

GRAUSTARK

... By ...
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CHAPTER I.—Grenfall Lorry, a wealthy American globe trotter, stumbles into acquaintance with a charming foreign girl on the train from Denver to Washington. The pair is left behind when the flier stops for repairs in West Virginia. II.—Lorry wires ahead to hold the train. He and the unknown girl ride twenty miles at a tearing pace in a mountain coach. There is no love-making, but a near approach to it as the rolling stage tumbles the passengers about. III.—Lorry dines with the forel party, consisting of Miss Guggenslocker, Uncle Caspa and Aunt Yvonne. They are natives of Graustark, a country Lorry had never heard of before.

"You say you obtained that coin from the porter on the Denver train?"
"Within two hours after I got aboard."

"Well, that coin purchased your name for me," she said calmly, candidly. He gasped.

"You—you don't mean that you"—he stammered.

"You see, Mr. Lorry, I wanted to know the name of a man who came nearest my ideal of what an American should be. As soon as I saw you I knew that you were the American as I had grown to know him through the books—big, strong, bold and comely. That is why I bought your name of the porter. I shall always say that I know the name of an ideal American—Grenfall Lorry."

Her frank statement staggered him almost beyond the power of recovery.

"I—I am honored," he at last managed to say, his eyes gleaming with embarrassment. "I trust you have not



"Well, that coin purchased your name for me."

found your first judgment a faulty one." He felt very foolish after this flat remark.

"I have remembered your name," she said graciously. His heart swelled.

"There are a great many better Americans than I," he said. "You forget our president and our statesmen."

"I thought they were mere politicians."

Grenfall Lorry, idealized, retired to his berth that night, his head whirling with the emotions inspired by this strange, beautiful woman. How lovely, how charming, how naive, how queenly, how indifferent, how warm, how cold—how everything that puzzled him was she. His last waking thought was:

"Guggenslocker! An angel with a name like that!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE INVITATION EXTENDED.

THEY were called by the porter early the next morning. The train was pulling into Washington five hours late. Grenfall wondered as he dressed whether fortune would permit him to see much of her during her brief day in the capital. After the train had come to a standstill he could hear the rustle of her garments in the next compartment. Then he heard her sweep into the passage, greet her uncle and aunt, utter a few commands to the maid, and, while he was adjusting his collar and necktie, pass from the car. No man ever made quicker time in dressing than did Lorry.

"She'll get away, and that 'll be the end of it," he growled, seizing his traps and rushing from the train two minutes after her departure. The porter attempted to relieve him of his bags on the platform, but he brushed him aside and was off toward the station.

"Nice time for you to call a man, you idiot," was his parting shot for the porter, forgetting of course that the foreigners had been called at the same time. With eyes intent on the crowd ahead, he plunged along, seeing nobody in his disappointed flight. "I'll never forgive myself if I miss her," he was wailing to himself. She was not to be seen in the waiting rooms, so he rushed to the sidewalk.

"Baggage transferred?"
"Cab, sir."

"Go to the devil—yes, here! Take these traps and checks and rush my stuff to — W — avenue. Trunks* just in on B. and O." he cried, tossing his burdens to a transfer man and giving him the checks so quickly that the fellow's sleepy eyes opened wider than they had been for a month. Relieved of his impediments, he returned to the station.

"Good morning, Mr. Lorry. Are you in too much of a hurry to see your friends?" cried a clear, musical voice, and he stopped as if shot. The anxious frown flew from his brow and was succeeded instantaneously by a glad smile. He wheeled and beheld her, with Aunt Yvonne, standing near the main entrance to the station. "Why, good morning," he exclaimed, extending his hand gladly. To his amazement she drew herself up haughtily and ignored the proffered hand. Only a brief second did this strange and uncalled-for hauteur obtain. A bright smile swept over her face, and her repentant fingers sought his timidly, even awkwardly. Something told him that she was not accustomed to handshaking; that same something impelled him to bend low and touch the gloved fingers with his lips. He straightened, with face flushed, half fearful lest his act had been observed by curious loungers, and he had taken a liberty in a public place which could not be condoned. But she smiled serenely, approvingly. There was not the faintest sign of embarrassment or confusion in the lovely face. Any other girl in the world, he thought, would have jerked her hand away and giggled furiously. Aunt Yvonne in-

you had left the station," he said.

"We are waiting for Uncle Caspar, who is giving Hedrick instructions. Hedrick, you know, is to go on to New York with our boxes. He will have them aboard ship when we arrive there. All that we have with us is hand luggage. We leave Washington tonight."

"I had hoped you might stay over for a few days."

"It is urgent business that compels us to leave so hastily, Mr. Lorry. Of all the cities in the world, I have most desired to see the capital of your country. Perhaps I may return some day. But do not let us detain you if you are in a hurry."

He started, looked guilty, stammered something about baggage, said he would return in a moment, and rushed aimlessly away, his ears fiery.

"I'm all kinds of a fool," he muttered as he raced around the baggage room and then back to where he had left the two ladies. Mr. Guggenslocker had joined them, and they were preparing to depart. Miss Guggenslocker's face expressed pleasure at seeing him.

"We thought you would never return, so long were you gone," she cried gayly. He had been gone just two minutes by the watch. The old gentleman greeted him warmly, and Lorry asked them to what hotel they were going. On being informed that they expected to spend the day at the Ebbitt he volunteered to accompany them, saying that he intended to breakfast there. Quicker than a flash a glance unfathomable as it was brief passed between the three, not quickly enough, however, to escape his keen, watchful eyes, on the alert since the beginning of his acquaintance with them, in conjunction with his ears, to catch something that might satisfy in a measure his burning curiosity. What was the meaning of that glance? It half angered him, for in it he thought he could distinguish annoyance, apprehension, dismay or something equally disquieting. Before he could stiffen his long frame and give vent to the dignified reconsideration that flew to his mind the young lady dispelled all pain and displeasure, sending him into raptures by saying:

"How good of you! We shall be so delighted to have you breakfast with us, Mr. Lorry, if it is convenient for you. You can talk to us of your wonderful city. I am sure we cannot trouble you much longer."

He expostulated gallantly and delightedly and then hurried forth to call a cab. At 8 o'clock he breakfasted with them, his infatuation growing deeper and stronger as he sat for the hour beneath the spell of those eyes, the glorious face, the sweet, imperial air that was a part of her, strange and unaffected. As they were leaving the dining room he asked if she would not drive with him.

His ardent gallantry met with a surprising rebuke. Her voice, a moment ago sweet and affable, changed its tone instantly to one so proud and arrogant that he could scarcely believe his ears.

"I shall be engaged during the entire day, Mr. Lorry," she said slowly, looking him fairly in the eyes with cruel positiveness. For a moment he dared not speak.

"I have reason to feel thankful that you are to be engaged," he said at last calmly, without taking his eyes from hers. "I am forced to believe, much to my regret, that I have offended when I intended to please. You will pardon my temerity."

There was no mistaking the resentment in his voice or the glitter in his eyes. Impulsively her little hand was stretched forth, falling upon his arm, while into her eyes came again the soft glow and to her lips the most pathetic, appealing smile, the forerunner of a pretty plea for forgiveness. The change startled and puzzled him more than ever. In one moment she was unreasonably rude and imperious, in the

next gracious and imploring.

"Forgive me," she cried, the blue eyes battling bravely against the steel in the gray ones above. "I was so uncivil! Perhaps I cannot make you understand why I spoke as I did, but let me say, I richly deserved the rebuke. Pray forgive me and forget that I have been disagreeable. Do not ask me to tell you why I was so rude to you just now, but overlook my unkind treatment of your invitation. Please, Mr. Lorry, I beg of you—I beg for the first time in my life. You have been so good to me, be good to me still."

His wrath melted away like snow before the sunshine. How could he resist such an appeal? "I beg for the first time in my life," whirled in his brain. What did she mean by that?

"I absolve the penitent," he said gravely.

"I thank you. You are still my ideal American—courteous, bold and gentle. I do not wonder that Americans can be masterful men. And now I thank you for your invitation and ask you to let me withdraw my implied refusal. If you will take me for the drive I shall be delighted and more than grateful."

"You make me happy again," he said softly, as they drew near the elder members of the party, who had paused to wait for them. "I shall ask your uncle and aunt to accompany us."

"Uncle Caspar will be busy all day, but I am sure my aunt will be charmed. Aunt Yvonne, Mr. Lorry has asked us to drive with him over the city, and I have accepted for you. When are we to start, Mr. Lorry?"

Mr. and Mrs. Guggenslocker stared in a bewildered sort of manner at their niece. Then Aunt Yvonne turned questioning eyes toward her husband, who promptly bowed low before the tall American and said:

"Your kind offices shall never be forgotten, sir. When are the ladies to be ready?"

Lorry was weighing in his mind the advisability of asking them to dine in the evening with his mother, but two objections presented themselves readily—first, he was afraid of this perverse maid; second, he had not seen his mother. In fact, he did not know that she was in town.

"At 2 o'clock, I fancy. That will give us the afternoon. You leave at 9 tonight, do you not?"

"Yes. And will you dine with us this evening?" Her invitation was so unexpected in view of all that had happened that he looked askance. "Ach, you must not treat my invitation as I did yours!" she cried merrily, although he could detect the blush that returns with the recollection of a reprimand. "You should profit by what I have been taught." The girl abruptly threw her arm about her aunt and cried as she drew away in the direction of her room: "At 2, then, and at dinner this evening. I bid you good morning, Mr. Lorry."

The young man, delighted with the turn of affairs, but dismayed by what seemed a summary dismissal, bowed low. He waited until the strange trio entered the elevator and then sauntered downstairs, his hands in his pockets, his heart as light as air.

In an hour he was at home and relating to his mother the story of his wanderings, neglecting for reasons best known to himself the events which occurred after Denver had been left behind, except for a casual allusion to "a party of foreigners." At 1 o'clock, faultlessly attired, he descended to the brougham, telling Mrs. Lorry that he had invited some strangers to see the city. On the way downtown he remembered that he was in business—the law business—and that it would be well to drop in and let his uncle know he was in the city. On second thought, however, he concluded it was too near 2 o'clock to waste any time on business, so the office did not know that he was in town until the next day, and then to no great extent.

Continued on Page Nine