

The Goose Girl

By HAROLD MacGRATH

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SYNOPSIS

Gretchen, a goose girl, meets a mysterious mountaineer and Carmichael, American consul in Dreiberg, Kingdom of Ehrenstein. Carmichael loves Princess Hildegard.

Gretchen's lover is Leo, a vintner. The prince regent of Jugendheit sends Hildegard an offer of marriage from King Frederick. The princess was abducted in infancy and later restored to her father, the grand duke.

Gretchen and Leo are to wed after the vintage. Hans Grumbach of America reaches Dreiberg.

Carmichael becomes fond of Grumbach, who admits he was born in Dreiberg. Hildegard's betrothal is announced.

Chancellor Herbeck suspects Grumbach, who later tells Carmichael his real name is Breunner. He has a forged passport. King Frederick refuses to marry Hildegard, who is pleased.

Gretchen takes a letter from a mysterious old woman to Hildegard. This woman is a friend of Hildegard's when she was abducted.

Herbeck prevents the grand duke from declaring war on Jugendheit. Grumbach declares to have been one of the princess' abductors.

Leo, the vintner, escapes when the police raid a Socialist meeting. Gretchen hears he is a spy from Jugendheit. The mountaineer shadows him. Leo lays a trap for Carmichael.

The mountaineer defends Gretchen from insult and offers her a palace and jewels. She declines. An old clock mender is recognized by the mountaineer. Grumbach meets Hildegard and is amazed by a locket she carries.

The grand duke and Herbeck plan to arrest Leo and the mountaineer. Carmichael is abducted by the mountaineer's party, who think he is Leo.

Carmichael tells Hildegard he loves her. Grumbach studies Hildegard with opera glasses. A gypsy claims a reward offered by the clock mender. Grumbach tells Carmichael that he and a gypsy stole the princess.

Grumbach sees a scar on Gretchen's arm and recognizes the gypsy. Grumbach, the clock mender and the gypsy offer to right a great wrong.

Carmichael recognizes Leo, the vintner, as King Frederick of Jugendheit. The mountaineer is his uncle, the prince regent. They are arrested. Gretchen finds she loves a king.

Grumbach tells the grand duke that Gretchen, not Hildegard, is his daughter and the real princess. The grand duke suspects Herbeck as the arch plotter.

Herbeck admits that he had the real princess, Gretchen, abducted and later substituted his own daughter, Hildegard, in her place. King Frederick offers to marry Gretchen.

Hildegard, her disgraced father and Carmichael sail for America. Carmichael's love for Hildegard is returned.

at the man and with her fan back him be seated at her side.

"You have not asked me to dance tonight," she declared.

"I am neither a prince nor an ambassador."

"But you have danced with me."

"Yes; I have been to heaven now and then."

"And do you eject yourself thus easily?"

"By turning myself out my self esteem remains untroubled."

"Then you expected to be turned out?"

"As I have said, I am not a prince. I am only a consul, not even a diplomat, simply a business arm of my government. My diplomacy never ascends above the quality of hops and wines imported. I am supposed to

"AND BECAUSE I LOVE HER!"

take in any wandering sailor, feed him and ship him home. I am also the official guide of all American tourists."

"That is no reason."

"Your father"—He should have said the grand duke.

"Ah, yes; my father, the chancellor, the ambassadors and their wives and daughters! I begin to believe that you have grown afraid of them."

"I confess that I have. I had an adventure last night. Would you like to hear about it?"

"Tell me."

He told her.

"A veiled lady," she mused. "What would you say if I told you that your mystery is no mystery at all? I am the veiled lady. And the person I went to see was my old nurse, my foster mother, with whom I spent the happiest, freest days of my life in the garret at Dresden. Puff! All mysteries may be dispelled if we go to the right person. So you are to be recalled?"

"I have asked for my recall, your highness."

"And so Dreiberg no longer appeals to you? You once told me that you loved it."

"I am cursed with wanderlust, your highness."

"You promised to tell me what she is like."

Suddenly all his fear went away, all his trepidation. The spirit of recklessness which had vided him a little while ago again empowered him. He was afraid of nothing.

"How shall I describe her?" he said. "I have seen only paintings and marbles, and these are inanimate. Have you ever seen ripe wheat in a rain-storm? That is the color of her hair. There are jade and lapis lazuli in her eyes."

He leaned toward her. "And I love her better than life, better than hope, and between us there is the distance of a thousand worlds. So I must give up the dream and go away, as an honorable man should."

Neither of them heard the chancellor's approach.

"And because I love her?"

Her fan dropped to the floor.

"Your highness," broke in the cold, even tones of Herbeck, "your father is making inquiries about you."

Carmichael rose instantly, white as the frill in his shirt.

Hildegard, however, was a princess. She gained her feet leisurely, with a half smile on her lips.

"Count. Herr Carmichael tells me that he is soon to leave Dreiberg."

"Ah!" There was satisfaction in Herbeck's ejaculation. But there was a glint of admiration in his eyes as he recognized the challenge in Carmichael's. "We shall miss Herr Carmichael."

Her highness moved serenely toward the door. Carmichael waited till she was gone from sight; then he stooped and picked up the fan.

The entrance to the vast dual vineyards was made through a small lodge where the dual vintner lived and kept his books and moneys till such time as he should be required to place them before the proper official. Upon the morning following the ball at the palace the vintner was reclining against the outside wall of the gates, smoking his china pipe and generally at peace with the world. He discerned a solitary figure approaching from the direction of Dreiberg—a youthful figure, buoyant of step and confident. Herr Hoffman was rather interested. The youth paused at the gate and inspected the old man highly.

"Herr Hoffman, I want work."

"So? What can you do?"

The youth recounted his abilities.

"I have a letter to you also."

"Let me see it."

Hoffman saw it, but with starting eyes. There was, then, something new under the sun. A picker of grapes recommended by a princess!

"Du lieber Gott! You are Leopold Dietrich?"

"Yes, herr."

"How did you come by this letter?"

"Her serene highness is patron to Gretchen, the goose girl, at whose request the recommendation was given me."

This altered matters. The two entered the office.

"Can you write?"

"A little, herr."

"Then write your name on this piece of paper and that. Each night you will present yours with the number of pounds, which will be credited to you. You must bring it back each morning. If you lose it you will be paid nothing for your labor."

Dietrich wrote his name twice. Still Hoffman was not wholly satisfied with his eyes.

"Gottlieb," he said to one of the men, "take him to terrace 98. We'll see what sort of workman he is." He spoke to Dietrich again. "What is Gretchen to you?" For Hoffman knew Gretchen.

"She is my sweetheart, herr." And there was no mockery in the youth's eyes as he said this.

"Take him along, Gottlieb."

Terrace 98 was given over to small grapes. Thus many bunches had to be picked to fill the basket. But Dietrich went to work with a will. His fingers were deft, and his knife was sharp, and by midnoon he had turned his sixth basket, which was fair work, considering.

As Hoffman did not feed his employees, Dietrich was obliged to beg from his coworkers. Very willingly they shared with him their coarse bread and onions. He ate the bread and stuffed the onions in his pocket. Once more the youth was alone. He set down his basket and laughed. Was there ever such a fine world? The very danger of it was the spice which gave it flavor.

"I love her, I love her!" His face grew bright again, and the wooing blood ran tingling in his veins. "Am I a thief, a scoundrelly thief, because I have that right common to all men to love one woman? Some day I shall suffer for this; some day my heart shall ache. So be it!"

His fingers were growing sore and sticky and there was a twinge in his back as he shouldered his eighth basket and scrambled down to the man who weighed the pick. He was beginning his ninth when he saw Gretchen coming along the purple aisle.

"What a beautiful day!" said Gretchen, with a happy laugh.

"Kiss me."

"When you fill that basket."

"Not before?"

"Not even a little one," mischief in her glance.

Out came the knife, and the vintner piled himself furiously. Gretchen had a knife of her own, and she joined him.

"There!" he said at last. "That's what I call work. But it is worth it. Now!"

Gretchen put her hands behind her back, closed her eyes and raised her chin. He kissed not only the lovely mouth, but the eyes and cheeks and hair.

"I ask only for your love, Gretchen—only that." And he pressed her hands.

"All men are rogues more or less. There are so many currents and eddies entering into a man's life. It is made up of a thousand variant interests. No; man's love is never like a woman's. But remember this, Gretchen—I loved you the best I knew how, as a man loves but once, honorable as it was possible, purely and dearly."

He ripped a bunch of grapes from the vine, a thing no careful vintner should do, and held it toward her.

"Have you ever heard of the kissing cherries?" he asked.

She shook her head. He explained. "This bunch will do very well."

He took one grape at the bottom in his teeth. Gingerly Gretchen did the

GRETCHEN RAISED HER CHIN.

same. Their lips met in a smothered laughter. Then they tried it again.

And this Watteau picture met the gaze of two persons on the terrace below. The empuing face of one threatened an explosion, but the smiling face of the other restrained this vocal thunder. The old head vintner kicked a stone savagely. Gretchen and her lover turned.

[To be Continued]

Sue Hospital for \$100,000.

H. E. Stemmler of Portland, brother of Dr. Laurel A. Stemmler, who had been so brutally maltreated at the Crystal Springs sanitarium near Portland, has filed suit to recover \$100,000 damages from the Sanitarium company, which consists of Dr. R. L. Gillespie, Dr. Henry W. Coe and R. M. Tuttle, suit having been started in the circuit court at Portland Monday morning.

Sensational charges of cruelty and misconduct are contained in the document, which was prepared by Attorney John F. Logan. Associated with him in the action are Judge Henry E. McGinn, Judge Thomas O'Day and Attorney Wilfrid E. Farrell. H. E. Stemmler has been appointed guardian of his brother and suit has been commenced by him in that capacity.

It is charged that the mental and physical suffering due to the unlawful acts of employees of the asylum was not confined to Dr. Stemmler, but that the plaintiff, his guardian, was so shocked on discovering the cruelties and indignities which the weak minded patient was forced to endure that he was reduced to a state necessitating the services of a physician.

Government Dredge Sure On Way.

That the dredge, Oregon, formerly used in the channel project here, but now in Gray's Harbor, is on the way back to Coos Bay is a certainty. A dispatch from the engineer at Portland to Henry Sengstacken, secretary of the Port of Coos Bay advises him that the dredge is now enroute to Coos Bay.

The dredge will start in to make a channel from the Smith mill to the sea, and has a yearly appropriation of \$50,000 from the federal government for its maintenance.

This certainly looks good to the people here, for the improvement is one of the most needed that could be done.—Coos Bay Harbor.

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