



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 trappers' 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, amazed, to a substantial log house in the wilderness of Talking River.

CHAPTER I—Continued

"Tonight we'll eat, Noel; tonight we'll eat!"
Dizzy from weakness Alan started for the cabin. Reaching the slab door he struck it with his mittened hand and called out: "Hello! Hello there, inside!"

For answer the door slowly swung in and the two pinched faces in the hoods stared into the black muzzle of an automatic pistol. Hunched behind the pistol stood a bearded giant of a man whose ice-blue eyes glittered hostilely beneath a livid scar that gouged his forehead.

In all the wide north, starving men were not greeted in this fashion. Alan Cameron's hollow eyes flamed with anger as he met the cold stare that probed his.

"You don't need that gun," he rasped. "We're starved out. Our trap-lines are up on the Mad River. We trade at Fort George. A wolf-vulture got into our cache and destroyed every bit of fish and flour we had."

The threat slowly faded from the cold eyes and the gun went back to its holster. "Starved out, eh? You look it!"

"We were on our way to the Sinking Lakes to find the Montagnais."
"Well, you'd have been out of luck if you hadn't struck this place. There are no hunters on the Sinking Lakes this winter."

Alan and Noel exchanged perplexed glances.

"Now, boys," continued the giant, "I've got some caribou stew in the kettle that'll wipe that hungry look off your faces. Come in!"

"My dog, here," said Alan, "you'll give him something, too?"
"There's plenty of stew for you all. Unhitch him and bring him in."

Dropping to his knees beside Rough, as he threw off his collar and belly-band, Alan whispered into a hairy ear: "You hear that, Rough? No more tough wolf! Stew! Deer stew for the big dog!"

"Drop your coats and moccasins and make yourselves cozy, boys," said their host, as the two starved men sucked in the appetizing odors emanating from a huge copper kettle, perched on a sheet-iron folding stove which stood at the side of the clay-plastered fireplace. The giant filled two aluminum cups and a pan from the kettle. "You'll get just one cup apiece, now. It'll knock you out, if you hog it in your condition. I guess the dog can stand a panful."

The speaker placed a dish, cooled with a handful of snow, before the ravenous husky, dropped some snow into the cups and handed them to Alan and Noel.

"Steady, boys—not all at once!" he warned, as the two feverishly drank the nourishing and palatable broth.

"We've been living on wolf the last week—what was that of it," said Alan. "I got two but they were like rawhide—no strength in them."

"Timber wolves?"
"No, white arctic wolves."
"That explains it—hunting south for the caribou, and most of the deer have moved east out of this country."

"That's why the Montagnais did not winter on the Sinking Lakes," nodded Alan.

Seated on a chair made of split spruce slabs, Alan threw curious glances about the interior of the cabin while the big, yellow-haired man offered Noel a plug of smoking tobacco and cut fillings for the huge pipe he held in his hand. The spruce log walls were carefully chinked with moss plastered with mud. Two small windows made of caribou parchment through which the last rays of the sun dimly entered were aided in lighting the room by a large candle set in a horn stick. On a wall a pair of caribou antlers held three rifles, while from their brow lines hung two belts with sheathed skinning knives. Built into a corner of the room was a double-decked bunk, matted with spruce boughs and covered with Hudson's Bay blankets and dressed caribou and bear skins. Near the bunk a ladder of spruce poles reached to a trapdoor in the loft over the main room, and at the end of the room, for the chimney was on the side of the building, a closed slab door, hung on rawhide hinges, communicated with a second room.

These details the quick eyes of Alan covered with a glance. The clamoring of his stomach was forgotten in his amazement at finding a permanent camp, which no man could build alone, on the headwaters of the Big River—on the frontiers of the unknown interior of Ungava. Who was this man and

where were the others? For what were they here?

As the giant turned to him when he had lit Noel's pipe and his own, Alan pleaded: "Just one more cup of that stew!"

"No more, now," was the answer. "I'm boss here! Lie down, you two, and get some rest like the dog there. He's asleep already."

"Onlee wan more drink?" teased Noel.

"No, not a mouthful!" The bearded man lifted a big hand in a gesture of refusal. "In an hour you'll have more. Then, when you get some strength, we'll talk. You're weak as rabbits, now."

So Alan and Noel stretched upon the lower section of the slab and almost immediately the warmth of the cabin and the food in their stomachs brought sleep.

CHAPTER II

An hour later Alan and Noel rose from the bunk, their drawn faces beaming at the thought of food. Smacking their cracked lips, they



"Hello, dad! Where did this sled and dog harness come from?"

drank the nourishing liquid and asked for more.

"No, not yet!" refused their host. "It won't do to eat too fast. When did you lose your grub?"

"We left our camp ten days ago, with three rabbits."
The cold eyes softened. "Tough!" Then Alan suddenly demanded: "Rough?"

"He's out by the sled. Call him in."
Alan opened the door and the husky limped stiffly inside, emptied the pan offered him and sprawled on the floor with a contented grunt.

"Mind telling me where you got that dog?" asked McCord.

"I got him as a pup from a north coast Eskimo."

"He's a beauty," said the man with the scar, admiring the massive head with its black and white markings, the great frame, with white chest and socks.

"Since we're going to see something of each other before you head for home," went on the giant, "what's your name?"

"Alan Cameron. My father was factor at Fort George. My partner's name is Noel Leloup."

The big man extended a calloused hand to each of the boys. "My name is John McCord. Welcome to Castle McCord!" he added with a laugh.

Alan's mind was busy with the mystery of how this yellow-haired giant had found his way to the Talking River whose headwater lakes lie on the frontier of an unknown country. Who was he? Why did he come? Where were his men and dogs?

The cups and pan were shortly filled again. Then, lighting his pipe, McCord observed, "Worst tangle of lakes I ever saw—the head water country of these big rivers!"

"How did you get here?" The gray eyes of Cameron met the sudden scrutiny in the cold stare of his host.

"That's a fair question," admitted the latter, after an interval, the glitter slowly fading from his ice-blue eyes. "I came in from Rupert House with two canoes and six Indians. Some of my dogs were drowned in October on the young ice. My men took the rest and went to East Main for more."

"From Rupert House?" Alan and Noel exchanged puzzled looks.

"Yes, it took all summer. We were lost half the time. But we finally picked up a Montagnais who knew the portages to the Sinking Lakes. So here I am."

Alan's suspicions, aroused by their hostile reception, were fast fading under McCord's seeming frankness. But whom had McCord feared when he opened the door? Whom did he expect to meet here in the solitudes of the Talking River country? From the appearance of the cache he had plenty of supplies and men working for him.

"You know where you are?" asked Alan. "On the edge of an unknown wilderness. No hunter knows what lies beyond the Sinking Lakes. The Montagnais will not cross the divide."

The bearded man threw back his head with a great laugh. "I suppose there are evil spirits there, too, and giant Windigo who eat men alive!"

Into the dark eyes of Noel stole a look of uneasiness. Among his people belief in the supernatural was universal and to them the unknown heart of Ungava had, for generations, been a taboed land, the home of demons.

"It's simply a question of grub," Alan replied. "To go far into this country, a man would have to winter there and find the caribou—or starve."

The big man nodded. "That's it! It's always a matter of grub in the bush. Ever hear of the River of Skulls?"

"Riviere of Skull!" gasped Noel, his small eyes wide with fear. "De

from! I noticed the trail on the river."

Beside the boys' sled, with a 22 caliber rifle in one hand, the other holding three snowshoe rabbits, stood a slender, hooded figure clothed in white Hudson's Bay duffel.

"We've got some visitors," replied the man in the doorway. "Hang those rabbits up and come in before these boys eat up all of your supper." Then he closed the door.

"I didn't tell you I had a partner wintering with me," he explained, with a chuckle. "In fact I wouldn't have known what to do without her. I see from your face you think I'm crazy to bring a girl into this country," he added to Alan, who shook his head doubtfully. "But she wouldn't let me come alone. I know I was wrong, but what could I do? She's as strong and able as a boy; good shot, handy in a canoe and can walk me off my feet. Well, here she is!"

The door opened and the girl closed it behind her and stood leaning against it. With a toss of her head, she threw back the hood of her parka. Her face, browned by sun and wind, was framed in a tumbled mass of gold.

"Heather," said the giant, with a wave of the hand, as the questioning eyes of the girl sought his, then curiously met the embarrassed gaze of the boys, "Alan Cameron, here, of Fort George, with Noel and Rough, walked in today, starved out."

"Gosh! That's too bad!"
"She's John McCord's daughter," said Alan, as he noted the tall, symmetrical build of the girl which even the parka coat and the heavy duffel leggings failed to conceal. "She has it all, the blue of his eyes and the yellow hair."

The girl gave her hand to each of the boys then, as Rough nosed tentatively forward, ears closed, brown eyes watching her closely, she cried: "What a beautiful dog! Dad, if we only had a team like—what did you say his name was?" She turned to Alan, painfully aware of his ten days' growth of beard and his winter-worn clothes.

"Rough."
"Come, girl, get off your coat and those heavy moccasins and socks and have some supper," broke in the giant. "It will soon be dark and we have no candles to waste."

The girl left the men and went into the connecting room while her father started a batch of corn bread and filled a tea-pot. Then he set a small slab table with aluminum plates and cups and moved it to the center of the room.

Embarrassed, Alan and Noel heated water from the river and did their best to make themselves more presentable but without marked success. When Heather McCord appeared, Alan refused a seat at the table, where he could not eat, and placed his stool back in the shadows of the room lit by the single candle and the fire.

"I'm sorry," she said to Alan, "that you cannot eat with us."
"I'm living high on this deer broom, thank you. In a day or two Noel and I'll make up for lost time."

She seemed to Alan hardly more than seventeen or eighteen. But she was a head taller than Berthe Dessane, down at Fort George, and the sweater she wore accentuated the clean lines of her shoulders and bust, and well developed arms. Still, he told himself, as he watched the candle-light pick up the deep gold in the unruly hair, bobbed at the nape of her round neck, lovely as was the picture she made, she was not lovelier than the raven-haired Berthe.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

spirit riviere, far een de lan' of de Caribou People!"

"The old Montagnais have many tales of this unknown country," explained Alan. "This River of Skulls is supposed to be haunted by spirits. No one has ever been there. It is old men's talk."

The man with the livid scar looked hard at the speaker, as he said: "How do you know no one has ever been there?"

Alan answered coolly, "No one from Fort George has ever been there."

"Guess you're right, lad! And it's supposed to flow into the Koksoak—this River of Skulls?"

"I don't know. It may flow into the Koksoak. Gabriel Dessane, at Fort George, says that all the rivers northeast of here must flow north into Hudson's Straits. He was once trader for the Revillon Freres at Fort Chimo, on the Koksoak."

The eyes of the giant burned with sudden interest. "On the Koksoak, eh! At Chimo, and he's now at Fort George? By glory, that's interesting—"

The sudden rising of Rough who moved to the door, a low rumble in his throat, checked the speaker.

"Someone is coming," announced Alan, watching the face of the big man slowly expand into a smile.

McCord threw open the heavy slab door of the shack.

"Hello, dad! Where on earth did this sled and dog harness come

Dogs Are Used in Palestine to Track Outlaws; Dobermanns Prove Efficient

Murder is no longer safe in Palestine, due almost entirely to the natural ability of the animal which for hundreds of years has been despised in the Holy Land—the dog, writes a Jerusalem United Press correspondent in the New York Herald Tribune.

Six hours after two killed youths had been shot down from behind by local terrorists while walking outside the walls of the "Old City," the suspected murderers were arrested. Jan and Elsa, two dogs belonging to the Palestine police, had scored the latest feat in a series of spectacular triumphs which has thrown fear into the hearts of Palestine's hitherto confident "organized" killers.

For years brigands and terrorists have laughed at the efforts of the police to track them down. Outlaws felt safe as they hid in caves and crannies of the mountains of Judea and Galilee, in the sandy wastes of the Mediterranean coastal plain, or with kinsmen in the countless villages dotting Palestine.

Exasperated by the mounting list of unsolved crimes, the Palestine police sent detectives to South Africa's police-dog training school at

Quaggaport, near Pretoria. The two policemen spent six months learning the African language, which is the only one the dogs understand. They also studied how to work the dogs. Then they returned to Jerusalem with two Dobermann pinschers.

Within a few weeks everything changed. The outlaws began to fear and respect these four-footed detectives that were so phenomenally successful.

In no way do the Dobermanns resemble the bloodhounds of detective fiction, but they are just as efficient in following a scent. They stand about three feet high, have sleek, brown, wire-haired coats and rippling muscles. When properly trained, these hounds can follow even a faint human scent for days over dry, sun-baked terrains.

First Diesel Engine Exploded
When Dr. Rudolf Diesel built his first compression-ignition engine more than 40 years ago and tested it, the new-fangled contraption blew up and the parts flew far and wide. Dr. Diesel was simply delighted. That terrific explosion had proved the soundness of the principle he had developed.

WHAT TO EAT AND WHY

C. Houston Goudiss Noted Food Authority

Describes the Need for IRON and COPPER

Shows How You Can Help to Avoid Anemia by Including These Blood-Building Minerals in the Diet

By C. HOUSTON GOUDISS
6 East 39th Street, New York City

OF ALL the nutrition problems that challenge the homemaker, none is more important than supplying her family's need for iron. This mineral is sometimes described as the supreme element in nutrition because it is an essential constituent of the blood.

How Blood Is Constructed

If you should examine a drop of blood under the microscope, you would observe that it is composed of red cells and white cells. In normal blood there are about 25 million times a million red blood corpuscles, owing their color to the iron-bearing protein hemoglobin. They carry oxygen to all the body tissues, and remove the carbon dioxide formed during the combustion of body fuel.



A reduction in the amount of hemoglobin in the blood may cause shortness of breath, quickened heart action, lack of appetite, weakness, and a slowing of all vital functions may also result from the diminished supply of oxygen to the tissues.

Lack of Iron May Lead to Anemia

In many young people the blood does not function normally, though frequently parents are unaware that anything is wrong. You may scold them for being lazy, for lacking interest in their work, or never heeding the things you tell them, when the real trouble is due to iron starvation which, if long continued, may lead to anemia.

The person who has a tendency toward anemia usually tires easily and lacks pep; complains of cold hands and feet; worries over trifles, and may have a complexion that is anything but rosy.

The great danger of an iron-deficient diet is that it deprives the body of its chief defense against disease. For when the quality of the blood is poor, one becomes an easy prey to infection. Moreover, if a serious illness occurs, lowered resistance makes it difficult to fight it off.

Two Forms of Anemia

Anemia may be due to loss of blood, to deficient blood formation, or to increased blood destruction in the body. The different forms of the disease are sometimes classified as primary and secondary anemia.

Primary anemia is usually known as pernicious anemia. It is a grave condition in which the marrow of the bones has lost its power to make red blood cells.

Secondary or nutritional anemia may result from loss of blood in an accident, or it may follow a long, infectious illness. For any infection lowers the iron reserve in the body. But the most com-

Send for This Free Blood-Building Diet

Including a List of Foods Rich in Iron, Copper

READERS are invited to write for a free bulletin containing a list of foods rich in iron and a list of those rich in copper. Also included are sample menus showing how to plan a balanced diet containing adequate amounts of foods rich in these blood-building minerals. Send your request—a post card will do—to C. Houston Goudiss, 6 East 39th Street, New York City.

Are You Overweight?
You can REDUCE Safely - Surely - Comfortably

Send for This Free Bulletin Offered by C. Houston Goudiss

Readers of this newspaper are invited to write to C. Houston Goudiss, at 6 East 39th Street, New York City, for his scientific Reducing Bulletin, which shows how to reduce by the safe and sane method of counting calories.

The bulletin is complete with a chart showing the caloric value of all the commonly used foods and contains sample menus that you can use as a guide to comfortable and beautiful weight reduction.

however, that better health results when an iron-rich food, such as egg-yolk, is introduced very early into the diet. This helps to prevent the slight anemia which was formerly regarded as unimportant, but which is now recognized as making the baby more susceptible to infection and retarding growth.

Children's Requirement High

It is desirable to keep the iron intake at a high level throughout childhood, for it has been discovered that better health results when a surplus is allowed above the daily requirement. But there is a very special need for iron in girls from the beginning of adolescence through the eighteenth year.

Iron-Rich Foods

To maintain top health and prevent the possibility of nutritional anemia, the homemaker must learn to meet the daily iron requirement of her family and not leave this vital matter to chance.

Iron-rich foods include egg yolk, liver, molasses, dried beans and peas, whole grain cereals, lean meat and green leafy vegetables. While milk has only a small amount of iron, experiments show that its iron is readily absorbed and is utilized to good advantage.

Eggs are such an excellent source of iron that one egg yields about one-tenth of the standard requirement. Lean meat furnishes a considerable amount, but liver is so much richer that it should be eaten frequently. Dried beans are inexpensive and when baked with molasses become a good source of iron.

It is a pity that parsley is so often used only as a garnish, because it has a higher iron content than most green leafy vegetables. Though potatoes contain only a moderate amount of iron, they are usually consumed in sufficient quantities to make them a significant source.

Copper Also Necessary

Investigation has demonstrated that adequate iron alone is not enough to prevent nutritional anemia, for the body cannot convert iron into blood pigment unless copper is also present. Therefore, in order to obtain the full benefits of iron, the diet must contain sufficient copper. Foods that supply copper in abundance are liver, nuts, dried beans and peas. Smaller but significant amounts are provided by whole grain cereals, dried fruits and poultry.

I shall gladly send to every homemaker a list of foods rich in both iron and copper, and also sample menus showing how to plan a balanced, blood-building diet.

I urge you to write for this material and keep the blood-building foods in mind when planning menus. Never forget for an instant that good blood is the best form of life insurance.

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