

# 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 Hildegard.

Gretchen's lover is Leo, a vintner. The prince regent of Jugendheit sends Hildegard 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 becomes fond of Grumbach, who admits he was born in Dreiberg. Hildegard's betrothal is announced.

Chancellor Herbeck suspects Grumbach, who later tells Carmichael his real name is Brunner. He has a forged passport. King Frederick refuses to marry Hildegard, who is pleased.

"Tell lies. They will suspend the catastrophe till we are ready to meet it. The marriage is not to take place till spring. That will give us plenty of time. After the coronation his majesty may be brought to reason. This marriage must not fall through now. The grand duke will not care to become the laughingstock of Europe. The prince's advice is for you to go about your affairs as usual. Only one man must be taken into your confidence, and that man is Herbeck. If any one can straighten out his end of the tangle it is he."

"Where is the prince?"

"Wherever he is he is working for the best interests of the state."

"There is the Bavarian princess," remarked the ambassador musingly.

"Ha! A good thought! But the king is romantic. She is older than he and ugly."

"You are not telling me everything," intuitively.

"I know it. I am telling you all that is at present necessary."

"You make me the unhappiest man in the kingdom! I have worked so hard and long toward this alliance. When did the king decline this alliance?"

"Evidently the moment he heard it. I have his letter. Listen:

"My illustrious and industrious uncle— I regret exceedingly that at this late day I should cause you political embarrassment, but when I gave my consent to the espousal of any of the various princesses at liberty surely it was understood that Ehrenstein was not to be considered. I refuse to marry the daughter of the man who privately strove to cover my father with contumely, who dared impute to him a crime that was my own but my father's. I realize that certain policies called for this stroke on your part, but it cannot be. My dear uncle, you have dug a fine pit, and I hope you will find a safe way out of it. I refuse to marry the Princess Hildegard. This is final. It can be arranged without any discredit to the duke or to yourself. Let it be said that my serene highness has thrown me over. I shan't go to war about it."

"FREDERICK.

"Observe! My illustrious and industrious uncle!" laughed the carter without mirth. "Our king, you will see, has a graceful style." He gained his feet. He was young, pleasant of face, but a thorough soldier.

"You are lieutenant von Radenstein!" cried the ambassador. "I recognize you now."

"Thanks, your excellency!"

"You are in the royal household, the regent's invisible arm. I have heard a good deal about you. I knew your father well."

"Again, thanks. Now, the regent has heard certain rumors regarding an American named Carmichael, a consul. He is often seen with her highness. Rather an extraordinary privilege."

"Rest your mind there, lieutenant. This Carmichael is harmless. He can be eliminated at any time."

"This is reassuring. You will see the chancellor tonight and show him this letter?"

"I will."

"One word more, and then I'm off. If a butcher or a baker or even a mountaineer pulls the bell cord and shows this ring admit him without fail. He will have vital news."

For half an hour the ambassador remained staring at the candlesticks. He wanted no dinner. He rang for his hat and coat, and twenty minutes later he was in the chancellor's cabinet.

"You seem out of health, baron," was the chancellor's greeting.

"I am indeed that, count. I received a letter today from the prince regent. It was sent to him by his majesty, who is hunting in Bavaria. Read it, count, but I pray to you to do nothing hastily."

The chancellor did not open the letter; he merely balanced it. His accustomed pallor assumed a grayish tinge.

"So his majesty declines?" he said evenly.

"You have already heard?" cried the amazed ambassador.

"Nothing, I surmise. The hour, your appearance, the letter—to what else could they point? I was afraid all along. Ah, if his majesty could but see her! Is she not worthy of a crown?"

"Herbeck, nothing would please me better than to see this marriage consummated."

"I believe you. We two peoples should be friendly. It has taken me months to bring this matter round. The duke rebelled; her highness scorned the hand of Frederick. Still, if you saw all the evidence in the case you would not blame the duke for his attitude."

"But those documents are rank forgeries!"

"So they may be, but that has not been proved. What remedy do you suggest?" asked the chancellor.

"I suggest that the duke must not know."

"Agreed. Go on."

"You will put the matter before her highness."

"That will be difficult."

"Let her repudiate the negotiations. Let her say that she has changed her mind. His majesty is quite willing that the humiliation be his."

"That is generous, but suppose she has set her heart on the crown of Jugendheit. What then?"

"In that event the affair is no longer in our hands, but in God's."

"Is there no way of changing the king's mind?"

"Read the letter, count," said the ambassador.

Herbeck read the letter. It was the work of a rather irresponsible boy.

"May I take this to her highness?" asked the chancellor. "I promise its contents will not go beyond her eye."

"I will take the risk."

Herbeck consulted his watch. It was half after 8. Her highness did not dine till 8.

"I shall go to her highness immediately, baron. I shall return the letter by messenger, and he will tell you the result of the interview."

"God be with you," said the ambassador, preparing to take his leave, "for all women are contrary."

After the baron was gone the chancellor paced the room with halting step. Then toward the wraith of his ambition he waved a hand as if to explain how futile are the schemes of men. He proceeded to the apartments of her highness. Would she toss aside this crown or would she fight for it? He found her alone.

"I have here a letter. I have given my word that its contents shall not be repeated to the duke, your father. If I let you read it will you agree to that?"

"And who has written this letter?" noncommittally.

"His majesty the king of Jugendheit," slowly.

"A letter from the king?" she cried, curious. "Should it not be brought to me on a golden salver?"

"It is probable that I am bringing it to you at the end of a bayonet," solemnly. "If the duke learns it contents the inevitable result will be war."

A silence fell upon them.

"He declines the honor of my hand—is that not it?" she finally said.

The chancellor assented.

"Ah!" with a note of pride in her voice and a flash in her eyes. "And I?"

"You will tell the duke that you have changed your mind," gravely.

"And if I refuse to change my mind?"

"I am resigned to any and all events."

"War!" Her face was serious. "And what has the king to suggest?"

"He proposes to accept the humiliation of being rejected by you."

"Why, this is a gallant king! Puff! There goes a crown of thistlesdown." Then she laughed. There was nothing but youth in the laughter—youth and gladness. "Listen to me. I declare to you that I am happier at this moment than I have been in days. To marry a man I have never seen, whose looks, character and habits are unknown—why, I have lived in a kind of horror. I am free! And she uttered the words as with the breath of spring.

The chancellor's shoulders drooped a trifle more, and his hand closed down over the letter.

"There will be no war," resumed her highness. "I know my father. Our wills may clash, but in this instance mine shall be the stronger."

"But this is not the end."

"You mean that there will be other kings?"

"Yes, there will be other kings. I am sorry. What young girl has not her dream of romance? But princesses must not have romances. Yours, my child, must be a political marriage. It is a harsh decree."

"My highness will or will not marry, as she pleases. Am I a chattel that I am to be offered across this frontier or that?"

The chancellor moved uneasily.

"You will, then, tell the duke that you have changed your mind, that you have reconsidered?" he persisted.

"This evening. Now, godfather, you may kiss her serene highness on the forehead."

"This honor to me?" The chancellor trembled.

"Even so."

He did not touch her with his hands, but the kiss he put on her forehead was a benediction.

"You may go now," she said, "for I shall need the whole room to dance in. I am free, if only for a little while!"

## CHAPTER VI

GRETCHEN'S DAY.

GRETCHEN was always up when the morning was rosy, when the trees were still dark and motionless and the beads

of dew white and frostlike, for what is better than to meet the day as it comes over the mountains and silence breaks here and there in the houses and streets, in the fields and the vineyards? Let old age, which has played its part and taken to the wings of the stage—let old age loiter in the morning, but not green years. Gretchen awoke as the birds awoke, with snatches and little trills of song. To her nearest neighbors there was about her that which reminded them of the regularity of a good clock; when they heard her voice they knew it was time to get up. She was always busy in the morning. The tinkle of the bell outside brought her to the door, and her two goats came pattering in to be relieved of their creamy burden. Gretchen was fond of them. They needed no milk at all. The moment she had milked them they went tinkling off to the steep pastures.

Even in midsummer the dawn was chill in Dreiberg. Gretchen blew on her fingers. The fire began its cheerful crackle, the kettle boiled briskly, and the frugal breakfast was under way.

There was dally one cup of coffee, but neither Gretchen nor her grandmother claimed this luxury; it was for the sick woman on the third floor.

What the character of the woman's illness was Gretchen hadn't an idea, but there could be no doubt that she was ill, desperately, had the goose girl but known it. Her face was thin and her bones were visible under the drablike skin; her hands were merely claws. She mystified the girl, for she never complained, never asked questions, talked but little, and always smiled kindly when the pillow was freshened.

"Good morning, frau," said Gretchen. "Good morning, liebechen."

"I have brought you a brick this morning, for it will be cold till the sun is high."

"Thank you."

Gretchen pulled the deal table to the side of the cot, poured out the coffee and buttered the bread.

"I ought not to drink coffee, but it is the only thing that warms me. You have been very patient with me."

"I am glad to help you."

"And that is why I love you. Now, I have some instructions to give you this morning. Presently I shall be leaving, and there will be something besides crowns."

"You are thinking of leaving?"

"Yes. When I go I shall not come back. Under my pillow there is an envelope. You will find it and keep it."

Gretchen, young and healthy, touched not this melancholy undercurrent.

"You will promise to take it?"

"Yes, frau."

"Thanks, little gosling. I have an errand for you this morning. It will take you to the palace."

"To the palace?" echoed Gretchen. "What shall I do?"

"You will seek her highness and give her this note."

"The princess! Will they not laugh and turn me out?"

"If they try that, demand to see his excellency Count von Herbeck and say that you came from No. 40 Krumerweg."

"And if I cannot get in?"

"You will have no trouble. Be sure, though, to give the note to no one but her highness."

Gretchen decked her beautiful head with a little white cap, which she wore only on Sundays and at the opera, and braided and beribboned her hair. Who was this old woman who thought nothing of writing a letter to her serene highness? And who were her nocturnal visitors? she pondered.

Being of a discerning mind, she hid about the Platz till after 9, for it had been told to her that the great sleep rather late in the morning. What should she say to her serene highness? What kind of courtesy should she make? At least she would wear no humble, servile air, for Gretchen was a bit of a Socialist. Did not Herr Goldberg, whom the police detested—did he not say that all men were equal? And surely this sweeping statement included women. With a confidence born of right and innocence she proceeded toward the east or side gates of the palace. The sentry smiled at her.

"I have a letter for her serene highness," she said.

"Leave it."

"I am under orders to give it to her highness herself."

"You cannot enter the gardens without a permit."

Gretchen remembered. "Will you send some one to his excellency the chancellor and tell him I have come from No. 40 Krumerweg?"

"Krumerweg! The very name ought to close any gate. But, girl, are you speaking truthfully?"

Gretchen exhibited the note. He scratched his chin, perplexed.

"Run-along. If they ask me I'll say that I didn't see you." The sentry resumed his beat.

Gretchen stepped inside the gates, and the real beauty of the gardens was revealed to her for the first time—stare flowers she had never seen before. It was all a fairyland. There were marble urns with hanging vines and marble statues.

A hand grasped her rudely by the arm.

"What are you doing here?" thundered the head gardener. "Be off with you!"

"How dare you touch me like that?" she cried angrily.

Something in her glance cooled even the warm blooded Herrmann.

"But you live in Dreiberg and ought to know."

"You could have told me without bruising my arm," defiantly.

"Herrmann?"

Gretchen and the head gardener whirled. Through a hedge which di-

vided the formal gardens from the tennis and archery grounds came a young woman in riding habit.

"What is the trouble, Herrmann?" she inquired.

"Your highness, this young woman here had the impudence to walk into the gardens."

"Has she stolen any flowers?"

"Why, no, your highness, but it is not customary."

"We, you and I, Herrmann," said her highness, with a smile that won Gretchen on the spot, "will overlook this first offense. Perhaps this young lady had some errand and lost her way."

"Yes, your highness," replied Gretchen eagerly.

"Ah! You may go, Herrmann."

Herrmann bowed, gathered up his pruning knives and scissors, which he had let fall, and stalked down the path.

"Whom were you seeking?" her highness asked, rather startled by the undeniable beauty of this peasant.

"I was seeking your serene highness. I live at No. 40 the Krumerweg."

"Krumerweg?" Her highness reached for the note and read it, and as she read tears gathered in her eyes. "Follow me," she said. She led Gretchen to a marble bench and sat down.

"What is your name?"

"Gretchen, highness."

"Well, Gretchen, sit down."

"In your presence, highness?"

"Don't bother about my presence on a morning like this. Sit down."

This was a command, and Gretchen obeyed with alacrity. The two sat mutely. They were strangely alike. Their eyes nearly matched, their hair, even the shape of their faces. They were similarly molded, too, only one was slender and graceful after the manner of fashion, while the other was stouter and more directly from the hands of nature. The marked difference lay, of course, in their hands. The princess had never toiled with her fingers except on the piano. Gretchen had plucked geese and dug vegetables with hers. They were rough, but toil had not robbed them of their natural grace.

"How was she?" her highness asked.

"About the same, highness."

"Have you wondered why she should write to me?"

"Highness, it was natural that I should," was Gretchen's frank admission.

"She took me in when nobody knew who I was, clothed and fed me and taught me music so that some day I should not be helpless when the battle of life began. Ah," impulsively, "had I my way she would be housed in the palace, not in the lonely Krumerweg. But my father does not know that she is in Dreiberg, and we dare not tell him, for he still believes that she had something to do with my abduction." Then she stopped. She was strangely making this peasant her confidant. What a whim!

Gretchen did not move. She saw that her highness was dreaming, and she herself had dreamed.

"Do you like music?"

"Highness, I am always singing."

"La, la, la!" sang the princess capriciously.

"La, la, la!" sang Gretchen, smiling. Her voice was not purer or sweeter; it was merely stronger, having been accustomed to the open air.

"Brava!" cried the princess. "Who taught you to sing?"

"Nobody, highness."

"What do you do?"

"I am a goose girl. In the fall and winter I work at odd times in the Black Eagle."

"Tell me all about yourself."

"This was easy for Gretchen; there was so little.

"Neither mother nor father. Our lives are something alike. A handsome girl like you must have a sweetheart."

Gretchen blushed. "Yes, highness. I am to be married soon. He is a vintner. I would not trade him for your king, highness," with a spice of boldness.

Her highness did not take offense. Rather she liked this frankness. It was a taste of the old days when she herself could have chosen a vintner and married him with none to say her nay. She surrendered to impulse.

"Gretchen, I do not think I shall marry the king of Jugendheit."

Gretchen grew red with pride.

"You love some one else, highness?"

Her highness did not blush.

"You must not ask questions like that, Gretchen."

This was not understandable to Gretchen, but a locket the princess wore pleased her eye. Her highness, observing her interest, slipped the trinket from her neck and laid it in Gretchen's hand.

"Open it," she said. "It is a picture of my mother, whom I do not recollect having ever seen. I will open it for you." Click!

Gretchen sighed deeply. To have had a mother so fair and pretty! She hadn't an idea how her own mother had looked. Indeed, being sensible and not given much to conjuring, she had rarely bothered her head about it. Still, as she gazed at this portrait the sense of her isolation and loneliness drew down upon her, and she in her turn sought the flowers and saw them not. After awhile she closed the locket and returned it.

"So you love music?" picking up the safer thread.

"Ah, yes, highness."

[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.

## SUMMONS

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 said 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 said Plaintiff 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 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 900' 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 of 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. Hill, County Judge of Coos County Oregon and dated the 17th day of August, 1910.

C. R. Wade

32-7 Attorney for Plaintiff

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## Notice to Contractors.

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Bandon, will upon the 30th day of September, 1910, at 7:30 p. m., receive sealed bids for moving the City Hall, north of the street line an estimate distance of 10 feet. Particulars as to specifications can be had from the undersigned. Bids must be filed with the Recorder not later than 6 o'clock p. m. September 30th, 1910.

Council reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

Dated at Bandon, Oregon, this 15th day of September, 1910.

E. B. KAUSRUD, Recorder.

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