

## The Girl Beyond the Trail

was confident that he could find his way back to the Finley and down to Hudson's Hope. What a surprise it would be to Father Roland when they dropped in on him some day, he and Marge! His heart beat excitedly as he told her about it, described the great distance they must travel, and what a wonderful journey it would be, with that glorious country at the end of it—The Château, home, and—— "We'll find your mother then," he whispered. They talked a great deal about her mother and Father Roland as they made their way down into the valley, and whenever they stopped to rest she had new questions to ask, and each time there was that trembling doubt in her voice, "I wonder if it's *true*?" And each time he assured her that it was.

"I have been thinking that it was Nisikoos who sent to her the picture you wanted to destroy," he said once. "Nisikoos must have known."

"Then why didn't she tell me?" she flashed.

"Because it may be that she didn't want to lose you—and that she didn't send the picture until she knew that she was not going to live very long."

The girl's eyes darkened, and then—slowly—then came the softer glow back into them.

"I—loved—Nisikoos," she said.

It was sunset when they began making their first camp in a cedar thicket, where David shot a porcupine for Tara and Baree. After their supper they sat for a while in the glow of the stars, and after that Marge snuggled down in her cedar bed and went to sleep. But before she closed her eyes she put her arms around his neck and kissed him good night. For a long time after that he sat awake thinking of the wonderful