



# THE DIVA'S RUBY



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## SYNOPSIS.

Baraka, a Tartar girl, became enamored of a golden bearded stranger who was prospecting and studying herbs in the vicinity of her home in central Asia, and revealed to him the location of a mine of rubies hoping that the stranger would love her in return for her disclosure. They were followed to the cave by the girl's relatives, who blocked up the entrance and drew off the water supply, leaving the couple to die. Baraka's cousin Saad, her betrothed, attempted to climb down a cliff overlooking the mine; but the traveler shot him. The stranger was revived from a water gourd Saad carried, dug his way out of the tunnel, and departed, deserting the girl and carrying a bag of rubies. Baraka gathered all the gems she could carry, and started in pursuit. Margaret, Donna (Margaretta da Cordova), a famous prima donna, became engaged in London to Konstantin Logotheti, a wealthy Greek financier. Her intimate friend was Countess Leven, known as Lady Maud, whose husband had been killed by a bomb in St. Petersburg; and Lady Maud's most intimate friend was Rufus Van Torp, an American, who had become one of the richest men in the world. Van Torp was in love with Margaret, and rushed to London as soon as he heard of her betrothal. He offered Lady Maud \$5,000,000 for her pet charity if she would aid him in winning the singer from Logotheti. Baraka approached Logotheti at Versailles with rubies to sell. He presented a ruby to Margaret. Van Torp bought a yacht and sent it to Venice. He was visited by Baraka in male attire. She gave him a ruby after the American had told her of having seen in the United States a man answering the description of the one she loved. The American followed Margaret to the Bayreuth "Parsifal" festival. Margaret took a liking to Van Torp, who presented her with the ruby Baraka had given him. Count Kralinsky, a Russian, arrived at Bayreuth. Van Torp believed him to be the one Baraka was pursuing. Baraka was arrested in London on the charge of stealing from Pinney, a jeweler, the ruby she had sold to Logotheti. Two strangers were the thieves.

## CHAPTER VII—Continued.

But after he was gone, Spiro was heard calling loudly, though not rudely or violently, from his place of confinement.

"Mr. Policeman! Mr. Policeman! Please come speak!"  
The man on duty went to the door

Logotheti by telephone. They'll be likely to know something about him at the bank if he's not at home, and he may come to find out what's the matter. If Mrs. Foxwell should look in and want to see the girl, let her in, of course, without asking me. If she's in town, she'll be here before long, for I've telephoned to her house, as usual when there's a girl in trouble."

There was a sort of standing, unofficial order that in any case of a girl or a young woman being locked up, Mrs. Foxwell was to know of it, and she had a way of remembering a great many sergeants' names, and doing kind things for their wives at Christmas time, which further disposed them to help her in her work. But the London police are by nature the kindest set of men who keep order anywhere in the world, and they will readily help a man or woman who tries to do good in a sensible, practical way; and if they are sometimes a little prejudiced in favor of their own perspicuity in getting up a case, let that policeman, of any other country, who is quite without fault, throw the first stone at their brave, good-natured heads.

Logotheti was not at his lodgings in St. James' place, and from each of two clubs to which the officer telephoned rather at random, the only answer was that he was a member but not in the house. The officer wrote a line to his rooms and sent it by a messenger, to be given to him as soon as he came in.

It was late in the hot afternoon when Mrs. Foxwell answered the message by coming to the police station herself. She was at once admitted to Baraka's cell and the door was closed after her.

The girl was lying on the pallet bed, dressed in a poor calico skirt and a

Logotheti to be informed of her captivity, and was absolutely confident that he would help her out of her trouble. Lady Maud was less sure of that, however, and said so, but it was soon clear that Baraka did not speak a word of any language known to Lady Maud, who was no great linguist at best. Under these circumstances it looked as if there were nothing to be done for the poor girl, who made all sorts of signs of distress, when she saw that the English woman was about to leave her, in sheer despair of being of any use. Just then, however, the sergeant came to the door, and informed the visitor that the girl had an accomplice who spoke her language and knew some English, and that by stretching a point he would bring the man, if Mrs. Foxwell wished to talk with him.

The result was that in less than half an hour, Lady Maud heard from Spiro a most extraordinary tale, of which she did not believe a single word. To her plain English mind it all seemed perfectly mad at first, and on reflection she thought it an outrageous attempt to play upon her credulity; whereas she was thoroughly convinced that the girl had come to grief in some way through Logotheti and had followed him from Constantinople, probably supporting herself and her companion by stealing on the way. Lady Maud's husband had been a brute, but he knew the east tolerably well, having done some military duty in the Caucasus before he entered the diplomatic service; his stories had chiefly illustrated the profound duplicity of all Asiatics, and she had not seen any reason to disbelieve them.

When Spiro had nothing more to say, therefore, she rose from the only seat there was and shook her head with an air of utter incredulity, mingled with the sort of pitying contempt she felt for all lying in general. She could easily follow the case, by the help of the sergeant and the police court reports, and she might be able to help Baraka hereafter when the girl had served the sentence she would certainly get for such an important and cleverly managed theft. The poor girl implored and wept in vain; Lady Maud could do nothing, and would not stay to be told any more insane stories about ruby mines in Tartary. She called the sergeant, freed herself from Baraka's despairing hold on her hand and went out. And when she thought of what must have gone before, and of the part Logotheti had almost certainly played in the girl's life, her anger was roused, and she sat down and wrote to Margaret on the impulse of the moment. She gave a detailed account of her experience at the police station, including especially a description of the way Baraka had behaved in trying to send a message to Logotheti.

"I tell you quite frankly," Lady Maud wrote in conclusion, "that my friend Mr. Van Torp has begged me very urgently to use any friendly influence I may possess, to induce you to reconsider your engagement, because he hopes that you will accept him instead. You will not think any less well of him for that. A man may ask his best friend to help him to marry the girl he is in love with, I am sure! I told him that I would not do anything to make trouble between you and Logo. If I am making trouble now, by writing all this, it is therefore not to help Mr. Van Torp, but because the impression I have had about Logo has really frightened me, for you. I made such a wretched failure of my own married life that I have some right to warn a friend who seems to be on the point of doing just the same thing. You have a right to be sure that the man you marry is quite free, and that you won't suddenly meet a lovely eastern girl of 20 who claims him after you think he is yours; and your friend has a right to warn you, if she feels sure that he is mixed up in some affair that isn't over yet.

"I don't know where Logo is, but if he were near enough I should go to him and tell him what I think. Of course he is not in town now—nobody is, and I've only stayed on to clear everything out of my house, now that I'm giving it up. I suppose he is with you, though you said you did not want him at Bayreuth! Show him this letter if you like, for I'm quite ready to face him if he's angry at my interference. I would even join you in Paris, if you wanted me, for I have nothing to do and strange to say I have a little money! I've sold almost all my furniture, you know, so I'm not such a total pauper as usual. But in any case answer this, please, and tell me that I have done right, or wrong, just as you feel about it—and then we will go on being friends, or say good-by, whichever you decide."

Lady Maud signed this long letter and addressed it to Miss Margaret Donna, at Bayreuth, feeling sure that it would be delivered, even without the name of the hotel, which she did not know. But the Bayreuth post-office was overworked during the limited time of the performances, and it happened that the extra assistant through whose hands the letter passed for distribution either did not know that Miss Donna was the famous Cordova, or did not happen to remember the hotel at which she was stopping, or both, and it got pigeon-holed under D, to be called for. The consequence was that Margaret did not receive it until the morning after the perform-

ance of "Parsifal" to which she had taken Van Torp, though it had left London only six hours after him; for such things will happen even in extremely well-managed countries when people send letters insufficiently addressed.

Furthermore, it also happened that Logotheti was cooling himself on the deck of his yacht in the neighborhood of Penzance, while poor Baraka was half-stuffed in the police station. For the yacht, which was a very comfortable one, though no longer new, and not very fast according to modern ideas, was at Cowes, waiting to be wanted, and when her owner parted from Van Torp after promising to dine on the next day but one, it occurred to him that the smell of the wood pavements was particularly nasty, that it would make no real difference whether he returned to Pinney's at once or in two days, or two weeks, since the ruby he had left must be cut before it was mounted, and that he might just as well take the fast train to Southampton and get to sea for 36 hours. This he did, after telegraphing his sailing-master to have steam as soon as possible; and as he had only just time to reach the Waterloo station he did not even take the trouble to stop at his lodgings. He needed no luggage, for he had everything he wanted on board, and his man was far too well used to his ways to be surprised at his absence.

The consequence of this was that when Baraka's case came up the next morning there was no one to say a word for her and Spiro. Mr. Pinney identified the ruby "to the best of his belief" as the one stolen from his counter, the fact that Baraka had been disguised in man's clothing was treated as additional evidence, and she and Spiro were sent to Brixton jail innocently all the while in eloquent but disjointed English, until he was told to hold his tongue.

Further, Lady Maud read the police court report in an evening paper, cut it out and sent it to Margaret as a document confirming the letter she had posted on the previous evening; and owing to the same insufficiency in the address, the two missives were delivered together.

Lastly, Mr. Pinney took the big ruby back to his shop and locked it up in his safe with a satisfaction and a sense of profound relief such as he had rarely felt in a long and honorable life; and he would have been horrified and distressed beyond words if he could have even guessed that he had been the means of sending an innocent and helpless girl to prison.

One thing more which concerns this tale happened on that same day. Two well-dressed men drove up to the door of a quiet and very respectable hotel in the West end; and they asked for their bill, and packed their belongings, which were sufficient though not numerous; and when they had paid what they owed and given the usual tips, they told the porter to call two hansoms, and each had his things put on one of them; and they nodded to each other and parted; and one hansom drove to Euston and the other to Charing Cross; and whether they ever met again, I do not know, and it does not matter; but in order to clear Baraka's character at once and to avoid a useless and perfectly transparent mystery, it is as well to say directly that it was the young man who drove to Euston, on his way to Liverpool and New York, who had Logotheti's ruby sewn up in his waistcoat pocket; and that the ruby really belonged to Margaret, since Logotheti had already given it to her, before he had brought it to Mr. Pinney to be cut and set. But the knowledge of what is here imparted to the reader, who has already guessed this much of the truth, would not help Baraka out of Brixton jail, where the poor girl found herself in very bad company indeed; even worse, perhaps, than that in which Spiro was obliged to spend his time.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Margaret received her friend's letter and the account of Baraka's trial by the same post on the morning after she and Mr. Van Torp had been to hear "Parsifal" together, and she opened the two envelopes before reading her other letters, though after assuring herself that there was nothing from Logotheti.

She read the newspaper cutting first, supposing that it contained something flattering about herself, for she had been a little short of public admiration for nearly a fortnight. Baraka's case was reported with the rather brutal simplicity which characterizes such accounts in the English papers, and Logotheti's name appeared in Mr. Pinney's evidence. There had been the usual "laughter," duly noted by the stenographer, when the poor girl's smart man's clothes were produced before the magistrate by the policeman who had arrested her. The magistrate had made a few stern remarks when ordering the delinquents to prison, and had called Baraka "hardened" because she did not burst into tears. That was all, and there were barely five-and-twenty lines of small print.

But the prima donna bit her handsome lip and her eyes sparkled with anger, as she put the cutting back into the first envelope, and took the folded letter out of the other. The girl had not only stolen a ruby, but it was Margaret's ruby, her very own,



the one Logotheti had given her for her engagement, and which she had insisted upon having set as a ring, though it would cover more than half the space between her knuckle and the joint of her third finger. Further, it had been stolen by the very girl from whom Logotheti had pretended that he had bought it, a fact which cast the high light of absurdity on his unlikely story! It was natural enough that she should have seen it, and should have known that he was taking it to Pinney's, and that she should have been able to prepare a little screw of paper with a bit of glass inside, to substitute for it. The improbabilities of such an explanation did not occur to Margaret, who saw only the glaring fact that the handsome Tartar girl had accompanied Logotheti, between London and Paris, disguised as a man, and had ultimately robbed him, as he richly deserved. She had imposed upon Van Torp, too, and had probably tried to sell him the very stone she had stolen from Logotheti, and the one she had made him take as a gift was nothing but a bit of glass, as he said it might be, for all he knew.

She devoured Lady Maud's letter in a few moments, and then read it twice again, which took so long that Mrs. Rushmore sent Justine to tell Potts to ask if Miss Donna did not mean to go out that morning, though the weather was so fine.

Great singers generally develop a capacity for flying into rages, even if they have not been born with hot tempers. It is very bad for the voice, but it seems to be a part of the life. Margaret was very angry, and Potts became as meek and mild as a little lamb when she saw the storm signals in her mistress's face. She delivered her message in a pathetic and op-

pressed tone, like a child reciting the collect for the day at a Sunday school.

The prima donna, imposing as a young lioness, walked slowly backwards and forwards between her window and the foot of the iron bedstead. There was an angry light in her eyes and instead of flushing, as her cheeks did for any ordinary fit of temper, they were as white as wax.

Potts, who was a small woman, seemed to shrink and become visibly smaller as she stood waiting for an answer. Suddenly the lioness stood still and surveyed the poor little jackal that served her.

"Ask Mrs. Rushmore if she can wait half an hour," she said. "I'm very angry, Potts, and it's not your fault, so keep out of the way."

Margaret's wrath did not subside quickly, and as it could not spend itself on any immediate object, it made her feel as if she were in a raging fever. Her temples throbbed, her hands trembled and were as hot as fire, her lips were drawn and parched, and when she caught sight of herself in the looking-glass she saw that she was quite white and that her eyes were blood-shot.

Her hand still shook so that she could hardly hold the pen steady while she wrote the telegram.

"Unspeakably grateful. If I can join me here you will gladly wait for you. Must see you at once. Do come."

She felt better as she rose from the table, and when she looked at herself in the mirror she saw that her face had changed again and that her natural color was returning. She rang for Potts, remembering that the half-hour must be almost up.

"Potts," Margaret said, "I've been in a rage, but I'm only angry now. Do I look like a human being again?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the maid, inspecting her gravely. "You are still



She Grasped Lady Maud's Arm.

and asked what he wanted. In his broken English he explained very clearly that Baraka had a friend in London who was one of the great of the earth, and who would certainly prove her innocence, vouch for her character, and cause her to be set at large without delay, if he knew of her trouble.

"What is the gentleman's name?" inquired the policeman.

The name of Baraka's friend was Konstantin Logotheti, and Spiro knew the address of the lodgings he always kept in St. James' place.

"Very well," said the policeman. "I'll speak to the officer at once."

"I thank very much, sir," Spiro answered, and he made no more noise.

The sergeant looked surprised when the message was given to him.

"Queer case this," he observed. "Here's the thief appealing to the owner of the stolen property for help; and the owner is one of those millionaire financiers; and the thief is a lovely girl in man's clothes. By the by, Sampson, tell Mrs. Mowle to get out some women's slops and dress her decently, while I see if I can find Mr.

loose white cotton jacket, which Mrs. Mowle had brought and had insisted that she must put on; and her man's clothes had been taken from her with all her other belongings. She sat up, forlorn, pale and lovely, as the kind visitor entered and stood beside her.

"Poor child!" exclaimed the lady, touched by her sad eyes. "What can I do to help you?"

Baraka shook her head, for she did not understand. Then she looked up into eyes almost as beautiful as her own, and pronounced a name, slowly and so distinctly that it was impossible not to hear each syllable.

"Konstantin Logotheti."

The lady started, as well she might; for she was no other than Lady Maud, who called herself by her own family name, "Mrs. Foxwell," in her work amongst the poor women of London.

Baraka saw the quick movement and understood that Logotheti was well known to her visitor. She grasped Lady Maud's arm with both her small hands, and looked up to her face with a beseeching look that could not be misunderstood. She wished



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a bit pale, ma'am, and your eye is a trifle wild, I may say. A motor veil, perhaps, if you are thinking of going out, ma'am."

"I haven't got such a thing, have I? I never motor now."

Potts smiled the smile of the very superior maid, and moved towards a perfectly new leather hat-box that stood in the corner.

"I always put in two for sea, ma'am," she said. "You wore one when we crossed the channel the last time, if you remember."

"Potts, you're a treasure!"

"Yes, ma'am," Potts answered vaguely in her meek voice, as she dived into one of the curious secret pockets of the hat-box. "That is, ma'am," she said, correcting herself, "I mean, it's very kind of you to say so."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

English Jew in High Position.  
Herbert Samuel, who was recently named as chancellor of Lancaster, with a seat in the cabinet, is the first Jew to attain to that distinction in England.