

# BEVERLY OF GRAUSTARK

By George Barr McCutcheon.

Author of "Graustark"

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"He came back to watch over Miss Calhoun while she slept. It was my sworn duty to guard her from the man who had accused her. This boy is a member of the band to which I belong, and he watched while I went forth on a pretty business of my own. It will be useless to ask what that business was. I will not tell. Nor will the boy. You may kill us, but our secrets die with us. This much I will say: We have done nothing disloyal to Graustark. You may believe me or not. It has been necessary for me to communicate with my friends, and I found the means soon after my arrival here. All the foxes that live in the hills have not four legs," he concluded significantly.

"You are a marvel!" exclaimed Lorry, and there was real admiration in his voice. "I'm sorry you were fool enough to come back and get caught like this. Don't look surprised, gentlemen, for I believe in your hearts you admire him quite as much as I do." The faint smile that veiled the roanid was confirmed enough. Nearly every man there had been trained in English speaking lands and not a word of the conversation had been missed.

"I expected to be arrested, Mr. Lorry," said Baldos calmly. "I knew that the warrant awaited me. I knew that my flight of last night was no secret. I came back willingly, gladly, your highness, and now I am ready to face my accuser. There is nothing for me to fear."

"And after you have confessed to all these actions? By George, I like your nerve!" exclaimed Lorry.

"I have been amply vindicated," cried Marlanx. "Put him in irons—and that boy too."

"We'll interview the boy," said Lorry, remembering the lad beneath the tree.

"See; he's sleeping so sweetly," said Baldos gently. "Poor lad, he has not known sleep for many hours. I suppose he'll have to be awakened, poor little beggar."

Colonel Quinnox and Haddan crossed the grounds to the big cedar. The boy sprang to his feet at their call and looked wildly about. Two big hands clasped his arms, and a moment later the slight figure came pathetically across the intervening space between the stalwart guards.

"Why has he remained here, certain of arrest?" demanded Lorry in surprise.

"He was safer with me than anywhere else, Mr. Lorry. You may shoot me a thousand times, but I implore you to deal gently with my unhappy friend. He has done no wrong. The clothes you see upon that trembling figure are torturing the poor heart more than you can know. The burning flush upon that cheek is the red of modesty. Your highness and gentlemen, I ask you to have pity on this gentle friend of mine." He threw his arm about the shoulder of the slight figure as it drooped against him. "Count Marlanx was right. It was a woman he saw with me in the chapel last night."

The sensation created by this simple statement was staggering. The flushed face was unmistakably that of a young girl, a tender, modest thing that shrank before the eyes of a grim audience. Womanly instinct impelled Yette to shield the timid masquerader. Her strange association with Baldos was not of enough consequence in the eyes of this tender ruler to check the impulse of gentleness that swept over her. That the girl was guiltless of any wrongdoing was plain to be seen. Her eyes, her face, her trembling figure furnished proof conclusive. The dark looks of the men were softened when the arm of the princess went about the stranger and drew her close.

"Bah! Some wanton or other!" sneered Marlanx. "But a pretty one, by the gods. Baldos has always shown his good taste."

Baldos glared at him like a tiger restrained.

"Before God, you will have those words to unsay," he hissed.

Yette felt the slight body of the girl quiver and then grow tense.

The eyes of Baldos now were fixed on the white, drawn face of Beverly Calhoun, who stood quite alone at the top of the steps. She began to sway dizzily, and he saw that she was about to fall. Springing away from the guards, he dashed up the steps to her side. His arm caught her as she swayed, and his touch restored strength to her—the strength of resentment and defiance.

"Don't!" she whispered hoarsely.

"Have courage," he murmured softly. "It will all be well. There is no danger."

"So this is the woman!" she cried bitterly.

"Yes. You alone are dearer to me than she," he uttered hurriedly.

"I can't believe a word you say."

"You will, Beverly. I love you. That is why I came back. I could not leave you to meet it alone. Was I not right? Let them put me into irons—let them kill me!"

"Come!" cried Colonel Quinnox, reaching his side at this instant. "The girl will be cared for. You are a prisoner."

"Wait!" implored Beverly, light suddenly breaking in upon her. "Please wait, Colonel Quinnox." He hesitated, his broad shoulders between her and the gaping crowd below. She saw with grateful heart that Yette and Lorry were holding the steps as if against a warlike foe. "Is she—is she your wife?"

"Good heavens, no!" gasped Baldos. "Your sweetheart?" piteously.

"She is the sister of the man I serve so poorly," he whispered. Quinnox allowed them to walk a few paces down the sagging, away from the curious gaze of the persons below.

"Oh, Baldos!" she cried, her heart suddenly melting. "Is she Prince Dan-

tan's sister?" Her hand clasped his convulsively as he nodded assent.

"Now I do love you."

"Thank God!" he whispered joyously. "I knew it, but I was afraid you never would speak the words. I am happy—I am wild with joy."

"But they may shoot you," she shuddered. "You have condemned yourself. Oh, I cannot talk to you as I want to—out here before all these people. Don't move, Colonel Quinnox. They can't see through you. Please stand still."

"They will not shoot me, Beverly, dear. I am not a spy," said Baldos, looking down into the eyes of the slender boyish figure who stood beside the princess. "It is better that I should die, however," he went on bitterly. "Life will not be worth living without you. You would not give yourself to the lowly, humble hunter, so I—"

"I will marry you, Paul. I love you. Can't anything be done to—"

"It is bound to come out all right in the end," he cried, throwing up his head to drink in the new joy of living. "They will find that I have done nothing to injure Graustark. Wait, dearest, until the day gives up its news. It will not be long in coming. Ah, this promise of yours gives me new life, new joy. I could shout it from the housetops!"

"But don't!" she cried nervously. "How does she happen to be here with you? Tell me, Paul. Oh, isn't she a dear?"

"You shall know everything in time. Watch over her, dearest. I have lived today for you, but it was a lie I loved. Care for her if you love me. When I am free and in favor again you will—Ah!" He broke off suddenly with an exclamation. His eyes were bent eagerly on the circle of trees just beyond the parade ground. Then his hand clasped hers in one spasmodic grip of relief. An instant later he was towering, with head bare, at the top of the steps, his hand pointing dramatically toward the trees.

Ravone, still in his ragged uniform, haggard, but eager, was standing like a gaunt specter in the sunlight that flooded the terrace. The vagabond, with the eyes of all upon him, raised and lowered his arms thrice, and the face of Baldos became radiant.

"Your highness," he cried to Yette, waving his hand toward the stranger. "I have the honor to announce the Prince of Dawsbergen."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THIS startling announcement threw the company into the greatest excitement. Baldos ran down the steps and to the side of the astonished princess.

"Prince Dantant!" she cried, unbelievingly.

He pushed the boyish figure aside and whispered earnestly into Yette's ear. She smiled warmly in response, and her eyes sparkled.

"And this, your highness, is his sister, the Princess Candace," he announced aloud, bowing low before the girl. At that instant she ceased to be the timid, clinging boy. Her chin went up in truly regal state as she calmly, even haughtily, responded to the dazed, half earnest salutes of the men. With a rare smile—a knowing one, in which mischief was paramount—she spoke to Baldos, giving him her hand to kiss.

"Ah, dear Baldos, you have achieved your sweetest triumph—the theatrical climax to all this time of plotting. My brother's sister loves you for all this. Your highness—and she turned to Yette with a captivating smile—"is the luckless sister of Dantant welcome in your castle? May I rest here in peace? It has been a bitterly long year, this past week," she sighed. Fatigue shot back into her sweet face, and Yette's love went out to her unreservedly. As she drew the slight figure up the steps she turned and said to her ministers:

"I shall be glad to receive Prince Dantant in the throne room without delay. I am going to put the princess to bed."

"Your highness," said Baldos from below, "may I be the first to announce to you that there will be no war with Dawsbergen?"

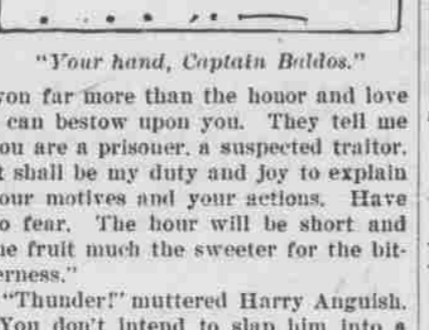
"This was too much. Even Marlanx looked at his enemy with something like the collapse in his eyes.

"What do you mean?" cried Lorry, seizing him by the arm.

"I mean that Prince Dantant is here to announce the recapture of Gabriel, his half brother. Before the hour is past your own men from the dungeons in the mountains will come to report the return of the fugitive. This announcement may explain in a measure the conduct that has earned for me the accusation which confronts me. The men who have retaken Gabriel are the members of that little band you have heard so much about. Once I was its captain, Prince Dantant's chief of staff—the commander of his ragged army of twelve. Miss Calhoun and fate brought me into Edelweiss, but my loyalty to the object espoused by our glorious little army has never wavered. Without me they have succeeded in tricking and trapping Gabriel. It is more than the great army of Graustark could do. Your highness will pardon the boast under the circumstances?"

"If this is true, you have accomplished a miracle," exclaimed Lorry, profoundly agitated. "But can it be true? I can't believe it. It is too good. It is too utterly improbable. Is that really Prince Dantant?"

"Assuming that it is Dantant, Gren-fail," said Yette. "I fancy it is not courteous in us to let him stand over there all alone and ignored. Go to him, please." With that she passed through the doors, accompanied by Beverly and the young princess. Lorry and others went to greet the enaculated visitor in rags and tags. Colonel Quinnox and Baron Dawsbergen looked at one another



"Your hand, Captain Baldos."

won far more than the honor and love I can bestow upon you. They tell me you are a prisoner, a suspected traitor. It shall be my duty and joy to explain your motives and your actions. Have no fear. The hour will be short and the fruit much the sweeter for the bitterness."

"Thunder!" muttered Harry Anguish. "You don't intend to slap him into a cell, do you, Gren?" Baldos overheard the remark.

"I prefer that course, sir, until it has been clearly established that all I have said to you is the truth. Count Marlanx must be satisfied," said he.

"And, Baldos, is all well with her?" asked the one we have known as Ravone.

"She is being put to bed," said Baldos, with a laugh so jolly that Ravone's lean face was wreathed in a sympathetic smile. "I am ready, gentlemen." He marched gallantly away between the guards, followed by Dangloss and Colonel Quinnox.

Naturally the Graustark leaders were cautious, even skeptical. They awaited confirmation of the glorious news with varying emotions. The shock produced by the appearance of Prince Dantant in the person of the ascetic Ravone was almost stupefying. Even Beverly, who knew the vagabond better than all the others, had not dreamed of Ravone as the fugitive prince. Secretly she had hoped as long as she could that Baldos would prove, after all, to be no other than Dantant. This hope had dwindled to nothing, however, and she was quite prepared for the revelation. She now saw that he was just what he professed to be—a brave but humble friend of the young sovereign, and she was happy in the knowledge that she loved him for what he was and not for what he might have been.

"He is my best friend," said Ravone, as they led Baldos away. "I am called Ravone, gentlemen, and I am content to be known by that name until better fortune gives me the right to use another. You can hardly expect a thing in rags to be called a prince. There is much to be accomplished, much to be forgiven, before there is a Prince Dantant of Dawsbergen again."

"You are faint and weak," said Lorry, suddenly perceiving his plight. "The hospitality of the castle is yours. The promise we made a few days ago holds good. Her highness will be proud to receive you when you are ready to come to the throne room. I am Gren-fail Lorry. Come, sit; rest and refresh yourself in our gladsome home. An hour ago we were making ready to rush to battle, but your astonishing but welcome news is calculated to change every plan we have made."

"Undoubtedly, sir, it will. Dawsbergen hardly will make a fight to release Gabriel. He is safe in your dungeons. If they want him now they come to your strongholds. They can't do it, believe me," said Ravone simply. "Alas, I am faint and sore as you suspect. May I lie down for an hour or two? In that time you will have heard from your wardens, and my story will be substantiated. Then I shall be ready to accept your hospitality as it is proffered. Outside your city gates my humble followers lie starving. My only prayer is that you will send them cheer and succor."

No time was lost in sending to the gates for the strollers who had accompanied the marvel of the day. The news of Gabriel's capture was kept from the city's inhabitants until verification came from the proper sources, but those in control of the affairs of state were certain that Ravone's story was true. All operations came to a standstill. The movements of the army were checked. Everything lay quiet under the shock of this startling climax.

"Hang it!" growled Anguish, with a quizzical grin as Ravone departed under the guidance of Count Halfont himself, "this knocks me galley west. I'd like to have had a hand in it. It must have been great. How the devil do you think that miserable little gang of tramps pulled it off?"

"Harry," said Lorry disgustedly, "they taught us a trick or two."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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Ainsworth Chapter, No. 17, R. A. M., stated convocation, First, Second and third Fridays of each month. OSCAR HAYTER, H. P. U. S. GRANT, Sec.

Naomi Chapter, No. 22, O. E. S., stated meetings Second and Fourth Tuesdays of each month. MRS. MAGGIE HAYTER, W. M. MRS. LEBBIE MUIR, Sec.

### Woodmen of the World.

Dallas Camp, No. 209, meets in their hall in the Woodman building every Tuesday evening. B. M. GUY C. G. W. G. VARRALL, Clerk.

Mistletoe Circle, No. 33, W. C. T. U., meets in their hall, in the Woodman building every second and fourth Wednesday. MRS. HELEN GREENWOOD, G. N. MRS. NELLIE TAYOR, Clerk.

### Knights of the Maccabees.

Dallas Tent, No. 3, meets Second and Fourth Thursdays of each month in I. O. O. F. hall. MARK HAYTER, S. K. Com. I. N. WOODS, R. K.

Lilac Hive, No. 28, L. O. T. M., meets on Second and Fourth Thursday afternoon of each month. MRS. KITTIE N. MILLER, I. C. MRS. ROSE FIDLER, R. K.

### Knights of Pythias

MARSHALL LODGE, No. 96, K. of P.—Meets every Monday evening in W. O. W. building. Visiting Knights are welcome. M. A. FORD, C. C. G. L. HAWKINS, K. of R. S.

### Fraternal Union of America

Lodge No. 144—Meets Third Tuesday of each month. W. J. WAGNER, F. M. MRS. S. E. MORRISON, Sec.

### A. O. U. W.

Union Lodge, No. 35—Meets First and Third Wednesday of each month. H. L. FENTON, M. W. JOHN E. SMITH, Fin.

Crystal Lodge, No. 50, D. of H., meets First and Third Wednesday of each month. MRS. C. G. COAD, C. of H. MRS. ED. F. COAD, Fin.

### United Artisans.

Assembly No. 46—meets First and Third Tuesday of each month. WILLIS SIMONTON, M. A.

### I. O. O. F.

Friendship Lodge, No. 6, meets every Saturday evening in I. O. O. F. Hall. W. L. SORESEN, N. G. W. A. AYRES, Rec. Sec.

LaCroix Encampment, No. 20, meets Second and Fourth Monday of each month. W. A. AYRES, C. P. A. W. TEATS, Scribe.

Admiral Lodge, No. 26, D. of R., meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month. MISS MABEL HOLMES, N. G. MISS OLLIE HOWE, Sec.

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A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.
		7:15	11:10	3:20				9:30	1:45	5:15	
		7:34	No Stop	3:39	Ar.	DALLAS	Ar.	No Stop	No Stop	No Stop	
		7:38	No Stop	3:43	Ar.	"TEATS"	Ar.	No Stop	No Stop	4:47	
		7:43	No Stop	3:48	Ar.	"GILLIAMS"	Ar.	9:02	No Stop	4:47	
					Ar.	"BRIDGEPORT"	Ar.	9:37	No Stop	4:42	
6:00	9:00	1:30	7:55	11:50	4:00	Ar.	FALLS CITY	8:45	1:00	4:30	8:30
6:30	9:30	2:00			Ar.	"BLACK ROCK"	Ar.			7:45	11:00
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