

FORBIDDEN VALLEY

by William Byron Mowery

SYNOPSIS: After tracking Igor Karakhan, international crook who is responsible for the death of her brother and father, into the Canadian wilderness, Sonya Kalkoff falls in her plan to shoot him and to hand and gagged instead. Curt Tennog, who loves Sonya and wants to bring Karakhan to justice as well, just has landed his plane on the lake near Karakhan's cabin. Karakhan plans to leave Sonya to the "mercy" of the Indians who have guarded him. Curt sees Smash Desplaine lighting a cigarette.

Chapter 45

DANGEROUS PLAN

Curt stepped back, livid with anger. "You irresponsible baby, if you do a trick like that again, I'll bogtie you hand and foot and gag you! If you had to have a cigarette, why in hell couldn't you have hid your match? I've warned you twice now; the third time I'm going to try something stronger."

He joined Paul and Tenn-Og again, and they slipped on down the shore. A pistol shot from the camp there crept out on a shelving rock where they had a good view.

A single candle shone in the cabin. Beyond it at the lean-to glowed the red coals of a fire. Everything else about the place was dark and quiet.

Paul motioned at the camp. "No body's there but Karakhan and his four men. Sonya hasn't come yet."

Curt nodded. Yes, thank God, he had got there in time. In spite of their attempt to get Ralph out they had providentially reached the lake ahead of her.

To start trouble before Sonya came would be gambling with her safety. If one of those four men should break away and take word to the party bringing her, that party would not come on and she would never reach the lake at all. She would be left in the power of Le-Noir—and Siam-Kiale. He had to hold off till she came. Tenn-Og said there were only three men with her; and three more would not stiffen the fight too much.

Not long after they had crept out on the rock, they heard the pack of honey-colored huskies leave the camp and tear up along the landwash, barking. A little later they noticed a stir and bustle at the lean-to. Figures passed in front of the fire, somebody quieted the dogs, the cabin door opened and an Indian was framed for a moment in the shaft of light.

"Somebody's come in," Curt told Paul. "It can't be Sonya and her party; she'd have gone inside the cabin and we'd have seen her. Let's slip closer and find out who it is."

Tenn-Og objected. The huskies would be sure to catch the white-man scent and stir up a commotion. He himself would go. He was Klose-hee; the dogs would pay no attention to him.

Curt agreed, and Tenn-Og left. As they watched the campfire and waited for him, Curt looked south in thought across those leagues of dark river and wondered how near Sonya was.

From the references to Victoria in her letter, he knew that she had used her acquaintance with Karakhan to play on the Russian's weak point and that her letter had been a daring and superbly managed coup to find out exactly where he was.

Where Baldwin and the whole Silent Squad had failed to trace Karakhan, she had picked up the man's trail and followed it unerringly. Where he himself had counted on having to search for weeks or even months to locate the Cossack, she had achieved it neatly and swiftly, with three pages of paper; and Karakhan had actually sent his man to fetch her!

In half an hour Tenn-Og reappeared beside them, as silently as he had gone. He had crept in beneath the cabin window and listened to the report which three runners had brought Karakhan:

The main band, on their way north, had caught up with Sonya's party, were bringing her with them, and would reach the lake about dawn.

The news jolted Curt. He dared not make a move till Sonya came, but when she did come the main band would be there also. To get her back with him again and to capture Karakhan he would have to fight that whole party.

In low tones he and Paul talked their predicament over. There would be at least two dozen of the men; Siam-Kiale and Le-Noir would be leading them, and the presence of white strangers in the very heart of their country would stir them to a high pitch. The prospect of a fight with them, a show-down fight, daunt-

ed both him and Paul; but there was no getting out of it now. They decided to find some good ambush above the cabin, where they could sweep the camp with their rifles. They would have the advantage of surprise, and that would help considerably. Paul was to have the first two shots—at Siam-Kiale and Le-Noir. With his deadly marksmanship he would probably get them both before the fight really began. If he did, it would be half the battle. "There's one thing," Curt added, "that I'm going to guard against now. When the rifle talk starts, Karakhan is dead sure to make a break for the hangar, to get into his plane and get away. I'm going to swim down to that hangar and put his plane out of commission. Then we'll have him."

He stripped off his clothes, slipped into the water, headed out into the lake a short distance, and circled in toward the hangar. He intended to disable the plane by removing the dog from the timer box. Karakhan would never get a splutter out of the engine, but the ship would not be injured in the least. By keeping the dog he would have a plane himself, to take Sonya and the others out. Maybe two planes, if Karakhan's plane had gas enough to divide.

Twenty strokes from the hangar he suddenly heard low guttural voices ahead. It stopped him short, just in time. In the darkness he could see the outlines of the building but could not locate the men at all except that they were near the plane shed.

WHAT were they doing there? Just a casual meeting and chat? For ten minutes he treaded water and listened, thinking they would go away. But they stayed where they were.

Submerging himself, he swam closer, came up very cautiously, and raised his eyes above the surface of the water.

He was near enough then to see the men. There were two of them. They were sitting on the ends of the catwalk, one on each side of the hangar entrance.

"Hell!" he swore. "Guards—watching the plane!" Reluctantly he backed away and returned to the shelving rock.

"It doesn't matter," Paul assured him. "He can't get fire steps from the cabin. If he makes a break, so much the better—it'll merely save us the trouble of taking him out of this country."

They hurried back to the cove, ate a bit of food from the emergency rations in the plane, and cleaned their guns carefully. Before leaving, Curt gave Smash his final orders.

"You're to stay here with the plane and keep under cover. Now here's what I want you to do. If anything happens to us—and I want you to wait till you're absolutely sure we're out of the picture—you hop into the plane and get as far from here as the gas'll take you. Head for Fort Nelson on the Liard; it's nearer than Juneau or Russian Lake.

"When the gas runs out and you have to come down, get out the canvas canoe and try to make Fort Nelson. If you get to Nelson, borrow a motor-canoe from Bob Fraser, streak for the signal corps station at Providence, and wireless A-K. Tell him it was my request that he should send a big patrol in here and try to find Sonya Volkov."

Circling up slope through the heavy timber, they headed for a cave which Tenn-Og had mentioned and which Curt thought might be a good place for an ambush.

The Indian's familiarity with the slope was amazing. Eight hundred yards above the camp, he turned and led them down toward the cabin till they came out on top of a high limestone cliff.

Without hesitating, even in the intense dark, the Indian took them down through a dangerous fissure. At the foot of the cliff he turned left, led them a dozen steps along a game trail, and stopped at the wide black mouth of a cave.

Curt started to enter and look around, but Tenn-Og seized his arm and jerked him forcibly back. "Very bad place!" he warned, in stumbling Jargon. "You fall, fall down deep, no man ever see you any more. I take you in. Stay behind me, put hand on my shoulder."

About ten steps inside, the Indian stopped. With no danger of a light being seen, Curt struck a double match. Just in front of them yawned a black chasm, only fifteen feet wide but apparently bottomless. Across it stretched two logs, six-inch pines. From somewhere down in the chasm came the gushing of water, a good-sized underground stream.

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Tomorrow, Sonya arrives on her dangerous mission.

HUSBANDS BEWARE WHILE DICTATING

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9.—(AP)—Husbands must be careful what they

say in letters to their wives dictated to a stenographer. Under a supreme court ruling today such letters were declared to be admissible as evidence in the trial of a husband on a criminal charge. Conrad Wolfe of Spokane, Wash., was charged with using the mails to defraud in the sale of stock in the Cantu Mining company of Alaska.

The government subpoenaed at his trial a stenographer to whom he had dictated a letter to his wife in which it was alleged he had declared "I am going to rob every last one of them blind." The stenographer was required to produce her shorthand note book and read the letter over the objection of counsel for Wolfe.

ENGINEER FINDS YANKS IMPOLITE

LONDON.—(UP)—The driver of the "Royal Scot," the British engine

which has just returned from its American tour, is scandalized at the manners of the young hopefuls he met in Canada and the U. S. The children displayed a complete ignorance of the word "please," declared Engineer Gilbertson on his return. But he was full of praise for their mechanical intelligence. His engine was often referred to as a little sewing machine, said Gilbert-

son. But the scoffers, on closer inspection of this midget compared with the giant American "hogs," were full of praise for its mechanical construction. Especially admired was the smooth perfection of the brakes. Phone 542. We will haul away your refuse. City Sanitary Service. Dance at Rogue Elk Saturday night, January 6th.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



THE MINUTE THAT SEEMS A YEAR

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Good News From Home!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Counting His Chickens

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—Those Long Nights

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



DENTISTS, DOCTORS SHOULD CO-OPERATE

BOSTON.—(UP)—There should be closer co-operation between doctors and dentists, in the opinion of Dr. Leroy M. S. Miller, dean of the Harvard Dental School. "It is possible," says he, "to make legal division of the body—but nature knows none. No legal barrier can stop the poison from an infected tooth speeding to the heart and interfering in its action; or to the joints, and stimulating arthritis; or to the eye, and affecting vision." Specialization is fine, he says, but it is "rapidly reaching the point in medicine at which, with the aid of the law, the various specialists would have acquired legal and territorial rights, each in his own portion of the anatomy."

GREETINGS TO GUAM BY MEDFORD RADIO

New Year's greetings from Medford to Guam will be traveling to the latter place by an indirect course today through the service of the Rogue River Valley Amateur Radio club, it was announced this afternoon. From Antioch, Cal., the local club received a message to transfer greetings from Guam to Tacoma, Wash. They did so and sent a greeting back to Antioch to be relayed to Guam, extending the happy new year of the Medford Chamber of Commerce, from which the club is operating.

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