

# The Princess Dehra

BY JOHN REED SCOTT.  
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The Duke nodded. "And on what is the notion based?"

"Originally, on hope, I fancy; but lately it has become accepted that the King not only has the power to displace you, but has actually signed the decree."

"And Frederick—does he encourage the idea?"

The Count shook his head. "No except by his open fondness for the American."

"I've been urged to go to Dornitz and kill the American," Lotzen remarked, with a smile and a nod toward Mrs. Spencer. "If you can kill him," said Bigler instantly, "the advice is excellent."

"Exactly. And if I can't, it's the end of me—and my friends."

"I think your friends would gladly try the hazard," the Count answered. "It is dull prospect and small hope for them, even now. And candidly, my lord, to my mind, it's your only chance, if you wish the Crown; for, believe me, the Archduke Armand is fixed for the succession, and the day he weds the Princess Royal will see him formally proclaimed."

The Duke strode to the far end of the room and back again.

"Is that your honest advice—to go to Dornitz?" he asked.

The other arose and raised his hand in salute. "It is, sir; and not mine alone, but Gime's and Rosen's and Whippen's, and all the others—that is what brought me here."

"And have you any plan arranged?"

The Count nodded ever so slightly, then looked the Duke steadily in the face—and the latter understood.

He turned to Madeline Spencer. "Come nearer, my dear," he said, "we may need your quick wit—there is plotting afoot."

She gave him a smile of appreciation, and came and took the chair he offered, and he motioned for Bigler to proceed.

"But, first, tell me," he interjected, "am I to go to Dornitz openly or in disguise? I don't fancy the latter."

"Openly," said the Count. "Having been in exile a month, you can venture to return and throw yourself on Frederick's mercy. We think he will receive you and permit you to remain—but, at least, it will give you two days in Dornitz, and, if our plan does not miscarry, that will be quite ample."

"Very good," the Duke commented; "but my going will depend upon how I like your plot; let us have it—and in it, I trust you have not overlooked my fitness at the Vierle Masque and so hang it all on my single sword."

"Your sword may be very necessary, but, if so, it won't be alone. We have several plans—the one we hope to—"

A light tap on the door interrupted him, and a servant entered, with the bright pink envelope that, in Valeria, always contained a telegram.

"My recall to Court," laughed the Duke, and drawing out the message glanced at it indifferently.

But it seemed to take him under long to read it; and when, at length, he folded it, his face was very grave; and he sat silent, staring at the floor, creasing and rereading the sheet with nervous fingers, and quite oblivious to the two who were watching him, and the servant standing stiffly at attention at his side.

Suddenly, from without, arose a mad din of horses' hoofs and human voices, as the retreating cavalcade dashed into the courtyard, women and men yelling like fiends possessed. And it roused the Duke.

"You may go," to the footman; "there is no answer now." He waited until the door closed; then held up the telegram. "His majesty died, suddenly, this afternoon," he said.

Count Bigler sprang half out of his chair.

"Frederick dead! the king dead!" he cried—"then, in God's name, who now is king—you or the American?"

The Duke arose. "That is what we are about to find out," he said, very quietly. "Come, we will go to Dornitz."

## CHAPTER II.

### Tomorrow and the Book.

Frederick of Valeria had died as every strong man wants to die: suddenly and in the midst

of his affairs, with the full vigor of life still upon him and no premonition of the end. It had been a sharp straightening in saddle, a catch of breath, a lift of hand toward heart, and then, with the great band of the Foot Guards thundering before him, and the regiment swinging by in review, he had sunk slowly over and into the arms of the Archduke Armand. And as he held him, there was a quick touch of surgeon's fingers to pulse and breast, a shake of head, a word; and then, sorrowfully and in silence, they bore him away; while the regiment, wheeling sharply into line, spread across the parade and held back the populace. And presently, as the people lingered, wondering and fearful, and the guards stood stolid in their ranks, the royal standard on the great tower of the castle dropped slowly to half staff, and the mellow bell of the cathedral began to toll, to all Valeria, the mournful message that her king was dead.

And far out in the country the Princess Dehra heard it, but faintly; and drawing rein, she listened in growing trepidation for a louder note. Was it the cathedral bell?—the bell that tolled only when a Dalberg died! For a while she caught no stroke, and the fear was passing, when down the wind it came, clear and strong—and again—and yet again.

And with blanched cheek and fluttering heart she was racing at top speed toward Dornitz, staying neither for man nor beast, nor hill nor stream, the solemn clang smiting her ever harder and harder in the face. There were but two for whom it could be speaking, her father and her lover—for she gave no thought to Lotzen or his brother, Charles. And now, which?—which? Mile after mile went behind her in dust and flying stones, until six were passed, and then the outer guard post rose in front.

"The bell!" she cried, as the sentry sprang to attention, "the bell, man, the bell!"

The soldier grounded arms. "For the king," he said.

But as the word was spoken she was gone—joy and sorrow now fighting strangely in her heart—and as she dashed up the wide avenue, the men uncovered and the women breathed a prayer; but she, herself, saw only the big, gray building with the drooping flag, and toward it she sped, the echo of the now silent bell still ringing in her ears.

The castle gates were closed, and before them with drawn swords, stern and impassive, sat two high cuirassiers of the guard; they heard the nearing hoof beats, and over the heads of the crowd that hung about the entrance, they saw and understood.

"Stand back!" they cried; "stand back—the princess comes!"

And the gates swung open, and the big sorrel horse, reeking with sweat and flecked with foam and dust, flashed by, and on across the courtyard. And Colonel Moore, who was about to ride away, sprang down and swung her out of saddle.

"Take me to him," she said quietly, as he stood aside to let her pass.

She swayed slightly at the first step, and her legs seemed strangely stiff and heavy, but she slipped her hand through his arm and drove herself along. And so he led her, calm and dry-eyed, down the long corridor and through the ante-room to the king's chamber, and all who met them bowed and drew back. At the threshold she halted.

"Do you please bid all retire," she said. "I would see my father alone."

And when he had done her will, he came and held open the door for her a little way, then stood at attention and raised his hand in salute; and the princess went in to her dear.

Meanwhile, the Archduke Armand was searching for the princess. The moment he had seen the king at rest in the castle, declining at escort, he had galloped away for the summer palace, first ordering that no information should be conveyed there by telephone. It was a message for him to deliver in person, though he shrank from it, as only a man can shrink from such a duty. But he knew nothing of the cathedral bell and its tolling, and when, as

he neared the park, the first note broke upon him, he listened in surprise; then he grasped its meaning, and with an imprecation, spurred the faster, racing now with a brazen clapper as to which should tell the princess first. And the sentry at the gate stared in wonder; but the officer on duty at the main entrance ran out to meet him, knowing instantly for whom the bell was tolling and for whom the archduke came.

"Her highness is not here," he cried. "She rode away alone by the North avenue a short while ago."

"Make report to the castle the instant she returns," Armand called, and was gone—to follow her, as he thought, on the old forge road.

"Ye Gods!" the officer exclaimed, "that was the king—the new king!" and mechanically he clicked his heels together and saluted.

Nor did he imagine that all unwittingly he had sent his master far astray; for the princess had gone but a little way by the North avenue, and then had circled over to the south gate.

And so Armand searched vainly, until at last bearing around toward Dornitz, he struck the main highway and learned that she had passed long since, making for the capital as fast as horse could run. And he knew that the bell had been the messenger, and that there was now naught for him to do but to return with all speed and give such comfort as he might. Though what to do or say he had no idea—for never before had he been called upon to minister to a woman's grief; and he pondered upon it with a misgiving that was at its deepest when, at length, he stood outside her door and heard her bid the servant to admit him.

But if he looked for tears and trembling he was disappointed, for she met him as she had met those in the corridor and the ante-room, dry-eyed and calmly. And in silence he took her in his arms, and held her close, and stroked her shining hair.

And presently she put his arms aside, and stepping back, she curtsied low and very gravely.

"Life to your majesty!" she said; "long live the king!" and kissed his hands.

He raised her quickly. "Never bend knee to me, Dehra," he said. "And believe me, I had quite forgot everything except that you had lost your father."

She went back to him. "And so had I, dear, until you came; but now, since he is gone, you are all I have—is it very selfish, then, for me to think of you so soon?"

He drew her to a chair and stood looking down at her.

"If it is," he said, "I am surely not the one to judge you."

She shook her head sadly. "There is no one to judge but—him," she answered; "and he, I know, would give me full approval." She was silent for a while, her thoughts in the darkened room across the court, where the tapers burned dimly, and a Captain of the Guard kept watch. And her heart sobbed afresh, though her lips were mute and her eyes undimmed.

At last she spoke. "Is the Book of Laws at the Summer Palace or here?" she asked.

"I do not know," said Armand. "I have never seen it except the day that the King read old Henry's decree and offered me Hugo's titles and estates."

"Well, at least, he spoke of it to you to-day."

Armand shook his head. "Never a word; neither to-day nor for many days."

A faint frown showed between her eyes. "Didn't he mention to you, this afternoon, the matter of the succession?"

"No."

She sat up sharply. "It can't be he didn't—"

The Archduke dropped on the floor at her feet and took her hand. "I assure you, Dehra, the King didn't speak a single word to me on such a matter."

"No, no," she said, "you don't understand. I mean it can't be he didn't make the decree."

"The decree!" Armand exclaimed, though he knew well there was but one she would refer to; and his pulse bounded fiercely and his face grew very hot.

"Yes, dear—the decree—that would have made you Heir Presumptive—and now King."

"And you think it was drawn?"

"I am sure of it."

"The King told you so?"

"Not directly, but inference. I came upon him late last night in his library, with the Laws

open before him and a pen in his hand; and when I ventured to voice my curiosity, he smiled and closed the book, saying, 'You may see it to-morrow, child; after I have told Armand.'"

"Doubtless he intended to tell me after the review."

The princess leaned over and put her arm around his neck.

"And now you are the king, dear, as he had always intended you should be," she whispered. "Thank God, the decree was made in time."

For a while Armand toyed with her slender fingers, and did not answer. Of course, she was right—it was the decree they both had been hoping for so earnestly, but which neither had dared mention to the king. And now, when it had come, and in such fashion was it really worth the while. Worth the turmoil and trouble, and, may be, the fighting, that was sure to follow his assumption of the royal dignity. Had Frederick lived to proclaim the decree and to school the nation into accepting him as his successor, the way would have been easy and well assured. But it was vastly different now—with Frederick dead, the decree yet to be announced, and few, doubtless, of those in authority around him, to be depended on to aid him hold the throne. Dalberg though he was, and now, by birth, the head of the house, yet he was a foreigner, and no people take kindly to a foreign king. Frederick had died too soon—another year—

And Dehra, bending down questioning his abstraction, read his face and understood his thoughts.

"Come, dear," she said, "the crisis is here, and we must face it. Dismiss the idea that you're a foreigner. Only you and Lotzen and I are familiar with our laws. You forget that the people do not know it required a special decree to make you eligible for the crown; and to them you have been the next king ever since you were proclaimed as Hugo's heir. And surely they have shown you a rare good will, and an amazing preference over the duke. He has spent his whole life in cultivating their dislike; do you fancy it won't bring its harvest now?"

He had turned and was watching her with an indulgent smile. It was sweet to hear her argue so; to see her intense devotion to his cause; her passionate desire that he should sit in her father's place and rule the ancient monarchy. And at her first words, and the sight of her loving eyes and flushed cheeks, his doubts had vanished, and his decision had been made. Yet, because he liked to see her so, he led her on.

"But what of the nobility," he objected; "in Valeria they still lead the people."

"True," she answered instantly, "true; but you forget again that the nobles are sworn to maintain the laws of the Dalbergs; and that for centuries none has ever broken faith. No, no, Armed, they will be true to their oaths; they will uphold the decree."

"Don't you think, dear," he smiled, "you are making it rather too assured? If the people are for me (or at least are not for Lotzen, and the nobles will bide by the laws, nothing remains but to mount the throne and seize the scepter."

"Just about that, I fancy," she replied.

"And, meanwhile, what will Lotzen be doing?"

She frowned. "Whatever the head of his house orders him to do. As a Dalberg he is bound to obey."

"And you think he will obey?"

"I surely do. I cannot imagine a Dalberg dishonoring the book of laws."

"I fear you do not know Ferdinand of Lotzen," said Armand seriously. "He intends to dispute the succession. I have never told you how, long ago, he warned me what to expect if I undertook to 'filch the crown,' as he put it. It was the afternoon he insulted me at headquarters—the Vierle Masque was in the evening."

Ther princess nodded eagerly. "Yes," said she, "yes—I know—the time he wanted you to toss up a coin for me. What did he say?"

(To Be Continued Next Week)

On the day fixed for him to leave the home he had occupied for 35 years, the Rev. Alfred Rudall, the pastor of St. Agnes' church, Cornwall, England, fell dead. He was 82 years old. It is stated that his emotion was very deeply stirred because his retirement necessitated leaving the parish where he had labored so long.

A statue of General Stefanik, first Czechoslovak minister of war, has arrived in Hamburg and is awaiting transportation to the United States. It will be erected in Cleveland at the expense of a wealthy Czech born citizen.

## Fate Takes a Hand.

Life has many embarrassing moments, but this was truly a dreadful one. I was a senior in a large university, and had had a romance with a prominent classmate. After our engagement was broken we were not on speaking terms, and this was generally known.

One evening I had been studying at a table in the library reading room when the lights went out. I stood up and collided with some one. I instinctively threw out my arms, and he did likewise.

Of course, the lights went on suddenly, and I found myself embraced and embracing my ex-fiance. Every one saw us, and we made quite a scene trying to get out.—Chicago Tribune.

Hope Against Hope.

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; which is of the faith of Abraham, who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations.—Romans 4:16 to 18.

Sunlight is a good germicide.

## Get Back Your Health!

Are you dragging around day after day with a dull backache? Are you tired and lame mornings—subject to headaches, dizzy spells and sharp, stabbing pains? Then there's surely something wrong. Probably it's kidney weakness! Don't wait for more serious kidney trouble. Get back your health and keep it. For quick relief get plenty of sleep and exercise and use Doan's Kidney Pills. They have helped thousands. Ask your neighbor!

A South Dakota Case

Theo. Millette, Sherman St., Sturgis, S. D., says: "I was running a large tractor when my kidneys gave away as a result of the constant jarring. They acted irregularly and caused annoyance. I had a severe ache across the small of my back and a soreness over my kidneys. I used Doan's Kidney Pills and they rid me of the trouble. I have had no return of it."

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## WOMEN OF MIDDLE AGE

### A Trying Period Through Which Every Woman Must Pass

Practical Suggestions Given by the Women Whose Letters Follow

Phila., Pa.—"When I was going through the Change of Life I was weak, nervous, dizzy and had headaches. I was troubled in this way for two years and was hardly able to do my work. My friends advised me to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and I am very sorry that I did not take it sooner. But I have got good results from it and am now able to do my housework most of the time. I recommend your medicine to those who have similar troubles. I do not like publicity, but if it will help other women I will be glad for you to use my letter."—Mrs. FANNIE ROSENSTEIN, 882 N. Holly St., Phila., Pa.

Detroit, Michigan—"During the Change of Life I had a lot of stomach trouble and was bothered a great deal with hot flashes. Sometimes I was not able to do any work at all. I read about Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound in your little books and took it with very good results. I keep house and am able now to do all my own work. I recommend your medicine and am willing for you to publish my testimonial."—Mrs. J. S. LIVENOR, 2051 Junction Avenue, Detroit, Mich.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Private Text-Book upon "Ailments Peculiar to Women" will be sent you free upon request. Write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts. This book contains valuable information.

A Foreign City.

A friend who spent several months in the East, says the thing that impressed him most about New York is that it is a foreign city.

The municipal signs are printed in English, Italian and Yiddish. You hear more foreign language than English in the subway, and everywhere foreign language newspapers are seen. In large sections of the city you do not see an American, or hear English spoken.

Natural Indignation.

Crabshaw—So there's no truth in the report that you've been dodging your income tax?

Neurich—It's an infamous libel. I've tried to do it every possible way, but have never succeeded.—New York Sun.

We wonder what Eve fussed about before Adam learned to smoke.

The critical time of a woman's life usually comes between the years of 45 and 50, and is often beset with annoying symptoms such as nervousness, irritability, melancholia. Heat flashes or waves of heat appear to pass over the body, cause the face to be very red and often bring on headache, dizziness and a sense of suffocation.

Another annoying symptom which comes at this time is an inability to recall names, dates or other small facts. This is liable to make a woman lose confidence in herself. She becomes nervous, avoids meeting strangers and dreads to go out alone.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is especially adapted to help women at this time. It exercises a restorative influence, tones and strengthens the system, and assists nature in the long weeks and months covering this period. Let it help carry you through this time of life. It is a splendid medicine for the middle-aged woman. It is prepared from medicinal roots and herbs and contains no harmful drugs or narcotics.

Radio Equipment of Airplane.

There has been installed on one of the huge Goliath biplanes engaged in the Paris-London aerial service a combined radio telephone and telegraph equipment of 35 watts antenna output, with a sending range of about 180 miles at 900 meters' wave length. The complete radio equipment, according to Radioelectricite, weighs only 125 pounds. An air-propeller-driven generator for six volts and a six-volt storage battery supply the necessary current. A three-bulb amplifier is used for receiving on all wave lengths between 300 meters and 1,000 meters.—Scientific American.

Human Radio.

Neighbor—Why do you look so tired and sleepy, Millicent?

Little Millicent—Oh, that new baby at our house—he broadcasts the whole night long.—Farm Life.

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