

# PAGE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS



## The Princess of the Purple Palace.

A Story of the Pekin Siege.  
By William Murray Graydon.

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### CHAPTER II.

In vain the lad tried to free himself. A horrid fascination riveted his eyes on the devilish face of his enemy with the glittering steel poised above him. He screamed hoarsely, and a husky shout answered. There was a quick patter of feet, the uplifted arm wavered, and as the would-be assassin turned to look behind him, a heavy blow cracked on his skull. He lurched to one side and fell.

Alec, grateful beyond words for this timely intervention, breathless and unmoved, was quickly helped to his feet by a lad of about his own age, who held a short, thick truncheon in one hand. It was easy to guess his nationality.

"Hurt?" he asked.

"No; thanks to you. I'm all right," Alec panted. "But that knife would have settled me in another second."

"It's lucky I was near," broke in the young stranger. "I say, we must cut and run for it."

A shrill clamor fairly drowned the words. Though the attack and its ending had transpired in less than a minute, the little band of pursuers had almost reached the spot.

"Shut up!" (Kill! Kill!) they cried.

Alec whipped out his revolver and pointed it at them, and at once the scowling Chinaman who was in the neighborhood, for they slunk right and left without offering any violence to the two young foreigners, who hurried on from street to street, twisting like hares, until not an echo of the hue and cry that had followed them for a time reached their ears. Then they halted to gain breath by the porch of a Buddhist temple that stood in the shadow of the city wall.

Alec took a good look at his rescuer. He saw a slim, wiry lad with sandy hair and complexion, blue-gray eyes, and plain, good-humored features—the sort of face that instinctively wins one's liking at first sight.

"You are an American?" he asked.

"Right. And you?"

"I'm the same."

"Good! Shake."

Their hands met in a tight grip.

"How did you get here?" Alec inquired of his companion, who gave the name of Dan Killgrew.

"I slipped out to meet the guards," he replied, "and I lost my way in trying to get round a crowded part of the Grand avenue. You don't belong to our legion, do you?"

"No; but that's where I am bound for now," said Alec. "I have a letter for the American minister, feeling to make sure that the precious missive was safely delivered."

"It is from my father, who is military instructor to the Viceroy of Shan Se."

"That's good," said Alec. "I'll take it to the minister for you."

"There, that ought to satisfy you," Alec said, in a native tongue, to one of the attendants. "You are wrong, my good fellows; I didn't fire that shot. Will you tell me the name of your honored master?"

"His highness, Prince Lan," was the sullen reply, given in English.

"Yes, that's it—I remember now," exclaimed Dan. "He has lots of pluck to expose himself like this. He makes a splendid mark for a second shot."

Some one else, apparently, thought the same. The young girl suddenly showed herself at the carriage window and called, entreatingly to the prince, who at the same moment seemed to realize that he was inviting disaster. With a glance at the crowd he fled before it pressed toward him, and in a trice the heavy gates had clanged shut.

"That's what I call cool treatment," said Dan. "Not even an apology."

The lads were left outside, confronted by the mob of two or three hundred natives that filled the street before the palace. They seemed mostly to belong to the lower classes, and they had been wrought up to a dangerous pitch of excitement by the recent strange event. With black scowls and threatening looks they regarded the young Americans.

"They mean trouble," muttered Dan. "Keep cool," Alec whispered. "Don't let them see we're afraid."

"Foreign devils!" cried a man from the rear.

The insulting epithet was taken up by others, and a couple of stones were hurled though with poor aim. The situation looked very serious.

"Show them your revolver," urged Dan. "I've half a mind to pound on Prince Lan's gate. Shall it?"

But just then a most fortunate diversion occurred. The distant blast of a bugle hurried the crowd before it across the street, and at once the crowd, their feelings of hatred transformed into eager childish curiosity, began to melt rapidly away in the direction of the sound.

The lads waited several minutes before they followed at a slower pace, and they had gone but a dozen yards from the palace when a sudden shout and with an exclamation of surprise picked up an object at his feet. It was a brass-mounted pistol, oddly engraved, and large of calibre for its size.

"That has been topped by the account of the man who fired at Prince Lan," said Alec. "He'd fired into the crowd so quickly that I didn't get a glimpse of him."

Dan was staring after the weapon. "I fancy I've seen this before," he said slowly.

"Where?"

"On—a certain person at the American Legation."

"That's queer."

"It's more than queer, if I'm right. But

pretentious quarter, which was little less crowded, they halted, curiously by an open gateway. Within, across a vast paved court, rose a splendid mansion. A terrace of pink stone, flanked by massive bronze urns and carved storks led up to the main entrance. The embattled parapets, roof and eaves were covered with purple tiles, which lent a striking and brilliant effect to the house.

"Who lives here?" Alec inquired.

"A Lord High somebody or other—I forget his name," Dan replied. "They call it the Purple Palace."

Just then, through the parting ranks of the people in the street, approached two mounted men in purple liveries closely followed by a carriage that was partly of European make. It was closed in wicker curtains, which, as the vehicle passed the two eyes were lifted suddenly for them to catch a glimpse of a young girl, whose delicate Oriental features were crowned by a mass of dark, curly hair, ornamented with beads of green jade. She favored Dan with a smile and a nod of recognition, then drew back into the shadow.

"Who was that?" Alec exclaimed in surprise.

As he spoke the sharp crack of a pistol was heard from opposite the lads, and instantly all was tumult and confusion. The man who had fired was swallowed hopelessly by the crowd. The carriage to which a pair of fine horses were attached, rolled on through the gateway, and stopped with a jerk. A dignified, elderly Chinaman, in a yellow jacket, his face livid with rage, leaped to the ground.

Then half a dozen attendants sprang out from the courtyard of the Purple Palace, and, with cries of anger, unsheathing their swords as they ran, they made furiously at Alec and Dan, who had been left isolated by the sudden scattering of the bystanders. They had barely realized their peril when the cold steel flashed before their eyes.

Were the two brave boys, after emerging in triumph from the deadly perils of a Lord High somebody or other?

"I'm sick to death of beef," said the leader of the No Quarter band of gray wolves, as he threw himself down under a tree. "I intend to have a bite of horse-flesh before I'm many days older."

"How do you propose to get it?" asked Wolfermann, a young and conceited wolf, who was dying for a chance to out Grayhead from the leadership. "The horses are pretty well organized 'round here. You need to be a sight smarter than you are to outgeneral old Don, their captain. Beef's all right—it could get enough of it, and he looked at his spare flanks.

"Beef may suit your taste, but it doesn't mine; I mean to have horse. That's what I called you together for," retorted Grayhead, and he pitched back on his haunches in a circle around him. "All of you lie low tomorrow," he continued; "I don't want Don to get wind of even one wolf. He thinks now that we have all gone across the next range after Mr. Gilbert's herds. Meet me under the leaning pine tree at 7 o'clock tomorrow evening, every one of you!" He glanced fiercely at Wolfermann, as he added: "I'm leader; disobey me at your peril!"

"I think it's time some of us had a voice in the council; I can't go things blind," said Wolfermann, while the other wolves' hair stood on end with astonishment that he should dare to dispute with their mighty leader. "And let me tell you right here that if you mean to pit your brain against Don's, you'll get left. How many of our bands has he not overtrown in his day?"

Grayhead spoke his mind.

"A head-brained aspead like you may fear Don," growled the old wolf. "I don't, though as he is, I mean to enjoy a steak of him. Don't dare dispute with me, Wolfermann, or I'll kill and eat you for supper; I'm hungry enough to do it."

"Cannibal!" hissed Wolfermann, as he got up and strolled away, with affected unconcern.

He had not gone far when he heard a pattering of feet, and looking around he saw Miss Grayhead, the leader's young daughter, running after him. She was as gentle as it is possible for a wolf to be; that is, although she was as fierce and merciless as the rest of her tribe in hunting animals for food, she hated the wolves to quarrel among themselves.

"Oh, Wolfermann!" she cried. "Why will you so anger my father?"

"It is he who angers me," answered Wolfermann.

"Well, have patience. If you vex him too much he will not let us set up house-keeping in that lovely little cave we found in the canyon last week."

"That's so. I'll try to keep my temper if only to please you, my fair bride to be."

Satisfied with this promise, Miss Grayhead kissed her paw to Wolfermann, and ran back to her papa, mamma, stopping only to catch and eat a jack rabbit which was so unwary as to jump out in front of her.

Wolfermann walked on, forming plan after plan whereby he might obtain the leadership, and yet secure the paw of Grayhead's charming daughter. At last he devised a scheme which satisfied him.

An owl was sleeping in the tree under which the wolves received Grayhead's orders. It was getting towards time for him to awaken for his night hunt, so Grayhead's first word aroused him. He listened attentively to all the conversation, for he was a beautiful owl, well versed in the language of four-footed animals.

"Here's a pretty go," he said to himself, "and the worst of it is the old varmint's right. Don is off guard. As I flew by last night I heard him tell his eldest son, that handsome bay gelding, that they might breathe freely as the No Quarters had gone away for a few days. But what am I wasting my time thinking for? I must warn Don," and off he flew.

Mr. Bad Owl.

As he skimmed along, Mr. Owl espied a belated mouse on its way home. He swooped down upon the little furry creature and was about to eat it up, when an owl of bad character, with whom he was not on speaking terms, bounced down and

snatched the mouse from him and even prepared to eat it before his eyes.

Dignified as Mr. Owl was this insult aroused his temper. He attacked the other bird, and pitched battle ensued, during which the mouse, which had been shambling to be dead, escaped to its hole. At first the fight was pretty nearly even, but very soon Mr. Good Owl gained on his opponent and at last had him at his mercy, lying on his back. He planted his foot on the other bird's breast and said severely:

"Now, consorter with wolves, confess your sins, for you have only a few moments to live."

"It would take more than a few moments to confess my sins," laughed the wicked owl, and I am ashamed to say that he winked; "but there is one thing that weighs even on my conscience. Grayhead bribed me to lie to the horse captain, and I told Don the wolves had gone away. Grayhead wants me to report every move of the horses to him. He will then know how and when to attack them tomorrow night. He dare not send one of his own folks as spies, for Don can smell a wolf a mile off."

"You vile creature!"

"You virtuous owls won't consort with a fellow like me, will you?"

"Do you repent then?"

"Well, yes. If I had a show again, I'd be different."

"Then I'll give you another chance. You must report all the horses' proceedings to Grayhead just as you promised."

"What are you givin' us? Are you fit to be a spy?"

"Hypocrite! I won't do it. I've repented, I say, and I'll darned if I'll get the horses into trouble."

"You judge me by yourself. Don has not a better friend in the world than I. Now, prove to you that I am speaking truth, I will take you home with me, and we will arrange with my wife what shall be done. You will go about in her company, and I'll take the struggle between the horses and wolves. Come with me."

Mrs. Owl Furious.

He took his foot from the repentant owl's breast and assisted him to his feet, and the two owls then flew back to Mr. Owl's home, in a hollow tree. Mrs. Owl was mad when she saw them come, for she had a headache, and had told her husband to bring home her supper. Now

THUNDER MADE TO ORDER.

Even on the clearest, calmest day, says the New York Herald, thunder-artificial, is true, yet strangely like natural thunder—can be manufactured by any one who will try the following simple, newly-devised experiment:

Get a piece of ordinary twine two or three feet in length, and place it around the back of your head, according to the manner shown

in the accompanying picture. Next bring the two ends forward past the ears, or rather, past the auricles. The ears must then be closed by keeping the fingers pressed firmly over them, and at the same time the fingers or hand must be pressed firmly over the twine at the point where it lies directly outside each auricle. Now ask some one to pull the two ends of the twine with his thumb and index finger, and then, a firm pressure being meanwhile maintained, to let them slip slowly through the illusion.

At once an illusion of thunder will be produced. You will hear peal after peal, and the firmer the pressure on the twine the louder will be the sound. If a few knots are tied in the twine a still more startling illusion will be produced.

Peach Blossom," his companion said, respectfully. "But I like the Princess of the Purple Palace better. She isn't half bad looking for a Chinese girl."

The Princess of the Purple Palace! It sounded ancient and romantic, with its suggestion of tales from the Arabian Nights. She had crossed Alec's life like an Oriental vision, and he wondered vaguely if he would ever see her again. Little did he dream of the perils he was shortly to encounter, of the sea of horror and bloodshed in which he was to be mired for the sake of the little Eastern maid with the beautiful name!

(To be continued.)

## GRAYHEAD AND HIS WOLF PACK MEET A BLOODY FATE

"I'm sick to death of beef," said the leader of the No Quarter band of gray wolves, as he threw himself down under a tree. "I intend to have a bite of horse-flesh before I'm many days older."

He had not only come back without it, but had brought a stranger. And when she found that Mr. Owl wanted her to go out with the notorious Mr. Nocturne, she was simply furious.

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had said, lay the magnificent iron-gray stallion, so feared and hated by all the No Quarters. Grayhead gnashed his teeth at the sight, and could almost feel them close on the hamstrings of the splendid animal and see him fall a helpless prey.

Very cautiously Grayhead led his band round the edge of the plain until they completely encircled the sleeping horse. Then he gave the signal to charge, and at that very instant, just as each wolf moved swiftly forward towards the quarry, there was heard the hideous hooting of an owl from a neighboring tree. The wolves did not heed it; they were too intent on their prey. The horses did though.

When the wolves, still keeping their circle, were within six feet of Don, he sprang up, leaped over the line of wolves, clearing them at a bound, and galloped to his hold horses, who had been hiding among the trees on three sides of the plain, and at the signal from Mr. Owl, had come forth unobserved by the wolves, about whom they now formed a perfect circle. As soon as he heard of the No Quarters' proposed attack, Don sent a messenger for assistance to the neighboring herds; they had responded by sending their bravest horses, so it was a very formidable array that now faced Grayhead and his band.

Still all might not have lost, for Grayhead had a great brain and was quick at expedients, had not Wolfermann, fired by hatred and ambition, chosen that moment to put his villainous scheme into execution. In the confusion consequent on the discovery of their danger, he saw his opportunity; flew at Grayhead's throat and, before any wolf could interfere, killed the chief.

Then he tried to take the place of leader, but no one would follow him. All was excitement and confusion. Each wolf tried singly to escape and they tumbled over each other in their hurry, and were trampled to death under the hoofs of the triumphant horses.

TRY THIS, JUST FOR FUN.

Here is a new and amusing experiment, which any one can try, as the only materials required are a tumbler, a cork, some cardboard and a small piece of paper.

If you place some cardboard over a glass filled with water, you will notice, after a little time, that it has become raised, especially in the middle. If no such change has taken place, the reason is either because the rim of the glass was not entirely dry, or because the cardboard does not completely cover its surface, and, therefore, before beginning the experiment, attention should be paid to these two points.

Mr. Owl and Don talked for quite a long time, laid their plans and decided what Nocturne was to tell Grayhead. The usual plan of horses, when suddenly attacked by wolves, is to form a square with the young and weaker ones inside, all strong ones, whose duty is to try to beat the enemy to death with their feet, on the outside. But Mr. Owl, having time to prepare, decided on another scheme. The wolf, if possible, to kill the whole band.

All next day Nocturne was going backwards and forwards carrying news of the horses' stayings and doings to Grayhead. Mrs. Owl hovering about to see he did not break faith. However, he was really regretful and proud of being restored to good society, and he did his best. The last information he took to Grayhead was this:

"Thinking that you are away, the horses feel perfectly secure, and Don, who is tired out with the constant watchfulness he has exercised against your band, proposes taking a good rest tonight. At 6 o'clock he will lie down in the center of a small, open plain surrounded by trees. The other horses will be sleeping or grazing on the north side of this plain, beyond the trees. The wind is blowing from north to south, so they can't see you. If you, Mr. Grayhead (here the cunning Nocturne put on a most respectful air), and your grand army of warriors will come on the south side and very quietly surround Don, you can kill him almost before he knows it, or is able to warn the other horses. Then, their leader being gone, any of his followers will be an easy prey, and you can have great sport and a glorious good of horseflesh. Don appointed the learned Mr. Owl as his watcher on the south side, but he is in my way; so don't be surprised if he is a hooting."

Grayhead licked his chops in anticipation of the feast he was soon to enjoy, and promised Nocturne all kinds of good things and the freedom of Wolf Land when the horses should be vanquished. Then he went to meet his wolves, gave them his instructions and at 7 o'clock they set forth on their nefarious errand.

It happened that Wolfermann and Miss Grayhead were running near each other. Miss Grayhead, who was so fond of the ambitious wolf, while he really only cared for himself.

"I have been talking to father," she whispered, "and I think you will find, if you talk to him tomorrow, that he no longer opposes our match."

"No; I don't think myself he will oppose anything very much tomorrow," answered Wolfermann, ambiguously. He was thinking of his scheme.

"My heart forebodes me. I wish we ate grass like horses, and didn't have to kill our food."

"Silly! Eat grass if you want to. Do you really think grass likes to be eaten? Wouldn't it rather live and go to seed? Horse eats grass, I eat horse—what's the difference? You think and talk too much. I like to kill and eat and fight." His eyes glowed so fiercely in the darkness that Miss Grayhead shivered and shrank away from him.

Very quietly the wolves crept through the trees and low bushes till they came to an opening, and there, right in the center of the little plain, just as Nocturne

had said, lay the magnificent iron-gray stallion, so feared and hated by all the No Quarters. Grayhead gnashed his teeth at the sight, and could almost feel them close on the hamstrings of the splendid animal and see him fall a helpless prey.

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## The Rapacious, Ubiquitous Flea.

Some Very Interesting Facts Concerning a Very Tiny Pest.

The flea possesses all the practical instincts—bloodthirsty, rapacity, cruelty. He is, further, as ingenious in devising contrivances as he is in the art of the victim. Possibly he cannot help all this. Possibly it comes from acting out the nature with which he finds himself endowed.

The flea is built upon lines that make him forever hungry. The more rapaciously he sucks blood, the faster it is voided. In his case, indeed, appetite grows by what he feeds on. In the feeding he assimilates infinitesimally, thereby growing after a few days of plenty, less a starving atom. But his continuous-performance appetite is far from being the oddest thing about him. Proportionately to size, he is the Samson of the universe. If an elephant had the same relative strength, he could come near to overeating a steel-framed skyscraper.

A flea, wingless, with a body out of all proportion to his head, and all over less than the sixteenth of an inch in length, will leap upon a silted plain surface over a yard. This, too, when he has been hatched in hair, or straw, or sand, and never known what it was to have a full meal. He makes the distance in a position analogous to the human standing broad jump. Give him the advantage of leaping downward, and he will easily cover six feet. More marvelous still, he will spring perpendicularly upward from one to two feet. Fancy a man or boy standing flat-footed and all of a sudden leaping over a church spire.

Cat and Dog Flea Hostility.

To fight like cats and dogs is the synonym of continuing strife, but even cats and dogs do not fight so bitterly as cat fleas and dog fleas. Only enough, the cat fleas are bigger than the dog fleas, as should be always victors. But here as elsewhere conditions tell. If the cat fleas are large and luxurious—fat they can never grow—the small lean, keen-backed dog fleas kill them out. The combatants stand up to fight, quite like a pair of prize-ring ornaments. As they have six legs they have plenty to stand on and still spare a couple with which to belabor each other.

Upon neutral ground, as a floor or walk, the cat and dog fleas keep the peace. But let one invade litter, or a coat scattered to the other, and there is straightaway a fight to a finish. Something even more curious than this is that the cat flea, in that dog fleas will not live upon cats, nor cat fleas upon a dog.

Flea's legs are of the insect manner, which he uses to wiggle very nearly invariably to the right of the body, as of feeding on moisture and microbes—at least one judges that to be the diet, since fleas breed so largely in sand, straw and manure. This quality of the flea's legs after a while spinning themselves cocoons. The cocoons are no bigger than tiny grains of sand, but under the microscope they show a most intricate, oval, beautifully banded with pink and pearl. Rain just at the hatching time often kills a whole brood of sand fleas, but enough always escape to more than make good the loss.

Beak Like a Bird's.

A flea's beak is sharp and hard, something like a bird's, only more pointed. He does not wear it out always, but folds neatly under him until he is ready to feed. That, however, is quite unusual. His quarters escaped to tell the tale of that night's awful massacre. There was great rejoicing amongst the cattle, horses and all the animals on which Grayhead's band had preyed. Don was appointed captain of the district for life, with Mr. Owl as chief counsellor. There was peace in the land.

As to Nocturne, he became quite a reformed character. Mrs. Owl, who took a motherly interest in his career, made a match for him with a pretty young owl, and the next spring they raised a brood of the cutest and most promising owlets ever seen.

RABBITS AS STEEPLECHASERS.

Long-Eared Pets May Be Trained to Play Games.

"A great many of our readers have written us about their pets, and a number of these have told us about pet rabbits, so now we are going to tell them how to play a game with these long-eared pets that is quite unusual," says a writer in the New York Herald. Thereupon he goes on to say:

"First make the rabbit jump over a small obstacle, such as a stool or anything not more than six inches high. Then give him a piece of carrot, or a piece of cabbage leaf or something else that he likes very much. Repeat this several times, and then gradually increase the distance between him and you and call him, showing him some more of the goodie he has already tasted. He will jump over the obstacle at once and come to get his reward."

"Then increase the obstacles, which can be easily done by turning chairs on their sides, placing empty boxes, coal scuttles and similar objects in the line. Be sure and give him a nibble of his reward every time he jumps over all of them. After a few trials he will understand perfectly what he is to do, and he will do what he will get by doing it."