

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 flies stop 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 riling 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 her "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 falls Lorry with a terrible blow. Anguish to the rescue. XI.—Lorry quartered 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 Dawsbergen also bids for the princess's hand with offer of a loan. Yvonne tells Lorry that she belongs to her people and will marry Lorenz.

ily, he should be recaptured if it required the efforts of all the policemen in Edelweiss. The chagrin of the grim old captain, who had never lost a prisoner, was pitiful to behold.

The forenoon was half over before Harry Anguish heard of his friend's escape. To say that he was paralyzed would be putting it much too mildly. There is no language that can adequately describe his sensations. Forgetting his bodyguard, he tore down the street toward the prison, wild with anxiety and doubt. He met Baron Dangloss, tired and worn, near the gate, but the old officer could tell him nothing except what he had learned from



"Oh, I beg pardon!"

Ogbot. Of one thing there could be no doubt—Lorry was gone. Not knowing where to turn or what to do, Anguish raced off to the castle, his bodyguard having located him in the meantime. He was more in need of their protec-

tion than ever.

At the castle gates he encountered a party of raving Axphainians, crazed with anger over the flight of the man whose life they had thirsted for so ravenously. Had he been unprotected Anguish would have fared badly at their hands, for they were outspoken in their assertions that he had aided Lorry in the escape. One fiery little fellow cast a glove in the American's face and expected a challenge. Anguish snapped his fingers and sarcastically invited the insulter to meet him next winter in a battle with snowballs, upon which the aggressor blasphemed in three languages and 300 gestures.

Anguish and his men passed inside the gates, which had been barred to the others, and struck out rapidly for the castle doors.

The Princess Yvonne was sleeping soundly, peacefully, with a smile on her lips, when her prime minister sent an excited attendant to inform her of the prisoner's escape. She sat up in bed, and, with her hands clasped about her knees, sleepily announced that she would receive him after her coffee was served. Then she summoned her maids.

Her uncle and aunt, the Countess Dagmar (whose merry brown eyes were so full of pretended dismay that the princess could scarcely restrain a smile), and Gaspon, the minister of finance, were awaiting her appearance. She heard the count's story of the escape, marveled at the prisoner's audacity and firmly announced that everything possible should be done to apprehend him. With a perplexed frown on her brow and a dubious twist to her lips, she said:

"I suppose I must offer a reward?"
"Certainly!" exclaimed her uncle.
"About 50 gavvos, uncle?"
"Fifty!" cried the two men, aghast.
"Isn't that enough?"
"For the murderer of a prince?" demanded Gaspon. "It would be absurd, your highness. He is a most important person."

"Quite so. He is a most important person. I think I'll offer 5,000 gavvos."
"More like it. He is worth that, at least," agreed Uncle Caspar.

"Beyond a doubt," sanctioned Gaspon.

"I am glad you do not consider me extravagant," she said demurely. "You may have the placards printed at once," she went on, addressing the treasurer. "Say that a reward of 5,000 gavvos will be paid to the person who delivers Grenfall Lorry to me."

"Would it not be better to say 'delivers Grenfall Lorry to the tower?'" submitted Gaspon.

"You may say 'to the undersigned' and sign my name," she said reflectively.

"Very well, your highness. They shall be struck off this morning."

"In large type, Gaspon. You must catch him if you can," she added. "He is a very dangerous man, and royalty needs protection." With this wise bit of caution she dismissed the subject and began to talk of the storm.

As the two young plotters were hastening up the stairs later on an attendant approached and informed the princess that Mr. Anguish requested an audience.

"Conduct him to my boudoir," she said, her eyes sparkling with triumph. In the seclusion of the boudoir she and the countess laughed like children over the reward that had been so solemnly ordered.

"Five thousand gavvos!" cried Dagmar, leaning back in her chair to emphasize the delight she felt. "What a joke!"

Tap, tap, came a knock on the door, and in the same instant it flew open, for Mr. Anguish was in a hurry. As he plunged into their presence a pair of heels found the floor spasmodically.

"Oh, I beg pardon!" he gasped as if about to fly. "May I come in?"

"Not unless you go outside. You are already in, it seems," said the princess, advancing to meet him. The countess was very still and sedate. "I am so glad you have come."

"Heard about Lorry? The fool is out and gone!" he cried, unable to restrain himself. Without a word she dragged him to the divan, and, between them, he soon had the whole story poured into his ears, the princess on one side, the countess on the other.

"You are a wonder!" he exclaimed when all the facts were known to him. He executed a little dance of approval, entirely out of place in the boudoir of a princess, but very much in touch with prevailing sentiment. "But what's to become of me?" he asked after cooling down. "I have no excuse for remaining in Graustark, and I don't like to leave him here either."

"Oh, I have made plans for you," said she. "You are to be held as hostage."

"What?"

"I thought of your predicament last night, and here is the solution: This very day I shall issue an order forbidding you the right to leave Edelweiss. You will not be in prison, but your every movement is to be watched. A strong guard will have you under surveillance, and any attempt to escape or to communicate with your friend will result in your confinement and his detection. In this way you may stay here until the time comes to fly. The Axphain people must be satisfied, you know. Your freedom will not be disturbed. You may come and go as you like, but you are ostensibly a prisoner. By detaining you forcibly we gain a point, for you are needed here. There is no other way in which you can explain a continued presence in Graustark. Is not my plan a good one?"

"It is beyond comparison," he said, rising and bowing low. "So shrewd is this plan that you make me a hostage forever. I shall not escape its memory if I live to be a thousand."

At parting she said seriously:

"A great deal depends on your discretion, Mr. Anguish. My guards will watch your every action, for they are not in the secret—excepting Quinnox—and any attempt on your part to communicate with Grenfall Lorry will be fatal."

"Trust me, your highness. I have had much instruction in wisdom to-day."

"I hope we shall see you often," she said.

"Daily—as a hostage," he replied, glancing toward the countess.

"That means until the other man is captured," said the young lady saucily.

As he left the castle he gazed at the distant building in the sky and wondered how it had ever been approached in a carriage. She had not told him that Allode drove for miles over wind-

ing roads that led to the monastery up a gentler slope from the rear.

The next afternoon Edelweiss thrilled with a new excitement. Prince Bolarov of Axphain, mad with grief and rage, came thundering into the city with his court at his heels. His wrath had been increased until it resembled a tornado when he read the reward placard in the uplands. Not until then did he know that the murderer had escaped and that vengeance might be de-

nied him.

After viewing the body of Lorenz as it lay in the sarcophagus of the royal palace, where it had been borne at the command of the Princess Yvonne, he demanded audience with his son's betrothed, and it was with fear that she prepared for the trying ordeal, an interview with the grief crazed old man. The castle was in a furore. Its halls soon thronged with diplomatists and there was an ugly sense of trouble in the air, suggestive of the explosion which follows the igniting of a powder magazine.

The slim, pale faced princess met the burly old ruler in the grand council chamber. He and his nobles had been kept waiting but a short time. Within a very few minutes after they had been conducted to the chamber by Count Halfont and other dignitaries the fair ruler came into the room and advanced between the bowing lines of courtiers to the spot where sat the man who held Graustark in his grasp.

Bolarov arose as she drew near, his gaunt face black and unfriendly. She extended her hand graciously, and he, a prince for all his wrath, touched his trembling lips to its white, smooth back.

"I come in grief and sadness to your court, most glorious Yvonne. My burden of sorrow is greater than I can bear," he said hoarsely.

"Would that I could give you consolation," she said, sitting in the chair reserved for her use at council gatherings. "Alas, it grieves me that I can offer nothing more than words." Truly she pitied him in his bereavement.

Bolarov said that he had heard of the murderer's escape and asked what effort was being made to recapture him. Yvonne related all that had happened, expressing humiliation over the fact that her officers had been unable to accomplish anything, adding that she did not believe the fugitive could get away from Graustark safely without her knowledge. The old prince was working himself back into the violent rage that had been temporarily subdued, and at last broke out in a vicious denunciation of the carelessness that had allowed the man to escape. He first insisted that Dangloss and his incompetent assistants be thrown into prison for life of executed for criminal negligence; then he demanded the life of Harry Anguish as an aider and abettor in the flight of the murderer. In both cases the princess firmly refused to take the action demanded. Then she acquainted him with her intention to detain Anguish as hostage and to have his every action watched in the hope that a clew to the whereabouts of the fugitive might be discovered, providing, of course, that the friend knew anything at all about the matter. The Duke of Mizrox and others loudly joined in the cry for Anguish's arrest, but she bravely held out against them and in the end curtly informed them that the American, whom she believed to be innocent of all complicity in the escape, should be subjected to no indignity other than detention in the city under guard, as she had ordered.

"I insist that this man be cast into prison at once," snarled the white lipped Bolarov.

"You are not at liberty to command in Graustark, Prince Bolarov," she said slowly and distinctly. "I am ruler here."

Bolarov gasped and was speechless for some seconds.

"You shall not be ruler long, madam," he said malevolently, significantly.

"But I am ruler now, and, as such, I ask your highness to withdraw from my castle. I did not know that I was to submit to these threats and insults or I should not have been kind enough to grant you an audience, prince though you are. When I came to this room, it was to give you my deepest sympathy and to receive yours, not to be insulted.

(Continued)