

The CZAR'S SPY

The Mystery of a Silent Love

By Chevalier WILLIAM LE QUEUX

AUTHOR OF "THE CLOSED BOOK," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY C-D RHODES

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SYNOPSIS.

Gordon Gregg, dining aboard with Hornby, the yacht, Lota's owner, accidentally sees a torn photograph of a young girl. That night the consul's safe is robbed. The police find that Hornby is a fraud and the Lota's name a false one. In London Gregg is trapped nearly to his death by a former servant, Olinto. Visiting in Dumfries, Gregg meets Muriel Leithcourt. Hornby appears and Muriel introduces him as Martin Woodroffe, her father's friend. Gregg discovers the torn photograph of the Lota and finds that the young girl is Muriel's friend, Woodroffe's daughter. Gregg discovers the body of a murdered woman in Rancho wood. The body disappears and in its place is found the body of Olinto, Muriel and Gregg search Rancho wood together, and find the body of Armidia, Olinto's wife. When the police go to the wood the body has disappeared. In London Gregg meets Olinto, alive and well. Gregg traces the young girl of the torn photograph, and finds that she is Elma Heath, niece of Baron Oberg, who has taken her to Abo, Finland, and that she holds a secret affecting Woodroffe. On his return to Rancho Gregg finds the Leithcourts had from Hilton Chater, who had called there. He goes to Abo, and after a tilt with the police chief, is conducted to Kajana, where he finds Elma in prison. A surgical operation has made her deaf and dumb. He escapes with her. Pursuers overtaking them, Elma escapes into the forest and Gregg is taken to Abo, where he is released and finds that the baron is using every effort to arrest Elma. He calls on Baron Oberg and accuses him of silencing and imprisoning Elma to prevent her from telling of his secret misdeeds.

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

A long silence had fallen between us, and it now occurred to me to take advantage of his hesitation. I said in a firm voice, in French:

"I think, baron, our interview is at an end, is it not? Therefore I wish you good-day."

He turned upon me suddenly with an evil flash in his dark eyes, and a snarling imprecation in Russian upon his lips. His hand still held the order committing me to the fortress.

"But before I leave you will destroy that document. It may fall into other hands, you know," and I walked toward him with quick determination.

"I shall do nothing of the kind!" he snapped.

Without further word I snatched the paper from his thin, white fingers and tore it up before his face. His countenance went livid. I do not think I have ever seen a man's face assume



Without Further Words I Snatched the Paper From His Thin, White Fingers.

such an expression of fiendish vindictiveness. It was as though at that instant hell had been let loose within his heart.

But I turned upon my heel and went out.

I had escaped by means of my own diplomacy and firmness. The czar's representative—the man who ruled that country—feared me, and for that reason did not hold me prisoner. Yet when I recalled that evil look of revenge on my departure, I could not help certain feelings of grave apprehension arising within me.

I took the midnight train back to Abo, arriving at the hotel next morning. After an hour's rest I set out anxiously in search of Felix, the drosky driver. I found him in his log-built house in the Ludno quarter, and

PUTS BLAME ON PARENTS

Writer in Eastern Magazine Criticizes Behavior of the Pupils of the High School.

It used to be that the college student was the target of criticism for all manner of excesses; now it is the students of our high schools. Presumably the high schools contain our choicest boys and girls, yet every once in a while a private or local educational board has to speak against the way the girls dress or the questionable social habits between the two sexes. Principal Jackson of the Lynn (Mass.) English High school, in addressing the 1,000 girls and boys under his care, charged them with "cigarette smoking, immorality and immodesty." Complaints had been made by the school committee of the way things were going, and the principal was authorized to make wholesale expulsions unless there was an immediate improvement in conduct. Smoking, flirting and improper conduct generally were referred to. Principal Jackson pictured a boy of the school walking down the street between two

when he asked me in I saw, from his face, that he had news to impart.

"Well?" I inquired. "And what of the lady? Has she been found?"

"Ah! your excellency. It is a pity you were not here yesterday," he said with a sigh.

"Why? Tell me quickly. What has happened?"

"I have been assisting the police as spy, excellency, as I often do, and I have seen her."

"Seen her! Where?" I cried in quick anxiety.

"Here, in Abo. She arrived yesterday morning from Tammerfors accompanied by an Englishman. She had changed her dress, and was all in black. They lunched together at the Restaurant du Nord opposite the landing stage, and an hour later left by steamer for Petersburg."

"An Englishman!" I cried. "Did you not inform the chief of police, Boranski?"

"Yes, your excellency. But he said that their passports being in order, it was better to allow the lady to proceed. To delay her might mean her rearrest in Finland," he added.

"Then their passports were viséed here on embarking?" I exclaimed.

"What was the name upon that of the Englishman?"

"I have it here written down, excellency. I cannot pronounce your difficult English names." And he produced a scrap of dirty paper whereon was written in a Russian hand the name—

"Martin Woodroffe."

CHAPTER XIV.

Spoiling the Spoiler.

I went to the railway station, and from the time-table gathered that if I left Abo by rail at noon I could be in Petersburg an hour before noon on the morrow, or about four hours before the arrival of the steamer by which the silent girl and her companion were passengers. This I decided upon doing, but before leaving I paid a visit to my friend, Boranski, who to my surprise and delight, handed me my wallet with the czar's letter intact, saying that it had been found upon a German thief who had been arrested at the harbor on the previous night. The fellow had, no doubt, stolen it from my pocket believing I carried my paper money in a flap.

"The affair of the English lady is a most extraordinary one," remarked the chief of police, toyng with his pen as he sat at his big table. "She seems to have met this Englishman up at Tammerfors, or at some place farther north, yet it is curious that her passport should be in order even though she fled so precipitately from Kajana. There is a mystery connected with her disappearance from the wood cutter's hut that I confess I cannot fathom."

"Neither can I," I said. "I know the man who is with her, and cannot help fearing that he is her bitterest enemy—that he is acting in concert with the baron."

"Then why is he taking her to the capital—beyond the jurisdiction of the governor general?"

"I am going straight to Petersburg to ascertain," I said. "I have only come to thank you for your kindness in this matter. Truth to tell, I have been somewhat surprised that you should have interested yourself on my behalf," I added, looking straight at the uniformed official.

"It is not on yours, but on hers," he answered, somewhat enigmatically. "I know something of the affair, but it was my duty as a man to help the poor girl to escape from that terrible place. She has, I know, been unjustly condemned for the attempted assassination of the wife of a general—condemned with a purpose, of course. Such a thing is not unusual in Finland."

"Abominable!" I cried. "Oberg is a veritable fiend."

But the man only shrugged his shoulders, saying—

"The orders of his excellency the governor general have to be obeyed, whatever they are. We often regret but we dare not refuse to carry them out."

"Russian rule is a disgrace to our modern civilization," I declared hotly. "I have every sympathy with those who are fighting for freedom."

"Ah, you are not alone in that," he sighed, speaking in a low whisper, and glancing around. "His majesty would order reforms and ameliorate the con-

dition of his people, if only it were possible. But he, like his officials, is powerless. Here we speak of the great uprising with bated breath, but we, alas! know that it must come one day—very soon—and Finland will be first to endeavor to break her bonds—and the Baron Oberg first to fall."

For nearly an hour I sat with him, surprised to find how, although his exterior was so harsh and uncouth, yet his heart really bled for the poor, starving people he was so constantly forced to oppress.

"I have ruined this town of Abo," he declared, quite frankly. "To my own knowledge five hundred innocent persons have gone to prison, and another two hundred have been exiled to Siberia. Yet what I have done is only at direct orders from Helsingfors—orders that are stern, pitiless and unjust. Men have been torn from their families and sent to the mines, women have been arrested for no offense and shipped off to Saghalien, and mere children have been cast into prison on charges of political conspiracy with their elders—in order to ruffly the province! Only," he added anxiously, "I trust you will never repeat what I tell you. You have asked me why I assisted the English mademoiselle to escape from Kajana, and I have explained the reason."

We ate a hearty meal in company at the Sappalinnä, a restaurant built like a Swiss chalet, and at noon I entered the train on the first stage of my slow, tedious journey through the great, silent forests and along the shores of the lakes of southern Finland, by way of Tavestehus and Viborg, to Petersburg.

At four o'clock next day I was out upon the quay in that city, straining my eyes seaward for any sign of smoke, but could see nothing.

It was after ten o'clock when a light shone afar off, and the movement of the police and porters on the quay told me that it was the vessel. Then after a further anxious quarter of an hour it came, amid great shouting and mutual imprecations, slowly alongside the quay, and the passengers at last began to disembark in the pelting rain.

Suddenly I caught sight of two figures—one a man in a big tweed traveling coat and a golf cap, and the other the slight figure of a woman in a long, dark cloak and a woolen tam-o'-shanter. The electric rays fell upon them as they came up the wet gangway together, and there once again I saw the sweet face of the silent woman whom I had grown to love with such fervent desperation. The man behind her was the same who had entertained me on board the Lota—the man who was said to be the lover of the fugitive Muriel Leithcourt.

Without betraying my presence, I watched them pass through the passport office and custom house, and then, overhearing the address which Martin Woodroffe gave the ishvoschik, I stood aside, wet to the skin, and saw them drive away.

At eleven o'clock on the following day I found myself installed in the Hotel de Paris, a comfortable hostelry in the Little Morskaya.

I was beneath the same roof as Elma, although she was in ignorance of my presence. Anxious to communicate with her without Woodroffe's knowledge, I was now awaiting my opportunity. He had, it appeared, taken for her a pleasant front room with sitting room adjoining, on the first floor, while he himself occupied a room on the third floor. As far as I could gather from the French waiter whom I judiciously tipped, he appeared to treat her with every consideration and kindness.

"Has the Englishman received any visitors?" I asked.

"One man—a Russian—an official of police, I think."

"If he receives anyone else, let me know," I said. "And I want you to give mademoiselle a letter from me in secret."

"Bien, m'sieur."

I turned to the little writing table and scribbled a few hasty lines to my love, announcing my presence, and asking her to grant me an interview in secret as soon as Woodroffe was absent. I also warned her of the search for her instigated by the baron, and urged her to send me a line in reply.

The note was delivered into her hand, but although I waited in suspense nearly all day she sent no reply. While Woodroffe was in the hotel I dared not show myself lest he should recognize me, therefore I was compelled to sham indisposition and to eat my meals alone in my room.

For several hours I sat at my window watching the life and movement down in the street below, my mind full of wonder and dark forebodings. Was Martin Woodroffe playing her false?

Just after half-past six o'clock the waiter entered, and handing me a note on a silver, said:

"Mademoiselle has, I believe, only this moment been able to write in secret."

I tore it open and read as follows:

Dear Friend—I am so surprised, I thought you were still in Abo. Woodroffe has an appointment at eight o'clock on the other side of the city, therefore come to me at 8:15. I must see you, and at once. I am in peril.

ELMA HEATH.

My love was in peril! It was just as I had feared. I thanked Providence that I had been sent to help her and extricate her from that awful fate to which "The Strangler of Finland" had consigned her.

At the hour she named, after the waiter had come to me and announced the Englishman's departure, I descended to her sitting room and entered without rapping, for if I had rapped she could not, alas! have heard.

The apartment was spacious and comfortable, thickly carpeted, with heavy furniture and gilding. From her low lounge chair a slim, wan figure sprang up quickly and came forward to greet me, holding out both her hands and smiling happily.

I took her hands in mine, and held them tightly in silence for some moments, as I looked earnestly into those wonderfully brilliant eyes of hers. She turned away laughing, a slight flushing to her cheeks in her confusion. Then she led me to a chair, and motioned me to be seated.

Ours was a silent meeting, but her gestures and the expression of her eyes were surely more eloquent than

words. I knew well what pleasure that re-encounter caused her—equal pleasure with that it gave to me.

Until that moment I had never really loved. I had admired and flirted with women. What man has not? Indeed, I had admired Muriel Leithcourt. But never until now had I experienced in my heart the real flame of true, burning affection. The sweetness of her expression, the tender caress of those soft, tapering hands, the deep, mysterious look in those magnificent eyes, and the incomparable grace of all her movements, combined to render her the most perfect woman I had ever met—perfect in all, alas! save speech and hearing, of which, with such dastard wantonness, she had been deprived.

She touched her red lips with the tip of her forefinger, opened her hands and shrugged her shoulders with a sad gesture of regret. Then turning quickly to some paper on the table at her side she wrote something with a gold pencil and handed it to me. It read:

"Surely Providence has sent you here! Mr. Woodroffe must have followed you from England. He is my enemy. You must take me from here and hide me. They intend to send me into exile. Have you ever been in Petersburg before? Do you know anyone here?"

Then when I had read, she handed me her pencil and below I wrote:

"I will do my best, dear friend. I have been once in Petersburg. But it is not best that we should escape at once from Russia?"

"Impossible at present," she wrote. "We should both be arrested at the frontier. It would be best to go into hiding here in Petersburg. I believed Woodroffe to be my friend, but I have found only this day that he is my enemy. He knew that I was in Kajana and was in Abo when he learned of my escape. He went with two other men in search of us, and discovered us that night when we sought shelter at the wood cutter's hut. Without making his presence known, he waited outside until you were asleep, and then he came and looked in at my window. At first I was alarmed, but quickly I saw that he was a friend. He told me that the police were in the vicinity

and intended to raid the hut, therefore I fled with him, first down to Tammerfors and then to Abo, and on here. At that time I did not see the dastardly trap he had laid in order to get me out of the baron's clutches and wring from me my secret. If I confess, he intends to give me up to the police, who will send me to the mines."

"Does your secret concern him?" I asked in writing.

"Yes," she wrote in response. "It would be equally in his interests as well as those of Baron Oberg if I were sent to Saghalien and my identity effaced. I am a Russian subject, as I have already told you, therefore with a ministerial order against me I am in deadliest peril."

"Trust in me," I scribbled quickly. "I will act upon any suggestion you make. Have you any female friend in whom you could trust to hide you until this danger is past?"

"There is one friend—a true friend. Will you take a note to her?" she wrote, to which I instantly nodded in the affirmative.

Then rising, she obtained some ink and pen and wrote a letter, the contents of which she did not show me before she sealed it.

I watched her write the superscription upon the envelope: "Madame Olga Stassulevitch, modiste, Scredni Prospect, 231, Vasilii Ostroff." I knew that the district was on the opposite side of the city, close to the Little Neva.

"Take a drosky at once, see her, and await a reply. In the meantime, I will prepare to be ready when you return," she wrote. "If Olga is not at home, ask to see the Red Priest—in Russian, Krasny-pastor. Return quickly, as I fear Woodroffe may come back if so, I am lost."

I assured her I would not lose a single instant, and five minutes later I was tearing down the Morskaya in a drosky along the canal and across the Nicholas bridge to the address upon the envelope.

The house was, I found, somewhat smaller than its neighbors, but not let out in flats as the others. Upon the door was a large brass plate bearing the name, "Olga Stassulevitch: Modiste." I pressed the electric button, and in answer a tall, clean-shaven Russian servant opened the door.

"Madame is not home," was his brief reply to my inquiry.

"Then I will see the Red Priest," I said in a lower tone. "I come from Elma Heath." Thereupon, without further word, the man admitted me into the long, dark hall and closed the door with an apology that the gas was not lighted. But, striking a match, he led me up the broad staircase and into a small, cosy, well-furnished room on the second floor, evidently the sitting room of some studious person, judging from the books and critical reviews lying about.

For a few minutes I waited there, until the door reopened, and there entered a man of medium height, with a shock of long, snow-white hair and almost patriarchal beard, whose dark eyes that age had dimmed flashed out at me with a look of curious inquiry, and whose movements were those of a person not quite at his ease.

"I have called on behalf of Mademoiselle Elma Heath, to give this letter to Madame Stassulevitch, or if she is absent to place it in the hands of the Red Priest," I explained in my best Russian.

"Very well, sir," the old man responded in quite good English. "I am the person you seek," and taking the letter he opened it and read it through.

I saw by the expression on his furrowed face that its contents caused him the utmost consternation. His countenance, already pale, blanched to the lips, while in his eyes there shot a fire of quick apprehension. The thin, almost transparent hand holding the letter trembled visibly.

"You know mademoiselle—eh?" he asked in a hoarse, strained voice as he turned to me. "You will help her to escape?"

"I will risk my own life in order to save hers," I declared.

"And your devotion to her is prompted by what?" he inquired suspiciously.

I was silent for a moment. Then I confessed the truth.

"My affection."

"Ah!" he sighed deeply. "Po-ti young lady! She, who has enemies on every hand, sadly needs a friend. But can we trust you—have you no fear?"

"Of what?"

"Of being implicated in the coming revolution in Russia? Remember, I am the Red Priest. Have you never heard of me? My name is Otto Kampf."

Otto Kampf! (TO BE CONTINUED.)

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