

# The Princess Dehra

BY JOHN REED SCOTT.  
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He had explained fully to her the complication produced by the disappearance of the laws, recounting in detail the scene at the royal council, when the compromise was forced; but as to Adolph and the incidents of the king's library he said never a word. To her prompt query, as to how he accounted for the book's disappearance, he answered that the American, knowing it contained no decree in his favor, had stolen and, doubtless, destroyed it—and that the princess royal's story was a clever lie—just such a lie as you, yourself, would have told for me, in a similar exigency," he had added; and she had smiled an acquiescence—thinking, the while, that for the American she would have done much more than lie, and gladly, if he would but let her.

Since the day when, as Colonel Spencer's bride, she had come to the old fort on the Missouri, and had first set eyes on Captain Armand Dalberg, there was but one man who might have stirred her cold heart to an honest beat; and though he had ignored her overtures, and finally had scorned them with scathing words, yet it had not entirely killed the old desire; and even now, after all that she had done against him, and was ready yet to do a single word from him would have brought her to his side. Yet, because she knew that word would never come, and that another woman claimed him honestly and without fear, she would go on with her part; and all the more willingly that it enabled her to strike through him the woman who had won him.

And now, after the two weeks quiescence, the restless fever was upon her, and the duke had caught the signs; next would come the call to Paris; and he knew the second call would win. If he were to hold her, it was time to start the campaign she had come to assist—and that very day was his visit to the summer palace, and the sudden determination of his plan. But when, in the evening, he had gone to her apartments to tell her of it, and to discuss the opening moves, she had sent him the message that she was indisposed and had retired, and that he should breakfast with her the next day.

And in the morning he had found her in her boudoir, in the most enticing of soft blue gowns, and no touch of dishabille nor carelessness in all her attire, from the arrangement of the raven hair to the shoeing of the slender feet. Madeline Spencer was much too clever to let a man see her in negligee when, to him, the hour for negligee was passed. She met him with a smile, and let him kiss her cheek.

"I am sorry about last night, dear," she said, "but I was quite too wretched to see even you—and I wanted to see you."

He sat on the arm of the chair, playing softly with her hair. "I wish I could believe that it was just I you wanted," he said. She shot him an upward glance of her siren eyes.

"I have been thinking about this business that we have on hand," she continued; "and, Ferdinand, if you wish my aid, you must get busy—I can't endure this stagnation longer. I'm a wild beast that would die in confinement; I need the jungle and the air and sky."

He laughed, and pinched her ear.

"Your jungle, little one, is the Champs Elysees and cher Maxim's; la chaleur communicative du banquet—you air and sky, the adulation of the masculine and the stare of admiring eyes."

"Yes, it is; and I've been away a long, long time; yet I want to stay with you until this work is ended—because" (taking his hand and smiling up at him) "you have been good to me, and because it promises excitement of a novel sort—only, dear, do let us be at it."

A door swung back. "Madam is served!" came the monotone. As they went in, the duke slipped his arm around her slender waist.

"We're going to be at it," he said; "send the servants away and I'll tell you my plan; it was for that I came last evening."

"Now, tell me!" she exclaimed, as the door closed behind the footman.

"We are going back to Lotzenia," he said.

She paused, and the black eye-

brows went up.

"We" she intoned.

He nodded. "That is where the game will be played out."

"And why not here, in Dornitz?"

"Because it's easier there—and surer."

She made to shiver. "So, for me, it's only out of a charming mausoleum into a common grave."

He laughed. "It will be a rarely lively grave, my dear Madeline, and, I promise you, exciting enough for even your starved nerves."

"When do we start?"

"Soon, I trust—there is work to be done here first."

"And I may help?"

"Yes, you may help—the plan needs you."

"And the plan?" she asked eagerly.

"The very simplest I could devise," said he; "to lure the American to Lotzenia and—"

She smiled comprehendingly. "Why take all that trouble—why not kill him in Dornitz?"

He flung up a caution in hand. "Softly, my dear, softly—and not so blunt in the words—and as I said, it's easier there and surer."

"But it would be so much prettier to play the game out here," she half objected; "and more accordant with your taste, I fancy."

"Very true," said he. "It's always more artistic to run a man through with a rapier than to kill him with a club; but in this business it's the end alone that concerns me. Yet the primary essential, in either method, is opportunity and freedom of movement; neither is here; both will be plentiful in the north."

"And, of course, at your friendly invitation, the American will gladly accompany you to Lotzenia and permit himself to be—offered up."

"Practically that."

An impatient smile shone in her eyes.

"I do not understand, Ferdinand, why you persist in under-rating your enemy; it's the climax of bad generalship. The American may be reckless and a bit headstrong, but assuredly he is not a fool."

The duke shrugged his shoulders. "He can fight, I grant you—but he can't scheme nor plot—nor detect one, though it's as evident as the sun."

"And yet—" she waived her hand toward the Epsau—"it is he you're fighting for the crown."

"Luck!" he scoffed—"a dotard king, a damn huzzar uniform, and a silly girl."

"Is his luck any the less now, with the girl regent of Valeria?" she asked.

"Possibly not," he said; "and hence another reason for the mountains—she won't be with him there."

She gave it up—she had tried repeatedly, but it was impossible, it seemed, to arouse him to Armand's real ability—when hate rides judgment, reason lies bound and gagged.

"Why should the governor of Dornitz go to far off Lotzenia?" she asked.

He glanced around the room suspiciously; then scribbled a line in pencil on his cuff and held it over to her.

She read it, and looked at him in puzzled interrogation.

"I don't understand," she said; "you told me that he—"

He had anticipated her question.

"So I did," he interrupted quickly, "but I have no proof; and lately I have come to doubt it. At any rate, this will disclose the truth. If my scheme works, he will follow into hell itself."

"A strikingly appropriate name for your castle, dear," she laughed.

He nodded and smiled.

"And what if the scheme doesn't work?" she asked.

"In that event, the laugh is on me, and we must devise another means to draw him there."

"Which will be quite fruitless, I can assure you."

"Then we will fight it out here," he said, "and I shall doubly need you."

"And you'll get me, doubly welcome." . . . She lit a cigarette and passed it to him; and lit another for herself. "Now, how are we to contrive to set the trap?"

A footman entered and headed

the duke a visiting card, with something pencilled on it. . . . "It's Bigler," he said, "and he asks to be admitted immediately—he's always in a rush. Tell Count Bigler I'll see him presently."

She stayed the servant with a motion; she did not intend to lose Lotzen until he had told her the whole plot.

"Why not have him here?" she asked; "and then let him go."

"By all means, if you will permit," and he nodded to the footman.

Most women would have called Count Bigler handsome; and not a few men, as well. He was red-headed and ruddy, with clean-cut features, square chin, and a laughing mouth, that contrary to Valerian fashion was not topped by a moustache. Since boyhood, he had been Lotzen's particular companion and intimate; and, as is usual in such instances, he was almost his antipode in temperament and manner.

He saluted the duke with easy off-handedness, and bent with deferential courtesy over Mrs. Spencer's hand; but pressing it altogether more tightly than the attitude justified.

She answered with the faintest finger tap and a quick smile, and waved him to a chair.

"If I'm de trop," she said, "I'll vacate."

"Madame is never de trop, to me," he answered, taking the cigarette she offered and smiling down at her, through the smoke, as he lit it.

When he turned to sit down, the left side of his face was, for the first time, toward the duke, showing the ear bound with strips of surgeon's plaster.

"In the name of heaven, man," said he, "what have you been doing with yourself?"

The count laughed. "Trading the top of my ear for a day or two more of life."

"Duel?" Lotzen asked.

"Yes, after a fashion, but not exactly under the code."

The primeval woman stirred in Mrs. Spencer.

"The story, count, the story!" she demanded coiling her little arms behind her head, and leaning far back in languorous gracefulness.

"It's the story that brings me here so early," he replied.

The duke was frowning. Dueling was a serious crime in Valeria, even in the army, and it was a particularly unfortunate moment for Bigler to offend; and especially as only the governor of Dornitz, or the regent could save him from punishment.

"How did you manage to get into such a mess just at this time?" he asked sharply. "Was any one killed?"

The count nodded. "Four, I think; I didn't stay to examine them."

"Four! four! God, man, was it a massacre?"

"Almost—I'm the sole survivor on your side."

Lotzen's frown grew.

"On my side!" he echoed.

"I was assuming to act for you," Bigler explained.

"For me!—who was on the other side?"

"The American—the American and Bernheim."

For a space the duke smoked in silence; then he gave a faint chuckle.

"They came rather close to making it five, didn't they?" He touched his ear—"Bernheim, I suppose? . . . Of course, the American would have made it five. What a fool you are, Bigler, to go into such a thing without telling me."

"I'm telling you now," the count grinned.

"And I'm exceedingly grateful to my dear cousin for leaving you to tell it. It's the only service he has ever done me. I assume it isn't necessary to ask if you got him—or even wounded him?"

"Quite unnecessary."

Madeline Spencer had been chafing at the delay; now she arose, and, going over to a divan, sank sinuously among the pillows, one trim, blue silk ankle shimmering far below her skirts.

"If you were as slow in the fight, count, as you are in getting at the story," she remarked, "it's a wonder to me how Bernheim missed you."

Both men laughed, and Bigler's glance lingered a moment in open admiration.

The duke swung his hand toward her.

"Madame grows impatient," he said. "Proceed, Monsieur Edmund."

The count took a fresh cigarette.

"It was this way," he began, pivoting his chair around on one back leg, so that he would have

both his auditors within his direct vision. "The two weeks we were bound to idleness mourning for old Frederick, I spent in watching the American. I soon discovered that it was his custom, every few days, to visit, very late at night, his friend, the American ambassador, and that he invariably not only walked the entire distance from the Epsau and back, but also went unattended. It seemed to me very simple to waylay him, some night on his return; the streets were usually deserted then, and he should be an easy victim, if set upon by enough men to assure success. And I had about arranged the matter, when I chanced to remember that the De Saures were still in the country and their house closed. It stands far back from the avenue, you know, and a safer and surer plan occurred to me—I would lure him into this house, and leave him there for burial. In the dark, my four rogues could put enough steel through him, from behind, to insure his quick demise. I proposed to take no chances with such a swordsman by giving him a light; and besides, it was just as well that the men should not know their victim. Nor did they ever see me unmasked. For decency, one of the rogues procured a woman."

"What!" exclaimed the duke—"one of your women?"

"It was voice, not beauty, I wanted—the cry of a female for help."

Lotzen nodded and smiled.

"Rather clever."

"For a week we met at the house at 11 o'clock every night, but the American didn't go to the embassy. Then, last night, at 12, he went, and old Bernheim with him. That didn't bother me much, however, and we waited for their return. They came about 2, through driving rain and wind; and the woman played her part perfectly. Such piteous cries I never heard. 'Don't strike me again—don't strike me again—help—help!' reiterated in tones that would have moved even your heart, my dear duke. I was concealed near the gate and they moved me—and they caught the American instantly, though Bernheim scented danger and protested vigorously. 'It may be a trap of Lotzen's,' he warned. 'Damn Lotzen!' was the prompt answer, as the girl wailed again—I tell you she was an artist at it; she, herself, must be used to beatings. They ran up the path to the house, I following; and here the whole scheme was almost upset by some fool having left the front door open. Bernheim protested that it proved the trap; and even the American was hesitating, when again the woman wailed. That settled it; and I dashed around the house to the rear entrance."

"My purpose was to draw them upstairs and finish the job there. They searched the first floor—we were on the second—then, leaving all the electric lights burning, they ascended—and we went down the back way, turned off the lights and closed and locked the doors. They promptly extinguished the lights they had set going above, and the house was in the densest darkness I have ever known. We could hear them whispering in the upper hall; and I sent two of my rogues up the front stairs and led the others up the rear, intending to snap an electric torch for the instant it would require to do our work; and which seemed all the easier because I had observed, at the gate, that the American was without his sword. When we were half way up, I heard a crash from the front, followed by the American's laugh. I paused an instant, then hurried on, and fell over a chair that had been placed at the head of the stairs. Everything remained quiet, however, and we went forward into the hall. My finger was on the key of the torch when there came a shrill whistle, and the lights went on. I saw Bernheim in front of us, pistol in hand; it flashed, and the man on my left went down. At the same moment, the American sprang at us from behind and felled the other fellow with the hilt of a sword—where he got it the devil only knows. As for me, I admit I was dazed with surprise; I heard the American offer me the choice: pistol or sword—I took the pistol. I had retained enough sense to know I hadn't the faintest chance with him. The front steps were near; I made the leap of my life, and plunged down them. Bernheim fired three times—this (indicating his ear) was the last, the first two missed."

(To be Continued Next Week.)

Mrs. Martha Strayer



## ARE YOU A SUFFERING WOMAN?

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Lincoln, Neb.—"At one time I became very miserable with weakness from which women suffer. I suffered all the time. One of my neighbors urged me to take Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription because it had cured her of similar symptoms, so I decided to try it. The first bottle made me feel so much better, I took four more, and feel certain that in that one experience 'Favorite Prescription' saved me from the operating table and the surgeon's knife. Two years afterwards when the turn of life commenced, I took the 'Prescription' again with the result that I came through strong and healthy and am still maintaining wonderful health."—Mrs. Martha Strayer, 218 So. 19th St.

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Try PISO's—asthma, whooping cough, all other pleurisy—does not upset stomach—no opiates. 35c and 60c everywhere.

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For Coughs & Colds

### Roadside Tragedy.

A curious and informative accident was observed on Randolph street yesterday evening. A girl in short skirts and high Russian boots, wide-flaring at the top, was strolling down the sidewalk. A young man, passing her, casually threw away his lighted cigarette. The girl took five steps and then started kicking the left leg. In another moment she was dancing in a hysterical circle.

The volunteer fire department helped her off with the left boot and removed the cigarette, with what was left of a charred silk stocking.—Chicago Post.

If one likes a man, it is no effort at all to share his happiness.

## FROM 94 POUNDS SHE GOES TO 132

Mrs. Gross Praises Tanlac for Overcoming Stomach Trouble—Says Results Are Priceless.

"Before I took Tanlac I only weighed ninety-four pounds and scarcely had strength to sweep the floor; but now I weigh one hundred and thirty-two and am as healthy and happy as can be." This remarkable statement was made, recently, by Mrs. Mabel Gross, 1137 Aldrich St., N. Minneapolis, Minn.

"For nearly two years I had been in a seriously weakened condition and suffered nearly all the time from headache and backache. My nerves were beyond my control and I was terribly dizzy. I couldn't half sleep and my stomach was so out of order that even the sight of food nauseated me."

"The benefits I have received from Tanlac are priceless. I am now a perfectly well woman and my friends often speak of how healthy I look. Health is worth everything, and that is what Tanlac has meant to me."

"Tanalac is for sale by all good druggists. Over 85 million bottles sold.—Advertisement."

### Bolled Loon Recipe.

Uncle Augustus, the sage of the village, was engaged in conversation with one of the young hunters who was enjoying the good ducking.

The young hunter wanted to know something about a loon.

"Ye never see a loon?" asked Uncle Augustus in amazement.

"No," replied the young man. "I never did. Are they good to eat?"

"Yes, they're good to eat, if you know how to cook 'em. You see, you put the loon in a kettle of boiling water and set it on the stove. Then you drop a flatiron on it, and when the flatiron is done th' loon is ready ter eat."—Judge.

A few years more and there will be no log cabins left for great men to be born in.

A plunge bath on rising is a certain means of chasing away drowsiness, but it's herolic.

There are now in France 1,800,000 more women than men.

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Unless you see the "Bayer Cross" on tablets, you are not getting the genuine Bayer product prescribed by physicians over 23 years and proved safe by millions for

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## 10c Makes Old Waists Like New

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### A "BLUE RIBBON" COUNTRY

CANADA

At the International Live Stock Show at Chicago, December, 1922, exhibits from CANADA were awarded the following prizes:

Grand Championship and First Prize for Hard Red Spring Wheat. In this class Canadian exhibits won 19 prizes out of a total of 25 awarded.

Grand Championship and First prize for Oats, winning 24 out of 35 prizes awarded.

First, 2nd, 3rd and 4th prizes for Peas, winning 4 out of 5 prizes awarded.

Grand Championship and First Prize for Rye; first prize for two-rowed Barley.

Grand Championship and Sweepstakes for Clydesdale Senior Stallion; 1st prize for Clydesdale 4 and 6 horse teams; 1st prize for Clydesdale Mares 3 years and under.

Championship for Galloway Steers; twelve 1st and 2nd prizes for Sheep. Many other prizes for Grains, Fodders and Live-stock.

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