

The Goose Girl

By HAROLD MacGRATH

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SYNOPSIS

Gretchen, a goose girl, meets a mysterious mountaineer and Carmichael, American consul in Dreiberg, Kingdom of Ehrenstein. Carmichael loves Princess Hildegarde.

Gretchen's lover is Leo, a vintner. The prince regent of Jugendheit sends Hildegarde an offer of marriage from King Frederick. The princess was abducted in infancy and later restored to her father, the grand duke.

Gretchen and Leo are to wed after the vintage. Hans Grumbach of America reaches Dreiberg.

Carmichael took the papers, frowning slightly. The consul went over the papers.

"You will have no trouble going about with those," Carmichael said listlessly. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"There is only one thing," answered Grumbach. "It will be a great favor."

"What do you wish?"

"An invitation to the military ball at the palace after the maneuvers," quietly.

Carmichael sat up.

"I am afraid you are asking something impossible for me to obtain," coldly.

"Ah, Mr. Carmichael, it is very important that I should be there. I can give you no explanations. I wish to attend this ball. I do not care to meet the grand duke or any one else. Put me in the gallery where I shall not be noticed."

"That might be done. But you have roused my curiosity. You have some purpose?"

"A perfectly harmless one," said Grumbach, mopping his forehead.

This movement brought Carmichael's eye to a scar on the back of his visitor's head. Grumbach acknowledged the stare by running his finger along the subject.

"I came near passing in my cheeks the day I got that," he volunteered. "Everybody looks at it when I take off my hat. I've tried tonics, but the hair won't grow there."

"Where did you get it?"

"At Gettysburg."

Carmichael was no longer indifferent. He gave his hand.

"I've got a few scars myself. What regiment?"

"The 11th Cavalry, New York."

"What troop?" with growing excitement.

"C troop."

"I was captain of B troop in the same regiment. Hurrah! Work's over for the day. Come along with me, Grumbach, and we'll talk it over downstairs in the Black Eagle. You're a godsend. C troop! Hanged if the world doesn't move things about oddly. I was in the hospital myself after Gettysburg—a ball in the leg. And I've rheumatism even now when a damp spell comes."

So down to the tavern they went, and there they talked the battles over, sundry tankards interpolating. It was "Do you remember this?" and "Do you recall that?" with diagrams drawn in beer on the oaken table.

"But there's one thing, my boy," said Carmichael, "the odds were on our side or we'd be fighting yet."

"That we would."

"But you're from this side of the water?"

"Yes; went over when I was twenty-two. I'm from Bavaria."

Grumbach cleared the room. All the near tables were vacant. The Black Eagle was generally a lonely place till late in the afternoon. Grumbach touched the scar tenderly. Could he trust this man? Could he trust any one in the world? The impulse came to trust Carmichael, and he did not disregard it.

"I was born in this very street," he whispered.

"Here?"

"No! Not so loud. Yes, in this very street. But if the police knew I wouldn't be worth that!" with a snap of the fingers.

"But what does this all mean? Can I help you in any way?"

"No; no one can help me."

"But why come back?"

"Who can say what a man will do? Don't question me. Let be. I have said too much already."

"But your name?"

Grumbach laughed unmusically. "Grumbach is as good as another. Listen. When I left Dreiberg there was a reward of a thousand crowns for me dead or alive."

Carmichael was plainly bewildered.

"You were mad to return."

"I know it. I couldn't help it. Oh, don't look like that! I never hurt anybody unless it was in battle"—naively.

"Now, what has happened since I went away? I have dared to ask questions of no one?"

Carmichael, strangely attracted and distrustful of his questioner, gave him a brief summary of events, principal among which was the amazing restoration of the Princess Hildegarde. To describe the Princess Hildegarde was not only an easy task but a pleasant one to Carmichael.

"So she is gentle and beautiful? Why not? Ach! You should have seen her mother. She was the most

beautiful woman in all Germany, and she sang like one of those Italian nightingales. The king of Jugendheit wanted her, but she loved the grand duke. So the Princess Hildegarde has come back to her own? God is good!"

"Well," said Carmichael, beckoning to the waitress and paying the score. "If any trouble arises send for me. You don't look like a man who has done anything very bad." He offered his hand again. Grumbach pressed it firmly, and there was a moisture in his eyes.

Grumbach declined Carmichael's invitation to lunch and immediately sought his own room. Once there he closed the shutters and opened his battered trunk. From the false bottom he took out a small bundle. Mad fool that he had been! How many times had he gazed at these trinkets in these sixteen or more years! How many times had the talons of remorse gashed his



MAD FOOL THAT HE HAD BEEN! Two little yellow shoes, like two butterflies; a little cloak trimmed with ermine, a golden locket shaped like a heart!

Grumbach was very fond of music. There was nothing at the opera, so he decided to spend the earlier part of the evening in the public gardens.

Subsequently he found himself standing beside a young vintner and his peasant sweetheart. Their hands secretly met and locked behind their backs. Grumbach sighed. He would always go his way alone.

"The girl turned her head. She loosened the vintner's hand."

"Do not mind me, girl," said Grumbach, his face broadening.

The girl laughed easily and without confusion. Her companion, however, flushed under his tan, and a scowl ran over his forehead.

The band was playing "Les Huguenots," and the girl hummed the air.

A hand was put upon Grumbach's shoulder authoritatively. The police officer who had examined his passports that morning stood at Grumbach's elbow.

"Herr Grumbach," he said quietly, "his excellency the chancellor has directed me to bring you at once to the palace."

"To the palace?" Grumbach's face was expressive of great astonishment. "My passports were wrong in some respect?"

"Oh, no, herr. They were correct."

Grumbach roused his mind energetically.

"But whatever can the chancellor want of me?"

"That is not my business. I was simply sent to find you. His excellency is always interested in German Americans."

"Shall we go at once?" asked Grumbach. "I never expected to enter the palace of the Grand Duke of Ehrenstein," Grumbach added. "It will be something to tell of when I go back to America."

"The palace is lighted up," was Grumbach's comment as the two passed the sentry outside the gates.

"The duke gives the dinner to the diplomatic corps tonight."

"A fine thing to be a diplomat."

"I myself prefer fighting in the open. Diplomats? Their very precious hides are never anywhere near the wars they bring about. No, no—this way. We go in at the side."

"You'll have to guide me. Yes, these diplomats. Men like you and me do all the work. I was in the civil war in America."

"That was a great fight," remarked the officer. "I should like to have been there."

"Four years—pretty long. Do you know Herr Carmichael?"

"The American consul? Oh, yes."

"He and I fought in the same regiment."

"Then you saw some pretty battles," Grumbach took off his hat. "See that?"

"Gott! That must have been an ugly one."

The somber black of Carmichael's evening dress stood out conspicuously among the blue and green and red uniforms at the grand duke's dinner. Etiquette compelled him to wear silk stockings, but that was the single concession on his part. He wore no orders.

The duke sat at the head of the table and her serene highness at the foot. And it was by the force of his brilliant wit that the princess did not hold in perpetuity the court at her end of the table. For a German princess of that time she was highly accomplished. She was ardent, whimsical, with a flashing mentality which rounded out and perfected her physical loveliness. Above and beyond all this she had suffered; she had felt the pangs of poverty, the smart of unrecognized merit. She had been one of the people, and her sympathies would always be with them, for she knew what those about her only vaguely knew, the patience, the uncomplaining bravery, of the poor.

"Gentlemen," said the duke, rising and holding up his glass. "This night I give you a toast which I believe will be agreeable to all of you, especially to his excellency Baron von Steinbock of Jugendheit. What is past is past. A new regime begins this night." He paused. All eyes were focused upon him in wonder. Only Baron von Steinbock displayed no more than ordinary interest. "I give you," resumed the duke, "her serene highness and his majesty Frederick of Jugendheit!"

The princess grew delicately pale as the men and women sprang to their feet. Every hand swept toward her, holding a glass. She had surrendered that morning—not because she wished to be a queen, not because she cared to bring about an alliance between the two countries. No; it was because she was afraid and had burned the bridge behind her.

The tan thinned on Carmichael's face, but his hand was steady. She sat still in her chair, her lids drooped, but a proud lift to her chin. Beautiful to him beyond all dreams of beauty! God send another war and let him die in the heart of it, fighting!

In the ballroom the princess was surrounded. Everybody flattered her, congratulated her and complimented her.

Carmichael was among the last to approach her. By this time he had his voice and nerves under control.

"I thought you had forgotten me," she said. "They walked to the conservatory."

"Forget your highness?" He bowed over her hand and brushed it with his lips, for she was almost royal now. "Your highness will be happy. It is written. You will be a great queen."

"Who knows?" dreamily. "When I recall what I have gone through all this seems like an enchantment out of a fairy book and that I must soon wake up in my garden in Dresden."

If only it might be an enchantment, he thought—if only he might find her, as the grim old chancellor had found her, in a garret! What? Dreaming again. He shrugged.

"Why did you do that?" she asked quickly.

"It was a momentary dream I had, and the thought of its utter impossibility caused me to shrug."

"This dream—was there not a woman in it?"

"Oh, no; there was only an angel."

"You interest me; you always interest me. You have seen so many wonderful things. And now it is angels."

"Only one, your highness." This was daring. "But perhaps I am putting my foot where angels fear to tread," which was still more daring.

"Angels ought not to be afraid of anything." She laughed. There was a pain and a joy in the sound of it. She read his heart as one might read a written line.

"Dreams are always unfinished things," he said, getting back on safer ground.

"What is she like, this angel?" forcing him upon dangerous ground again willfully.

"I dare not tell you." His eyes sought hers unflinchingly. The chancellor and Baron von Steinbock came up.

"Your highness," began the benign voice of the chancellor, "the baron desires, in the name of his august master, to open the ball with you. Behold my fairy wand," gayly. "This night I have made you a queen."

"Can you make me happy also?" said she so low that only the chancellor heard her.

"I shall try. Ah, Herr Captain," with a friendly jerk of his head toward Carmichael, "will you do me the honor to join me in my cabinet a quarter of an hour hence?"

"I shall be there, your excellency," Carmichael was uneasy. He was not certain how much the chancellor had heard.

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laughed softly.

"I am sorry, Herr Grumbach. All this unnecessary trouble simply because of the word Bavaria. How long will you be making your visit?"

"Only a few days. Then I shall proceed to Bavaria."

"Your excellency has no further orders?" said the head gardener impatiently.

"Good heaven, Breunner, I had forgotten all about you! There is nothing more. Herr Captain, you will return with me to the ballroom?"

"If your excellency will excuse me, no, I am tired. I shall return to the hotel with Herr Grumbach."

Carmichael and Grumbach crossed the Platz leisurely.

"How did you come by that Bavarian passport?" asked Carmichael abruptly.

"It is a forgery, my friend, but his excellency will never find that out."

"You have me all at sea. Why did he bring in the head gardener and leave him standing there all that while?"

"He had a sound purpose, but it fell. The head gardener did not recognize me."

"Do you know him?"

"Yes. He is my elder brother."

The ambassador from Jugendheit, Baron von Steinbock, was not popular in Dreiberg, at least not among the people who still held to the grand duke's idea that the kingdom had been behind the abduction of the Princess Hildegarde. Never a hot-headed Dreiberger passed his house without a desire to loot it, to scule the piked fence and batter in the doors and windows.

The king of Jugendheit was to marry her serene highness. The menials in and about the embassy felt the new importance of their positions. So then imagine the indignation of the majordomo when, summoned at dusk one evening to the carriage gates three or four days after the portentous news had issued from the palace, he found only a ragged and grimy carter who demanded peremptorily to be admitted and taken to his excellency at once.

"Go away!" The majordomo spun on his heels contemptuously.

"I will skin you alive," vowed the carter, striking the iron with the butt of his whip, "if you do not open these gates immediately. Open!"

"If you do not stop hammering on those bars I shall send for the police."

The carter thrust a hand through the grill. There was a ring on one of his fingers.

"Imbecile, set your eye on that and admit me without more ado!"

The majordomo was thunderstruck. He threw back the bolts, and the carter pushed his way in. That ring on the carter's finger!

"Take me to the baron."

Vastly subdued, the majordomo preceded the carter into the office of the embassy and went in search of the baron, who was in his study.

"Your excellency, there is a man in the office who desires to see you quickly. A carter!"

The ambassador jumped to his feet. "One moment, your excellency. He wore a ring on his finger, and I could not refuse him."

The majordomo whispered two words. The ambassador rushed from the study. It was dark in the embassy office. Quickly the ambassador lighted some candles. Gas would be too bright for such a meeting.

"Well, your excellency," said a voice from the leather lounge.

"Who are you?"

For this was not the voice the baron expected to hear.

"My name at present does not matter. The news I bring is far more important. His majesty emphatically declines any alliance with the house of Ehrenstein."

"Damnation!" swore the ambassador.

"The exact word used by the prince. Now then, what's to be done?"

"This means war."

"War! It looks as if you and I, baron, shall not accompany the king of Prussia into Alsace-Lorraine."

"This is horrible!"

"But what possessed the prince to blunder like this?"

"The prince really is not to blame. Our king, baron, is a young colt. A few months ago he gave his royal uncle carte blanche to seek a wife for him. Politics demanded an alliance between Jugendheit and Ehrenstein. There have been too many years of useless antagonism. On the head of this bolt from heaven comes the declaration of his majesty that he will marry any other princess on the continent."

"They will pull this place down."

"Let them. We have 10,000 more troops than Ehrenstein."

"You young men are a pack of fools!"

"Softly, baron."

"Where is the king?"

The carter smiled. "He is hunting, they say, with the crown prince of Bavaria."

"But you, why have you come dressed like this?"

"That is a little secret."

"But what's to be done?"

[To be Continued]

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Summons

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON, IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF COOS.

A. M. Hitchcock, and Emma Hitchcock, Plaintiffs.

vs. May Pearce, and any and all persons unknown having or claiming an interest or estate in the property made the subject of the above entitled action.

Defendants.

To May Pearce and to any and all persons having or claiming an interest or estate in the property made the subject of this suit, the above named Defendants:

IN THE NAME OF THE STATE OF OREGON, you and each of you are hereby required to appear and answer the complaint filed against you in the above entitled suit within 10 days from the date of the service of this Summons upon you, if served within Coos County or within 20 days if served within any other County in the State of Oregon, but if served by publication then on or before the last day of the time specified in the order for the publication of this Summons which time prescribed is six weeks and which last day of publication will be upon Thursday the 29th day of September 1910, and if you so fail to appear and answer said Complaint by said time Plaintiffs will apply to the above entitled Court for an order decreeing a Partition of real property, said order being more specifically defined as the Partitioning and setting separate and apart from the remainder of the land herein described the one fourth interests of the Defendants, which said real property is described as follows:

Beginning at a point 990' West of the North-east corner of Section 36, Twp. 28, South of Range 15, West of the Willamette Meridian in Coos County, Oregon, and from said point running thence South 264', thence West 330', thence North 264', thence East 330' to the place of beginning, and containing two acres.

This Summons is published in the Bandon Recorder, a weekly newspaper published at Bandon, Coos County, Oregon for a period of six consecutive weeks, beginning with the 18th day August 1910, and ending with the 29th day of September, 1910, pursuant to an order of publication made by an order of the Hon. John F. Hall, County Judge of Coos County Oregon and dated the 17th day of August, 1910.

C. R. Wade Attorney for Plaintiff

32-7t

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