

Long Live The King

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

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The leader nodded. "By chance," said the con-
 ceal, "this—this brave veteran"—he glanced
 contemptuously at the huddled figure
 in the chair—"has come across an old
 passage, the one which rumor has said
 by under the city wall, and for which
 we have at different times instituted
 search."

He paused, to give his words weight.
 That they were of supreme interest
 could be told by the craning forward
 of the committee.
 "The entrance is concealed at the
 base of the old Gate of the Moon. Our
 friend here followed it, and reports
 it in good condition. For a mile or
 thereabouts it follows the line of the
 destroyed wall. Then it turns and
 goes to the palace itself."

"Into the palace?"
 "By a flight of stairs, inside the
 wall, to a door in the roof. This door,
 which was locked, he opened, having
 carried keys with him. The door he
 describes as in the tower. As it was
 night, he could not see clearly, but
 the roof at that point is flat."

"Stand up, Adelbert," said the leader
 sharply. "This that our comrade tells
 is true?"

"It is true, excellency."

"Shown a diagram of the palace,
 could you locate this door?"

Old Adelbert stared around him
 hopelessly. It was done now. Nothing
 that he could say or refuse to say
 would change that. He nodded.

When, soon after, a chart of the
 palace was placed on the table, he in-



"It Is There," He Said Thickly.

indicated the location of the door with a
 trembling forefinger. "It is there," he
 said thickly. "And may God forgive
 me for the thing I have done!"

CHAPTER XV.

King Karl.

"They love us dearly!" said King
 Karl.
 The chancellor, who sat beside him
 in the royal carriage, shrugged his
 shoulders. "They have had little
 reason to love, in the past, majesty," he
 said briefly.

Karl laughed, and watched the
 crowd. He and the chancellor rode
 alone, Karl's entourage, a very modest
 one, following in another carriage.
 There was no military escort, no pomp.
 It had been felt unwise. Karl, paying
 ostensibly a visit of sympathy, had
 come unofficially.

The chancellor was not so calm as
 he appeared. He had lined the route
 from the station to the palace with his
 men; had prepared for every conting-
 ency so far as he could without call-
 ing out the guard. As the carriage,
 drawn by its four chestnut horses,
 moved slowly along the streets, his
 eyes under their overhanging thatch
 were watching ahead, searching the
 crowd for symptoms of unrest.

Anger he saw in plenty, and
 suspicion. Scowling faces and frow-
 ning brows. But as yet there was no
 disorder. He sat with folded arms,
 magnificent in his uniform beside Karl,
 who wore civilian dress and looked
 less royal than perhaps he felt.

And Karl, too, watched the crowd,
 feeling its temper and feigning an in-
 difference he did not feel. Olga Los-
 chek had been right. He did not want
 trouble. More than that, he was of
 an age now to crave popularity. Many
 of the measures which had made him
 beloved in his own land had no higher
 purpose than this, the smiles of the
 crowd. So he watched and talked of
 indifferent things.

"It is ten years since I have been

here," he observed, "but there are few
 changes."

"We have built no great buildings,"
 said Mettlich bluntly. "Wars have left
 us no money, majesty, for building!"

That being a closed road, so to
 speak, Karl tried another. "The
 crown-prince must be quite a lad," he
 experimented. "He was a babe in
 arms, then, but frail, I thought."

"He is sturdy now." The chancellor
 relaxed into watchfulness.
 "Before I see the Princess Hedwig,"
 Karl made another attempt. "It might
 be well to tell me how she feels about
 things. I would like to feel that the
 prospect is at least not disagreeable to
 her."

The chancellor was not listening.
 There was trouble ahead. It had come,
 then, after all. He muttered some-
 thing behind his gray mustache. The
 horses stopped, as the crowd suddenly
 closed in front of them.

"Drive on!" he said angrily, and the
 coachman touched his whip to the
 horses. But they only reared, to be
 grasped at the bridles by hostile hands
 ahead.

Karl half rose from his seat.
 "Sit still, majesty," said the chancel-
 lor. "It is the students. They will
 talk, that is all."

But it came perilously near to be-
 ing a riot. Led by some students,
 pushed by others, the crowd sur-
 rounded the two carriages, first mut-
 tering, then yelling. A stone was
 hurled, and struck one of the horses.
 Another dented the body of the car-
 riage itself. A man with a handker-
 chief tied over the lower half of his
 face mounted the shoulders of two
 companions, and harangued the crowd.
 They wanted no friendship with Kar-
 nia. Were they to lose their national
 existence? He exhorted them manly
 through the handkerchief. A babel of



A Babel of Noise, of Swinging Back and Forth.

noise, of swinging back and forth, of
 mounted police pushing, through to
 surround the carriage, of cries and the
 dominating voices of the student
 demagogues. Then at last a semblance
 of order, low muttering, an escort of
 police with drawn revolvers around the
 carriage, and it moved ahead.

Through it all the chancellor had sat
 with folded arms. Only his livid face
 told of his fury. Karl, too, had sat im-
 passive, picking at his small mustache.
 But, as the carriage moved on, he
 said: "A few moments ago I observed
 that there had been few changes. But
 there has been, I perceive, after all, a
 great change."

"One cannot judge the many by the
 few, majesty."

But Karl only raised his eyebrows.
 In his rooms, removing the dust of
 his journey, broken by the automobile
 trip across the mountains where the
 two railroads would some day meet,
 Karl reflected on the situation. A dual
 monarchy, one portion of it restless
 and revolutionary, was less desirable
 than the present peace and prosperity
 of Karnia. And unrest was contagious.
 He might find himself in a difficult
 position.

He glanced about his rooms. In one
 of them Prince Hubert had met his
 death. It was well enough for Met-
 tlich to say the few could not speak for
 the many. It took but one man to do
 a murder, Karl reflected grimly.

But when he arrived for tea in the
 archduchess' white drawing room he
 was urbane and smiling. He kissed
 the hand of the archduchess and bent
 over Hedwig's with a flash of white
 teeth.

Then he saw Olga Loschek, and his
 smile stiffened. The countess came
 forward, greeted, and as he extended

his hand to her, touched it lightly
 with her lips. They were quite cold.
 For just an instant their eyes met.

It was, on the surface, an amiable
 and quiet tea party. Hedwig had
 taken up her position by a window,
 and was conspicuously silent. Behind
 her were the soft ring of silver against
 china, the countess' gay tones, Karl's
 suave ones, assuming gravity, as he
 inquired as to his majesty's health;
 the Archduchess Annunziata pretend-
 ing a solicitude she did not feel. And
 all forced, all artificial.

"Grandmother," Hedwig whispered
 from her window to the austere old
 bronze figure in the place, "was it
 like this with you, at first? Did you
 shiver when he touched your hand?
 And doesn't it matter, after a year?"

"Very feeble," said the archduchess,
 voice, behind her, "but so brave—a
 lesson to us all!"

"He has had a long and conspicuous
 career," Karl observed. "It is sad, but
 we must all come to it. I hope he will
 be able to see me."

"Hedwig!" said her mother, sharp-
 ly, "your tea is getting cold."
 Hedwig turned toward the room.
 Listlessness gave her an added dignity,
 a new charm. Karl's eyes flamed as
 he watched her. Even her coldness
 appealed to him. He had a feeling
 that the coldness was only a young
 girl's armor, that under it was a deep-
 ly passionate woman. The thought of
 seeing her come to deep, vibrant life
 in his arms thrilled him.

When he carried her tea to her, he
 bent over her. "Please!" he said.
 "Try to like me, I—"

"I'm sorry," Hedwig said quickly.
 "Mother has forgotten the lemon."

Karl smiled and, shrugging his
 shoulders, fetched the lemon. "Right,
 now," he inquired. "And aren't we
 going to have a talk together?"

"If you wish it, I dare say we shall."
 "Majesty," said Hilda, frowning into
 her teacup. "I see a marriage for
 you." She ignored her mother's scowl,
 and tilted her cup to examine it.

"A marriage!" Karl joined her, and
 peered with mock anxiety at the tea
 grounds. "Strange that my fate
 should be confined in so small a com-
 pass! A happy marriage? Which am
 I?"

"The long yellow leaf. Yes, it looks
 happy. But you may be rather
 shocked when I tell you."

"Shocked?"
 "I think," said Hilda, grinning, "that
 you are going to marry me."

"Delightful!"
 "And we are going to have—"

"Hilda!" cried the archduchess fret-
 fully. "Do stop that nonsense and let
 us talk. I was trying to recall, this
 morning," she said to Karl, "when you
 last visited us." She knew it quite
 well, but she preferred having Karl
 think she had forgotten. "It was, I
 believe, just before Hubert—"

"Yes," said Karl gravely, "just be-
 fore."
 "Otto was a baby then."

"A very small child. I remember
 that I was afraid to handle him."

"He is a curious boy, old beyond his
 years. Rather a little prig, I think.
 He has an English governess, and she
 has made him quite a little woman."

Karl laughed, but Hedwig flushed.
 "He is not that sort at all," she
 declared stoutly. "He is lonely and—
 rather pathetic. The truth is that no
 one really cares for him, except—"

"Except Captain Larisch!" said the
 archduchess smoothly. "You and he,
 Hedwig, have done your best by him,
 surely."

The bit of byplay was not lost on
 Karl—the sudden stiffening of Hed-
 wig's back, Olga's narrowed eyes.
 Olga had been right, then. Trust her
 for knowing facts when they were dis-
 agreeable. His eyes became set and
 watchful, hard, too, had any noticed.
 There were ways to deal with such a
 situation, of course. They were giv-
 ing him this girl to secure their own
 safety, and she knew it. Had he not
 been so mad about her he might have
 pitied her, but he felt no pity, only a
 deep and resentful determination to
 get rid of Nikky, and then to warm
 her by his own fire. He might have
 to break her first. After that manner
 had many queens of Karnia come to
 the throne. He smiled behind his
 small mustache.

When tea was almost over, the
 crown prince was announced. He
 came in, rather nervously, with his
 hands thrust in his trousers pockets.
 He was very shiny with soap and
 water and his hair was still damp
 from parting. In his tailless black
 jacket, his long gray trowsers, and his
 round Eton collar, he looked like a
 very anxious little schoolboy, and not
 royal at all.

Greetings over, and having re-
 quested that his tea be half milk, with
 four lumps of sugar, he carried his
 cup over beside Hedwig, and sat down
 on a chair. Followed a short silence,
 with the archduchess busy with the
 tea things, Olga Loschek watching
 Karl, and Karl intently surveying the
 crown prince. Ferdinand William
 Otto, who disliked a silence, broke it
 first.

"I've just taken off my winter flan-
 nels," he observed. "I feel very
 smooth and nice underneath."

Hilda giggled, but Hedwig reached
 over and stroked his arm. "Of course
 you do," she said gently.

"Nikky," continued Prince William
 Otto, stirring his tea, "does not wear
 any flannels. Miss Braithwaite thinks
 he is very careless."

ject. I do not wear any either. Your
 'Nikky' and I seem most surprisingly
 to have the same tastes—about various
 things."

"Do you like dogs?" inquired the
 crown prince, much interested.

"Dogs! Why, yes. I have quite a
 number of dogs."
 "I should think it would be nice
 to have just one dog, and be very
 fond of it. But I suppose they would
 eat a great deal. Do you believe in
 love at first sight?"

"Otto!" said the archduchess, ex-
 tremely shocked.

He turned to her apologetically. "I
 was only trying to find out how many
 things he and Nikky agreed about,"
 he explained. "Nikky believes in love
 at first sight. He says it is the only
 real kind of love, because love isn't
 a thing you think out. You only feel
 it."

The archduchess met Karl's eyes.
 "You see!" she said.

"But it is sound doctrine," Karl ob-
 served, bending forward and with a
 slanting glance at Hedwig. "I quite
 agree with him again. And this friend
 of yours, he thinks love is the only
 thing in the world, I dare say?"

"Well, he thinks a great deal of it.
 But he says that love of country comes
 first, before anything else."

The archduchess glanced at Hedwig
 furiously. "The girl had closed her
 eyes, and was sitting detached and
 pale. She would have liked to box her
 ears. Karl was no fool, and there was
 talk enough. He would hear it, of
 course."

"Tell us about your pilgrimage,
 Otto," she suggested.

"Well, I went," said the crown
 prince reflectively. "We walked a long
 time, and it was very warm. I have
 quite a large blister, and the arch-
 bishop had to take his shoes off and
 walk in his stockings, because his feet
 hurt. No one saw. It was on a coun-
 try lane. But I'm afraid it didn't do
 very much good." He drew a long
 breath.

"No?" Karl inquired.
 Suddenly the boy's chin quivered.
 He was terribly afraid he was going
 to cry, and took a large sip of tea,
 which cleared his voice.

"My grandfather is not any better,"
 he said. "Perhaps some one else
 should have gone. I am not very
 good," he explained to Karl. "It
 ought to be a very good person. He
 is very sick."

"Perhaps," suggested Karl mock-
 ingly, with a glance at Hedwig, "they
 should have sent this 'Nikky' of
 yours."

Annunziata stirred restlessly. She
 considered this talk of Nikky in
 execrable taste.

"He is not particularly good."
 "Oh, so he is not particularly
 good?"

"Well, he thinks he isn't. He says
 he doesn't find it easy to love his
 country more than anything in the
 world, for one thing. And he smokes
 a great many cigarettes."

"Another taste in common!" jeered
 Karl, in his smooth, carefully ironic
 tones.

Annunziata was in the last stages
 of irritation. There was no mistaking
 the sneer in Karl's voice. His smile
 was forced. She guessed that he had
 heard of Nikky Larisch before, that,
 indeed, he knew probably more than
 she did. Just what, she wondered,
 was there to know? A great deal, if
 one could judge by Hedwig's face.

"I hope you are working hard at
 your lessons, Otto," she said, in the
 severe tone which Otto had learned
 that most people use when they refer
 to lessons.

"I'm afraid I'm not doing very well,
 tante. But I've learned the 'Gettys-
 burg address.' Shall I say it?"

"Heavens, no!" she protested. She
 had not the faintest idea what the
 "Gettysburg address" was. She
 suspected Mr. Gladstone.

The countess had relapsed into sil-
 ence. A little back from the family
 circle, she had watched the whole
 scene stouly, and knowing Karl as
 only a woman who loves sincerely and
 long can know a man, she knew the
 inner workings of his mind. She saw
 anger in the very turn of his head
 and set of his jaw. But she saw more,
 jealousy, and was herself half mad
 with it.

She knew him well. She had her-
 self, for years, held him by holding
 herself dear, by the very difficulty
 of attaining her. And now this indif-
 ferent, white-faced girl, who might be
 his, indeed, for the taking, but who
 would offer or promise no love, was
 rousing him to the instinct of posses-
 sion by her very indifference. He had
 told her the truth, that night in the
 mountain inn. It was Hedwig he
 wanted, Hedwig herself, her heart, all
 of her. And, if she knew Karl, he
 would move heaven and earth to get
 the thing he wanted.

She surveyed the group. How little
 they knew what was in store for them!
 She, Olga Loschek, by the lifting of
 a finger, could turn their smug super-
 ority into tears and despair, could ruin
 them and send them flying for shelter
 to the very ends of the earth.

But when she looked at the little
 crown prince, legs dangling, eating his
 thin bread and butter as only a
 hungry small boy can eat, she shivered.
 By what means must she do all this!
 By what unspeakable means!

(To be continued)

Between the requirements of more
 wheat for the allies and more money
 to support the army Uncle Sam must
 continue to tighten his belt and
 loosen the straps of his pocketbook.

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