# GRAUSTARK

...By...

GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

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SYNOPSIS

Chapter I—Grenfall Lorry, a wealthy American globe trotter, [illegible] into acquaintance with a charming foreign girl on the train from Denver to Washington. The pair are left behind when the flier stops for repairs in West Virginia. Chapter II — Lorry wires ahead to hold the train. He and the unknown girl ride twenty miles at a tearing pace in a mountain coach. There is no lovemaking, but a near approach to it as the rolling stage tumbles the passengers about. Chapter III —Lorry dines with the foreign party, consisting of Miss Guggenslocker, Uncle Cas[illegible] and Aunt Yvonne. They are natives of Graustark, a country Lorry had never heard of before. Chapter IV. — Lorry shows the foreigners the sights of Washington. They leave for New York to sail on the Kaiser [illegible] Miss Guggenslocker naively [illegible] her "ideal American" [illegible] come and see her [illegible] Chapter V—Wildly in[illegible] arrives to New York. [illegible] Guggenslocker is not on the [illegible] He sees the steamer of [illegible] waves him a kiss from the deck. Chapter VI —Lorry joins his old friend, Harry Anguish, an [illegible] artist, in Paris. Graustark [illegible] capital, Edelweiss, are located on the map. The Americans get [illegible] the Guggenslockers there. [illegible] Lorry sees his charmer [illegible] engage with a beautiful [illegible] own sex. He [illegible] station, but the [illegible] leaving the mystery [illegible] Later he receives a note at [illegible] signed Sophia Guggenslocker, inviting him to visit her next day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ABDUCTION OF A PRINCESS.

THAT afternoon they went to the palace grounds and inquired for the chief steward. After a few moments they were shown to his office in a small dwelling house just inside the gates. The steward was a red faced little man, pleasant and accommodating. He could speak German—in fact, he was a German by birth—and they had no difficulty in presenting their request. Mr. Frausch—Jacob Frausch—was at first dubious, but their frank, eager faces soon gained for them his consent to see that part of the great park open to the public. Beyond certain lines they were not to trespass. Anguish asked how they could be expected to distinguish these lines, being unacquainted, and the steward grimly informed them that the members of the royal guard would establish the lines so plainly that it would be quite clear.

He then wrote for them a pass to the grounds of the royal palace of Graustark, affixing his seal. In giving this pass to them he found occasion to say that the princess had instructed him to extend every courtesy possible to an American citizen. It was then that Anguish asked if he might be permitted to use his camera. There was an instant and emphatic refusal, and they were told that the pass would be rescinded if they did not leave the camera outside the gates. Reluctantly Anguish deposited his luckless box in the steward's office, and they passed into the broad avenue which led toward the palace.

A guard, who served also as a guide, stepped to their side before they had taken ten paces. Where he came from they never knew, so instantaneous was his appearance. He remained with them during the two hours spent in the wonderful park.

The palace stood in the northwestern part of the grounds, possibly a half mile from the base of the mountain. Its front faced the mountain side. The visitors were not permitted to go closer than a quarter of a mile from the structure, but attained a position from which it could be seen in all its massive, ancient splendor. Anguish, who had studied churches and old structures, painted the castles on the Rhine and was something of a connoisseur in architecture, was of the opinion that it had been standing for more than 500 years. It was a vast, mediæval mass of stone, covered with moss and ivy, with towers, turrets and battlements.

The park was probably a mile square and was surrounded by a high wall, on the top of which were little guard houses and several unsaid camera. When they had completed their tour of inspection, their guide rapidly led the way to the wall that encircled the grounds, reaching it at a point not far from the castle itself. Here was situated another large gate, through which they did not pass. Instead they ascended some steps and came out upon the high wall. The top of this wall was several feet wide, and walking was comparatively safe. They soon understood the guide's design. The object was to walk along this wall until they reached the main gate. Why this peculiar course was to be taken they could not imagine at first. Anguish's fertile brain came to the rescue. He saw a number of women in a distant part of the grounds, and, remembering their guide's haste in conducting them to the wall, rightly conjectured that it was against custom for visitors to meet and gaze upon members of the royal household. The men and women, some of whom could be plainly distinguished from the faraway wall, were undoubtedly a part of the castle's family and were not to be subjected to the curious gaze of sightseers. Perhaps her royal highness the Princess of Graustark was among them.

They reached the main gate and descended. Anguish securing his camera, after which they thanked the steward and turned to for the guide. But he had disappeared as if the ground had swallowed him.

"Well, it's a fair Versailles," observed Anguish, as they walked down the street, glancing back at the frowning wall.

"It all goes to make me wonder why in the name of heaven we have never heard of this land of Graustark," said Lorry, still thinking of the castle's grandeur.

"My boy, there are lots of things we don't know. We're too busy. Don't you remember that but one half the world knows how the other half lives? I'll wager there are not twenty-five people in the United States who know there is such a country as Graustark."

"I don't believe that a single soul over there has heard of the place," vouchsafed Lorry, very truthfully.

"I'll accept the amendment," said Anguish. Then he proceeded to take a snapshot of the castle from the middle of the street. He also secured a number of views of the mountain side, of some odd little dwelling houses and two or three interesting exposures of red robed children. Everybody, from the children up, wore loose robes, some red, some black, some blue, but all in solid colors. Beneath these robes were baggy trousers and blouses among the men, short skirts among the women. All wore low boots and a sort of turban. These costumes, of course, were confined to the native civilians. At the hotel the garb of the aristocrats was vastly different. The women were gowned after the latest Viennese patterns, and the men, except those of the army, wore clothes almost as smart as those which covered the Americans. Miss Guggenslocker—or whatever her name might be—and her carriage companion were as exquisitely gowned as any women to be seen on the boulevards or in Hyde park of an afternoon.

It was late in the afternoon when they returned to the hotel. After dinner, during which they were again objects of interest, they strolled off toward the castle, smoking their cigars and enjoying the glorious air. Being a stranger in a strange land, Lorry acted on the romantic painter's advice and also stuck a revolver in his pocket. He laughed at the suggestion that there might be use for the weapon in such a quiet, model, well regulated town, but Anguish insisted:

"I've seen a lot of these fellows around town who look like genuine brigands and cutthroats, and I think it just as well that we be prepared," asserted he positively, and his friend gratified what he called a whim.

At 10 o'clock the slender moon dropped behind the mountain, and the valley, which had been touched with its tender light, gradually took on the somberness and stillness of a starlit night. The town slumbered at 11, and there were few lights to be seen in the streets or in the houses. Here and there strolled the white uniformed police guards, occasionally soldiers hurried barrackward, now and then belated citizens moved through the dense shadows on the sidewalks, but the Americans saw still life in its reality. Returning from their stroll beside the castle walls far to the west of where they had entered the grounds that afternoon, they paused in the middle of Castle avenue near the main gate and looked down the dark deserted street. Far away could be seen the faint glare from their hotel. One or two street lamps burned in the business part of the city. Aside from these evidences of life there was nothing but darkness, silence, peacefulness, about them everywhere.

"Think of Paris or New York at 11 o'clock," said Lorry, a trifle awed by the solitude of the sleeping city.

"It's as dead as a piece of prairie land," said his friend. "Gad, it makes me sleepy to look down that street. It's a mile to the hotel, too, Lorry. We'd better move along."

"Let's lie down near the hedge, smoke another cigar and wait till midnight. It is too glorious a night to be lost in sleep," urged Lorry, whose heart was light over the joys of the day to come. "I can dream just as well here, looking at that dark old castle, with its one little tower light, as I could if I tried to sleep in a hard bed down at the hotel."

Anguish, who was more or less of a dreamer himself, consented, and after lighting fresh cigars they threw themselves on the soft, dry grass near the tall hedge that fenced the avenue as it neared the castle grounds. For half an hour they talked by fits and starts, one thinking of the face he had seen, the other picturing in his artist eye the painting he had vowed to create from the moonlit castle of an hour ago.

"Some one coming," murmured the painter, half rising to his elbow attentively.

"Soldiers," said the other briefly. "They'll not disturb us."

"They'll not even see us, I should say. It's as dark as Egypt under this hedge. They'll pass if we keep quiet."

The figures of two men could be seen approaching from the city, dim and ghostly in the semblackness of the night. Like two thieves the Americans waited for them to pass. To their exceeding discomfiture, however, the pedestrians halted directly in front of their resting place and seated themselves leisurely upon a broad, flat stone at the roadside. It was too dark to see if they were soldiers, notwithstanding the fact that they were less than fifteen feet away.

"He should be here at 12," said one of the newcomers in a low voice and in fairly good English. The other merely grunted. There was a silence of some duration, broken by the first speaker.

"If this job fails and you are caught, it will mean years of servitude."

"But in that case we are to have 10,000 gavens apiece for each year we lie in prison. It's fair pay—not only for our failure, but for our silence," said the other, whose English was more difficult to understand.

Anguish's fingers gripped Lorry's leg, but there was no sound from either of the thoroughly amused dreamers. "A plot, as I live," thought each, with a thrill.

"We must be careful to speak only in English. There are not twenty people in Edelweiss who understand it, but the eight hav ears. It is the only safe tongue. Geddos speaks it well. He should be here." It was the first speaker who uttered these words, little knowing that he had listeners other than the man to whom he spoke.

A dark figure shot across the roadway, and, almost before the Americans were aware of it, the party numbered three.

"Ah, Geddos, you are punctual."

"I have found it ever a virtue," responded the newcomer.

"Have you secured your men?"

"I have, your"—

"Sh! Call me Michael, on your life. They are ready and willing to undertake the venture?"

"Yes, but they do not understand the true conditions. I have told them that we are to rob the castle and carry the booty to Ganlock before morning."

"They do not know the real object of the raid, then. That is as I desired. Are they trusty and experienced men?"

"The best—or the worst—that I could find in Vienna. Not one understands our language, and they are so ignorant of our town that they are entirely dependent on me. They know nothing whatever of the princess, Michael, and will do only as they are told, realizing that if caught they will be guillotined. I have told them it is the royal palace we are to rifle. Ostrom here and I are the only ones except yourself and the men who will aid us inside the castle, who know the truth, sir."

"It cannot fail unless those inside prove false or unworthy," said the hoarse voiced Ostrom. Anguish's fingers were gripping Lorry's leg so fiercely that the blood was ready to burst out, but he did not feel the pain. Here, then, was some gigantic plot in which the person of the princess herself was to be considered. Was it an assassination?

"You have five of these Viennese?"

"Yes; two to stand beneath the window to receive the booty as we lower it to the ground, one to stand

*"He should be here at 12."*

guard at the west gate and two to attend the carriage and horses in the ravine beyond the castle."

"When did these men arrive?"

"This morning. I kept them in my sister's home until an hour ago. They are now in the ravine awaiting Ostrom and myself. Are you sure, Michael, that the guards and the cook have been made to understand every detail? The faintest slip will mean ruin."

"They are to be trusted fully. Their pay is to be high enough to make it an object to be infallible. The guard, Dushan, will leave the gate unwatched, and you will chloroform him, with his consent, of course. You will enter, as I have explained before, and crawl along in the dark shadow of the wall until you reach the arbor that leads to the kitchen and scullery. Here another guard, Rabbo, known to Ostrom as a comrade in her royal highness' service not more than a year ago, will be encountered. He will be bound and gagged without the least noise or struggle. Just as the clock strikes 2 the cook will walk past the scullery window in the basement thrice, carrying a lighted candle. You will see this light through the window and will know that all is well inside the castle. Ostrom, you will then lead the two Viennese to a place directly beneath the third window in the princess' sleeping apartment. There are several clumps of shrubbery there, and under these they will hide, protected from the gaze of any watchman who is not with us. You and Geddos will be admitted to the scullery by the cook, who will conduct you to the hall leading to her highness' bedroom. The man who guards her door is called Dannox. He will not be at his post, but will accompany you when you leave the castle. You will understand how carefully you must enter her room and how deeply she must be chloroformed. In the adjoining room her lady in waiting, the Countess Dagmar, sleeps. If her door is ajar, you are to creep in and chloroform her, leaving her undisturbed. Then the princess is to be wrapped in the cloth you take with you and lowered from the window to the men below. They are to remain in hiding until you have left the castle and have reached their side. It will not be difficult, if caution is observed, for you to get outside of the wall and to the carriage in the ravine. I have given you this plan of action before, I know, but I desire to impress it firmly upon your minds. There must not be the slightest deviation. The precision of clockwork is necessary."

The man named Michael hissed the foregoing into the ears of his companions, the paished Americans hearing every word distinctly. They scarcely breathed, so tremendous was the restraint imposed upon their nerves. A crime so huge, so daring as the abduction of a princess, the actual invasion of a castle to commit the theft of a human being just as an ordinary burglar would steal in and make way with the contents of a silver chest, was beyond their power of comprehension.

"We understand fully how it is to be done, and we shall get her to Ganlock on time," said Geddos confidently.

"Not a hair of her head must be harmed," cautioned the arch conspirator. "In four days I shall meet you at Ganlock. You will keep her in close confinement until you hear from me. Have you the guard's uniforms that you are to wear tonight?"

"They are with the carriage in the ravine. Ostrom and I will don them before going to the castle. In case we are seen they will throw observers off the track long enough for us to secure a good start in our flight."

"Remember, there is to be no failure. This may mean death to you, certainly a long prison term, if you are apprehended. I know it is a daring deed, but it is just of the kind that succeeds. Who would dream that mortal man could find the courage to steal a princess of the realm from her bed and spirit her away from under the very noses of her vaunted guardsmen? It is the bold, the impossible plan that wins."

"We cannot fail if your men on the inside do their work well," said Geddos, repeating what Ostrom had said. "All depends on their faithfulness."

"They will not be found wanting. Your cutthroats must be sent on to Calas with the empty carriage after you have reached Ganlock in safety. You will need them no more. Ostrom will pay them, and they are to leave the country as quickly as possible. At Calas they will be able to join a pack train that will carry them to the Great Northern railroad. From there they will have no trouble in reaching Vienna. You will explain to them, Geddos. All we need them for, as you know, is to prove by their mere presence in case of capture that the attempt was no more than a case of burglary conceived by a band of Viennese robbers. There will be no danger of capture if you once get her outside the walls. You can be half way to Ganlock before she is missed from the castle. Nor can she be found at Ganlock if you follow the instructions I gave last night. It is now nearly 1 o'clock, and in half an hour the night will be as dark as Erebus. Go, men; you have no more time to lose, for this must be accomplished slowly, carefully, deliberately. There must be no haste until you are ready for the race to Ganlook. Go, but, for God's sake, do not harm her! And do not fail!"

"Failure means more to us than to you, Michael," half whispered the hoarse Ostrom.

"Failure means everything to me! I must have her!"

Already the two hirelings were moving off toward the road that ran west of the castle grounds. Michael watched them for a moment and then started swiftly in the direction of the city. The watchers had not been able to distinguish the faces of the conspirators, but they could never forget the calm, cold voice of Michael, with its quaint, jerky English.

"What shall we do?" whispered Anguish when the men were out of hearing.

"God knows!" answered Lorry. "This is the most damnable thing I ever heard of. Are we dreaming? Did we really see and hear those men?" He had risen to his feet, his companion sitting weakly before him.

"There's no question about it! It's a case of abduction, and we have it in our power to spoil the whole job. By gad, but this is luck, Gren!" Anguish was quivering with excitement as he rose to his feet. "Shall we notify old Dangloss or alarm the steward? There's no time to be lost if we want to trap these fellows. The chief devil is bound to escape, for we can't get him and the others too, and they won't peach on him. Come, we must be lively! What are you standing there for? The trap must be set!"

"Wait! Why not do the whole job ourselves?"

"How—what do you mean?"

"Why should we alarm anybody? We know the plans as well as these scoundrels themselves. Why not follow them right into the castle, capture them red handed, and then do the alarming? I'm in for saving the Princess of Graustark with our own hands and right under the noses of her vaunted guardsmen, as Michael says." Lorry was thrilled by the spirit of adventure. His hand gripped his friend's arm and his face was close to his ear. "It is the grandest opportunity two human beings ever had to distinguish themselves!"

"Great heaven, man! We can't do such a thing!" gasped Anguish.

"It's the easiest thing in the world. Besides, if we fail, we have nothing to lose. If we succeed, see what we've done! Don't hesitate, old man! Come on! Come on! We'll take 'em ourselves, as sure as fate. Have you no nerve? What kind of an American are you? This chance won't come in ten lifetimes! Are we not equal to those two scoundrels?"

"Two! There are at least ten of them!"

"You fool! The three guards are disposed of in advance, two of the Viennese are left with the horses, two are chucked off under the princess' window, and one stands at the gate. We can slug the man at the gate, the fellows under the window are harmless, and that leaves but our two friends and the cook. We have every advantage in the world. Can't you see?"

"You are right! Come on! I'll risk it with you! We will save the Princess of Graustark!"

"Don't you see it will be just as easy for us to enter the castle as for these robbers? The way will be clear and will be kept clear. Jove, man, we need not be more than thirty seconds behind them. Is your pistol all right?"

By this time the two men were speeding along the grassy stretch toward the road that ran beside the wall. They looked to their pistols and placed them carefully in outside coat pockets.

"We must throw away these heavy canes," whispered the painter to his friend, who was a pace or so ahead.

"Keep it! We'll need one of them to crack that fellow's head at the gate. Gad, it's dark along here!"

"How the devil are we to know where to go?"

"We'll stop when we come to the gate where we climbed up the wall to day. That is the only entrance I saw along the west wall, and it is near the castle. Just as soon as the gang enters that gate we'll crawl up and get rid of the fellow who stands watch."

It was so dark that they could barely see the roadway, and they found it necessary to cease talking as they slunk along beside the wall. Occasionally they paused to listen, fearing that they might draw too close upon the men who had gone before. At last they came to a big gate and halted.

"Is this the gate?" whispered Anguish.

"Sh! Yes; I'm quite sure. We are undoubtedly near the castle, judging by the distance we have come. Let us cross the road and lie directly opposite. Be careful!"

Like panthers they stole across the road and down a short grassy embankment. At Anguish's suggestion Lorry wrapped his handkerchief tightly about the heavy end of his cane, preparing in that way to deaden the sound of the blow that was to fall upon the Vienna man's head. Then they threw aside their hats, buttoned their coats tightly and sank down to wait, with bounding hearts and tingling nerves, the arrival of the abductors, mutely praying that they were at the right gate.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EXPLOIT OF LORRY AND ANGUISH.

DURING the half hour spent in the grassy ditch or gutter they spoke not more than half a dozen times and in the faintest of whispers. They could hear the guard pacing the driveway inside the ponderous gate, but aside from his footsteps no sound was distinguishable. A sense of oppression came over the two watchers as the minutes grew longer and more deathlike in their stillness.

They knew nothing of the surroundings. If they failed, there was the danger of being shot by the guards before an explanation could be made. If they succeeded, it must be through sheer good fortune and not through prowess of mind or muscle. Both knew the sensible, judicious act would be to alarm the guards and thus avoid all possible chance of a fiasco. With misgivings and doubts in their hearts the two self appointed guardians of the princess lay there upon the grass, afraid to give up the project, yet fearing the outcome.

"The dickens will be to pay, Lorry, if they dispose of this guard on the inside and lock the gate. Then how are we to follow?" whispered Anguish.

Lorry was thoughtful for a while. He felt the chill of discouragement in his heart.

"In that case we must lie outside and wait till they come out with the princess; then make a sudden assault and rescue her. In the darkness we can make them think there are a dozen rescuers," he whispered at length. After awhile Anguish asked another appalling question, the outgrowth of brain racking study:

"Suppose these fellows, who will be in guards' uniform, should turn about and capture us. What then? We are strangers, and our story would not be believed. They could slip away in the excitement and leave us in a very awkward position."

"Harry, if we are going to hatch up all sorts of possibilities, let's give up the thing right now. I have thought of a thousand contingencies, and I realize how desperate the job is to be. We must either cast discretion to the winds or we must retreat. Which shall we do?"

"Cast aside discretion and hang our fears," said the other, once more inspired. "We'll take chances and hope for the best. If we see we are going to fail, we can then call for the guards. The grounds are doubtless full of soldiers. The only part I'm worried about is the groping through that strange dark castle."

"We must do some calculating, and we must stick close together. By watching where they station the two Viennese we can figure about what direction we must take to get to the princess' room. Sh! Isn't that some one approaching?"

They strained their ears for a moment and then involuntarily, spasmodically shook hands, each heaving the deep breath of excitement. The stealthy rustle of moving bodies was heard, faint, but positive. It was a moment of suspense that would have strained the nerve of a stone image. Where were the abductors? On which side of the road and from what direction did they come? Oh, for the eyes of a cat!

There was a slight shuffling of feet near the gate, a suppressed "Sh!" and then deathly silence. The gate opened, a faint creaking attesting the fact, followed by the heavy breathing of men, the noise of subdued activity, the scent of chloroform, some whispering and then the creaking of the gate.

"They've gone," whispered Anguish. Lorry's form arose to a crouching posture, and a moment later he was crossing the road with the tread of a cat, his cane gripped firmly in his hand. Anguish followed with drawn revolver. So still was their approach that they were upon the figure of a man before they were aware of the fact. In the darkness the foremost American saw the outline of a human figure bending over a long object on the ground. He could smell chloroform strongly and grasped the situation. The Viennese was administering the drug, his companions having left that duty for him to perform. No doubt the treacherous guardsman was lying calmly on his back, bound and gagged, welcoming unconsciousness with a smile of security.

As soon as Lorry gained his bearings fully he prepared to fell the wretch who was to stand watch. Anguish heard his friend's figure suddenly shoot to an erect position. There was a whirring sound as of disturbed air and then a dull thud. Something rolled over on the ground, and all was still. He was at Lorry's side in an instant.

"I hope I haven't killed him!" whispered Lorry. "Quick! Here is his bottle of ether. Hold it beneath his nose. I am going to pile the body of this guard crosswise on top of him. He will not be able to arise if he should recover consciousness."

All this was done in a moment's time, and the two trackers were headed for the entrance. The gate was ajar two or three feet. With turbulent hearts they stole through.

"Keep along the wall," whispered Lorry, "and trust to luck. The castle is to the left."

Without hesitation they crept over the noiseless grass close beside the wall. Directly they heard sounds near at hand. The abductors were binding and chloroforming the guard at the arbor. After waiting for some moments they heard the party glide away in the darkness and followed. The body of the guard was lying just outside the mouth of the arbor, and the odor of chloroform was almost overpowering. Once inside the long arbor, the Americans moved slowly and with greater caution. There was a dim light in a basement window ahead. Toward the front of the castle and in the second story a faint glow came from another window. They guessed it to be from the princess' room or from that of the countess.

At last they saw four figures steal past the dim basement light. One of them halted near the window and three crept away in the darkness. Presently one of them returned, and all activity was at an end for the time being. How near it was to 2 o'clock the watchers could not tell. They only knew that they were within twenty-five feet of Geddos and Ostrom and that they would not have long to wait.

Soon a bright little blaze of light crossed the basement opening. Then it returned, crossing a second time and a third. All was still again. The soft shuffle of a foot, the rustle of arbor vines, and the form of a man crawled up to the window. With inconceivable stealth and carefulness it glided through the aperture, followed by a companion.

Lorry and Anguish were at the opening a second or two later, lying flat on their stomachs and listening for sounds from within. The dim light was still there, the window was open and there was a sound of whispering. Lorry raised his head and peered through, taking calculations while the light made it possible. He saw an open door on the opposite side of the low room, with steps beyond leading upward. Between the window and the door there were no obstacles. Up those steps he saw three men creep, the leader carrying the dim light. The door was left open, doubtless to afford unimpeded exit from the building in case of emergency. Harry Anguish touched Lorry's arm.

"I took the two pistols from that Vienna man out there. We may need them. Here is one for yourself. Go first, Lorry," he whispered.

Lorry stuck the revolver in his coat pocket and gently slid through the window to the floor below. His friend followed, and they paused to listen. Tak-

*"A sound and you die!" he hissed.*

ing Anguish by the hand the other led the way straight to the spot where he remembered seeing the door.

Boldly the two men began the breathless ascent of the stone steps. The top was reached, and far ahead, down a narrow hall, they saw the three men and the dim light moving. Two of them wore uniforms of guards. Keeping close to the wall, their followers crept after them. Up another flight of steps they went and then through a spacious hall. The Americans had no time and no desire to inspect their surroundings. The wide doors at the far side of the room opened softly, and here the trio paused. Down a great marble hallway a dim red light shed its soft glow. It came from the lamp at the foot of the broad staircase.

The cook pointed to the steps and then gave his thumb a jerk toward the left. Without the least sign of fear Geddos and Ostrom glided into the hall and made for the staircase. The watchers could not but feel a thrill of admiration for these daring wretches. But now a new danger confronted them. The cook remained standing in the doorway watching his fellows in crime! How were they to pass him?

There was no time to be lost. The abductors were creeping up the steps already, and the cook must be disposed of. He had blown out the light which he carried and was now a very dim shadow. Lorry glided forward and in an instant stood before the amazed fellow, jamming a pistol into his face.

"A sound and you die!" he hissed.

"Don't move!" came another whisper, and a second revolver touched his ear. The cook, perhaps, did not know their language, but he certainly understood its meaning. He trembled and would have fallen to the floor had not the strong hand of Lorry pinned him to the wall. The hand was on his throat too.

"Chloroform him, Harry, and don't let him make a sound!" whispered the owner of the hand. Anguish's twitching fingers succeeded those of his friend on the cook's throat, his pistol was returned to his pocket, and the little bottle came again into use.

"I'll go ahead. Follow me as soon as you have finished this fellow. Be careful and turn to the left when you come to the top."

Lorry was off across the marble floor, headed for the stairway, and Anguish was left in charge of the cook, of whom he was to make short work. Now came the desperate, uncertain part of the transaction. Suppose he were to meet the two conspirators at the head of the stairs, or in the hall, or that the other traitor, Dannox, should appear to frustrate all. It was the most trying moment in the whole life of the reckless Lorry.

When near the top of the steps, he hugged the high balustrade and cautiously peered ahead. He found himself looking down a long hall, at the far end of which, to his right, a dim light was burning. There was no sound and there was no sign of the two men either to the right or to the left. His heart felt like lead. They evidently had entered the princess' room. How was he to find that room? Slowly he wriggled across the broad, dark hall, straightening up in the shadow of a great post. From this point he edged along the wall for a distance of ten or twelve feet to the left. A sound came from farther down the hall, and he imagined he heard some one approaching.

His hand came in contact with a heavy hanging or tapestry, and he quickly squirmed behind its folds, finding himself against a door which moved as his body touched it. He felt it swing open slightly and drew back, intending to return to the hall, uncertain and very much undecided as to the course to pursue. His revolver was in his hand. Just as he was about to pull aside the curtain a man glided past, quickly followed by another. Providence had kept him from running squarely into them. They were going toward the left, and he realized that they were now approaching the princess' room. How he came to be ahead of them he could not imagine. Again he felt the door move slightly as he pressed against it. The necessity for a partial recovery of his composure before the next and most important step impelled him softly to enter the room for an instant's breath.

Holding to the door, he stood inside and drew himself to his full height, taking a long and tremulous breath. There was no light in the room, but through the door crack to his left came a dim, broad streak. He now knew where he was. This room was next to that in which the princess slept, for had he not seen the light from her window? Perhaps he was now in the room of the Countess Dagmar. Next door! Next door! Even now the darling Geddos and Ostrom were crawling toward the bed of the ruler of Graustark, not twenty feet away. His first impulse was to cross and open the door leading to the next room, surmising that it would be unlocked, but he remembered Anguish, who was doubtless, by this time, stealing up the stairs. They must not be separated, for it would require two steady, cool heads to deal with the villains. It was not one man's work. As he turned to leave the room he thought how wonderfully well they had succeeded in the delicate enterprise so far.

His knees struck the door, and there was a dull thump, not loud in reality, but like the report of a gun to him. A sudden rustle in the darkness of the room, and then a sleepy voice, soft and quick, as of a woman awakening with a start:

"Who is it?"

His heart ceased beating, his body grew stiff and immovable. Again the voice, a touch of alarm in it now:

"Is that you, Dannox?"

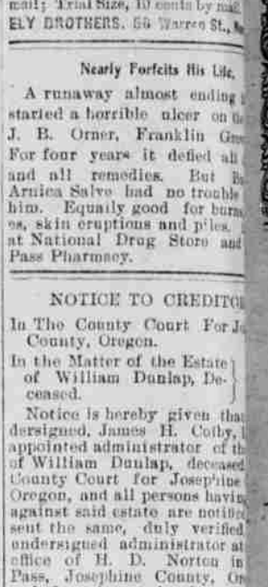
She spoke in German, and the voice came from somewhere in front and to his right. He could not answer, could not move. The paralysis of indecision was upon him.

"How is it that the outer door is open?"

This time there was some[illegible] a reprimand in the tones, [illegible] He almost could see the wide searching eyes.

*(To be continued.)*


CATARR

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NOTICE TO CREDITO[illegible]

In The County Court For Jo[illegible] County, Oregon.

In the Matter of the Estate of William Dunlap, Deceased.

Notice is hereby given that [illegible] dersigned, James H. Colby, [illegible] appointed administrator of th[illegible] of William Dunlap, deceased [illegible] County Court for Josephine [illegible] Oregon, and all persons having [illegible] against said estate are notifie[illegible] sent the same, duly verified, [illegible] undersigned administrator at [illegible] office of H. D. Norton in [illegible] Pass, Josephine County, Or[illegible] or before six months from the [illegible] the first publication of this [illegible] which first publication is T[illegible] January 14, A. D., 1904.

JAMES H. CO[illegible]
Admi[illegible]

NOTICE FOR PUBLICAT[illegible]

Timber Land, Act June 3, [illegible]
United States Land Offi[illegible]
Roseburg, Oregon, Nov. 2[illegible]

Notice is hereby given that in [illegible] ance with the provisions of th[illegible] Congress of June 3, 1878, ent[illegible] act for the sale of timber lan[illegible] States of California, Oregon, [illegible] and Washington Territory," as [illegible] ed to all the Public Land State[illegible] of August 4, 1892,

MARTIN O. SWEET

of Jackson county, State of Ore[illegible] a resident of the town of Gol[illegible] said state, has this day filed [illegible] office his sworn statement No. [illegible] the purchase of the S½ NW¼, N[illegible] of Section No. 30 in Township [illegible] South, range No. 4 W., W. M., [illegible] offer proof to show that the lan[illegible] is more valuable for its timber [illegible] than for agricultural purposes, [illegible] establish his claim to said lan[illegible] Charles Nickell, U. S Commis[illegible] Medford, Oregon, on Saturday, [illegible] day of February, 1904. He na[illegible] witnesses:

George McClellan, Fred. M[illegible] William Childers, John E. N[illegible] Gold Hill, Oregon.

Any and all persons claiming [illegible] ly the above-described lands are [illegible] ed to file their claims in this off[illegible] before said 6th day of February.

J. T. Barnes, Re[illegible]

CONTEST NOTICE.

Department of the Interi[illegible]
United States Land Offi[illegible]
Roseburg, Oregon, Nov. 30[illegible]

A sufficient contest affidavit [illegible] teen filed in this office by [illegible] Eades, contestant, against he[illegible] entry No. 10,361, made Dece[illegible] 1900, for E½ NW¼, NE¼ SW¼ [illegible] 30, Township 33 South, Range [illegible] by Charles A. Hill, contestee, [illegible] it is alleged that Charles A. H[illegible] abandoned said land for more [illegible] months last past, said parties are [illegible] notified to appear, respond and [illegible] dence touching said allegation [illegible] o'clock a. m., on February 15, [illegible] fore R. L. Bartlett, County [illegible] Grants Pass, Oregon, and the [illegible] hearing will be held at 10 o'clock [illegible] of February 23, 1904, before the [illegible] ter and Receiver at the United [illegible] Land Office in Roseburg, Oregon.

The said contestant having, [illegible] per affidavit, filed November 2[illegible] set forth facts which show that [illegible] diligence personal service of this [illegible] can not be made, it is hereby [illegible] and directed that such notice be [illegible] by one and proper publication.

J. H. Booth, Re[illegible]


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