

# The Game and The Candle

By Eleanor M. Ingram.

(Continued)

The doorway was empty; the evening serenade of a robin filled the hush. Allard's head sank on his arm in the darkest moment of the last summer months.

But presently he looked up again. Still dressed as when the accident had happened a few hours before, he possessed a tiny box of cart-ridges, only the width of the room separated him from his desire. He impulsively tossed aside the blanket and slipped to the floor.

The fall drew a gasp of pain. All before faded into insignificance beside the anguish of movement. It was not the ankle only; the injury had gone farther than that. Colorless, catching his breath with difficulty, Allard dragged himself inch by inch toward the goal.

Desmond was almost forgotten when the first shot on the mountain-side rang out. Startled from the mists of suffering, Allard pushed an instant. Then as a very fusillade reverberated among the cliffs, he tolled on with redoubled haste. They would come next for him.

It had a pearl and silver handle, that revolver. He had treasured it because it was a gift from Robert, and a souvenir too frequently duplicated to betray his identity. Now the pearl shone a glistening spot in the surrounding grayness, beckoning, tantalizing. It was so far across the room, so very far.

Shots again! He struggled yet more desperately, and the resulting pang brought waves of faintness above his head. If he could only rest, so.

Some one was shouting, half excitedly, half fearfully, and other voices replied in equal excitement. Some one was killed, they were saying, had fallen from the cliff. Desmond, perhaps? Allard roused himself fiercely and saw with gratitude how near the coveted object lay. A little farther, only a little; but it cost.

The rush and patter of feet grew louder, the steady approach of the hunters. It hardly mattered, for the cool, white handle was in the grasp of the outstretched hand. He had won, won doubly. He had accomplished his task, and he held the key to the door. Robert's face leaned toward him, warm with relief and praise; Theodora was in the room, bringing fragrances of sandalwood and rose—

Once more he drove back the mists and dragged the revolver to him, smiling, but with knit brows.

CHAPTER 11.  
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS.

They looked at each other steadily, the distinguished visitor and the prisoner who polished a brass railing. Beside them an official was droning a particularly monotonous and dreary account of the institution, his eyes half closed with the mental exertion of recollection, his thoughts turned inward and absorbed. There were several gentlemen and officers of the building in the bare room, chatting with one another in varying degrees of boredom and interest, and completely ignoring the quiet prisoner who had been John Allard. Yet he was perhaps the only one present, with the exception of the man facing him, who escaped the commonplace.

"You have something to say?" questioned the grave, lustrous dark eyes of the visitor; eyes southern in their long-lashed softness, northern in their directness.

And Allard's gray eyes returned assent with an utter calm which overlaid the surface of tragedy.

"On the east bank of the Hudson, six miles above Tarrytown," went on the droning voice of the official, then broke as the visitor's cool, slightly imperious tones fell across the monologue:

"Ah, and is it permitted to speak with your inmates, if one has the fancy?"

The official stared, but smiled vaguely.

not. I can aid you no farther; and—

"And?"

For an instant the curtain was withdrawn from the prisoner's clear eyes.

"You wake what is better asleep. It is not pleasant for me to meet you, monsieur."

The visitor caught his breath. It came to him with a shock of realization that many days and nights might pass before he could forget that straight glance of quivering pain and humiliation, of proudly endured hopelessness.

"Yet I ask it," he insisted.

"Very well. If I am not here it will be because it was not possible." The visitor turned away with well assumed carelessness.

"I fancied your prisoner there was a fellow countryman," he remarked to the official, in passing on. "But he appears to be French."

"Yes, sir. He said he came from the South, at his trial."

The man had necessarily kept beside the visitor to reply, and they talked down the room together.

"What is he here for?" came the inquiry.

Counterfeiting, sir. Rigat over that mountain across the river, they captured him and killed one of his comrades. The rest got away in time, and they never were found because this man would tell nothing even to save himself. He might have turned state's evidence and got off with a light sentence,

for he was young and not known to the police. But he wouldn't and he got the whole thing. Leroy his name is. The officers who captured him believe he never meant to be taken alive; for they found him unconscious, with a little pistol in his hand, and they guessed that he fainted before he could use it. He had to spend weeks in a hospital before he could be tried, getting over a broken ankle and some other worse injuries. But he and his fellows had done clever work,

no one knows how much. This Leroy might have been across the water, as you say, sir; no one knows him here.

"How long has he been here?"

"Two years, sir."

"And his sentence?"

"Fifteen."

The visitor shuddered involuntarily. Pleased by his interest, the official brightened to offer further diversion:

(To be continued.)

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