



WHEN I LEFT, MOST OF THE CITY WAS STILL *ASLEEP*. I DID MY THIRTY-TWO-AND-ONE *OBEISANCES* SWIFTLY AND QUIETLY, AS BEST I COULD, AND CREPT OUT.

AND I REMEMBER *THINKING*, EVEN THEN —



IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'D EVER LEFT KENIEL ON MY OWN.

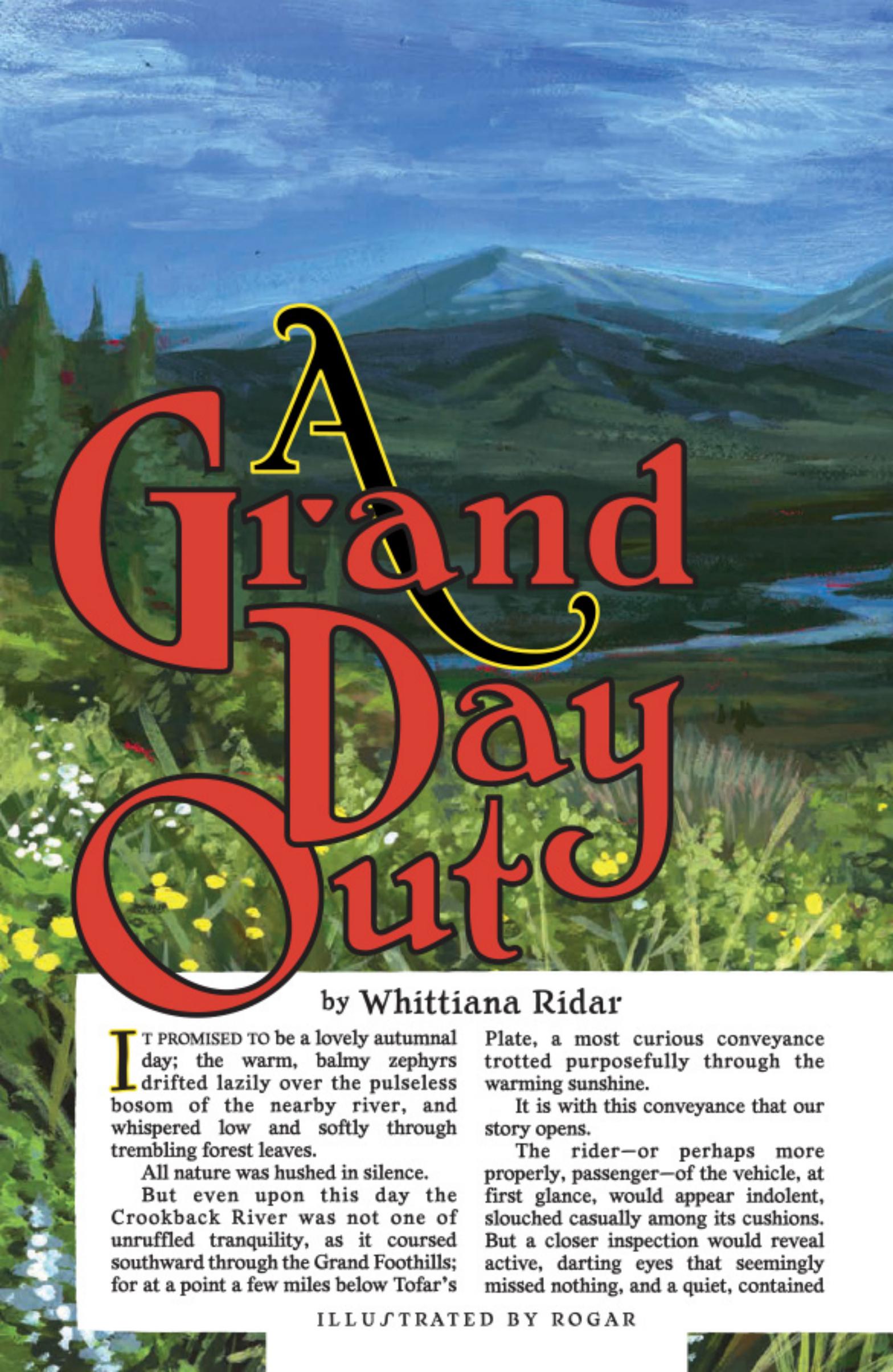
PELHAU'S CORNER. DALLOWS COURT. MAGISTER PERRENSON'S SHOP. MY FATHER'S HOUSE. EVEN AFTER ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED, EVEN IN ITS RUINED STATE —

— IT WAS STILL *HOME*. THE ONLY ONE I'D EVER KNOWN.

EVERYTHING I'D EVER KNOWN.



BUT AHEAD OF ME —



Grand Day Out

by Whittiana Ridar

IT PROMISED TO be a lovely autumnal day; the warm, balmy zephyrs drifted lazily over the pulseless bosom of the nearby river, and whispered low and softly through trembling forest leaves.

All nature was hushed in silence.

But even upon this day the Crookback River was not one of unruffled tranquility, as it coursed southward through the Grand Foothills; for at a point a few miles below Tofar's

Plate, a most curious conveyance trotted purposefully through the warming sunshine.

It is with this conveyance that our story opens.

The rider—or perhaps more properly, passenger—of the vehicle, at first glance, would appear indolent, slouched casually among its cushions. But a closer inspection would reveal active, darting eyes that seemingly missed nothing, and a quiet, contained

ILLUSTRATED BY ROGAR



attentiveness that marked all sounds, all smells, even the faint buzz of *squitiria* over the nearby water.

His face, his limbs, revealed little, but his mind recorded much.

Occasionally, his eyes flickered to the sky, as if following a track he saw there, and his mind would direct the tireless limbs of his rude palanquin. And the hilt of his sword was never far from his hand.

He smiled, faintly, as he crested a rise, and took in what lay before him...

IT WAS *ODD*, SEEING THE GREAT CHAMPION RIDE OLD MAGISTER EIKHOUN'S CHAIR. BUT OTHER THAN *THAT*, WE HAD ONLY THE CRICKETS.

HE SAID HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO RIDE ONE AND HAD NO TIME TO *LEARN*.



MOST OF THE CITY HAD EXPECTED HIM TO LEAVE ON HIS SCOUTING MISSION *IMMEDIATELY*. BUT HE SAID FIRST LIGHT, AND STUCK TO IT.

AND IT WAS GOOD HE *DID*.



THERE'D BEEN NO FURTHER ATTACKS FROM THE BISON TRIBES. SO SOME THOUGHT THEY WERE *SAFE*, AND COULD WHILE AWAY THE NIGHT IN *COMFORT* —

**SKREEE
SKREEEEEEE**

AHH!

AAAAHHHHH!





IF HE HADN'T BEEN THERE -

SKRII? HRAA!



HNAAAA!

SKKH!

NO!
No!
Please -



SKIIHHH*

Ek?



Under cover!
Get the [redacted]
under cover, you morons!

Nnh!



Not until the fire's out! They'll be drawn to it all night!



Noise! Make noise! Interfere with their delicate senses...

...so they can't zero in on us!



Yeah, okay. Do that.



WE DID -



AND MORE -