



THE RIVER of SKULLS

—by George Marsh—

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WNU SERVICE

SYNOPSIS

Alan Cameron, young trapper, Noel, his Indian partner, and Rough, husky Ungava sled dog, look in vain for the Montagnais camp in the desolate Big River country of Northern Canada. Their supplies destroyed by wolves, they are forced to subsist on wolf meat until they come across a substantial log house in the wilderness of Talking River, where they are greeted by a big blond man with a gun. Introducing himself as John McCord, hunter, the big man asks Alan if he dares go with him next year to the River of Skulls beyond the Sinking Lakes, where no man is said to have been before. Healer McCord, the doctor, who had come with him to the wilderness, wins the immediate devotion of Rough. On the eve of Alan's departure for Fort George, McCord suddenly tells him to bring him back some dogs, and to keep his mouth shut to questions. He gives the boy money, warning him not to show it at Fort George, and when questioned, explains all later. Returned to Fort George, Alan meets McCord and Slade, Provincial police, with Arsené Rivard, clerk, and Alan's rival for Berthe's affections, with whom he is in love. The two police are looking for a guide to the Big River wilderness. Accidentally Alan drops one of McCord's bills and when questioned, insists he had got it from Neil Campbell, whose life he had saved at Whale River two years before. He realizes he must make good his lie by going north and seeing Campbell before anyone else has had a chance to talk to him. Berthe's father tells Alan the police are after a man wanted for murder, and have hired a boat to check Alan's story at Whale River. Alan beats the police to Whale Island, en route to Richmond to get his dogs. Alan returns to Fort George. Another government agent, a seductive Mrs. Hanbury, arrives by plane, tries to bargain with him to tell her the whereabouts of McCord and his daughter. The only outcome is Berthe's jealousy. Miserable over Berthe's coolness, Alan suspects Rivard of poisoning her mind.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"I want to talk with you, Cameron," said McQueen.

"All right."

Leaving Noel with the dogs, Alan joined McQueen and entered his house. The policeman took the chair Alan offered and leisurely filled and lit his pipe, then asked abruptly, "When do we start up river?"

It was evident that McQueen intended to ignore the matter of the race to Whale River, was satisfied, as was most of Fort George, that Alan had met McCord. For a space the eyes of the youth met the other's in a fixed stare.

"I'm starting in about a week," said Alan. "Are your men stronger water men?"

"Yes, they're good river men. Slade and I were brought up in a canoe."

"Good thing for you. There's some bad poling water on this river."

"Well, when you're ready to start, let me know," said McQueen.

"You'll be a month reaching the three forks and you'll need three months' grub, for you might miss the caribou," said Alan, hoping to learn whether the police intended to winter in the interior or to return before the ice.

"Three months?" laughed the other, rising. "We're traveling in two canoes with flour for six months."

As Alan watched McQueen walk toward the Hudson's Bay store he said aloud: "No, you won't get John McCord. What a mess he'd make of you and Slade if you ever met him!"



"I can't help myself, can I?"

Ottawa flashed her teeth, threw back her head and looked at him through her long lashes? Well, he also had some teeth to show. Calmly brushing aside her detaining hands, he rose from his chair and, while her brain fought with her offended pride as wave after wave of blood stained her face, he calmly lit his pipe.

"You—you—" she choked.

"You—what, Mrs. Special Agent?" he asked, coolly.

Suddenly recovering her poise she stood staring at him in amazement. "You blockhead!" she finally managed to say.

She turned to find Rough standing at her elbow, hair erect, his throat swelling in a muffled growl.

"That beast! Take that beast away from me!" she cried.

"Here, Rough!" commanded Alan. "You're scaring the lady. Did you think she was going to bite me? I did. Good-night, Mrs. Hanbury!" he opened the door. "So that's the way a special agent from Ottawa handles the men!"

Standing in the doorway he laughed bitterly into the night. He knew, now, that he could not make his peace with Berthe Dessane before he left Fort George.

It was July, the Montagnais "Moon When the Birds Moults," and the trade was at its height at Fort George. Gradually the coast Crees were taking their families to summer fishing camps on the coast islands, where the Hearne's salmon, sea-trout and whitefish were schooling before ascending the rivers to their spawning grounds, and where the Canada geese, pintail and black duck would flock with their new broods. Remnants of the great ice-floe from Hudson's Straits, Fox Channel and the Bay of God's Mercy which had besieged the coast in the spring, now drifted far in the great bay, slowly vanishing under the sun and the warm rain winds.

The remaining days of his stay were busy ones for Alan. There were supplies to be carefully checked, all of which he bought with his credit at the posts. The money McCord had given him he hid carefully under the floor of his cabin. The extra flour, beans and sugar Noel got through Montagnais, as well as the extra gill-net which might some day, in the heart of the unknown country, save their lives. Fearing the havoc which the tongue of Mrs. Hanbury had undoubtedly created at the Revillon Freres through the oily Rivard, for days Alan avoided the parting with Berthe. But at last, hungering for the sight of her face, driven by the desire to defend himself, he went to the Revillon Freres.

Gabriel Dessane and Pierre were busy with Indians, so Alan waited until the factor was free. As he lounged against the counter, Arsené Rivard entered the room, saw Alan, flushed and went at once to

the desk behind the counter where he busied himself with an account book.

So she's been here, surmised Cameron. Berthe knows Mrs. Hanbury came to my house. Rivard's lost no time telling her mother some wild lie about that call. There's little chance for me now, with Berthe.

Finishing with the Indian, Gabriel Dessane approached Alan and gave him a hearty handshake. "How are you, Alan? They tell me you got the dogs you were after. Come outside where I can talk to you."

In the empty clearing Dessane began: "You start with the police this week McQueen tells me. That is good!"

"Good?" protested Alan. "I can't help myself, can I?"

"No, but your going to Whale put yourself in a bad light here, Alan. Everyone thinks you met this McCord."

"Do you?" Alan looked hard at the kindly Frenchman.

"You say you did not. For me that is sufficient." The other smiled inscrutably into Cameron's level eyes.

"I came to say good-by to Berthe but—she's turned against me. The other night she heard I had talked to Mrs. Hanbury and was jealous. Madame Dessane, Rivard, they've been working on her."

Gabriel Dessane raised both arms to the skies in an eloquent gesture. "Mon Dieu, what that Madame Hanbury has done at Fort George! My wife to me will speak hardly at all. Tiens! Alan, it is terrible!"

Alan smiled at the older man's vehemence.

"She tried to get information the night I was here and, three nights ago, she came to my house and—"

"And what, Alan?" Gabriel Dessane was interested.

"Well, she may be a government agent but—"

"Go on, Alan."

"She tried her best to make me talk. I had nothing to say."

Dessane seemed disappointed. He frowned at the distant hills across the great river. "She has been at me to attempt to learn from you if you met this McCord—and to find out where. She is a pretty woman, yes—a pretty woman," he said with a sigh. "She has made much trouble for me."

"Now about Rivard," demanded Alan, immersed in his own problem. "You know how I feel toward Berthe. Do—do you object to my hoping—that some day—"

The older man placed his hand kindly on Alan's shoulder.

"There is much time yet, Alan. You are both young—too young. You have your way to make—"

"But Rivard, he's wasting no time," Alan demurred, vehemently. "Are you his friend or—mine?"

Dessane's face sobered. "Rivard is sent here by the company. His family has influence. I am helpless. And there is Madame Dessane! She is very difficult."

"I see," replied Cameron, with a shrug. "I'm a poor man—a hunter, without a decent home to give her. Rivard will go up in the Company. I see! Well, I'll go and say good-by if she'll see me."

"You must not forget that you are under a cloud here—the police may make serious trouble for you. But Berthe will see you. She is not happy. She does not know what to think."

Alan started to move away, then turned to the older man. "Oh, I want to ask you a question. When you were at Fort Chimo did you ever hear of the River of Skulls?"

Dessane stood for a time with knit brows, seemingly groping deep in his memory. "I recall, now, an old Naskapi once told me about a River of Skulls where there had been a battle between the Huskies and the Indians," he answered. "They exterminated each other. And their spirits now moan in the gorge near which the fight took place. He said some of the bones and skulls are still found along the shore. But the Indians were afraid of this moaning gorge, Manitou Gorge, the Gorge of the Spirits, as they called it, and most of them avoided it."

"Was this river far in the interior, south of Chimo?"

"Oh, yes, deep in the caribou barrens. He said it was a branch of the Koksoak, but no white man has ever been there. It's a country where even the Indians starve when they miss the deer migrations."

Alan bade the trader good-by, then, braving the stony face of Madame Dessane, went dejectedly to say his farewell to Berthe. At the door where once he had been welcome he was kept waiting by what, judging from the sound, appeared to be a heated argument, punctuated by the shrill voice of his friend, little Manon. At last the door was opened by Berthe.

"I am leaving in a few days," he said, probing her dark eyes in an attempt to read her thoughts. "I've come to say good-by. Berthe."

"Come in, Alan," she said, with a faint smile.

"Berthe," he began, "I can't go, with you feeling this way! It's all Rivard and this woman, I know. You don't understand what she's up to."

"I understand this much," the girl retorted bitterly. "She was at your house. She boasted to Madame Martin, at the Northern Trading Company, that she had twisted you round her little finger," Berthe flung back caustically, her black eyes snapping as blood flushed her dark face.

There were tears in his eyes as he watched her wrestle with pride and doubt and the loyalty of years.

"Oh, it's not that! You're wrong! It's not this woman!" she protested. "It's your suddenly going up the coast when you'd been away—so long! You went to see Neil Campbell! You know you did! Everyone believes it! It's that you went away and did not tell me the truth. You couldn't care so much for me and do that. It's that I've lost faith in you—that's all!" With a sob and a faint "Good-by, Alan!" Berthe ran from the room.

CHAPTER VI

There were only a few friends to bid Alan and Noel good-by on the beach at the Hudson's Bay Company when they loaded their canoe for the long trip to the headwaters. But, at the Revillon Freres, the entire population watched Trudeau and Goyette, McQueen's helpers, with two hired Montagnais canoe-men, stow the outfit in the two police canoes. Then them, Dessane and Rivard talked to McQueen, Slade and Mrs. Hanbury.

Shortly, the police and the woman who had turned Fort George into a hotbed of gossip withdrew from the group and talked, heads together, in low tones. Then, after hurried good-bys, the two boats headed for the far shore where Alan, with his four Ungavas running the beach, was riding the flood tide.

Later, in front of the Northern Trading Company, a sea-plane taxied up the river, lifted, then in a long loop returned and passed over the police canoes.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Neurotics Are Numerous and Make Life Unpleasant for the Rest of the Family

Those difficult people whom we call neurotics are getting plenty of advice nowadays. But how about those long-suffering ones who have to live with neurotics? Isn't it time they received a little of the aid and comfort that is being passed around?

A nervous invalid can reduce a whole family to serfdom—and what can't one do to the family pocket-book! Countless scores of men and women—more often women—suffer from aches and pains for which no physician can find an organic cause. They wander from one doctor to another looking hopefully for the miracle man who "really understands my case."

Some have "heart spells" or "gas on the stomach," or throw a mysterious kind of fit when they are crossed, writes Raymond G. Fuller in *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. The handy illness flares up in a family emergency, just when calmness and efficiency are especially needed. When moving day comes, or Johnnie breaks his leg, or Aunt Emma arrives for a visit, a headache (or something) sends the fragile one to bed, while more mature members of the family have to carry on.

Then there are the family dictators who rule by direct methods rather than by appeals to sympathy and pity. They are fathers and mothers who turn their children either into weaklings or into bitter rebels against authority; wives who browbeat their husbands into apologetic "timid souls"; husbands whose wives tremble with fear at their frown.

Neurotics are hard to get along with because they find it hard to get along with themselves. Because they are uncomfortable they make others uncomfortable. They haven't really grown up, but get their own way by playing on other people's sympathies or scaring them into submission, just as children do. Whether clinging and sweet or tempestuous and domineering, they are family tyrants when allowed to be, and neurotics do make cowards of us all.

Beginning of Billiards
An authority on billiards dates the real start of the game in the United States from the year 1859. The first national match was played at Detroit, Mich., April 12, 1859.

Strange Facts

Government Pays Cats

THE familiar old proverb says, "a cat may look on a king," but there is no mention of what it may cost the king. In England some cats may demand their weekly pay from his majesty's government. There is an old English law providing a shilling a week for the food of each cat employed in the service of the state. There are about two thousand cats on the British government's payroll. Cats still protect granaries, cold storage vaults, docks, workshops, ships and stores.

It is believed that the ancient Egyptians domesticated and revered the cat because its protection meant the difference between plenty and starvation. The Egyptians were a grain producing people. A plague of mice and rats could reduce the population to starvation. Eighteen centuries before the Christian era the cat was domesticated in Egypt and treated with respect and veneration. When a cat died the members of the household went into mourning.

It is commonly thought that cats can see in the dark. This is an erroneous idea. Their eyes are so constructed that the pupils can contract to mere slits in bright light and become large and round in the dark. Because of the mechanism of the eye cats can catch rays of light too dim for the human eye to see by. Cats can see in very faint light, but not in total darkness.

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HOW to SEW

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

THE most economical way to cut a slip cover is to make a pattern first. Do this before you buy the material, then fold several bed sheets the width of the fabric you wish to buy, and lay the pattern pieces on them to estimate the amount of goods needed. Some of the pattern pieces may be made of paper, though un-



bleached muslin is better for parts that must be fitted. Allow 1 inch at all seam lines to insure an easy fit, and 3-inches for a tuck-in all around the spring seat as shown here at A. Cut the sections with straight edges, then pin them in place and shape them to follow the lines of the chair as at B. Also mark each pattern piece with an arrow, as shown, to indicate which way the grain of the goods should run. The lower sketch shows the pattern pieces pinned on the slip cover material. Brush fringe accents the main

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONS

Filling Worm Holes.—If furniture is attacked by wood worms, syringe the holes with paraffin, and afterwards fill them with paraffin wax.

Cooking Green Vegetables.—Let the water be boiling when the vegetables are put in. The kettle should be left uncovered and the cooking time reduced to a minimum.

Washing White Silk.—Never use soap on white silk. The soap should be dissolved in water before laundering is begun.

Cleaning Electric Toaster.—A cheap narrow paint brush is splendid for brushing crumbs from between the wires of an electric toaster and also lessens the danger of damaging the toaster.

Blue for the Kitchen.—Claiming that flies hate blue, paint experts recommend that kitchen walls be colored medium or "implement" blue with pale blue ceilings.

Cinnamon Broken into.—A stick of cinnamon broken into the milk beaten into custards gives them a faint cinnamon color, but does not darken them.

JUST JESTS



Never Despair
A friend wrote a letter saying that he was in very bad health, and concluded: "Is there anything worse than having toothache and earache at the same time?" The other wrote back: "Yes, rheumatism and Saint Vitus' dance!"

Tommy's definition of "nothing"
is a balloon without its cover.

DISPUTED
Professor—The cave man had only a primitive language.
Sophomore—That can't be so, sir. Else how could they have given those Greek names to all their animals.

Off the Earth
Two motorists were zipping along at some eighty miles per hour, when a policeman appeared from nowhere and ordered them to pull over.
"Were we driving too fast, officer?" asked one of them.
"No," he sneered, "you were flying too low."

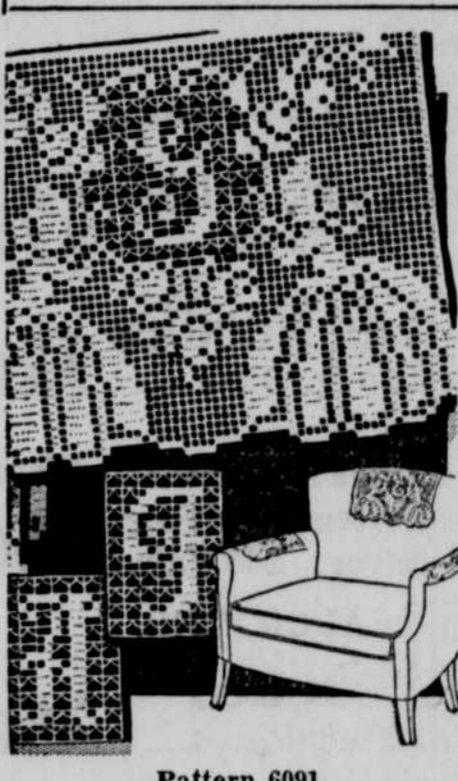
Softer, Please
Indignant Customer—Really, Mr. Sands, you get dearer and dearer every day.
Grocer—Not so loud, mum. My wife's powerful jealous.

The new couple is said to be well matched. She was a grass widow and he's a vegetarian.

So Unprepared
Husband (hearing burglar)—Be quiet, dear. This is going to be a battle of brains.
Wife—Yes, but shouldn't you have a weapon of some sort?

His Lesson
Father—I promised you a bicycle if you worked hard at school and passed. And you have failed. What have you been doing?
Tommy—Learning to ride a bike.

Chair Set in Filet Crochet



Pattern 6091
Distinctive — this easily crocheted set, its picturesque motif and initial set off by lacy K-stitch. Excellent for scarf-ends, too!

tern 6091 contains charts and directions for making the set and 3¼ by 5 inch alphabet; illustration of stitches; materials needed. To obtain this pattern, send 15 cents in stamps or coins (coins preferred) to The Sewing Circle, Household Arts Dept., 259 W. 14th St., New York, N. Y.

In the Doghouse!

A dog's life really is a dog's life, according to a Baltimore (Md.) expert. In fact, it may be even worse than it's jokingly supposed to be.

Take, for example, the canine nervous breakdown. The most lousy pooch has feelings, too, and may become ill because of anxiety or tough breaks.

If the atmosphere isn't friendly, a dog reacts to it, becomes blue and moody, just like a human. Frequently strain of a dog show is too much for an entry, and it will go to pieces, refuse to eat, become ill, though it's in perfect physical condition.—Washington Post.

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