BEVERLY OF GRAUSTARK

By George Barr McCutcheon. Author of "Graustark"

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cat, ne pensivery studied the face of the sleeping girl whose dark brown head was pillowed against the corner cushlons of the coach. Her but bad been removed for the sake of comfort. The dark lashes fell like a soft curtain over her eyes, obscuring the merry gray that had overcome his apprehensions. Her breathing was deep and regular and peaceful. One little gloved hand rested carelessly in her lap, the other upon her breast near the delicate throat. The heart of Baldos was troubled. The picture he looked upon was entrancing, uplifting; he rose from the lowly state in which she had found him to the position of admirer in secret to a princess, real or assumed. He found himself again wondering if she were really Yetive, and with that fear in his heart he was envying Grenfall Lorry, the lord and master of this exquisite creature, envying with all the helplessness of one whose hope is blasted at birth.

The note which had been surreptitiously passed to him in Ganlook lay crumpled and forgotten inside his coat pocket, where he had dropped it the moment it had come into his possession, supposing that the message contained information which had been forgotten by Franz and was by no means of a nature to demand immediate attention. Had he read it at once his suspicions would have been confirmed, and it is barely possible that he would have refused to enter the city.

Late in the afternoon the walls of Edelwelss were sighted. For the first time he looked upon the distant housetops of the principal city of Graustark. Up in the clouds, on the summit of the mountain peak overlooking the city, stood the famed monastery of St. Valentine. Stretching up the gradual incline were the homes of citizens, accesstble only by footpaths and donkey roads. Beverly was awake and impatient to reach the journey's end. He had proved a most disappointing companion, polite, but with a baffling indifference that irritated her considerably. There was a set expression of deflance in his strong, clean cut face, the look of a soldier advancing to meet a powerful foc.

"I do hope he'll not always act this way," she was complaining in her thoughts. "He was so charmingly impudent out in the hills, so deliciously homan. Now be is like a clam. Yetive will think I am such a fool if he doesn't live up to the reputation, I've given

"Here are the gates," he said, half to himself. "What is there in store for me beyond those walls?" "Oh. I wish you wouldn't be so dis-

mal!" she cried in despair. "It seems just like a funeral."

"A thousand apologies, your highness," he murmured, with a sudden lightness of speech and manner. "Henceforth I shall be a most amiable jester to please you."

Beverly and the faithful Aunt Fauny were driven to the castle, where the former bade farewell to her new knight until the following morning, when he was to appear before her for personal him to the barracks of the guard, where he was to share a room with young Haddan, a corporal in the service.

"The wild, untamed gentleman from the hills came without a word, I see," said Lorry, who had watched the approach. He and Yetive stood in the window overlooking the grounds from the princess' boudoir. Beverly had just entered and thrown herself upon a

"Yes; he's here," she said shortly. "How long do you, with all your cleverness, expect to hoodwink him tuto the bellef that you are the princess?" asked Yetive, amused, but anx-

tous. "He's a great fool for being boodwinked at all," said Beverly, very much at odds with her protege. "In an hour from now he will know the truth and will be howling like a madman for his freedom."

"Not so soon as that, Beverly," said Lorry consolingly. "The guards and officers have their instructions to keep him in the dark as long as possible,"

"Well, I'm tired and mad and hungry and everything else that isn't compatible. Let's talk about the war," said Beverly, the sunshine in her face momentarily eclipsed by the dark

cloud of disappointment. Baldos was notified that duty would be assigned to him in the morning. He went through the formalities which bound him to the service for six months, listening indifferently to the words that foretold the fate of a traitor. It was not until his new uniform and equipment came into his possession that he remembered the note resting in his pocket. He drew it out and began to read it with the alight interest of one who has anticipated the effect. But not for long was he to remain apathetic. The first few Baldos listening with exaggerated inlines brought a look of understanding to his eyes; then he laughed the easy laugh of one who has cast care and confidence to the winds. This is what he read:

She is not the princess. We have been uped. Last night I learned the truth. She is Miss Calhoun, an American, going

with her into Edelweiss. It my and may mean death. Questry her boldly before committing yours if.

There came the natural impulse to make a dash for the outside world, fighting his way through if necessary. Looking back over the ground, he wondered how he could have been deceived at all by the unconventional American. In the clear light of retrospection he now saw how i-apossible it was for her to have been the princess. Every act, every word, every look, should have told him the truth. Every flaw in her masquerading now presented itself to him, and he was compelled to laugh at his own simplicity. Caution, after all, was the largest component part of his makeup. The craftiness of the hunted was deeply rooted in his being. He saw a very serious side to the adventure. Stretching himself upon your highness?" the cot in the corner of the room, he gave himself over to plotting, planning, thinking.

In the midst of his thoughts a sudden light burst in upon him. His eyes gleamed with a new fire, his heart leaped with new animation, his blood ran warm again. Leaping to his feet, he ran to the window to reread the note from old Franz. Then he settled back and laughed with a fervor that cleared the brain of a thousand vague misgivings.

"She is Miss Calhoun, an American, going to be a guest at the castle;" not the princess, but Miss Calhoun. Once more the memory of the clear gray eyes leaped into life. Again he saw her asleep in the coach on the road from Ganlook. Again he recalled the fervent throbs his guilty heart had felt as he looked upon this fair creature, at one time the supposed treasure of another man. Now she was Miss Calhoun, and her gray eyes, her entrancing smile, her wondrous vivacity, were not for one man alone. It was marvelous what a change this sudden realization wrought in the view ahead of him. The whole situation seemed to be transformed into something more desirable than ever before. His face cleared, his spirits leaped higher and higher with the buoyancy of fresh relief, his confidence in himself crept back into existence. And all because the fair deceiver, the slim girl with the brave gray eyes who had drawn him into a net was not a princess!

Something told him that she had not with any desire to injure him or with the slightest sense of malice. To her it had been a merry jest, a pleasant comedy. Underneath all he saw the goodness of her motive in taking him from the old life and putting him into his present position of trust. He had helped her, and she was ready to help him to the limit of her power. His position in Edelweiss was clearly enough defined. The more he thought of it the more justifiable it seemed as viewed from her point of observation. How long she hoped to keep him in the dark he could not tell. 'The outcome would be entertaining. Her efforts to deceive, if she kept them up, would be amusing. Altogether he was ready, with the leisure and joy of youth, to instructions. Colonel Quinnox escorted await developments and to enjoy the comedy from a point of view which she could not at once suspect.

His subtle effort to draw Haddan into a discussion of the princess and her household resulted unsatisfactorily. The young guard was annoyingly unresponsive. He had his secret instructions and could not be inveigled into betraying himself. Baldos went to sleep that night with his mind confused by doubts. His talk with Haddan had left him quite undecided as to the value of old Franz's warning. Either Franz was mistaken or Haddan was a most skillful dissembler. It struck him as utterly beyond the pale of reason that the entire castle guard should have been enlisted in the scheme to deceive him. When sleep came he was contenting himself with the thought that morning doubtless would give him clearer insight to the situa-

Both he and Beverly Calhoun were ignorant of the true conditions that attached themselves to the new recrult. Baron Dangloss alone knew that Haddan was a trusted agent of the secret service, with instructions to shadow the newcomer day and night. That there was a mystery surrounding the character of Baldos, the goat hunter, Daugloss did not question for an instant, and in spite of the instructions received at the outset he was using all his skill to unravel it.

Baldos was not summoned to the castle till noon. His serene indifference to the outcome of the visit was calculated to deceive the friendly but watchful Haddan. Dressed carefully in the

close fitting uniform of the royal guard, taller than most of his fellows, handsomer by far than any, he was the most noticeable figure in and about the barracks. Haddan coached him in the way he was to approach the princess, tentness and with deep regard for de-

Beverly was in the small audience room off the main reception hall when he was ushered into her presence. The servants and ladies in waiting disappeared at a signal from her. She arose to greet him and be knell to kiss har

hand. For a moment her tongue was bound. The keen eyes of the new guard had looked into hers with a directness that seemed to penetrate her brain. That this scene was to be one of the most interesting in the little comedy was proved by the fact that two eager young women were hidden behind a heavy curtain in a corner of the room. The Princess Yetive and the Countess Dagmar were there to enjoy Beverly's first hour of authority, and she was aware of their presence.

"Have they told you that you are to act as my especial guard and escort?" she asked, with a queer flutter in her voice. Somehow this tall fellow with the broad shoulders was not the same as the ragged goat hunter she had known at first.

"No, your highness," he said easily. "I have come for instructions. It pleases me to know that I am to have a place of honor and trust such as

"General Marlanx has told me that a vacancy exists, and I have selected you to fill it. The compensation will be attended to by the proper persons, and your duties will be explained to you by one of the officers. This afternoon, I believe, you are to accompany me on my visit to the fortress, which I am to Inspect."

"Very well, your highness," he respectfully said. He was thinking of Miss Calhoun, an American giri, although he called her "your highness." "May I be permitted to ask for instructions that can come only from

"Certainly," she replied. His manher was more deferential than she had ever known it to be, but he threw a bomb into her fine composure with his next remark. He addressed her in the Graustark language:

"Is it your desire that I shall continue to address you in English?"

Beverly's face turned a bit red, and her eyes wavered. By a wonderful effort she retained her self control, stammering ever so faintly when she said in English:

"I wish you would speak English," unwittingly giving answer to his question. "I shall insist upon that. Your English is too good to be spoiled."

Then he made a bold test, his first having failed. He spoke once more in the native tongue, this time softly and earnestly.

"As you wish, your highness, but I think it is a most ridiculous practice," he said, and his heart lost none of its courage. Beverly looked at him almost pathetically. She knew that behind the curtain two young women were enjoying her discomfiture. Something told her that they were stifling their mirth with dainty lace bordered handkerchiefs.

"That will do, sir," she managed to say firmly. "It's very nice of you, but after this pay your homage in English," she went on, taking a long chance on his remark. It must have been complimentary, she reasoned. As for Baldos, the faintest sign of a smile touched his lips, and his eyes were twinkling as rawn him into his present position right; she did not know a word of the Graustark language.

"I have entered the service for six months, your highness," he said in Eng-



Your highness, I fear we have spice and eavesdroppers here."

"You have honored me, and I lish. give my heart as well as my arm to your cause."

Beverly, breathing easier, was properly impressed by this promise of fealty. She was looking with pride upon the figure of her stalwart protege.

"I hope you have destroyed that horrid black patch," she said.

"It has gone to keep company with other devoted but deserted friends," he said, a tinge of bitterness in his voice, "The uniform is vastly becoming," she went on, realizing helplessly that she was providing intense amusement

for the unseen auditors. "It shames the rags in which you

found me." "I shall never forget them, Baldos," she said, with a strange earnestness in

"May I presume to inquire after the health of your good Aunt Fanny and, although I did not see him, your Uncle Sam?" he asked, with a face as straight and sincere as that of a judge. Beverly swallowed suddenly and checked

d laugh with some difficulty. "Aunt Fanny is never ill. Some day I shall tell you more of Uncle Sam. It

will interest you." highness. Do you expect to return to sequences: America soon?"

This was the unexpected, but she met It with admirable composure. "It depends upon the time when month."

Prince Dantan resumes the throne in Dawsbergen," she said. "And that day may never come," said he, such mocking regret in his

newer interest. "Why, I really believe you want to

go to America!" she cried. The eyes of Baldos had been furtively drawn to the curtain more than once during the last few minutes. An occasional movement of the long oriental hangings attracted his attention. It dawned upon him that the little play was being overheard, whether by spies or conspirators he knew not. Resentment sprang up in his breast and gave birth to a daring that was as spectacular as it was confounding. With long, noiseless strides he reached the door before Beverly could interpose. She half started from her chair, her eyes wide with dismay, her lips parted, but his hand was already clutching the curtain. He drew it aside relentlessly.

Two startled women stood exposed to view, smiles dying on their amazed faces. Their backs were against the closed door, and two hands clutching handkerchiefs dropped from a most significant altitude. One of them flashed an imperious glance at the bold discoverer, and he knew he was looking upon the real princess of Graustark. He did not lose his composure. Without a tremor he turned to the American

"Your highness," he said clearly, coolly, "I fear we have spies and eavesdroppers here. Is your court made up of-I should say, they are doubtless a pair of curious ladies in waiting. Shall I begin my service, your highness, by escorting them to yonder door?"

CHAPTER XIII.

EVERLY gasped. The countess stared blankly at the new guard. Yetive flushed deeply, bit her lip in hopeless chagrin and dropped her eyes. A pretty turn, indeed, the play had taken! Not a word was uttered for a full half minute; nor did the guilty witnesses venture forth from their retreat. Baldos stood tall and impassive, holding the curtain aside. At last the shadow of a smile crept into the face of the princess, but her tones were full of deep humility when she spoke.

"We crave permission to retire, your highness," she said, and there was virtuous appeal in her eyes. "I pray forgiveness for this indiscretion and implore you to be lenient with two miserable creatures who love you so well that they forget their dignity."

"I am amazed and shocked," was all that Beverly could say, "You may go, but return to me within an hour. I will then hear what you have to say."

Slowly, even humbly, the ruler of Graustark and her cousin passed beneath the upraised arm of the new guard. He opened a door on the opposite side of the room, and they went out, to all appearance thoroughly crestfallen. The steady features of the guard did not relax for the fraction of a second, but his heart was thumping disgracefully.

"Come here, Baldos," commanded amused. Beverly, a bit pale, but recovering her he bent his head quickly. Franz was is a matter which I shall dispose of ladies in hiding?" mused Harry Anprivately. It is to go no further, you guish. The Count and Countess Hal-

"Yes, your highness." "You may go now, Colonel Quinnox will explain everything," she said hurriedly. She was eager to be rid of him. As he turned away she observed a faint but peculiar smile at the corner of his mouth.

"Come here, sir!" she exclaimed hotly. He paused, his face as somber as an owl's. "What do you mean by laughing like that?" she demanded. He caught the flerce note in her voice, but gave it the proper interpretation.

"Laughing, your highness?" he said in deep surprise. "You must be mistaken. I am sure that I could not have laughed in the presence of a princess."

"It must have been a-a shadow, then," she retracted, somewhat startled by his rejoinder. "Very well, then. You are dismissed."

As he was about to open the door through which he had entered the room it swung wide and Count Marlanx strode in. Baldos paused irresolutely and then proceeded on his way without paying the slightest attention to the commander of the army. Marlanx came to an amazed stop, and his face flushed with resentment.

"Halt, sir!" he exclaimed harshly. "Don't you know enough to salute me,

Baldos turned instantly, his figure straightening like a flash. His eyes met those of the Iron Count and did not waver, although his face went white with passion.

"And who are you, sir?" he asked in cold, steely tones. The count almost reeled.

"Your superior officer! That should be enough for you!" he half hissed, with deadly levelness. "Oh, then I see no reason why I

should not salute you, sir," said Baldos, with one of his rare smlles. He saluted his superor officer a shade too elaborately and turned away. Marlanx's eyes glistened. "Stop! Have I said you could go,

sir? I have a bit of advice to"-"My command to go comes from your superior, sir," said Baidos, with

irritating blandness.

"Be patient, general," cried Beverly, in deep distress. "He does not know any better. I will stand sponsor for nim." And Baldos went away with a ight step, his blood singing, his devilmay-care heart satisfied. The look in left the castle he said aloud to him- amazement. "Another question, if it please your self with an easy disregard of the con-

> "Well, it seems that I am to be assoangels. Heavens! June is a glorious

you know, and, besides, you didn't ad- It was a long two miles to his office in

voice that she looked upon him with dress him very politely for an utter

"The insolent dog!" snarled Marianx, his self control returning slowly. "He guard." shall be taught well and thoroughly, never fear, Miss Calhoun. There is a way to train such recruits as he, and they never forget what they have learned."

"Oh, please don't be harsh with him," she pleaded. The smile of the Iron Count was not at all reassuring. "I know he will be sorry for what he has done, and you"-

"I am quite sure he will be sorry," said he, with a most agreeable bow in

submission to her appeal. "Do you want to see Mr. Lorry?" she asked quickly. "I will send for him, general." She was at the door, impatient to be with the banished culprits.

"My business with Mr. Lorry can wait," he began, with a smile meant to be inviting, but which dld not impress her at all pleasantly.

"Well, anyway, I'll tell him you're here," she said, her hand on the door knob. "Will you wait here? Goodby." And then she was racing off through the long halls and up broad staircases toward the boudoir of the princess, There is no telling how long the ruffled count remained in the antercom, for the excited Beverly forgot to tell Lorry that he was there.

There were half a dozen people in the room when Beverly entered eagerly. She was panting with excitement, Of all the rooms in the grim old castle the boudoir of the princess was the most famously attractive. It was really her home, the exquisite abiding place of an exquisite creature. To lounge on her divans, to loll in the chairs, to glide through her priceless rugs, was the acme of indolent pleasure. Few were they who enjoyed the privileges of "little heaven," as Harry Anguish had christened it on one memorable night long before the princess was Mrs. Grenfall Lorry.

"Now, how do you feel?" cried the flushed American girl, pausing in the door to point an impressive finger at the princess, who was lying back in a huge chair, the picture of distress and annovance.

"I shall never be able to look that man in the face again." came dolefully from Yetive's humbled lips. Dagmar was all smiles and in the fittest of humors. She was the kind of culprit who loves the punishment because of the crime.

"Wasn't it ridiculous, and wasn't it just too lovely?" she cried.

"It was extremely theatrical," agreed Beverly, seating herself on the arm of Yetive's chair and throwing a warm arm around her neck. "Have you all heard about it?" she demanded naively, turning to the others, who unquestionably had had a jumbled account of the performance.

"You got just what you deserved," said Lorry, who was immensely

"I wonder what your august vagawits with admirable promptness. "This bond thinks of his princess and her font were smiling in spite of the as sault upon the dignity of the court.

"I'd give anything to know what he really thinks," said the real princess. "Oh, Beverly, wasn't it awful? And how he marched us out of that room!" "I thought it was great," said Beverly, her eyes glowing. "Wasn't it splendid? And isn't he good look-Ing?"

"He is good looking, I imagine. But I am no judge, dear. It was utterly impossible for me to look at his face," lamented the princess.

"What are you going to do with us?" asked Dagmar penitently.

"You are to spend the remainder of your life in a dungeon, with Baldos as guard," decided Miss Calhoun.

"Beverly, dear, that man is no ordinary person," said the princess quite positively.

"Of course he isn't, He's a tall, dark mystery." "I observed him as he crossed the ter-

race this morning," said Lorry. "He's a striking sort of chap, and I'll bet my head he's not what he claims to be." "He claims to be a fugitive, you must

remember," said Beverly in his de-"I mean that he is no common malefactor, or whatever it may be. Who

and what do you suppose he is? I confess that I'm interested in the fellow, and he looks as though one might like him without half trying. Why haven't you dug up his past history, Beverly? You are so keen about him." "He positively refuses to let me dig,"

explained Beverly. "I tried, you know, but he-he-well, he squelched me." "Well, after all is said and done, he

caught us peeping today, and I am filled with shame," said the princess. "It doesn't matter who he is, he must certainly have a most unflattering opinion as to what we are."

"And he is sure to know us sooner or later," said the young countess, mo mentarily serious.

"Oh, if it ever comes to that I shall be in a splendid position to explain it all to him," said Beverly. "Don't you see, I'll have to do a lot of explaining myself?"

"Baron Dangloss!" announced the guard of the upper hall, throwing open the door for the doughty little chief of

"Your highness sent for me?" asked he, advancing after the formal salutaber eyes was very sustaining. As he tion. The princess exhibited genuine

"I did, Baron Dangloss, but you must have come with the wings of an eagle. It is really not more than three clated with the devil as well as with minutes since I gave the order to Colonel Quinnox." The baron smiled mysteriously, but volunteered no solution. "Now, you promised you'd be nice to The truth is, he was entering the cashim, General Marianx," cried Beverly the doors as the messenger left them, advantage of this liberal offer, yet the instant Baldos was out of the but he was much too fond of effect to subscription to the Observed must be room. "He's new at this sort of thing spoil a good attraction to the Observed must be subscription to the Observed must be subscripted must be subs room. "He's new at this sort of thing, spoil a good situation by explanations.

the Tower. "Something has just ! pened that impels me to ask a questions concerning Baldes, the

"May I first ask what has he ed?" Dangloss was at a loss for meaning of the general sulle s

"It is quite personal and of no or sequence. What do you know of h My curiosity is aroused, Now, quiet, Beverly. You are as eapknow as the rest of us,"

"Well, your highness, I may as a confess that the man is a public to

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He comes here a vagabond, but here tainly does not act like one. He she that he is being hunted, but taken one into his confidence. For that i cannot be blamed."

"Have you any reason to mene who he is?" asked Lorry. "My instructions were to refn

from questioning him," comple Dangloss, with a pathetic look at n original plotters. "Still, I have my investigations along other lines."

"And who is he?" cried Beret eagerly.

"I don't know," was the disappoor ing answer. "We are confronted by queer set of circumstances. Donbt you all know that young Prince he tan is flying from the wrath of his brother, our lamented friend fisher He is supposed to be in our hills wi a half starved body of followers. seems impossible that he could he reached our northern boundaries with out our outposts catching a glimps him at some time. The trouble is the his face is unknown to most of a among the others. I have been plur on the presumption that Baldes is reality Prince Dantan, but last up

the belief received a severe shock" "Yes?" came from several eigerla "My men who are watching to Dawsbergen frontier came in l night and reported that Danta hi been seen by mountaineers to late than Sunday, three days ago. The mountaineers were in sympathy with him and refused to tell whith went. We only know that he was he the southern part of Graustark time days ago. Our new guard speaks any languages, but he has never been har to use that of Dawsbergen. That as

in itself is not surprising, for, of it things, he would avoid his mote tongue. Dantan is part English is birth and wholly so by cultivation is that he evidently finds a mate in an Baldos." "Then he really isn't Prince In tan?" cried Beverly, as though a de-

Ished ideal had been shattered. "Not if we are to believe the time from the south. Here is another on plication, however. There is, as mi know, Count Halfont, and perhaps al of you, for that matter, a pretende to the throne of Axphain, the fuglish

young, good looking, a scholar and the next thing to a pauper." "Baldos a mere pretender!" cia Beverly in distress. "Never!" "At any rate, he is not what he pre-

Prince Frederic. He is described a

tends to be," said the baron, with a wise smile. "Then you think he may be Priss Frederic?" asked Lorry, deeply later

"I am inclined to think so, although another complication has arisen his it please your highness, I am h a amazingly tangled state of mind," as mitted the baron, passing his bal

over his brow. "Do you mean that another myste ous prince has come to life?" sile Yetive, her eyes sparkling with interin the revelations.

"Early this morning a dispatch of to me from the Grand Duke Michael Rapp-Thorberg, a duchy in weits Europe, informing me that the dubi eldest son had fled from home and a known to have come to the far est possibly to Graustark."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Angula "It never rains but it balls, so been hall to the princes three."

"We are the Mecca for runsway of alty, it seems," said Count Halfont "Go on with the story, Baron Dasgloss," cried the princess. "It is like!

book." "A description of the young man is companies the offer of a large remain for information that may lead to it return home for reconciliation, and

here the baron paused dramatically. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

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