

# FORBIDDEN VALLEY

by William Byron Mowery

**SYNOPSIS:** By the help of Tenn-Og, Klondike Indians whom he had befriended, Curt Teungson and Paul, his partner, have escaped the Klondike and are taking their friend Ralph Nichols, badly wounded, to the Canadian lake where Curt's plane is hidden. Curt has temporarily abandoned his hunt for his Karakhan, secretly hoping to get Ralph to a hospital. Curt hopes to have news of Sonya Volkov, whom he loves although she has run away to Karakhan, from a band of Klondike Indians his party just has killed. Tenn-Og has talked with them.

## Chapter 39 NEWS OF SONYA

THE main band, Tenn-Og said, had discovered the escape of the whites and had started north to Karakhan's place to guard him. These six runners had been sent south on the chance that they might catch up with the whites and ambush them.

Sonya was on her way north; nothing had been heard of her since she left with her three guides. "Do you know where this white man is hiding?" Curt asked Tenn-Og.

At the headwaters lake of the Lilluar, the Indian told him. He himself had once lived at that lake, almost at the very place where the white man's cabin now stood. A week ago Curt would have considered that information priceless, but now it meant little. In a general way he did plan to return later and make a second attempt to get Karakhan; but in all probability the Russian would be out of the Lilluar and gone by that time.

He was nobody's fool; he certainly had read the handwriting on the wall. He had a plane and plenty of gas for it, as LeNoir's trading account showed. The wearisome job of following his trackless air path would have to be done all over again.

"How can you go back to your people, Tenn-Og?" he asked. "Those six are going to tell the others that you were with us, helping us."

With a grunt and a frown Tenn-Og stated that he did not care whether he went back or not. He was almost an outcast now, he said, because of Siam-Kiale.

Ever since his talk with Tenn-Og that first night, when the Indian gave him so much information voluntarily, Curt had felt that he stood off somehow from the other Klondikes. His tones now and his reference to the subject implied there was some bitter personal feud between Siam-Kiale and him.

The stories about the brutality in Siam-Kiale's nature, made Curt sharply uneasy about Sonya. She was up in that country alone, in the charge of Indians who were completely under the thumb of the chief.

If he and the main band overtook her party, he might seize her, brush LeNoir aside, and disappear with her somewhere in that unknown country. Once she reached Karakhan she probably would be safe; but any one of a dozen accidents might intervene to strand her in those wild mountains and keep her from reaching him.

As the afternoon wore along, a perceptible change came over Ralph. At first Curt could not decide what the change boded; but as the signs became more pronounced, he recognized their grim meaning. He could never get Ralph out, or even get to the plane with him.

JUST at twilight they reached the Iskitmaw mouth, having covered in twenty-four hours a stretch of river which had taken his party four whole days on the up trip. He called a halt. All need of hurrying had passed, and the buffeting of the waves was causing Ralph intense pain. The most they could do was to ease him for the little time that remained.

Near the tributary mouth they went ashore on a pine island, the island of black lilies, where Curt had spent some dark hours once. He did not recognize the place till they had landed, and then he would not change. Inland at a mossy spot they spread the sleeping robes and carried Ralph there and laid him down.

All three of them were stumbling from exhaustion. On top of the heavy strain of the fight and the long day of imprisonment, they had had no sleep in more than sixty hours, and had just finished a terrific stretch of canoe work—twice around the cove without a pause.

Curt made Paul and Tenn-Og eat a little food, and then took them a couple of rods aside. "You two lie down," he bade, "and get some rest. In our condition we're fit for nothing, and we don't know what's ahead of us. I'll stay up with Ralph. I can do everything that needs to be done. God knows it's not much."

In the eastern sky the moon

brightened as night shut down. Filtering through the pine branches, it cast illigible shadows on the woods floor and lay in a wan ghostly flood over Ralph and the wolf-foot and the plot of black lilies. Far away, so far it seemed a mere pinpoint of sound in the night silence, a crescendo wailing arose, and was taken up and answered from a dozen mountain peaks.

In the last two hours, since realizing that Ralph was not to be with them, Curt had made up his mind to go back north and try to capture Karakhan. Tenn-Og could take them to that headwater lake. If Siam had kept his rendezvous, they would have a plane and could make the trip in less than three hours.

With any luck at all, he would not only end his long hunt then and there, but he could shield Sonya and bring her out. In spite of her association with Karakhan he felt, it his duty, as a man, to look after her safety. She was a white girl, she had shot square with him and helped him and Paul out of a desperate plight.

Besides, he was vaguely beginning to suspect that there was something to her relations with the Russian which he knew nothing about. Her letter to the man and her talk with LeNoir stood as mountainous facts against her, but still he was troubled. His bad mistake about Tenn-Og, of whose treachery he had been so sure, made him wonder whether he might not be partly mistaken about Sonya too.

THE time verged on midnight. Red Antares, glittering in the southwest, hung low over the distant peakline. Through the trees he watched it sink and vanish. When he glanced again at Ralph he was surprised to see that the latter's eyes were open.

He took Ralph's hand, to let him know that a friend was with him. Ralph looked around, evidently looking for Sonya. The delirium had passed, he seemed to be in no pain whatever; but he was not altogether clear-headed, and his consciousness was the last faint flare-up.

He gazed up at Curt for a moment. His lips parted. Curt bent lower. "Where are we, Curt?" "Down river, Ralph. Back at the Iskitmaw."

"You thought—could get me out?" Curt nodded, not trusting his voice.

"Where's Sonya, Curt? I'd like her—a little talk—" Curt started to say that Sonya was on her way to Karakhan, but he checked himself. No need to recall that painful fact to Ralph's wandering mind.

"She's sleeping, Ralph. I'll wake her before long. She asked me to—" "Then she didn't try to reach him, Curt?" Ralph asked, struggling weakly against the fog in his brain.

Curt could see him groping to recall the happenings of that dim time before he was stricken. "I thought—she did go."

"No, she gave that over, Ralph. I'm glad. She'd have been left—alone in there—with those Indians. I tried to tell her so—but she believed she could get out—somehow—afterward."

Curt thought that Ralph's mind must be wandering badly. What did he mean by "left alone in there"? She would be with Karakhan, wouldn't she? And what did Ralph mean by "she'd get out, somehow, afterward"? After what?

"You'll watch out for her now, Curt?" Ralph begged. "She likes you—more than she—lets herself think. You'll take care of her, won't you?" Curt promised. He felt himself on the verge of something portentous, a discovery of the whole truth about Sonya's trip. Very plainly she had told Ralph.

Before he could word the questions in his mind, Ralph's lips were moving again.

"She wanted to—trust you, Curt. Wanted to tell you, and ask your help. But she felt she—didn't dare. She wasn't sure—just who you were; and she was afraid you'd—judge her harshly. Afraid you'd—send her back out—if you know, that would have been—a terrible blow to her. She couldn't rest, couldn't live—till she'd hunted him down."

Ralph sank back, limp and quiet. A tremor passed through him. For a moment Curt thought it was the end. But then came a faint rally.

The incoherent words he had just listened to bewildered Curt. Ralph was distinctly implying that when Sonya reached the headwaters lake she would be exposed to some great danger.

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Curt cuts a lobstick, tomorrow.

# LOCAL PEOPLE IN FLOOD TRIP

A party of local people who had been spending the week in Long Beach, Cal., reached Medford Monday night, and reported coming north through the torrens of rain which have killed and injured so many in that section.

The group, including Mr. and Mrs. J. Wingfield of Medford and Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Erickson of Reese creek, left Long Beach at 8:30 Sunday morning, shortly after the storm had started.

Mrs. Wingfield said today that in many places the water came half way up on the car, while in other places it was a foot deep on the highways.

Phone 542. We will haul away your refuse. City Sanitary Service.

Broken windows glazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

# DRY RULE FOR ROAD WORKERS

SALEM, Jan. 3.—(AP)—Orders regarding temperance for all employees

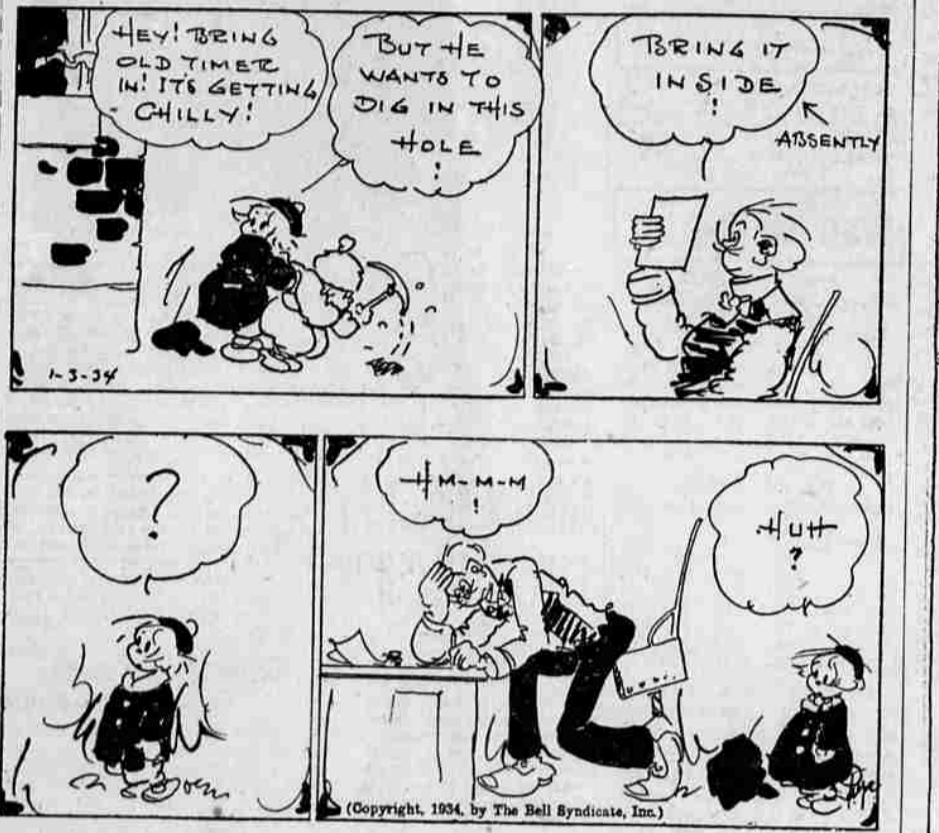
of the state highway department were issued today by R. H. Baldock, state highway engineer. Violation of the rules set out in the order will result in immediate dismissal, Baldock stated.

"All employees of the highway department are public servants and as such are subject to a more critical judgment than are others not so

employed," Baldock said. "They are also charged with the maintenance of the highway system and the erection of signs and safety devices for the protection of the traveling public. It is especially necessary, therefore, for employees of this department to avoid any use of liquor for which either they or the highway department can be criticized."

# S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



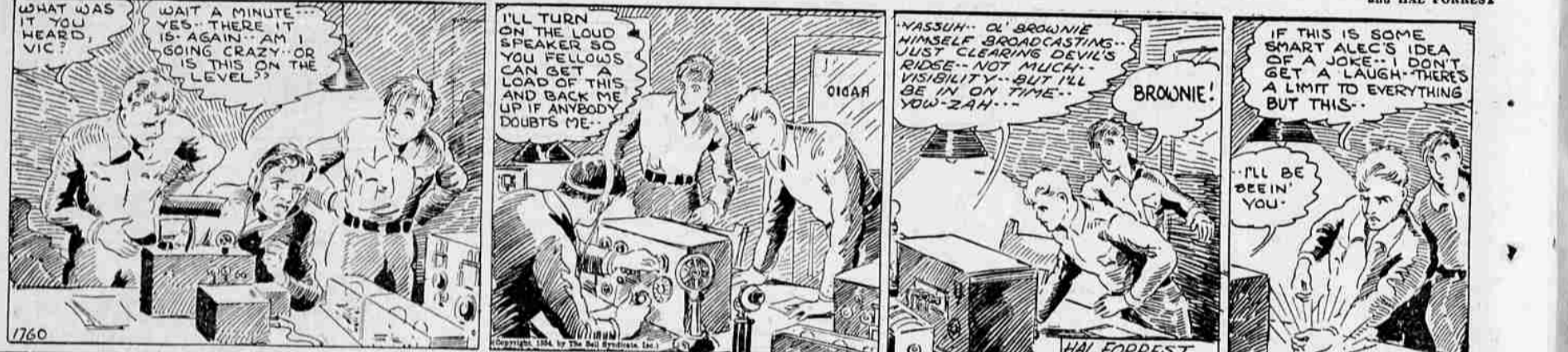
# SUBURBAN HOUSE

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