

The Princess Dehra

BY JOHN REED SCOTT.
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The archduke picked up the letter knife and slowly cut lines on the blotter.

"You need not go into the tiger's cage," he remarked.

"There isn't any cage—the beast is at large."

"Nonsense, colonel; this fellow Lotzen has got on your nerves. I thought you hadn't any."

"The pity of it is, sir, that he hasn't got on yours."

"And when he does," said Armand kindly, "will be time enough for the 'bain mail.'"

Bernheim took the vest and deliberately laid it on the blotter.

"For the sake of those who love you, my lord," he said—

"and"—turning to a picture of the princess, which hung on the opposite wall, and saluting—"for her whom we all serve."

The archduke looked at the picture in silence for a moment.

"Send the vest to the Epsau," he said; "I will wear it—sometimes."

And Bernheim knew he had to be satisfied with the sometimes—

though as even that was more than he had dared to hope for, he was well content.

The archduke and the American ambassador met by appointment at the outer gate of the city, and as the former had been delayed, they rode at speed to the summer palace. It was the first time they had been together, informally, since the king's death, but beyond the usual friendly greeting and an occasional word en route there was no conversation. There was much that Armand wished to discuss with his friend, but this was not the place for it—it needed a quiet room and the other aids to serious consultation.

"I want a word with you, Dick, before you go back to town," he remarked, as they dismounted.

And Courtney nodded comprehendingly.

"As many as you wish, my boy," he said.

But the princess also wanted a word with Courtney; she knew his keen insight into motives and men; his calm judicialness of judgment; his critical analysis of facts, and, most important of all, his influence with Armand, and she desired his counsel and his aid. She had not forget the part he had played in the recent past; that but for him there would be no Archduke Armand; that, indeed, it was this quiet diplomat whom she had to thank for the happiest days of her life, and the happy prospect for the days to come; and, but for whom, there would be to her only the memory of that ride in the forest with the American Captain Smith; and Ferdinand of Lotzen would be king; and she—she might even be his queen—and have yet to learn his villainy and his villainy.

All this she knew, and her heart warmed to Courtney as now it warmed to none other save Armand himself. And that very morning, as the two men crossed the terrace and came toward them, she had told Lady Helen Radnor, with the smiling frankness of a comrade, that if she sent this man away, no act in all her life would equal it in folly; then without waiting for an answer she had gone to greet her guests.

Now, when the luncheon was ended, she dismissed the servants and turned to Courtney.

"Will you do something for Armand?" she asked.

"Don't you think I have already done him service enough?" he said, looking at her with a significant smile—"more than he deserves or can ever appreciate."

"Well, may be you have," she smiled, catching his humor, "so do this for me—help me to make him king."

"What can I do?" he asked.

She leaned a bit nearer. "Keep him firm for his birthright; don't let him fling it aside in disgust, if the struggle drags out, for long."

Courtney nodded. "I understand," he said; "but you need have no concern; you yourself will keep him firm—it's the only way he can make you queen."

He paused and tapped his cigarette meditatively against his glass. "You think there isn't any doubt as to the decree in his favor?" he asked.

"None—absolutely none."

"Then all you have to do is

to find the book—that shouldn't be so very difficult."

"True enough; it shouldn't—but it will be."

"You seem very positive," he said.

"A woman's intuition," Courtney smiled. "Which isn't infallible."

"Will you try to prove that?" she asked. "Will you help us find the book?" And without waiting for his answer she turned to the archduke. "Armand," she said, "tell Mr. Courtney what we know as to the laws; I want his advice."

Armand laughed. "I fancy he already knows it, my dear—it's his business to know things."

"And it's also particularly his business," she retorted, "never to betray that he knows—therefore we must tell him."

"Bear with him, Your Highness," said Courtney—"I assure you he will learn in time. . . . Meanwhile, Monsieur le Prince, I'm all attention."

Armand leaned over to Lady Helen. "His manners are rather crass," he remarked, in a confidential whisper, "but he really means well." Then he pushed the cigarette across to Courtney.

"Take a fresh one, old chap; the story may be a bit long."

CHAPTER VIII.

Inference or Fact.

Through the story Courtney sat with half closed eyes, pulling at his gray imperial, the unlighted cigarette between his lips.

With the main facts he was already familiar, as was every embassy in Dornitz, but much of the small details were new to him; and at the end, for a while, he was silent, fitting the incidents to gether in his mind.

"Do you care to tell me what the police make of it?" he asked.

"Nothing, as usual," Armand answered. "Their intelligence doesn't run beyond a hidden panel, and sounding every wall and floor in the palace; they scorn any theory but that his majesty concealed the book."

"Which is perfectly absurd," Dehra added; "why should he conceal it, with the box and the vault at hand?"

"Why don't you make them take another lead?" Lady Helen asked.

"Because I'm sick of them and their ways—I've sent them away—and away they stay; in another day there wouldn't have been a wall in the palace."

"She told the officer in charge the only way he could ever find the book was not to search for it," Armand laughed. "And then gave him a grade in rank to save the words."

"Don't interrupt, sir," the princess exclaimed. "And remember I can't give you a grade."

"Was any one with the king after you left him that night?" Courtney asked.

"Only Adolph, the valet," Dehra replied. "I'm quite sure he would receive no one at that hour."

"And what did Adolph say as to the book?"

"That he hadn't seen it for four days prior to Frederick's death," said Armand.

"Who told you that?" the princess asked quickly.

"He told the council."

"Then he deliberately deceived you; he saw it the night I did—the last night;—he came to the door just after the king spoke of Armand's decree."

Courtney struck a match and carefully lit the cigarette.

"Where is Adolph?" he asked.

"He has gone back to France, I think."

Courtney sent a quick, inquiring look at Armand, which the latter missed, having turned toward Lady Helen.

"Oh, I remember," he replied; "there was a stray line about him in the paper—grief and so forth. At the time, I inferred he had been banished by the police, for some reason."

"We can have him back," she interjected.

The archduke looked around. "Adolph is dead," he said. "His body was found behind the hedge under the king's library windows three days after Frederick's demise."

"But his return to France?" Dehra exclaimed.

"A fiction of your police, doubtless," said Courtney dryly; "they are very clever. . . . He

was—killed, of course?"

"In the park, the night the king died, a dagger wound in the heart," the archduke explained.

"Do you know anything—indeed, it was only yesterday I learned of it and sent for the papers in the case."

"And the—killer, I assume, has not been apprehended."

"Naturally not," said Armand; and proceeded to explain the matter as the police viewed it.

"What do you think, now?" Dehra demanded, at the end.

A bit of a smile crept into Courtney's face.

"I think," he said, "that the only circumstance which relieves the police from utter imbecility is their not knowing that the valet had lied to the royal council as to the book."

The princess' finger tips began to tap the table, and the little wrinkle showed between her eyes.

"Don't, my dear, don't," laughed Armand; "you can't give the entire bureau a grade in rank—and besides, they are not to blame. I called the chief down hard yesterday, only to have him tell me it was the ancient and rigid custom never, except by special order, to investigate a crime that touched the royal household, nor to follow any clue which led inside the palace. And I apologized—and instantly abolished the custom."

"They were specially ordered to search for the book of laws," the princess insisted; "wouldn't that lead them to Adolph?"

"Under their theory Adolph had nothing to do with the book," said Courtney.

"Just so," the archduke remarked; "and between their Potten theories and customs the business has been sadly bungled."

"Their fatal fallacy," said Courtney, "was, it seems to me, in assuming that no one but his majesty and her highness could open the vault—I have no doubt the valet had discovered the combination."

"But the box," Dehra objected; "it was locked when I got it, and Adolph could not have had the key."

"He might have had a duplicate."

"I think not," said Armand; "it is a trick lock with a most complicated arrangement, and to make a duplicate would have required the original key."

"Well, however that may be is not essential," said Courtney; "the fact remains that, between 11 o'clock of one night and 10 o'clock of the second day thereafter, the book disappeared; and the last time it was seen, to our knowledge, it was lying under the king's own hand, on the table in his library, with the open box beside it; and that the latter was found, closed and locked and empty, in its place in the vault, while the most thorough search for the book has been ineffectual except, it seems, to prove that it is not in the palace. We can safely assume that his majesty did not hide it; hence he returned it to its place; and whoever took it, got it out of a locked box in a locked vault. For this, Adolph had the best opportunity."

"But what possible motive?" the princess exclaimed.

Courtney smiled. "If I could tell you that, we would be far toward finding the book; yet he had a motive—his lie to the council proves it."

"You think he stole the laws?" she asked.

Courtney sent a smoke cloud shooting upward and watched it fade.

"I think," said he, "that if Adolph didn't steal them, he knows who did; his lie can bear no other construction."

"And his death?" the archduke asked.

Courtney watched another smoke ring and made no reply.

"Come," insisted Armand; "answer."

The other shook his head.

"I stop with the lie," he said. "Indeed I can't get beyond it. The valet would have but one reason for stealing the book—to sell it to—someone, who would have every reason to conceal or even to destroy it. Every logical inference points to this someone; and yet, for once, logic seems to be at fault."

"You mean the Duke of Lotzen?" said the princess.

Courtney smiled, but made no answer.

"Your pardon," she said, "but at least you can tell us why the logic is at fault."

"Because," said he, "the actual facts are otherwise. As Armand knows, I like to play with mystery, and when I may help a friend I like it all the more. The logical solution of the matter, in

view of the decree, is a knowing valet, and a ready buyer; yet the latter was not in Dornitz, when the book was taken, nor has my most careful investigation disclosed any communication, by Adolph, with him or his friends. On the contrary, the evidence is absolutely conclusive against it; and hence acquits the someone of having had any hand in the theft."

"You knew, then, of Adolph's death?" Armand asked.

"Yes—though not all the details as you related them."

The archduke smiled; there were very few details missed when Courtney started an investigation.

"Your argument, Richard," he said, "is based upon the hypothesis that Adolph is the thief, which appears most probable; yet your examination suggests no other solution?"

"Absolutely none—and, more peculiar still, I was unable to find the slightest trace of the valet outside the palace, between the time he left the council and the discovery of his dead body behind the hedge—though you and her highness saw him in the library after the council adjourned."

"And that is the last time I ever saw him," said Dehra.

"And more than that," Armand added, "it's the last time any one saw him in the palace; I had that matter looked into yesterday. The council rose about noon and afterward not a servant nor soldier so much as laid eyes on him."

"Isn't there something particularly significant in the place where Adolph was found?" the princess asked. "Mightn't he have been killed in the library and then, from the window, the body dropped behind the hedge?"

Courtney's hand went to his imperial reflectively.

"A very reasonable and a very likely explanation," he said; "and the nature of the wound supports it; it was a noiseless assassination—but, again, that eliminates the someone."

"Very true," said the archduke; "he left the council before it adjourned, to return at once to town."

"But did he return at once?" Dehra persisted. "Mightn't he have remained and killed Adolph—some how, some way—I don't know, but mightn't he?"

Armand shook his head. "I think not," he said. "I looked into that too, and there seems to be no doubt Lotzen was in Dornitz before 1 o'clock; and every moment of his time, until Adolph was found, has been accounted for; so, even assuming he didn't leave the palace immediately, he would have had to kill the valet within half an hour after we saw him in the library; and that, under all the conditions, is utterly incredible."

"Nothing's incredible where Lotzen is concerned," she answered. "So let us assume he did kill Adolph, in the king's library, during that very half hour between noon and 12:30, and answer me this: Why did he kill him?"

"Either to get the book of laws or because Adolph knew too much concerning it," said Armand, smiling at her earnestness.

"Exactly; and, therefore, Lotzen either has the book or he knows where it is. . . . Am I not right?" she demanded, turning to Courtney.

"Undoubtedly, your highness—according to your premises."

"You don't admit the premises?"

"I can't—they are too improbable—and the facts are against them."

"Oh, facts!" she exclaimed, "facts! I don't care a rap for facts. Lotzen killed Adolph and Lotzen has the book."

(To Be Continued Next Week)

There is reported from London a French-German combination in steel manufacturing to exceed in size and power United States Steel itself. It will have to be big and complete for that program. The United States Steel corporation alone is bigger than all the German steel companies combined and, quite important, United States Steel has on hand, in cash and government bonds, something like \$500,000,000, a good nest egg for an international fight.

If the French and Germans would combine industrially, instead of trying to rise by trampling each other down, it would be a good thing for both. Magnanimity after victory, as the Romans learned 2,000 years ago, is the best policy.

Sir David Llewellyn, Welsh coal king, says he can ship coal to Canada from Wales more cheaply than it can be shipped from Pennsylvania mines. That interests American consumers, who pay \$15 for coal that costs \$2 the same set of men largely own the railroads and the mines and are interested in getting as much as possible out of both.

WASHINGTON AMBASSADOR INSTRUCTED

Chancellor Cuno Appeals for American Arbitration, Berlin Dispatches Report—Mystery Surrounds Negotiations.

BY KARL H. VON WIEGAND,
Universal Service Correspondent.
Special Wireless Dispatch.

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Berlin, Dec. 17.—The German government has again, in effect if not in form, appealed to Washington to take up the ungrateful role of arbitrator in the apparently unsolvable reparations problem which is keeping all of Europe and a good part of the rest of the world in economic chaos.

This information comes to Universal Service from quarters in close touch with the government. According to reliable information this step by Chancellor Cuno is in the form of instructions to Ambassador Wiedfeldt, at Washington, to ask unofficially but carefully in Washington and New York the question which may be tersely summed up:

"What does America think Germany's capacity to pay may be estimated at?"

Behind the diplomatic and financial scenes on the foreign office stages in Berlin, London, Paris, Rome and Washington, a tremendous diplomatic "reparations battle" is going on. The conversations are veiled in much mystery, and every effort is made to keep the reports secret that pass between Washington and the European capitals, and between Paris, London, Berlin and Rome themselves.

France for the moment is fighting on the defensive in this struggle, according to such reliable information as is obtainable.

Chancellor Cuno, who came into office in Berlin with the promise that he would initiate an active policy on the reparations question, has kept that promise and to a certain degree has succeeded in making the subject of reparations a world topic.

Ambassadors Instructed.

Dr. Cuno and Foreign Minister Rosenber, it is said, have instructed German ambassadors and ministers in various capitals, including Washington, to discontinue their passive policy and in their talks with the governments to which they are accredited to emphasize the gravity of the economic situation in Europe in general and in Germany in particular. They were told to urge the necessity of a definite settlement of the reparations questions as the most important problem in all Europe if not in the world.

The German view is that Germany's capacity to pay at present is almost nil, and that if Germany is ever to be put in condition to pay she must be given a moratorium of at least two years, and must be granted a loan, with the reparations fixed at a sane economic figure.

France's attitude is that Germany can but will not pay. The attitude of England and Italy is half way between the ideas of Germany and France.

As all these countries are interested parties, none of them, perhaps, can avoid being influenced by their own desires and interests, Ambassador Wiedfeldt, it is said in inner circles here, has been instructed to ascertain by informal method, the views of the American government and leading financiers in New York, as to what they, as outsiders and observers, believe Germany's capacity to pay is—in short, he has been told to ask America for advice.

To noon Sunday it was said that no reports had as yet been received from Ambassador Wiedfeldt as to what the results of his conversations with Secretary Hughes and New York bankers have been.

Advance in Marks Surprised.

Some time this week the floating debt of Germany will pass the immense figure of 1,000,000,000 marks. The money press is said to have made another new record for speed in the past week, and it is stated that Monday's reichsbank report will show the new issue as far exceeding 100,000,000,000 marks.

That in the face of all this the mark should have jumped into a tremendous advance in New York, created something of a sensation here, and has given rise to great optimism in governmental circles, with corresponding anxiety in economic and financial quarters, where this sudden disjuncting of all business transactions in Germany is viewed with more or less alarm.

HOOVER ISSUES STATEMENT.

Universal Service.
Washington, Dec. 17.—"To sustain our foreign trade at normal levels under present conditions, the United States must provide large scale credits in the form of foreign loans or invest heavily in French enterprises."

BOMB PLOT FAILS.

Sofia, Bulgaria, Dec. 17.—Premier Stamboulsky and Minister of the Home Office Descaloff, were the intended victims of a bomb hurled by two Macedonians. Both officials escaped injuries.

PLAN ANTI-TAX STRIKE.

London, Dec. 17.—Agriculturists in Rhineland have decided upon a strike against the government requisitioning foodstuffs, according to a Central News dispatch from Mavence. The farmers plan reprisals against the alleged exorbitant taxes thus collected.

Herald Square will have a new 20-story building on the site of the old Herald building, one of New York's landmarks built by the elder James Gordon Bennett. The structure will cost \$1,500,000 and will be ready for occupancy next October. It is owned by Frank A. Munsey.

OPPOSITION TO GERMANY LOAN SHOWN

Senators Still Fear Entanglement—British Press Divided on Feasibility—Weidfeldt Confers With J. P. Morgan.

Universal Service.

Washington, Dec. 17.—Congress is watching with keen interest every move made at the White House and the state department looking toward the further use of American money by European nations.

Opposition to the proposed loan to Germany or to any plan for sending additional funds to Europe already has manifested itself among both senators and representatives.

This opposition, which thus far has found expression only in capitol cloak rooms, is expected to show itself in speeches from the Senate floor this week.

Fear Entanglement.

The opposition to the German loan is based upon belief of senators that the loan, if authorized, would simply lead to further entanglement of the United States in the affairs of Europe.

In private conversation, members of congress have directed particular attention to the fact that proposals for new advances of credit to Europe are apparently under consideration before agreement has been reached for the payment of principal and interest on funds already loaned.

Meanwhile, state department officials refused to break the absolute silence they have maintained with reference to the progress, if any, that is being made toward the offering of an American solution for the European financial situation.

Hughes Remains Silent.

"There is nothing that I care to say," was the only comment by Secretary of State Hughes when shown Paris dispatches to the effect that the United States already had approached France informally in the matter.

Reports received in Washington, indicate that France, while greatly desirous of American financial assistance, is still in no mood to accept conditions which no American financial interests declare essential to the success of any loan.

Dr. Otto Wiedfeldt, German ambassador at Washington, returned Sunday from a conference in New York with J. P. Morgan & Co. Dr. Wiedfeldt, it is understood, was informed that American bankers could participate in a loan to Germany only in case reparations claims were reduced and the American government sanctioned the transaction.

KING WANTS CONFERENCE.

By William H. King, United States Senator From Utah.

Washington, Dec. 17.—In my opinion the entire question of a loan to Germany should be held in abeyance until there has been an international conference at which all the questions involved in reparations and territorial boundaries could be adjusted. I would not sanction a loan to Germany, nor to any of the other nations of Europe which are on the verge of bankruptcy, until these other matters have been settled. I do not see how the United States could guarantee a loan to Germany on any grounds which would not apply equally well to other nations.

I appreciate the fact that only by the resuscitation of Germany can stability be brought to the rest of Europe. But it seems to me the only thing for this government to do is to call an economic conference, inviting all the nations of the world, including Germany, Russia, Turkey, Bulgaria, China, and Japan for the purpose of (1) bringing about general disarmament (2) assuring the permanency of political boundaries, or setting up a tribunal to which nations might appeal for the delimitation of their respective boundaries and (3) passing upon international debts and the reparations which Germany should pay.

When these things shall have been done, it will be time for the United States to pass upon the question of guaranteeing loans to Germany or other countries.

PARIS SAYS PLANS GIVEN.

Paris, Dec. 17 (U. P.)—The United States government already has informed the allies it contemplates intervention in European affairs, but from an economic standpoint only, it was stated authoritatively today.

The allies understand Washington will maintain its previous attitude towards political matters; also that President Harding is not yet certain what form the proposed action will take.

Already the move of America towards assisting Europe has changed the allies' plans of action towards Germany. It may result in a complete about face on the part of those in France who have advocated seizure of the Ruhr. Premier Poincaré's obvious vagueness on this point in the chamber last night may be accounted for by this. There is noticeable cooling on the part of the French extremists, who desire independent action.

The news from Washington resulted in a sudden rise of the franc, which opened 50 centimes higher than yesterday's close.

AGENTS CAPTURE LAST OF MOUNTAIN BAND

Lexington, Ky., Dec. 17.—The roundup of the "Ballard gang" which furnished opposition to federal prohibition forces in Menifee county's week long moonshine war, was completed Saturday night with the capture of Charles Ballard.

Ballard, according to reports received at prohibition headquarters here, was arrested in Bath county by Sheriff Ben Wells. The outlaw, according to the report, was so weakened by exposure and loss of blood from bullet wounds that he made no resist-