

# BRIDE of BATTLE

A Romance of the American Army Fighting on the Battlefields of France

By VICTOR ROUSSEAU

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## SYNOPSIS.

**CHAPTER I—**Mark Wallace, a young officer in the United States army, is wounded at the battle of Santiago. While wandering alone in the jungle he comes across a dead man in a hut outside of which a little girl is playing. When he is rescued, he takes the girl to the hospital and announces his intention of adopting her.

**CHAPTER II—**His commanding officer, Major Howard, tells him that the dead man was Hampton, a traitor who sold war department secrets to an international gang in Washington, and was detected by himself and Kellerman while they were working in the same office with him. Howard pleads to be allowed to send the child home to his wife and they agree that she shall never know her father's shame.

**CHAPTER III—**Years pass. Wallace is stationed out West. On the outbreak of the European war Colonel Howard secures him a staff post in Washington.

**CHAPTER IV—**He finds Eleanor there, the center of attraction, also Kellerman, in whom he discerns an antagonist.

## CHAPTER V.

But Mark refused Colonel Howard's invitation to become his guest, and avoided the house in Massachusetts circle as much as he could with decency. He was courageous enough to analyze his reasons and he did not conceal the result from himself.

He wanted Eleanor with all the pent-up longing of the denied years in the desert. His love was the strongest passion that he had ever felt, and yet, strangely for a man of his years, it had in it much more of the paternal element than of the lover. All his life he had been almost kinless, his only sister was dead, he wanted Eleanor's presence, Eleanor with him, to see her every day, whether as wife or daughter. Yet he was brave enough to acknowledge that this love, selfless in a measure, threatened to become a consuming passion if he did not hold himself rigidly in check.

He, the middle-aged captain, and Eleanor, with her station, her prospects and her beauty—it was an impossible dream, or one that would ruin the girl's life if, in some wild moment, she made it truth.

He had his reward in Eleanor's increasing restraint, her quite visible indignation. They had fallen apart again, after that single meeting. It was a poor reward, but the sort that Mark had received all his life from fortune. But there were lonely nights when life seemed unbearable, and he had to exert all his will power to keep himself in check. Mark had rented a little furnished apartment in the Northwest section, off Pennsylvania avenue, and he had found the desert more companionable.

One night he felt at the end of his powers. That was after a grilling day in the war office, one of those days that sometimes come in Washington toward the middle of September, when everything is as sticky as the asphalt sidewalks.

It had been a day of evil portent besides. Colonel Howard, who had seemed of late to reflect Eleanor's coolness in some measure, had greeted him with a wry face when he came in. "The devil's to pay, Mark," he said. "Draw up your chair. There's a leakage in the department."

"What?" cried Mark.  
"Things are getting known—for instance, our dealings with the shipping people. They've found the exact number of ships we've requisitioned. You know whom I mean by 'they.'"

Mark nodded. The cosmopolitan influences in Washington, whose ramifications extended to the ends of the earth, or, at least, across the Atlantic, were busy in every drawing room extracting news, the tiniest and least reliable of which was not despised, since many such single items make up a coherent story.

"The Brigadier's wild about it," continued the Colonel, pulling at his mustache. "And it seems impossible to detect how the leakage occurred. It must have been through the shipping companies, of course; yet they couldn't have pieced the thing together without concerted action, which is out of the question. Let's go through the papers."

They opened the safe and went through them one by one, but nothing was missing.

"Damn it!" growled Colonel Howard. "I've been through this before, Mark—you know that. In that case there is in this case there can be none, at least, in the war department. And I've told the Brigadier I'll answer with my place for discovering where the leak lies."

He closed the safe and strode off into Kellerman's room, to return with Kellerman, looking angrier than before.

"What are we going to do, Kellerman?" he asked.

"Mark looked into the keen, appraising eyes of Mrs. Kenson with dislike and disgust. "You'd better let him go, Major Kellerman," he said. As he spoke he saw Mrs. Kenson bite her lip vindictively.

"Oh, I'll leave him to you," responded Kellerman airily. "You'll excuse me, Wallace, I'm sure, but Mrs. Kenson's auto will be here in a few moments."

Mark, hot with indignation, answered nothing, but raised the man from the ground and got him outside the gate. As he did so he heard the door of the house close softly.

The tramp was half unconscious, and muttering vaguely.  
"Four years since I've seen her," he mumbled. "I didn't want money. Only the word. God knows I wouldn't have taken money from her as he said, the cur—"

"Was she your wife?" asked Mark, thinking that he saw light.  
"God forbid!" ejaculated the man with convincing spontaneity. "Who are you, anyway?" he demanded, looking at him directly for the first time.

"What were you doing in that place?" He grasped Mark by the arm. "Are you another friend of hers?" he asked.  
"Or didn't you know that it's the swellest gambling house in Washington?" Mark took him by the shoulders.

"What's your name and where do you live?" he asked. "I haven't time to waste on you, but I'm ready to help you if I can."  
"My name? Hartley. Good enough name, isn't it? Live? I haven't lived for more years than I remember. I'm a corpse—see? I wanted to live. That's why I came here when I heard she was in Washington. Walked from New York. Why should she be here now, unless there's another poor young fool like me for her? Where the carcass is, there are the eagles—or is it vultures?"

Mark drew the man's arm through his and led him away. Presently a cab came crawling up. He hailed it and gave his address.  
He took him home and played the Good Samaritan, washed his wounds, plastered them, and gave the man a bed in his living room. Hartley had subsided into a state of frightened silence. He looked dubiously at Mark all the while he was receiving his ministrations, and would say nothing.

"Now, please understand," said Mark, "I've brought you here because you seem to me to be up against it. The door's unlocked. And I'm trusting you with my things. Those cups are silver, Hartley—I won them at West Point. That little picture is by Griffin and worth about seven hundred. That's about all. I think—but I want you to understand you're free, and I'll help you if I can."

Hartley flushed rather oddly. Mark thought, but said not a word. It was a foolish act, he thought repeatedly before he fell asleep; but he must win the man's confidence if he was to learn the mystery. And he was satisfied that his interest in Eleanor's movement boded no harm to her.

In the morning, Hartley was gone, as he expected. But he had taken neither the cups nor the picture.  
(Continued next week.)

## CLOWN PRINCE WRITES TO PAPA

## Sends Special Delivery Letter After Meeting Ignorant Yank.

[Reprinted for the third time by request.]

"On the Run, Somewhere in France. Everywhere in France."

"Dear Fadder: I am writing on der run, as der brave and glorious soldiers under my command have not seen der Rhine for so long dat dey have started back dat way, and of course I am going mit dem. Oh, fadder, dere has been some ofel dings happened here in France. First I started in my big ofel feussive which was to crush der fool Americans, but dey know so little about military tactics dat dey kon't be crushed like I vant 'em. I sent my men in der fight in big waves, and ven dey got to de Americans dey all said: 'Boo' as loud as dey could holler. Vell, according to what you have always told me, de Americans should ought to have turned and run like blazes. But vat do you tink! Dem fool Americans don't know anything about war, and instead of running de odder way, dey came right toward us. Some of dem was singing: 'Ve von't come back till it's over over dere,' or some odder foolish song, and some of dem were laughing like fools. Dey are so ignorant. But dey are so ofel reckless mit dere guns, and ven dey come toward us it vas dat my men took a notion dey wanted to go back to der dear old Rhine. Ve don't like de little dirty Marine river annyway. And oh fadder, dem Americans use such ofel language. Dey know nothing of kultur, and say such ofel dings right before us. And dey talk such blasphemy too. Vat you tink dey said right in front of my face? One big husky from a place dey call Missouri he said—oh fadder, I hate to tell you vat an ofel ting he said, but I can't help it—he said: 'To hell mit der kaiser!' Did you ever hear annyting so ofel? I didn't tink anybody could say such a ofel ting. It made me so mad, I wouldn't stand and hear such an ofel ting, so I turned around and run mit der odder boys. Vas right? Vat! And oh, fadder, you know dem breastplates vat you sent us—you can send some to put on our backs. You know ve are going de odder way now, and breastplates are no good for de cowardly Americans are shooting us right in der back. Some of our boys took der breastplates and put 'em on behind, but der fool Americans are playing 'De Star Spangled Banner' mit machine guns on dem breastplates. Can't you help us? You remember in your speech you said nothing could stand before de brave German soldiers! Oh, fadder, I don't believe dese ignorant Americans ever read your speech for dey run after us just like ve vas a bunch of rabbits. Vat you tink of dat! Can't you send 'em some of your speeches right away? Dey don't know how terrible ve are. Can't you move my army back to Belgium vere ve von all our glory? My men can vip all de vimmen and children vat dem Belgians can bring against us. But dese fool Americans are so rough. Ve can't make 'em understand dat ve are der greatest soldiers on earth, and ven ve try to sing 'Deutschland uber alles' dey laugh like a lot of monkeys. But ve are getting de best of de Americans. Ve can outrun 'em. Fadder, if ve are not der best fighters on earth ve are der best runners sure. Nobody can keep up mit us ven ve tink of der dear old Rhine, and my army never tink so much of dat dear old river. Let me right away know vat to do by return postoffice. 'July 20 times.' CLOWN PRINCE VILLIE.

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