company of Dallas. Hanson, appearing as a defense witness in this case, the second filed in the nation against the NRA codes, expressed belief that if the program is interfered with, the lumber industry will fall in complete financial ruin.

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