

FORBIDDEN VALLEY

by William Byron Mowery

SYNOPSIS: Curt Tennison, after a desperate struggle, has reached the lake in the Canadian wilderness to where Smash Desplains should be waiting with Curt's airplane. Sonya Volant, whom Curt loves, has rashly tried to reach Igor Karakhan, wealthy enemy, whom Curt is trying to bring to justice. Ralph Nichols, wounded in a battle with the formidable Klamath Indians, has explained that Sonya went to kill Karakhan. Ralph dies; Curt believes his story and struggles to reach Sonya and protect her.

Chapter 41 NO SMASH

Curt took one glance along the south shore and frowned—half a curse and half a cry of tragic disappointment. The plane was not in sight. They fired shots in the hope that Smash might have drawn it back into some little bay. But they got no answer. Smash had failed them.

They paddled over toward the cabin. As they drew in, Paul noticed a bit of white hanging from a low pine branch. It was Smash's handkerchief, put there to draw attention. A tin cigarette box was tied to the limb beside it. As Curt suspected, the box held a note.

Old Timer: I'm clearing out for Tallast. Our left wing tank sprung a slow leak and I thought it ought to be fixed. I'll get back tomorrow morning without fail.

Smash P. E. There's a dance at Lake Marianne tomorrow night, and I may hop over there; but I'll be back bright and early the next morning.

Curt turned the note over, looking for the date. There was none. Smash had crazily forgotten even to date his message.

In the furious anger of helplessness he tore the note to bits. It was seldom that he lost complete control of himself, but that idiotic message and the crack-up of his plane sent him tramping the landwash in a blind fury.

A tank leak—hell! Smash had got tired of being alone and had flounced off to soak up some of his sociability. He had not been asked to share any of those dangers up the Lilliar; his job was nothing more onerous than standing by with the plane; and he had flunked it.

Now when they desperately needed him and the very hours were precious, he was loolooing around somewhere, several hundred miles away. At the critical time when Sonya would reach that lake, they would not be there, he and Paul. They were stranded, in a God-forsaken wilderness, with two hundred and forty mountain miles between themselves and her.

ON the evening of the third day Sonya's party stopped at twilight and made camp in a drogue of river-bank pines. The three Indians, her escort on the trip north, built her a little lean-to, deftly wove a balsam-twig mattress for her blankets, and otherwise made her as comfortable as they could.

The leader of the three, an older half brother of Tenn-Og, called the halt, out of consideration for the white girl in his charge. Sonya herself would rather have pushed on to the headwaters lake that night. It was only twenty miles farther and they could reach it by dawn. Now when the end of her long quest was in sight, she wanted it and its harrowing uncertainty over with.

In spite of the hard trip that day she did not feel tired. She was at too high a tension. While the Indians were broiling trout for a meal, she walked back the trail to an overfalls around which her party had just portaged, and sat down on the lip of the rock thirty feet above the plunging water.

Dusk was creeping into the mountain valley. The poorwills were beginning to call, and owls drifted on noiseless wing through the heavy timber. The twilight, the solitude, the song of the waters, seemed to her a kind of pause and self-communion before tomorrow came.

With a secret rejoicing she had heard how Curt and Paul had beaten off those fourteen canoes. But she had known they'd do it! Tenn-Og no doubt had taken them a boat after the attack, and they were safe now. But where were they? It was possible that Ralph had weakened when she left, and had told Curt the truth about her journey.

In that case, would Curt follow her north and try to help her out? She wanted to think so. Even the faint possibility of it buoyed her up. Alone now, with her bridges burned and utterly on her own resources, she realized how completely she had depended on him. She felt lost without his protection, lost and defenseless and woefully inadequate to cope with what lay ahead.

In wishful fancy she tried to imagine him there with her, his rifle between his knees, his lean hard face between herself and danger; but the memory of his change and his withering coldness drove the fancy away. He had even ignored her overture to him that last evening. Her cheeks burned at the thought of her confession, and his silent scorn of it; and yet she knew that if she came out of this alive she would write to him and ask him to come to see her.

A few yards down the portage trail two Indians unexpectedly came swinging around a buckbrush thicket. They were carrying a loaded canoe, and behind them came others, a large party. Sonya started to her feet in surprise. The churning overfalls had muffled the noise; she had not known they were about till they suddenly appeared.

They were Kioschees. Why, they were the main band!—there were Siam-Klale and LeNoir! A sudden fear surged through her. Ralph and Curt and Paul—what had happened to them? This band had intended to stay down there and hem that little island in till they had killed the three men. Had they made another attack, successful this time?

LENOIR'S glum face reassured her. As she went up to camp with the party, he told her the news. Nichols had been wounded, he said; the other two had made a shelter for him the next day and he had not been seen walking about. Shortly after dark that evening they had escaped, in some unknown fashion.

They had whipped south; an unidentified canoe had slipped through that bottle neck and it must have been theirs. They probably were getting out of the country, but on the chance that they might swing north again he was taking the main band home to protect his chief.

Sonya guessed that Curt and Paul were hurrying Ralph out to civilization where he could get medical attention. She prayed he was not badly hurt. She was glad of their escape, but in another way the news plunged her into a black dejection.

Hitherto she could feel that Curt was within two or three days' swift travel of her and that she might possibly get back to him. She had even hoped that he might be coming north on her trail. But now when he was heading south, out of the Lilliar, she felt completely and finally abandoned.

At the camp LeNoir sent Tenn-Og's half brother and two other Indians on ahead to take Karakhan the news. The main party was to travel on that night, too; but they would have to pause for supper and go more slowly and so could not reach the lake till morning.

Sonya wondered why LeNoir insisted on traveling that night. For some reason he seemed in a great hurry to deliver her to Karakhan. He commanded her gruffly, as he brought her some fish and dried meat: "Tonight, on rest of dis treep, you stay close by me, Don't step into de dark; don't get out my canoe; keep hold my belt w'en we walk 'cross any portage. Understand?"

Sonya promised to obey him. During the hasty meal she was aware of Siam-Klale ogling her with narrowed eyes, as he had done at the Lilliar forks; but now his stare was so brazen that it unnerved her.

As the party was setting the boats to water, he trundled over to LeNoir and said something to him and jerked a thumb in her direction. Immediately a violent quarrel sprang up between them, and Sonya gathered that Siam-Klale was demanding that LeNoir should go in his canoe.

LeNoir won the argument, and she stepped into his canoe. She was grateful to him in a way, but she could read his secret thoughts and they frightened her. His proprietary attitude was velleed now, because he was afraid of Karakhan; but what about the time, only a few hours ahead, when Karakhan would be dead in his cabin? That incident at Russian Lake showed her what she could expect from "Teeste LeNoir."

In that whole band she had but one friend, Tenn-Og's half brother. Like Tenn-Og, he seemed less bound than the others to the benighted customs of his tribe; and he appeared to have a certain influence with the other men. For an Indian, he had been good to her on the trip. He might possibly take her across the mountains by a secret trail and hand her over to some treaty band who would get her back among white people. But it was a slender hope.

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Sonya meets the man she hopes to kill—in Monday's chapter.

VETERAN WEATHER OBSERVER PASSES

ROSEBURG, Ore., Jan. 5. — (AP) — William Bell, 82, who was in charge

of the construction of the first telephone line into the state of Washington, and who was one of the oldest men in point of service in the U. S. weather bureau, died here last night. He spent 46 years in federal service, enlisting with the signal service of the army in 1880 and serving in that department until 1891 when he was transferred to the weather bureau

with which he was connected until his retirement in 1926. He came to Roseburg in 1908 and was in charge of the station here until the time of his retirement. An odd-appearing gray rock which has been shedding a dusty fungus for 15 years without apparent shrinkage is owned by a Portland, Ore., collector.

RENO DIVORCES MAY BE ILLEGAL

CHICAGO, Jan. 5. — (AP) — A decision of the Nevada supreme court

in dismissing the divorce action of a Chicago man in Reno court on the ground that he was not a bona fide resident of that state, was hailed by Chief Justice Joseph Sabath of the superior court as putting Reno's easy divorces in jeopardy.

"The decision places Reno divorces in the same category as Mexican and French divorces," said Judge Sabath. "The supreme court takes the same position that I have always maintained—that six weeks does not constitute legal residence. Thousands of divorces already granted in Reno are imperiled by the decision."

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



DIFFICULT DECISIONS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



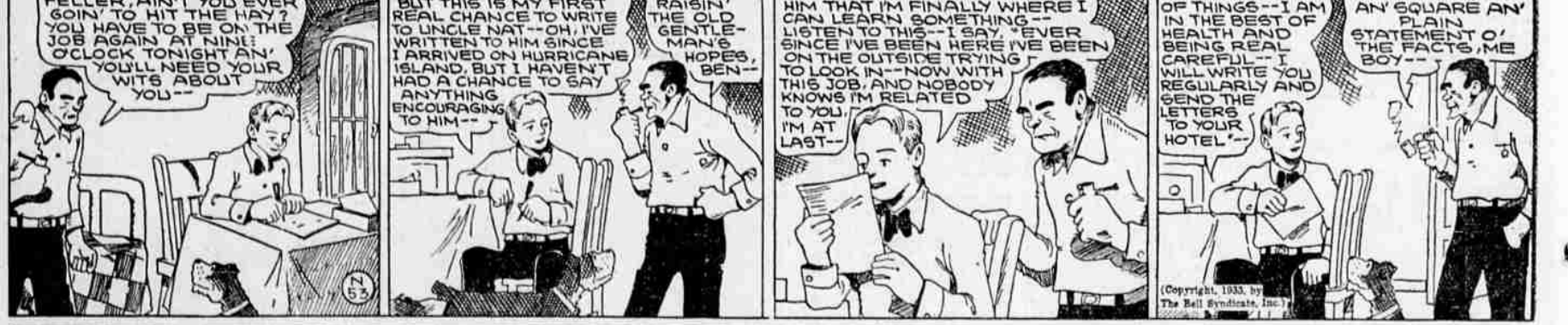
TAILSPIN TOMMY—Skeeter Is Convinced!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Ben's First Report

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—The Freezing Point

By SOL HESS



FOREST RANGERS IN DISCUSSION PLANS

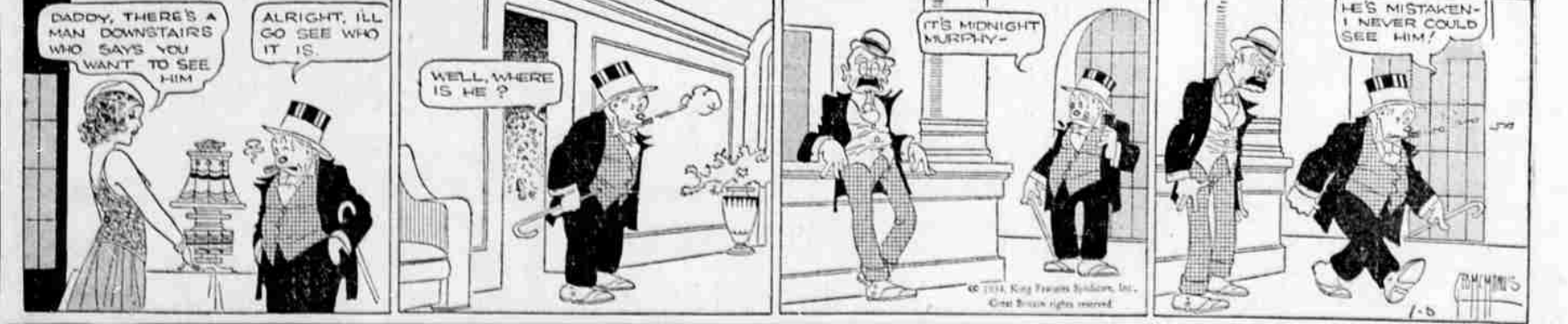
To study plans for the coming field season, the district rangers of the Rogue River national forest met Tuesday and Wednesday at the forestry offices in the Federal building with the supervisor's staff. Rangers attending were Hugh Ritter of Klamath Falls, John Holst of Butte Falls, Jess DeWitt of Union Creek and Lee Port of Jacksonville.

Utah is the habitat of 404 species or subspecies of birds, a University of Colorado naturalist reported.

Seventeen species of cactus in Oklahoma have been catalogued by Ora M. Clark of Bristolow.

BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



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