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The Kott Piano For Sale CHEAP. Also a Square Piano For Sale or Rent. E. C. CHAMBERLIN, Jeweler and Optician.

THE MYSTERY OF GRASLOV

By Ashley Towne

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"One could not know Vladimir without admiring him," she said suddenly, with a great accession of spirit. "I fail to see why I should be put through this catechism by you."

"You needn't be if you don't want to," he answered coldly. "This is a nice, quiet village. Neslerov is lying not far away, somewhat cut up now, but he will get over that. I could go on my way and leave you if my questions are distasteful. The thing is that there must be an explanation to this affair, and I'd like to know what it is to be. It is no trifling matter to cut the governor of a Russian province to pieces."

"Have you been fighting?" she asked quickly.

"No," he replied, with a tinge of sarcasm. "Neslerov and I indulged in a few pleasantries. He doesn't feel as gay over them as I do; that's all."

"Oh, I see your hand is bandaged—I never noticed it. Oh, Jack, forgive me!"

"We were following a course of inquiry," he said, putting the bandaged hand behind him. "This Vladimir—you met—there was an attachment—so far, so good. Now, how did that lead to this affair?"

"I wanted to see Vladimir and went by train from Moscow to Perm. I found a drosky at the station and was driven to the shops. Shops, house—all were deserted. I found Neslerov there with a painting under his arm. He was taking it away. It was a beautiful picture, a beautiful face. I asked the prince where Vladimir was. He said that all the Paulpoffs—father, mother and Vladimir—had been sent to Siberia."

"Sent to Siberia! That big simple hearted fellow! For what?"

"Conspiring with others to kill the czar. We were alone; the drosky driver went out, and Neslerov tried to kiss me. I fought him; I shot him."

"You shot Neslerov?"

"Yes, I shot him. I would again. I then returned to Moscow, but did not tell my father anything about the matter, save that Vladimir was sent to Siberia. We soon after started for the Obi and stopped at Perm. We saw the governor, and he promised that if he discovered that Vladimir was innocent he would help him."

"He might as well have said that if he discovered the moon was cheese he'd give it to you for lunch. Things like that are rarely corrected in Russia."

"When we left Perm, Neslerov was on the train. Of course, as papa did not know anything about the shooting in the house of the Paulpoffs he greeted Neslerov as a friend. Everything went well till we had crossed the border and come into Neslerov's own province. At this place—I had been sleeping—I woke up. The car had become detached from the train. I was alone with Neslerov. He took my revolver from me and dragged me here and ordered the priest to marry us. Then you came."

"Yes, I think I came just in time," said Denton.

Then a stern look came again upon his face.

"Frances," he said, "I do not know, of course, how this matter will end. If Neslerov wishes, he can destroy me. If he finds it advisable to keep silent, then I may find a way to assist this Vladimir. I think we shall soon be on the way to the Obi."

With these words he left the hut and was met at the door by an angry, threatening mob of villagers.

"There he is!" growled an old man, evidently the leader. "He tried to kill his excellency. Kill him!"

"Kill him!" said another. "It is the governor's command. He put the iron road, the bridge, the devil wagons, through our country. The czar does not wish it, and we must avenge the wrong. Kill him!"

CHAPTER IX.

DENTON TURNS LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER.

DENTON presented an unruffled front.

"Take me to the governor," he said.

"The governor is resting," growled a fellow whose face was a mass of greasy hair. "You will kill him."

"Nonsense! Take me to the governor. If you kill me, he will die."

"Why is that, builder of bridges? Is there a god who avenges the death of Americans?"

"It will need no god to do that now. The case is simply that Neslerov needs better care than you can give him. He is badly injured. It is necessary that he shall be taken to Tomsk at once. I can start within the hour. There will not be another train to the Obi in four days. Do you desire to keep your precious governor here and have him die on your hands?"

"No. Let us see what the governor has to say."

It was a solemn crowd that marched in two columns, with Denton between, to the hut of the village priest, where Neslerov lay.

"Why do you bring him here?" asked the priest. "Heard you not what his excellency said?"

"Hold your peace. Wait till you hear them speak together," was the reply.

Neslerov looked up at his conqueror, and an expression of hatred came into his eyes. Denton made no show of sentiment or compassion.

"I understand you commanded these villagers to kill me," he said, standing at the side of the bed and looking coldly and sternly at his victim. "I just wanted to say before they kill me—which they certainly will do if you insist—that in that case you would probably die here for lack of proper care."

"You cannot help me—you would not," answered Neslerov.

"That is for you to say. I am not a murderer. I had no desire to kill you. You attacked me, and I defended myself. I am going back to Tomsk, provided your savage villagers don't kill me, and I merely came to ask if you would be pleased to go."

"How?" he asked.

"In the same car you came thus far in."

"But how? There is no train due for days."

"I will take you to Tomsk if you promise never again to molest Mr. Gordon or his daughter."

"I promise," said Neslerov. "I will order the villagers to permit you to go."

Denton then went to the car and examined it. He discovered where a flaw in the iron had weakened the couplings.

He was followed at a short distance by several young men, among whom was the boy who had run to tell him that a woman was being roughly handled by Neslerov, and who had taken his horse to shelter. He ordered the boy to bring the horse. Mounting, he was soon out of sight. He did not go far, however. He rode along the track until he reached a siding a short distance from the bridge, where there was an old construction engine.

Denton examined the old hulk. It was fit only for drawing one or two cars. Denton carried water from the river and filled the boiler and built a fire of wood.

Soon after the villagers were surprised to see a wheezy, rickety old engine coming slowly, with a prodigious noise, into view. Denton's horse had no difficulty in keeping up with it.

The old engine was coupled to the car, and then Denton went for Frances.

"The train is ready," he said.

"The train! What train?"

"The train that is to carry you to the Obi, where you will join your father."

"But there is no train!"

"There is a train, and as the steam is up and the track clear I suggest haste. Your father is probably anxious."

She went with him. At the sight of the engine she understood.

"You are a wonderful—you are doing this for me!" she said.

"Yes, but Neslerov will be a passenger."

"And you?"

"Engineer, conductor, guard—all."

He took her to the car and made her comfortable.

Neslerov was carried to the car by the villagers. The backs of two seats were turned down, a bed was made for him, and he lay there quiet and seemingly content.

"Of course, I know that you are seriously wounded," said Denton to him, "and the possibility of your doing any mischief is small, but I want to tell you before we start that if I catch you at any tricks I will kill you as I would a dog."

Neslerov nodded, and Denton went on the engine.

It was an exciting start, though the audience was small. The villagers stared, then laughed as the little old engine puffed and screeched and scraped as it got under way.

But it had a man in charge of it who was accustomed to overcoming difficulties. And the way he made it groan and work would have made glad the heart of the man who had abandoned it on the siding six months before.

In the car was silence. Neslerov was too weak to talk; Frances would not talk to him if he wished. She remained at her end of the car, save to go in mercy to him and offer him water at intervals. At such times he would look up at her with an earnest, inscrutable expression on his face. She would not speak, nor he.

Suddenly at a siding toward which he had been aiming Denton turned the engine to the right and brought the little train to a standstill. They had been on the road sixteen hours and had traveled 210 miles.

Frances and Neslerov both looked up as the train stopped and saw the grimy engineer enter the car.

"There is a village near here," he said, "and just beyond this siding there is a small signal box. I have just visited it, and there is a train coming this way from Tomsk. Undoubtedly, as there is no regular train due, this is a searching party out after Frances Gordon. Now, I have no wish to start an international controversy. What story shall we tell?"

"Tell the truth," said Frances. "It does not, as a rule, harm any person who is innocent."

"No," said Neslerov; "not as a rule. But we are in a part of the world where customs are different from yours. If you tell the truth, you [illegible] never make the world believe [illegible] you will not understand; I [illegible] you."

"I know what you m[illegible] rances scornfully. "You [illegible] your reputation is so bad th[illegible] it were known that you had that car left behind to compel me to marry you everybody will be sure I am your wife. Is that it?"

"Yes; something like that."

"But, then, there is my word," said Denton.

"Your story will be believed by your people, my story by mine," said Neslerov. "Let us each tell what we please. I do not care."

Denton nodded and went back to his engine. But he did not start. The whistle of a speeding locomotive was borne to him by the breeze. It came—one engine and a car, the same as that he was on, but a modern locomotive of American make. Gordon was in the car with some officials from Tomsk.

"Hey! That you, Denton?" he gasped as the grimy bridgebuilder stepped into the car, which was stopped at the side of the construction engine. "My girl and the governor of Tomsk got left behind in a car. Seen"—

"I'm all right," said Frances as she emerged from her car and flew to her father's arms.

"Did Denton save you? What was it? Where is Neslerov?" asked Gordon.

"Oh, he is in there," said Frances coolly. "We've had a lively experience. I thought at one time we'd be killed by some savages. But Mr. Denton and the prince—oh, let's get on; I'm tired out and hungry."

Denton heard and wondered.

In every new experience he had had with Frances Gordon he had been made more and more astonished by the uncertain moods, the whims, the strange turns her caprice would take.

"Hitch on to this train and haul her back to the Obi," said Denton. "If the road doesn't want this engine, I can use it at the Obi bridge."

This attachment was soon made, and Mr. Gordon, after visiting the prince and congratulating him upon his escape from the savages, assisted in transferring to him some of the comforts to be found in the other car. The Russian officials swarmed around him and praised his courage.

At the sight of the engine she understood.

"And that American! He is a brave one too!" they said.

"Yes; he is brave—braver than I," said Neslerov weakly.

The train started back toward Tomsk. It had about ninety miles to go to reach the Obi. During the journey Denton and Frances found themselves side by side in the rear car, with no one near enough to hear their low spoken tones.

"I cannot understand you," said Denton. "You first said tell the truth, then you yourself told the first deliberate lie. Why?"

Frances looked at him coolly.

"Because I thought it over. There was a good deal in what Neslerov said. Then, again, you and my father have work to do, a career to make, money to earn, and with the enmity of Neslerov you would be ruined. I studied it well. It is better as I said it. Let it pass."

"Here we are at Vashlov," he said. "For the time being you are home again."

"Yes," she replied, with the slightest tremor in her voice. "Thanks to you, I am home again—in my temporary home."

CHAPTER X.

JANSKY, SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE.

NESLEROV lay in his palace in Tomsk, slowly recovering. His heart was filled with rage, and he longed for vengeance.

His closest confidant now was Jansky, who, owing to his meritorious conduct in the apprehension of so great a gang of conspirators as the Paulpoffs, was promoted at the request of Neslerov to a post where he could assist his superior in his plans and ambitions.

He had told Jansky the story of the ride from Moscow, and it was of course colored to suit his purpose. Jansky had received his commission—the first important one since his arrival at Tomsk—to watch the American and find an opportunity to wreak vengeance.

About twenty miles from the city of Tomsk was the village of Tivoloffsky, a small mining town peopled by convicts.

To this town the Paulpoffs had been sent. Vladimir was useful in the mines. With his tremendous strength he could do the work of two, and in his simple obedience to the mandates of his superiors he never uttered a complaint. The old people did menial work, cooking for the convicts who had no families or cleaning in the houses of the officers.

This new life came hardest upon the old people, and it was their sufferings that made Vladimir curse under his breath.

One day Jansky entered the room where Neslerov sat or half reclined.

"Well, what is it? I see you have something to say," said Neslerov.

"I have, your excellency," replied the superintendent of police. "It concerns him—your enemy."

"The American?"

"Yes. I have obeyed your commands—he has been constantly watched. And at last we are in a position to strike."

Neslerov sat up straight.

"What? Tell me at once."

"It is not yet revealed what the man's object is, but he and the Paulpoffs are plotting again."

"The Paulpoffs?"

"They and the American. He has visited them twice. It was overheard that he and Papa Paulpoff had a long conversation about a picture."

Neslerov glanced at a painting that hung on the wall. It was the painting he had taken from the Paulpoffs' house at Perm.

"What can he know about the picture?" asked the governor.

"I do not know. That is, as I said, not yet revealed."

"Jansky," he said, "I know what the object is if you do not. Listen carefully now to what I say. It is quite possible the American has discovered the existence of the original of that picture you see there. It is a small medallion, probably in a locket. It was lost some years ago by a member of my family and bears relation to a great mystery—the mystery of Graslov."

Jansky shut his eyes and seemed to be thinking.

"Jansky, your life and mine depend on your action now. Do you understand?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Fire at Williamsport.

Williamsport, Pa., March 9.—Fire gutted the old Ullman's opera house building, burning out Michael Levis' clothing house, George Londer's general store, the Armory and a half dozen other occupants. The total loss is estimated at $75,000.

Death of Hon. James H. Blount.

Macon, Ga., March 9.—Hon. James H. Blount, for twenty years member of congress from Georgia, and afterwards commissioner paramount to the Hawaiian islands during the second Cleveland term, died here of conges-

MEMORIAL FOR BEECHER

Plan for National Monument to Famous Preacher.

ALL SPEAK WORDS OF PRAISE.

Grover Cleveland Says Noted Divine Was Highest Type of National Hero—Justice Brewer Also Pays Tribute to His Memory.

New York, March 9.—A great mass-meeting was held in the Academy of Music in Brooklyn for the purpose of raising funds to erect a memorial in honor of Henry Ward Beecher, the founder of Plymouth church, and for forty years its pastor. Many hundreds who were turned away from the door gathered at an overflow meeting at Plymouth church. Mayor Seth Low presided and among the prominent persons who paid tribute to the memory of the great preacher were former President Grover Cleveland, Justice D. J. Brewer of the United States supreme court, the Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis of Plymouth church and the Rev. Frank W. Gunsaulus of Chicago.

Dr. Gunsaulus said: "I bring the heartiest concurrence of the middle west in this movement for a memorial to Mr. Beecher. They rejoice that Henry Ward Beecher belonged to no east or west, but to all the people. I saw him once away out west and he said: 'There is something out here that widens and strengthens and deepens me.' We believe in him in the west as an immortal son of God."

Mr. Cleveland in his address lauded the famous preacher as the highest type of national hero and urged a fit memorial to the divine. At the conclusion of the addresses a subscription for the Beecher memorial fund was started by Mrs. W. C. Wallace with a contribution of $10,000. Other contributors were Henry W Phipps, $1,000; Dr. Rossiter W. Raymond, $2,500, and John Arbuckle, $5,000. The total amount of the subscriptions was not announced.

BUFFALO HUNT IN UTAH.

Salt Lake Men Have Exciting Time Freeing Herd of Vicious Bulls.

Salt Lake, March 9.—A buffalo hunt took place on Antelope island, in the Great Salt lake, fifty miles from this city. The hunters were a party of Salt Lakers and their game three magnificent bulls among a private herd of buffaloes on the island. These animals had become so vicious that their presence was a constant menace, not only to human life, but also to the herds of cattle grazing on the island. The hunt was an exciting affair and several of the party had narrow escapes from the bulls. Severals times the animals, maddened by bullets, turned upon their pursuers, who escaped only by urging their mounts to the utmost speed. The buffaloes were killed.

BRICKMAKERS ORDER STRIKE.

Nearly Four Thousand Men Will Quit Work in St. Louis.

St. Louis, March 9.—Between three and four thousand brickmakers will strike to enforce demands for a recognition of their union, for a change of hours and an increase of wages, and it is thought that as many more in allied trades will follow before the end of the week, unless some agreement is come to between the brick manufacturers and the Building Material Trades council. The strike of brickmakers was agreed to by a unanimous vote at a general meeting of all crafts identified with brickmaking.

General Corbin in St. Louis.

St. Louis, March 9.—Major General Henry C. Corbin, adjutant general United States army, who is to be grand marshal of the World's fair dedication parade here next month, arrived from Washington. He will meet with the commission on ceremonies of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition company and a similar committee from the World's fair national commission to complete the details for the dedication ceremonies. Major General John C. Bates, who will command the troops in this parade, will arrive from Omaha today.

Wreck on Louisville and Nashville.

Birmingham, Ala., March 9.—While running at high speed in an effort to make up lost time, passenger train No. 4, northbound, on the Louisville and Nashville railroad, was badly wrecked twenty-two miles south of here. So far as known only five persons were injured, three of whom were members of the train crew. Occurring at the foot of a steep grade the wrecked cars were thrown to either side of the track, officials attributing the wreck to the splitting of a switch.

OHIO RIVER AGAIN RISING

Southern States Prepare for Worst Flood in Years.

VERY HIGH WATER IN MICHIGAN.

Grand River Out of Its Banks, Bridges Are Washed Away, Dams Burst and Houses Submerged—Worst is Yet to Come.

Evansville, Ind., March 9.—Great crowds of people were carried out of here by the boats because of the high waters. Many of the steamers had to refuse people. The river is still rising. All the boats are delayed. The river between here and Owensboro is over ten miles wide. White and Patoka rivers are still rising rapidly. Reports of heavy losses continue to come in. Many towns between Owensboro and Cairo are now at the mercy of the high water.

Cincinnati, March 9.—The Ohio river has been rising here again and it is reported rising at upper river points. Rain prevailed throughout Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and western Pennsylvania, so that another flood is predicted this week all along the Ohio valley. The Wabash, Cumberland, Tennessee and other tributaries are also rising and the situation from Paducah to Cairo is the worst that has been known for nineteen years.

Grand River Out of Its Banks.

Grand Rapids, Mich., March 9.—Grand river is out of its banks and is within a foot of the high mark record. Three sections of the North Park wagon bridge gave way and were carried down in the rushing torrent. Lowlands in the south part of the city are under water and a number of houses are isolated. Basements of business houses along the river are flooded by water backing up in the houses. Reports from points up the river are of flooded lands and basements and partly submerged houses. A number of dams have been carried out, including the Wagar dam, which furnished the power for electric lighting at Ionia.

FOG CLOSES NEW YORK PORT.

Ferry Sinks Canal Boat and Collides With Another Vessel.

New York, March 9.—Dense fog caused the almost entire suspension of harbor and river traffic and for many hours effectually blockaded the port against in-coming steamers and coasting craft. Three collisions occurred during the day, but without loss of life. The big transfer steamer Express was in collision twice. While groping her way down East river she ran into and sank the canal boat Lyman Willie, tied up at a bulkhead. The wife of the captain of the canal boat, the only person aboard, escaped to the dock. While backing out after the collision the Express crashed into the steamer Rhode Island, cutting off her stem completely about two feet above the water line and splintering the woodwork below the water.

Five Fatalities at a Fire.

Cumberland, Md., March 9.—Six persons were burned to death and one was fatally injured as the result of a fire in a small hotel at Leiter, a mining town near Elkins, W. Va. The dead: Maggie Coughlin, Annie Burke, Henry Burke, George C. Anderson, Mrs. George C. Anderson, a child of the Andersons. Robert Long is fatally injured. Several persons escaped with minor injuries by jumping from a second story window.

Five Perish in Fire.

Dawson, March 9.—Five people were burned to death in the Aurora roadhouse on Hunker creek. Charles Bernsie, who owned the house, and his wife and two children and Thomas Baird, who was in charge of one of the government roadhouses, were burned to a crisp. Neighbors who saw the burning building were unable to enter on account of the smoke. The Bernsie family came from Portland, Ore.

Boat Upsets, Seventeen Drown.

Glens Falls, N. Y., March 9.—Only two more bodies of the victims of the Spier Falls tragedy of Saturday have been recovered. Two of the sixteen men not accounted for were found, making the number of dead and missing by the capsizing of the ferryboat seventeen. Many of the Italians employed on the works left their jobs and a stampede i[illegible]d.

Des Moines, March 9.—[illegible] Capital City woolen mills we[illegible]ed by fire. The loss is $60[illegible]ered by insurance. One hun[illegible]ployes will be thrown out of