

# GRAUSTARK

... By ...  
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CHAPTER I.—Greenfall 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 sliding stage tumbles the passengers about. III.—Lorry dines with the foreign party, consisting of Miss Guggenlocker, Uncle Caspar and Aunt Yvonne. They are natives of Graustark, a country Lorry had never heard of before. IV.—Lorry shows the foreigners the sights of Washington. They leave for New York to sail on the Kaiser Wilhelm. Miss Guggenlocker naively calls Lorry "ideal American" and invites him to come and see her at Edelweiss. V.—Wildly infatuated, Lorry hurries to New York. The name Guggenlocker is not on the steamer list. He sees the steamer off. Miss G. waves him a kiss from the deck. VI.—Lorry joins his old friend, Harry Anguish, an American artist, in Paris. Graustark and its capital, Edelweiss, are located by a guide book. The Americans get no trace of the Guggenlockers there. VII.—Lorry sees his charmer driving in a carriage with a beautiful companion of her own sex. He gets a glance of recognition, but the carriage rolls on, leaving the mystery unsolved. Later he receives a note at his hotel signed Sophia Guggenlocker, inviting him to visit her next day. VIII.—In the evening Lorry and Anguish ramble about the grounds of the castle where dwells the court of the Princess of Graustark. They overhear a plot to abduct the princess and resolve to capture the plotters red handed. IX.—Following the conspirators, Lorry finds himself in a room he heard them designate as that of the princess. X.—Lorry tells the princess of the plot. Mutual recognition; she is Miss Guggenlocker. Danno, the guard, is in the abduction plot. He tells Lorry with a terrible blow. Anguish to the rescue. XI.—Lorry quarters in the castle. The princess visits him, but forbids all talk of love. XII.—Graustark is bankrupt and owes the neighboring principedom of Axphain \$30,000,000. The creditor demands cash or the cession of the richest districts of Graustark. XIII.—The Prince of Axphain offers to extend the loan if the princess will marry his son Lorenz. Prince Gabriel of Dowsbergen also bids for the princess's hand with offer of a loan. Yvette tells Lorry that she belongs to her people and will marry Lorenz.

When Anguish announced that his principal chose pistols, a strange gleam crept into the eyes of the Axphainians, and they seemed satisfied. Colonel Atobawn acted as interpreter during this short but very important interview, which was carried on in the Axphain language. Lorry sat on the window sill steadfastly gazing into the night. The visitors departed soon, and it was understood that Prince Lorenz would condescend to meet Mr. Lorry at 8 o'clock on the next morning in the valley beyond the castle, two miles from town. There was no law prohibiting duels in Graustark.

"Well, you're in for it, old man," said Anguish gloomily, his chin in his hands as he fastened melancholy eyes upon his friend.

"Don't worry about me, Harry. There's only one way for this thing to end. His royal highness is doomed." Lorry spoke with the earnestness and conviction of one who is permitted to see into the future.

Calmly he prepared to write some letters, not to say farewell, but to explain to certain persons the cause of the duel and to say that he gloried in the good fortune which had presented itself. One of these letters was addressed to his mother, another to the rather of Prince Lorenz and the last to the Princess of Graustark. To the latter he wrote much that did not appear in the epistles directed to the others. Anguish had been in his room more than an hour and had frequently called to his friend and begged him to secure what rest he could in order that their nerves might be steady in the morning. But it was not until after midnight that the duelist sealed the envelopes, directed them and knocked at his second's door to say:

"I shall intrust these letters to you, Harry. You must see that they start on their way tomorrow."

Then he went to bed and to sleep.

At 6 o'clock his second, who had

slept but little, called him. They dressed hurriedly and prepared for the ride to the valley. Their own new English bulldog revolvers were to serve as weapons in the coming combat, and a carriage was to be in waiting for them in a side street at 7 o'clock.

Before leaving their room they heard evidences of commotion in the hotel and were apprehensive lest the inmates had learned of the duel and were making ready to follow the fighters to the appointed spot. There was a confusion of voices, the sound of rushing feet, the banging of doors, the noise increasing as the two men stepped into the open hall. They were amazed to see half dressed men and women standing or running about the halls, intense excitement in their faces and in their actions. White uniformed policemen were flocking into the corridors. Soldiers, coatless and hatless, fresh from their beds, came dashing upon the scene. There were excited cries, angry shouts and, more mystifying than all, horrified looks and whis-



"Don't you dare to drink that toast!"

"What has happened?" asked Lorry, stopping near the door.

"It can't be a fire. Look! The door to that room down there seems to be the center of attraction. Hold on! Don't go over there, Lorry. There may be something to unnerve you, and that must not happen now. Let us go down this stairway. It leads to a side entrance, I think." They were half way down the stairs when the thunder of rushing feet in the hall above came to their ears, causing them to hesitate between curiosity and good judgment. "They are coming this way."

"Hear them how! What the devil can be the cause of all this rumpus?" cried the other.

At that instant a half dozen police guards appeared at the head of the stairs. Upon seeing the Americans they stopped and turned as if to oppose a foe approaching from the opposite direction. Baron Dangloss separated himself from the white coats above and called to the men below. In alarm they started for the street door. He

was with them in an instant, his usually red face changing from white to purple, his anxious eyes darting first toward the group above and then toward the bewildered Americans.

"What's the matter?" demanded Lorry.

"There! See!" cried Dangloss, and even as he spoke a conflict began at the head of the stairs, the police, augmented by a few soldiers, struggling against a bowling, enraged mass of Axphainians. Dangloss dragged his reluctant charges through a small door, and they found themselves in the baggage room of the hotel. Despite their queries he offered no explanation, but rushed them along, passing out of the opposite door, down a short stairway and into a side street. A half dozen police guards were awaiting them, and before they could catch the faintest idea of what it all meant they were running with the officers through an alley as if pursued by demons.

"Now, what in thunder does this mean?" panted Lorry, attempting to slacken the pace. He and Anguish were just beginning to regain their senses.

"Do not stop! Do not stop!" wheezed Dangloss. "You must get to a place of safety. We cannot prevent something dreadful happening if you are caught!"

"If we are caught!" cried Anguish.

"Why, what have we done?"

"Unhand me, Baron Dangloss. This is an outrage!" shouted Lorry.

"For heaven's sake, be calm! We are befriending you. When we reach the tower, where you will be safe, I shall explain," gasped the panting chief of police. A few moments later they were inside the prison gates, angry, impatient, fatigued.

"Is this a plan to prevent the duel?" demanded Lorry, turning upon the chief, who had dropped limply into a chair and was mopping his brow. When he could find his breath enough to answer, Dangloss did so, and he might as well have thrown a bombshell at their feet.

"There'll be no duel. Prince Lorenz is dead!"

"Dead!" gasped the others.

"Found dead in his bed, stabbed to the heart!" exclaimed the chief. "We have saved you from his friends, gentlemen, but I must say that you are still in a tight place."

He then related to them the whole story. Just before 6 o'clock Mizrox had gone to the prince's room to prepare him for the duel. The door was closed, but unlocked, as he found after repeated knockings. Lorenz was lying on the bed, undressed and covered with blood. The horrified duke made a hasty examination and found that he was dead. A dagger had been driven to his heart as he slept. The hotel was aroused, the police were called, and the excitement was at its highest pitch when the two friends came from their room a few minutes after 6.

"But what have we to do with this dreadful affair? Why are we rushed off here like criminals?" asked Lorry, a feeling of cruel gladness growing out of the knowledge that Lorenz was dead and that the princess was freed from her compact.

"My friend," said Dangloss slowly, "you are accused of the murder."

Lorry was too much stunned to be angry, too weak to protest. For some moments after the blow fell he and Anguish were speechless. Then came the protestations, the rage and the threats, through all of which Dangloss sat calmly. Finally he sought to quiet them, partially succeeding.

"Mr. Lorry, the evidence is very strong against you, but you shall not be unjustly treated. You are not a prisoner as yet. In Graustark a man who is accused of murder and who was

not seen by any one to commit the crime cannot be legally arrested until an accuser shall go before the princess, who is also high priestess, and swear on his life that he knows the guilty

man. The man who so accuses agrees to forfeit his own life in case the other is proved innocent. If you are to be charged with the murder of the prince, some one must go before the princess and take oath—his life against yours. I am holding you here, sir, because it is the only place in which you are safe. Lorenz's friends would have torn you to pieces had we not found you first. You are not prisoners, and you may depart if you think it wise."

"But how can they accuse me? I knew nothing of the murder until I reached this place," cried Lorry, stopping short in his restless walk before the little baron.

"So you say, but"—

"If you accuse me, I'll kill you!" whispered Lorry, holding himself tense. Anguish caught and held him.

"Be calm, sir," cautioned Dangloss. "I may have my views, but I am not willing to take oath before her royal highness. Listen: You were heard to say you would kill him. You began the fight. You were the aggressor, and there is no one else on earth, it is said, who could have wished to murder him. The man who did the stabbing entered the room through the hall door and left by the same. There are drops of blood in the carpet, leading direct to your door. On your knob are the prints of bloody fingers where you—

or some one else—placed his hand in opening the door. It was this discovery, made by me and my men, that fully convinced the enraged friends of the dead prince that you were guilty. When we opened the door, you were gone. Then came the search, the fight at the head of the stairs and the race to the prison. The reason I saved you from that mob should be plain to you. I love my princess, and I do not forget that you risked your life, each of you, to protect her. I have done all that I can, gentlemen, to protect you in return. It means death to you if you fall into the hands of his followers just now. A few hours will cool them off no doubt, but now—now it would be madness to face them. I know not what they have done to my men at the hotel—perhaps butchered them."

There was anxiety in Dangloss' voice, and there was honesty in his keen old eyes. His charges now saw the situation clearly and apologized warmly for the words they had uttered under the pressure of somewhat extenuating circumstances. They expressed a willingness to remain in the prison until the excitement abated or until some one swore his life against the supposed murderer. They were virtually prisoners, and they knew it well. Furthermore, they could see that Baron Dangloss believed Lorry guilty of the murder. Protestations of innocence had been politely received and politely disregarded.

"Do you expect one of his friends to take the oath?" asked Lorry.

"Yes; it is sure to come."

"But you will not do so yourself?"

"No."

"I thank you, captain, for I see that you believe me guilty."

"I do not say you are guilty, remember, but I will say that if you did murder Prince Lorenz you have made the people of Graustark rejoice from the bottoms of their hearts, and you will be eulogized from one end of the land to the other."

"Hanged and eulogized," said Lorry grimly.

(Continued)

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