

# BEVERLY OF GRAUSTARK

By George Barr McCutcheon.

Author of "Graustark"

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"I am coming to a place where I won't get dripping wet," he called softly. There was a dangerous ring in his voice, and she drew back in a panic.

"You must not!" she cried desperately. "This is madness! Go down, sir!" "I am happy enough to fly, but cannot. So I do the next best thing—I climb to you." His arm was across the stone railing by this time, and he was panting from the exertion, not two feet from where she crouched. "Just one minute of heaven before I go back to the shadows of earth. I am happy again. Marlanx told me you had dismissed me. I wonder what he holds in reserve for me. I knew he lied, but it is not until now that I realize. Come, you are to shield me from the rain."

"Oh, oh!" she gasped, overwhelmed by his daring passion. "I should die if any one saw you here." Yet she spasmodically extended the umbrella so that it covered him and left her out in the drizzle.

"And so should I," responded he softly. "Listen to me. For hours and hours I have been longing for the dear old hills in which you found me. I wanted to crawl out of Edelweiss and lose myself forever in the rocks and crags. Tonight when you saw me I was trying to say goodby to you forever. I was trying to make up my mind to desert. I could not endure the new order of things. You had cast me off. My friends out there were eager to have me with them. In the city every one is ready to call me a spy—even you, I thought. Life was black and drear. Now, my princess, it is as bright as heaven itself."

"You must not talk like this," she whispered helplessly. "You are making me sorry I called to you." "I should have heard you if you had only whispered, my rain princess. I have no right to talk of love—I am a vagabond, but I have a heart, and it is a bold one. Perhaps I dream that I am here beside you—so near that I can touch your face—but it is the sweetest of dreams. But for I should have left Edelweiss weeks ago. I shall never awaken from this dream. You cannot rob me of the joys of dreaming."

Under the spell of his passion she drew nearer to him as he clung strongly to the rail. The roses at her throat came so close that he could bury his face in them. Her hand touched his cheek, and he kissed its palm again and again, his wet lips stinging her blood to the tips of her toes.

"Go away, please," she implored faintly. "Don't you see that you must not stay here now?" "A rose, my princess—one rose to kiss all through the long night," he



"I should die if any one saw you here," he whispered. She could feel his eyes burning into her heart. With trembling, hurried fingers she tore loose a rose. He could not seize it with his hands because of the position he held, and she laughed tantalizingly. Then she kissed it first and pressed it against his mouth. His lips and teeth closed over the stem, and the rose was his.

"There are thorns," she whispered ever so softly. "They are the riches of the poor," he murmured, with difficulty, but she understood.

"Now, go," she said, drawing resolutely away. An instant later his head disappeared below the rail. Feinting over the side, she saw his figure spring easily to the ground, and then came the rapid, steady tramp as he went away on his dreary patrol.

"I couldn't help it," she was whispering to herself between joy and shame. Glancing instinctively out toward the solitary lamp, she saw two men standing in its light. One of them was General Marlanx; the other she knew to be the spy that watched Baldos. Her heart sank like lead when she saw that the two were peering intently toward the balcony where she stood and where Baldos had clung but a moment before.

## CHAPTER XXII

HE shrank back with a great dread in his heart. Marlanx, of all men! Why was he in the park at this hour of the night? There could be but one answer, and the very thought of it almost suffocated her. He was drawing the net with his own hands, he was spying with his own eyes. For a full minute it seemed to her that her heart would stop beating. How long had he been standing there? What had he seen or heard? Involuntarily she peered over the rail for a glimpse of Baldos. He had gone out into the darkness, missing the net at the lamp post either by choice or through pure good fortune. A throbbing thankfulness assailed her heart. She was not thinking of her position, but of his.

Again she drew steadily away from the rail, possessed of a peculiar feeling that her form was a plain to the vision as if it were broad daylight. The tread of a man impelled her to glance below once more before peering to her room. Marlanx was coming toward the veranda. She fled swiftly, pausing at the window to lower the friendly but forgotten umbrella. From below came the sibilant hiss of a man seeking to attract her attention. Once more she stopped to listen. The "Hiss!" was repeated, and then her own name was called softly, but imperatively. It was beyond the power of woman to keep from laughing. It struck her as irresistibly funny that the Iron Count should be standing out there in the rain, signaling to her like a lovesick boy. Once she was outside, however, it did not seem so amusing. Still, it gave her an immense amount of satisfaction to slam the windows loudly, as if in pure defiance. Then she closed the blinds, shutting out the night completely.

Turning up the light at her dressing table, she sat down in a state of sudden collapse. For a long time she stared at her face in the mirror. She saw the red of shame and embarrassment mount to her cheeks, and then she covered her eyes with her hands.

"Oh, what a fool you've been!" she half sobbed, shrinking from the mirror as if it were an accuser.

She prepared for bed with frantic haste. Just as she was about to scramble in and hide her face in the pillows a shocking thought came to her. The next instant she was at the windows, and the sashes were closed with a rattle like a volley of firearms. Then she jumped into bed. She wondered if the windows were locked. Out she sprang again like a flash, and her little bare feet scurried across the room, first to the windows and then to the door.

"Now I reckon I'm safe," she murmured a moment later, again getting into bed. "I love to go to sleep with the rain pattering outside like that. Oh, dear, I'm so sorry he has to walk all night in this rain. Poor fellow! I wonder where he is now. Goodness! It's raining cats and dogs!"

But in spite of the rain she could not go to sleep. Vague fears began to take possession of her. Something dreadful told her that Count Marlanx was on the balcony and at her window, notwithstanding the rainpour. The fear became oppressive, maddening. She felt the man's presence almost as strongly as if he were in plain view. He was there; she knew it.

The little revolver that had served her so valiantly at the inn of the Hawk and Raven lay upon a stool near the bedside every night. Consumed by the fear that the window might open slowly at any moment she reached forth and clutched the weapon. Then she shrank back in the bed, her eyes fixed upon the black space across the room. For hours she shivered and waited for the window to open, dozing away time and again, only to come back to wakefulness with a start.

The next morning she confessed to herself that her fears had been silly. Her first act after breakfasting alone in her room was to seek out Colonel Quinnox, commander of the castle guard. In her mind she was greatly troubled over the fate of the bold visitor of the night before. There was a warm, red glow in her face and a quick beat in her heart as she crossed the parade ground. Vagabond though he was he had conquered where princes had failed. Her better judgment told her that she could be nothing to this debonair knight of the road, yet her heart stubbornly resisted all the arguments that her reason put forth.

Colonel Quinnox was pleasant, but he could give Beverly no promise of leniency in regard to Baldos. Instructions had come from General Marlanx, and he could not set them aside at will. Her plea that he might once more be assigned to old time duties found the colonel regretfully obtuse. Baldos could not ride with her again until Marlanx withdrew the order which now obtained. Beverly swallowed her pride and resentment diplomatically, smiled her sweetest upon the distressed colonel and marched defiantly back to the castle. Down in her rebellious, insulted heart she was concocting all sorts of plans for revenge. Chief among them was the terrible overthrow of the Iron Count. Her wide scope of vengeance even contemplated the destruction of Graustark if her end could be obtained in no other way.

Full of these bitter-sweet thoughts, she came to the castle doors before she was aware that he was waiting for her upon the great veranda. As she mounted the steps, a preoccupied frown upon her fair brow, General Marlanx, lean, crafty and confident, advanced to greet her. The early hour was responsible for the bright solitude which marked the place. But few signs of life were in evidence about the castle.

She stopped with a sharp exclamation of surprise. Then scorn and indignation rushed in to fill the place of astonishment. She faced the smiling old man with anger in her eyes.

"Good morning," he said, extending his hand, which she did not see. She was wondering how much he had seen and heard at midnight.

"I thought the troops were massing this morning," she said coldly. "Don't you mass too?"

"There is time enough for that, my dear. I came to have a talk with you in private," he said menacingly.

"It is sufficiently private here, Count Marlanx. What have you to say to me?" "I want to talk about last night. You were very reckless to do what you did."

"I mean that I saw everything that occurred."

"Well, I'm not ashamed of it," obstinately. "Goodby, Count Marlanx."

"One moment, please. I cannot let you off so easily. What right had you to take that man into your room, a place sacred in the palace of Graustark? Answer me, Miss Calhoun."

Beverly drew back in horror and bewilderment.

"Into my room?" she gasped.

"Let us waste no time in subterfuge. I saw him come from your window, and I saw all that passed between you in the balcony. Love's eyes are keen. What occurred in your chamber I can only—"

"Stop! How dare you say such a thing to me?" she cried. "You miserable coward! You know he was not in my room. Take it back—take back every word of that lie!" She was white with passion, cold with terror.

"Bah! This is childish. I am not the only one who saw him, my dear. He was in your room—you were in his arms. It's useless to deny it. And to think that I have spared him from death to have it come to this! You need not look so horrified. Your secret is safe with me. I come to make terms with you. My silence in exchange for your beauty. It's worth it to you. One word from me, you are disgraced and Baldos dies. Come, my fair lady, give me your promise. It's a good bargain for both."

Beverly was trembling like a leaf. This phase of his villainy had not occurred to her. She was like a bird trying to avoid the charmed eye of the serpent.

"Oh, you—you miserable wretch!" she cried, hoarse with anger and despair. "What a cur you are! You know you are not speaking the truth. How can you say such things to me? I have never wronged you!" She was almost in tears, impotent with shame and fear.

"It has been a pretty game of love for you and the excellent Baldos. You have deceived those who love you best and trust you most. What will the princess say when she hears of last night's merry escapade? What will she say when she learns who was hostess to a common guardsman at the midnight hour? It is no wonder that you look terrified. It is for you to say whether she is to know or not. You can bind me to silence. You have lost Baldos. Take me and all that I can give you in his stead, and the world never shall know the truth. You love him, I know, and there is but one way to save him. Say the word and he goes free to the hills; decline and his life is not worth a breath of air."

"And pretending to believe this of me, you still ask me to be your wife. What kind of a man are you?" she demanded, scarcely able to speak.

"My wife?" he said harshly. "Oh, no. You are not the wife of Baldos," he added significantly.

"Heavens!" gasped Beverly, crushed by the brutality of it all. "I would sooner die. Would to heaven my father were here. He would shoot you as he would a dog! Oh, how I loathe you! Don't you try to stop me! I shall go to the princess myself. She shall know what manner of beast you are."

She was racing up the steps, flaming with anger and shame.

"Remember, I can prove what I have said. Beware what you do. I love you so much that I now ask you to become my wife. Think well over it. Your honor and his life! It rests with you," he cried eagerly, following her to the door.

"You disgusting old fool," she hissed, turning upon him as she pulled the big brass knocker on the door.

"I must have my answer tonight or you know what will happen," he snarled, but he felt in his heart that he had lost through his eagerness.

She flew to Yette's boudoir, consumed by rage and mortification. Between sobs and feminine maledictions she poured the whole story, in all its ugliness, into the ears of the princess.

"Now, Yette, you have to stand by me in this," announced the narrator conclusively, her eyes beaming hopefully through her tears.

"I cannot prevent General Marlanx from preferring serious charges against Baldos, dear. I know he was not in your room last night. You did not have to tell me that, because I saw you both at the balcony rail." Beverly's face took on such a radiant look of rejoicing that Yette was amply paid for the surprising and gratifying acknowledgment of a second period of eavesdropping. "You may depend upon me to protect you from Marlanx. He can make it very unpleasant for Baldos, but he shall pay dearly for this assault to you. He has gone too far."

"I don't think he has any proof against Baldos," said Beverly, thinking only of the guardsman.

"But it is so easy to manufacture evidence, my dear. The Iron Count has set his heart upon having you, and he is not the man to be turned aside easily."

"He seems to think he can get wives as easily as he gets rid of them, I observe. I was going back to Washington soon, Yette, but I'll stay on now and see this thing to the end. He can't scare a Calhoun; no sir-ee! I'll telegraph for my brother Dan to come over here and punch his head to pieces."

"Now, now, don't be so high and mighty, dear. Let us see how rational we can be," said the princess gently, whereupon the hot-headed girl from Dixie suspended hostilities and became a very demure young woman. Before long she was confiding timidly, then boldly, that she loved Baldos better than anything in all the world (TO BE CONTINUED.)

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That the cost of said sidewalks will be assessed to the above described real property fronting and abutting thereon.

That the cost of said sidewalks will be assessed to the above described real property fronting and abutting thereon.

Witness my hand and the official seal of the City of Dallas, this 19th day of March A. D. 1907.

DAN E. STOUFFER, Auditor and Police Judge of the City of Dallas, Oregon.

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Notice is hereby given that by an order of the Honorable William Galloway, Judge of the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon in and for Polk County, made at Chambers at McMinnville, Oregon, on the 18th day of March, 1907, in certain cases filed in said Court, in which E. A. Meyer is plaintiff and F. J. Oberer is defendant, the said plaintiff, E. A. Meyer, has duly notified all creditors of the partnership property, assets and effects of the said E. A. Meyer and F. J. Oberer, partners in said firm, to appear at the Court on the 21st day of April, 1907, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon of said day, at the Court room of the said Polk County, in the City of Dallas, Oregon, to show cause why the said partnership should not be dissolved, and to show cause why the said partnership should not be dissolved, and to show cause why the said partnership should not be dissolved.

Notice of Final Settlement.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned, as guardian of the person and estate of A. J. Crozier, a person incapable of conducting his own affairs, has filed for final account in the County Court of the State of Oregon, for Polk County, and that said account, the 21st day of March, 1907, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon of said day, at the Court room of the said Polk County, in the City of Dallas, Oregon, to show cause why the said final account should not be allowed, and to show cause why the said final account should not be allowed.

Notice for Publication.

United States Land Office, Portland, Oregon, January 9, 1907.

Notice is hereby given that in compliance with the provisions of the act of Congress of June 2, 1878, entitled "An act for the sale of timber lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada, and Washington Territory," the following lands are offered for sale to the highest bidder at public auction, to-wit: The lands described in the following list, and the same are subject to the provisions of said act, and the same are subject to the provisions of said act, and the same are subject to the provisions of said act.

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TIMBER LAND, ACT JUNE 2, 1878.

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