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A Medieval Tale

By ESTHER VANDEVEER

Medieval times were prolific of stories of the devil, who was supposed to be going about making bargains for souls. A great many such tales illustrating his methods have been handed down to us from that age in which they were believed by those who circulated them. Here is one that has remained dormant for many years. It was told me by an American multimillionaire who bought a castle in Germany and found the legend among papers that had not been disturbed for hundreds of years.

Count Caspar Ardenreid, the lord of the castle in question, was in love with Bertha, the daughter of a neighboring Baron Cronsheld. There had been a feud between the families, and Cronsheld refused the young count the hand of his daughter.

One evening the count was sitting in his cabinet, disconsolate that he must be deprived of his love, when the door opened and a man entered wearing a pointed beard and an upturned mustache.

"Who are you," asked the count, "and how did you gain access to me unannounced?"

"I am the devil," was the response, "and I have come to help you to win the hand of the girl you love."

"Leave me; you will require a soul to pay for your assistance."

"You are right. I must have the soul of your firstborn child."

"Begone, I say; I will have nothing to do with you."

"Then you must give up all hope of a union with the Countess Bertha. Her father will never yield."

The devil stuck to his work, conversing with the count and constantly getting him under his satanic influence. Caspar asked him how he would accomplish his object, and he said the baron was a skillful chess player. The devil would taunt him into playing a game, the winner to name a husband for his daughter. Caspar, who was desperately in love, finally consented, but only after wringing from the devil a certain condition. He might redeem his child's soul if he could beat the devil at a game of chess. This did not seem likely, but it was the only hope Satan would give.

The bargain having been struck, Satan sent the baron word that he had heard of his remarkable skill at chess and challenged him to a contest. The baron, much flattered, invited the challenger to his castle. Satan appeared in the person of an agreeable young man giving evidence by his rich attire and general lavishness of being a grand personage. He told the baron that he would play him a game of chess, the stake to be what he had named to Caspar. The baron, supposing that he wanted Bertha for himself, consented. Of course the devil beat the baron, and the winner named for a husband for his daughter Count Caspar Ardenreid. The baron consented, cursing the trickster at the same time and wondering why he had befriended the lovers.

Since there was nothing against Count Caspar but the feud with which he had nothing to do, Baron Cronsheld made the best of it and soon became attached to his son-in-law. Caspar told him how he had won his consent and what he had agreed to pay for it. This excited the old man to spend a great deal of time studying difficult chess problems in order that when the devil came to claim his grandchild he might redeem him by beating the arch fiend at his own game. He was so proud of his ability as a chess player that he really aspired to beat the devil.

The day a man child was born to the count and countess was both a happy and a sad one. The lady had learned from her husband the secret that her baby's soul must go to the devil, and since she was very religious the calamity was the more awful. Her father assured her that her son was safe, for it had been stipulated that if any one could be found to beat the devil at chess the bargain would be off. He (the baron) had learned a number of combinations any one of which was sure to win.

The mother proposed that the baby be baptized at once, hoping that this might forestall Satan, but before it could be done he appeared and claimed the child's soul. Since all depended on a chess contest the count proposed that three games be played between the baron and the devil, two games to win. So they sat down at once and began to play. Satan said he would play the first game with his eyes shut. He purposely threw away the game, but even without seeing the chessmen he could have beaten his antagonist if he had been so disposed. The second game he beat the baron in less than a dozen moves.

Cronsheld refused to play the third game, declaring that the best chess player in the world could not beat one who played using superhuman means. The count went to his wife to impart the news that their son's soul depended on the third game, which the devil was sure to win. Bertha said she had been praying to the Virgin Mary for help and had been told what to do. When her husband went back to the devil he said he would play the third game himself. Satan laughed scornfully, but sat down at the board.

Half a dozen moves had been made and Satan had but two more to make to checkmate when Caspar threw back his doublet and displayed a gold cross. Satan cringed under the table and left the room like a dog with his tail between his legs.

And he never came back for his pay.

Colonel Bunker

By M. QUAD

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"You have asked me, sub," began Colonel Bunker, "which was the strangest duel I ever fought. Of the fifteen or twenty I think that two might come under the head of strange."

"Majah Blazer and I were friends and neighbors and had been for years. Not a word of discord had ever passed between us. He had a cat and I had a dog, and they were also friends."

"One morning the majah came into my office and called out:

"Colonel, tell your dawg that if he will come over he may have a look at them."

"What is it, majah?"

"Our old cat has kittens."

"You don't say! How many of them?"

"Just twenty-one, sub."

"You counted them yourself, did you?"

"Colonel, do you question my statement?"

"Not at all, major; but twenty-one kittens in a litter is certainly a wonderful thing."

"It may be, sub, and—good morning, sub!"

"And, sub, it wasn't an hour before he sent a friend to me to arrange a duel. I had seemed to doubt his veracity, and he must clear his honor. I agree with you that it was silly, but men were mighty peppery in those days. The majah's wife came and begged that I refuse the challenge, but at the same time she couldn't show me how I could do it and maintain my honor. I asked her the number of kittens and was not at all surprised to learn that the number was only four."

"The explanation was that the majah's wife had been canning strawberries, and in speaking of it to him she gave the number of the cans as twenty-one."

"Well, sub, the choice of weapons lay with me, and I chose swords. A week before that while out for a walk I crossed the dueling ground, and I observed that close by in a fence corner was a bumblebee's nest. We were to meet at sunrise, which is a very uncomfortable hour, by the bye, and the night before I had a confidential talk with a colored brother."

"The night passed, and the morning came. I was first on the ground, and I had time to see that the colored brother was up in the part he was to play. On my word, the majah knew no mo' about sword play than a Laplander. I could have had him out in one minute, but I did not want that. I gave the colored brother the nod, and he stirred up the bees through the fence with a pole. They came out of the grass by the hundred, and I alone saw them in time to get away."

"But the bees, sub—the bees! Those men left behind were a sight to see when the insects got through with them. All of them had to be led home, and not one of them got out of the house for a fortnight. As for the majah, when he could get out he came to the office to say:

"Colonel, I have had news for your dawg."

"What is it?"

"Every kitten is dead."

"Sho! That's too bad."

"And the shelf fell down and broke all the fruit jars."

"Too bad, too bad."

"And you take notice, sub, we didn't get the kittens and the jars mixed up."

At this juncture Colonel Bunker remarked that he would tell the story of another duel.

"Captain Seaton was my good friend and had been for years. One evening as we sat on the veranda of his house, smoking our pipes and saying little, he carelessly observed:

"It's a wonder those grasshoppers can keep that noise up the way they do."

"You mean crickets, captain," I corrected.

"I mean what I mean," he snapped.

"Well, there we were," said the colonel—"there we were. It made no difference whatever to either one of us whether it was a cricket or a grasshopper or an owl singing. But there are times when the best of men are attacked by what may be called a fool perversity. We sulked for five minutes, and then I said:

"Captain, the songs of those crickets are not so unpleasant after all."

"You mean the songs of those grasshoppers, sub," he replied.

"Crickets!"

"Grasshoppers!"

"Colonel Bunker, my friend will wait on you and arrange."

"The sooner the better, sub."

"And within an hour his friend came, and a duel was arranged for sunrise."

"You may say we were a couple of idiots, sub, but in those days a man's honor was held to be a sacred thing. If I was out walking with a gentleman and remarked that there was a ring around the moon and he replied that he couldn't see it, honor required that I send him a challenge."

"And, sub, perhaps there was neither moon nor ring showing!"

"We were on the field and the bulldog was being paced off when a dog got after a drove of mules out at pasture, and the mules got after us. All hands were driven up trees, and as we roosted fifteen feet high one of the seconds called out:

"Gentlemen, I don't think it was either crickets or grasshoppers!"

"Then what?"

"Tree toads!"

"And we descended and shook hands, and the duel was off, sub—and the duel was off!"



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Notice to Contractors

Sealed bids will be received by the County Court of Marion County for the improvement of certain roads in Road District No. 40, near Mill City, by clearing and grading the same, as more fully appears by the plans and specifications of the same now on file in this office.

All bids must be accompanied by a certified check of five per cent. of the amount of the bid and must be filed in this office on or before Friday, September 10th, at one o'clock P. M.

Max Gehlhar, County Clerk.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

(Publisher.)

Department of the Interior.

U. S. LAND OFFICE at Portland, Oregon, July 30th, 1915.

NOTICE is hereby given that Joseph M. Erdulius, of Hullt, Oregon, who, on April 12, 1910, made Homestead Entry, No. 02544, for the North West 1/4 of Section 10, Township 8 south, Range 2 East, Willamette Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make five year Proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before the Register and Receiver of the United States Land Office, at Portland, Oregon, on the 14th day of September, 1915.

Claimant names as witnesses: E. L. Patterson, Joseph Labunski, B. F. Rode, John Van Gorder, all of Hullt, Oregon.

Proof made according to law under which entry was made.

9-2 N. Campbell, Register.

Mill City - Stayton - Salem Auto-Stage

Leaves Mill City 6:30 a. m. for Lyons Mehama, Stayton, 8:05, Sublimity, Aumsville, Turner, arrives in Salem at 9:30. Leave Salem 4:40, arrive Mill City 7:45. Stops in Stayton at Stayton Hotel and Hendershott's.

D. B. Hill, Owner.

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