

THE MYSTERY OF COUNT LANDRINF
BY FRED YIMSHAW
CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE

and anxiety difficult to be borne. I could settle down to nothing; neither did our little detective display any marked degree of dignified calm. He was greatly excited, and he spent the time together in playing billiards at home and discussing at great length and with much vain repetition the chances for and against the success of Percy's efforts. Borofsky was, though much excited, quite sanguine and almost confident that for some inexplicable reason his poor father had fled to London without warning mother of his departure and that Percy had accidentally found him there. He would not discuss the question as to why father should have done this. The most plentiful of times for explanations, he said, afterward. The main point now was to make sure that the count was safe and well and to know where he had him at any moment. It might not even be necessary to bring him back at once should he have good reason to desire to remain away. There might be financial troubles or a quarrel with the authorities.

"Both utterly impossible, Borofsky!" I said. "My father is a rich man, and the authorities from the lowest chinovnik to the czar respect and esteem him."

"My dear young sir," said Borofsky, "neither you nor I can see in the dark. Rather than grope about and knock his shine against the furniture the wise man will wait for light, and so will we."

We had not mentioned to mother the object of Percy's trip to London. She had naturally concluded that he had business of his own to attend to, and was pleased and grateful when he promised her, at parting, that he would not be absent long and would return to help her in my discouraging task of finding father. We met Percy on the afternoon of the third day, and as Borofsky and I tramped the platform of the Warsaw station, awaiting the arrival of his train, I, for one, was in such a state of mind that I had not a word to say to my companion by reason of the quaking of my jaws and the rapid beating of my heart, and I fancy Borofsky, though he had as much less at stake on the result of Percy's trip, was not much less agitated than I. Slowly and laboriously the train dragged itself into the station, as Russian trains do. There is none of that fine rushing in at full speed and pulling up short at the very platform in the admirable manner of our English engines. The lumbering, wood burning thing, had an immense distance to go, you see, and is no doubt so tired that it can scarcely drag itself and its heavy load of carriages into the haven where it would be received. Percy's train, coming slowly and mournfully in at last, and out jumped Percy.

I could see at once by his radiant face and the pleased smile with which he greeted us that the dear old fellow had been successful, or believed himself to have succeeded, in his enterprise. I sprang to him and seized his hand.

"Well, old man," I murmured, scarcely able for excitement to articulate the words, "what luck?"

"The very best, as I sincerely believe," said Percy, pressing my hand very hard. "I found the man, as I told you, and I know where he lives and—"

"Oh, is it father?" I blurted, a sort of black mist seeming to form before my eyes for very intensity of excitement.

"Dear old Boris, I firmly believe it is," said Percy. "I cannot say for certain, but there could hardly be another so like him that I could be mistaken about. He has no twin brother, has he?"

"Oh, no!" I murmured. "I think it must be he. But why, why?—I did not finish my sentence. I believe I burst into tears and was hurried into the carriage by Percy and Borofsky. There were not very many people about, the train having been nearly empty. I hope there were few witnesses to my weakness.

Borofsky took up the conversation in the carriage. "So you think it is really the count?" he began. "Tell me, did you get a snap shot?"

"I got three," said Percy with pride, "and was not caught at it. Twice. I

"This is a hand camera," I said, "and I've just taken a snap shot."

"He did not even see or notice me. The third time he looked straight at me and suspected me, I suppose, for he asked what I was doing."

"This is a hand camera," I said, "and I've just taken a snap shot of Marylebone church, with your kind permission. He only granted and passed on." Percy paused and laughed. "How did he talk English?" I asked.

"Rather brokenly—but that was all he said, so that I cannot judge very well."

"My father speaks perfectly, as you know," I said.

"It is nothing!" exclaimed Borofsky, "he would assume a foreign accent, supposing that he does not wish to be recognized as the count. Are the portraits successful?"

"The photos are not developed yet," replied Percy. "We'll do them together after dinner, or before, if there's time."

The developing of those three photos was an exciting operation. The printing from the negatives next morning was even more so. The prints represented a man whose dress and general appearance were plebeian and altogether unlike my dear patrician looking old father, but the face—so far as I could judge of it from a portrait, and that a very small and not overclearly printed one—was my father's face. There was little or no doubt of it.

"Well!" said Borofsky, when I had made a prolonged and silent inspection of each of the three photos. "In a word, is it the count or is it not?"

"Heaven only knows," I murmured. "The clothes and the hat are things that father would never think of wearing."

"Do remember," said Borofsky, somewhat impatiently, "that if this is your father, he is—for reasons of his own which have nothing to do with us at this point of the investigation—disguised. The main question is not as to the clothes, but the man inside them."

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