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The Man From Home

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By **BOOTH TARKINGTON** and **HARRY LEON WILSON**

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CHAPTER XVII.
FACE TO FACE.

IF the roof of the building had collapsed and had left the persons there assembled in the room confronting death itself, there could have been no more complete astonishment.

It was Horace who first appreciated the somberness of the crouching, terror-stricken woman upon the floor.

"Helene!" he whispered, but Pike stepped forward and waved him back.

"You stand back!" said the lawyer. "She's his wife!" And at the words Horace fairly staggered. Daniel went on, pointing to the cowering Hawcastle.

"And there's his best friend."

The words seemed to rouse some of the fighting St. Aubyn instinct in the earl, and his eyes flashed.

"It's a lie!" he cried hoarsely. "I never saw the man in all my life before."

"The lady seemed to recognize him," said Pike grimly. "I guess you won't have to jab your memory too hard. It's only ten years to St. Petersburg, Mr. Glenwood!"

"Almeric, go for the police!" ordered the earl.

"No, no!" cried the countess. "I can't stand it!"

Pike laid his hand upon Ivanoff's shoulder and spoke loudly:

"Call 'em in! We're ready!"

Almeric, with a frightened glance around, stepped to the doors and threw them wide, calling as he reached the passage:

"Tell that officer to bring his men here!"

He turned and again entered the room, and Pike's face lit up unpleasantly as he looked at him, then softened as he turned to Ethel.

"I want you always to remember that I consider it cheap at the price," he said.

There was a quick step without, and Von Grollerhagen entered, followed by Ribiere. For an instant he glanced about the circle and then spoke in a clear, ringing voice.

"There will be no arrests tonight, my friends," he said, and at the words Hawcastle sneered openly.

"This man goes, too!" he declared violently. "Call those carabinieri!" he reiterated to Almeric.

Von Grollerhagen smiled sweetly and raised his hand deprecatingly.

"The officer is not there. You see, the carabinieri have been withdrawn." He turned to Daniel. "For you, my friend, I have relinquished my incognito." Pike stared at him uncompromisingly, and the German turned to Lord Hawcastle.

"This man Ivanoff," he said, "is in my custody."

For a moment the two men measured each other, and then Hawcastle burst out violently:

"By whose authority? Do you know you are speaking to the Earl of Hawcastle?"

Von Grollerhagen smiled. Ribiere stepped forward and addressed Hawcastle directly.

"More respect, sir!" he cried. "You are addressing the Grand Duke Vasil of Russia!"

Hawcastle paled and fairly staggered into the arms of his son, who reeled from the shock. The others stared uncomprehendingly, and Pike looked up with a curious frightened look upon his lean face. Quite slowly he moved to the table and rested a hand upon it and with the other caressed his chin. His eyes were looking straight ahead, and he murmured in a awestruck tones:

"Good Lord! And think what—why, I've been calling him—doc!"

The grand duke perceived the agitation on Pike's face and came forward to take his hand.

"My friend," he said gently, "it has been refreshing." He spoke to Ribiere.

"I shall take the man Ivanoff's statement in writing. Bring him to me with you."

He turned on his heel quickly and went off through the door on the other



"You are addressing the Grand Duke Vasil of Russia!"

side of the room that led to his private chamber. When he had gone Ribiere touched Ivanoff on the shoulder as a signal, and the stricken man arose. One glance he cast upon the guilty woman, who shrank so shiveringly into a corner as he gazed upon her, and then said:

"I would not touch you—even to strangle you!" and then to the thunderstruck Hawcastle he said:

"God will let me pay my debt to the Earl of Hawcastle!"

In an instant he was gone, and Hawcastle, pale with rage and anguish, strode forward to Pike, who was smiling.

"Why, you"—the earl began, but Daniel raised his hand. He spoke softly, even genially.

"Oh, I hated to hand you this, my lord," he said. "I didn't come over here to make the fine flower of Europe any more trouble than they've got. But I had to show John Simpson's daughter, and I reckon now she ain't wanting any alliance with the remnants of Crecy and Agincourt."

From the other side of the sofa, where she had been sobbing on her brother's shoulder, Ethel came tremblingly.

"I have no choice," she said slowly. "You see, I gave Almeric my promise when I thought it an honor to bear his name. Now that you have shown me

"It is minor the Earl of Hawcastle." that it is a shame to bear it the promise is only more sacred. You see, the shame is not his fault, is it? You want—me—to-be—honorable—don't you?"

When she had finished Daniel was leaning well back on the table.

"Your father and mother—both—came from Missouri, didn't they?"

He sighed heavily, and she hung her head. Hawcastle looked toward the open door of the room and touched his son upon the shoulder. When they had reached the door the earl looked back and shook his fist at Pike.

"You haven't heard the last of this, curse you!" he said and disappeared quickly. Lady Creech, who had been in a semi-swooning condition, came suddenly out of her trance and gazed sharply about her.

"Don't mumble your words," she said sharply and rose to her feet. With a withering glance at Pike she turned to Ethel.

"Come, my dear," she said. "This terrible place is not for you. Let us go."

Horace came suddenly to life and closed his drooping jaw. He stepped forward and faced the old lady.

"My sister will remain for a time, Lady Creech," he said. "I will look after her—in the future."

(To be continued.)

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