Of Royal Lineage.

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The storm, which had been raging since 4 o'clock that afternoon, increased in violence when the sun went down and the two men who had been struggling through the German forest since noon feared that they were doomed to pass the night among those gigantic trees with the thunder crashing and booming over them, and the vivid and almost incessant lightning darting and hissing through the branches. For hours they had led their horses, because the way was too precarious for any other mode of procedure. They were in the midst of a dense forest, which they had attempted to cross without the aid of a guide; and now darkness was upon them—darkness which they could not hope to penetrate.

One of them was tall and broad, almost a giant in stature, with tawny hair and beard and (in spite of their surroundings) an easy, nonchalant air of conscious superiority to circumstances. The other was shorter and more compactly built, with swarthy face and dark eyes, alert, quick-motioned and cautious, but not less courageous than his companion.

"Tell you what, Craddock," said the taller of the two, when they paused to collect their faculties and decide upon what was best to do, "I don't think I fancy what is paradoxically called dry land in a storm like this. Give me the sea, the open sea, even if I have nothing greater nor better than a common yawl beneath me. It beats these big trees and falling branches with never a compass to steer by nor a point in sight from which to take your bearings. What are we going to do now?"

"Forge ahead; it is the only thing we can do," replied Craddock.

"Call up the sun, then, Mr. Joshua, for it seems to be standing still on the wrong side of the world. Call it up out of the depths, take an observation and I'm with you. As for keeping our course—or any course in this blackness—it seems to me to be out of the question."

"We cannot remain here, however."

The Norwegian laughed aloud.

"It looks to me as though we would have to do that very thing," he said. "Why, Crad, we're surrounded by breakers, and they are the worst sort of breakers that I ever ran afoul of. They're made of wood, to be sure, but they are as likely to make a wreck of our spars as they are of the hull. If one of those falling twigs—and I'll take my oath they're bigger round than my legs—if one of them should rap you on the head, it would be worse than falling from the maintruck of a fullrigged ship to the deck."

The darkness was intense by this time, although never a minute passed when it was not dispelled, for an instant at least, by the lightning. One of the flashes illuminated the scene as Thorgensen ceased speaking and, without replying to the protest of the Norwegian, Craddock started forward.

Thus, for another hour, they progressed, pausing between the flashes and making, as Thorgensen expressed it, "as much headway as possible," whenever the warring elements permitted objects for a moment to be visible.

The Norwegian never abated his flow of conversation and did not appear to heed the fact that his companion replied in monosyllables whenever he could do so. Their route led them over obstructions of all kinds, around huge bowlders and often underneath the fallen trunk of a forest giant whose companions had not permitted it to lie prone upon the ground, but with outstretched arms sustained it so that it only half reclined.

After journeying some distance they began to descend the sloping side of the mountain and their way became easier. The trees were separated by greater distances and the clutter of debris and moss-grown rocks were less frequent and smaller. The wind howled on, the thunder continued to boom and the lightning still played hide and seek among the branches, but the darkness seemed less dense. There were moments when they could see the sky through the treetops.

Once, when they halted to rest and were about to start on again, the horse led by Craddock, who was in the lead, refused to stir, and while his master was still urging him a flash of light revealed the fact that they were standing on the edge of a ravine, into which five paces more would have precipitated them; and then out of the darkness beneath, far away and far below them, the quick eyes of the Norwegian discovered a single glimmer of light.

"Look there, Crad," he said, grasping his companion by the arm. "Do you see that? Looks like a masthead light. Anyhow, it's a beacon for us. We'll have to change our course, but we can make it, eh? Looks as though we would have to come about and try a new tack, though. How do you make out the bearings, old man?"

"I think we are on a ledge which we can go around without much trouble. Hold my horse till I take soundings."

He disappeared in the darkness and was gone so long that Thorgensen began to stamp with impatience and at last he calls out:

"Where the devil are you, Crad? Down in that black hole?"

"No, right here," replied Craddock, at his elbow. "Come; I know the way now. There is a path just below us and I think it leads to the house where the light shines out. Before we start, though, Ralph, I want to ask a few questions. You have not deceived me concerning the purpose of your trip to this part of the world. I knew, when you asked me to come here with you, why you made the request. It is the same old madness, Ralph—the love of a peasant for a princess.

"Yes, Crad, it is the same old madness, and as sure as I stand here in the midst of storm and darkness, with my eyes fixed upon that glimmer of light, I believe that the power of love has directed my steps through this black forest and that beyond that light she is awaiting my coming. Say what you will, believe what you will, the hand of God is in this! I know that she is there where that light gleams out. And I believe that she knows that I am somewhere near her."

"Does she expect you, Ralph?"

"No; not in the sense that you mean. I have never communicated with her nor attempted to do so since that night in the Mediterranean. I have not intended to deceive you in inducing you to come here with me. I knew that you understood why I came and why I wished to have you with me. Do you know, Crad, that one month from today is the time fixed for her wedding?"

"Yes."

"Do you remember that although I saw her and listened to her voice that evening in the Mediterranean, although I touched her hand and kissed it, I uttered not one word myself?"

"Yes; I remember."

The Norwegian threw back his head with a gesture that was majestic and the flash of lightning which illumined his face at that instant revealed something that was grand and inspiring about the aspect and attitude of the man. Presently, he continued:

"I discovered that she was with a hunting party at a lodge in the forest," he said "It belongs to one of the German princes, I will not tell you his name. You will soon know in whose domain you are. Yonder almost at our feet, is the lodge where she is a guest, and I shall see and have speech with her before I depart. On such a night as this, from the storm and darkness, surely any traveler will be welcome where a human being lives. It is our passport for admission to the lodge. In the sunlight, even in the starlight of a better night, we might be turned away. Tonight we will be welcome. One thing more: Just now you referred to me as a peasant. I am no peasant. The same blood which flows in her veins burns in mine. The ancestors of her father, the king, were the same as the ancestors of my father, who was a sailor and a fisherman, and I know it to be true. We are both descendants of Harold Fairhair, who was the first king of the Northmen, and he ruled Norway, Sweden, Denmark and England as well. I know my lineage and the record is as clear, as direct and as impossible of controversion as hers. When I am again in the presence of the princess I will not be silent. Tonight I feel that I am a king. Yonder, where that light gleams out, beckoning to me, is my queen and no man, be he emperor or god, shall say me nay."

Craddock made no reply. There was nothing that he could say. The great, giant-like combination of Hercules and Apollo was as immovable as a rock in moods like this one, and so, picking their way down the mountain side, they presently discovered the path to which Craddock had referred, and in another half hour were before the gate of the lodge.

The Norwegian raised the bronze knocker to summon the porter, but paused ere he permitted it to fall, and then, while he stood with it in his grasp, above the moaning thunder, which trembled in the distance, his voice rang out in that strange, weird yodel, and he knew that at least one person within the lodge would recognize and understand it. Then, while the sounds of it still lingered among the treetops, he hammered with the bronze upon the gate.

The delay which followed was short. Then the smaller gate, which was encased within the big one, was opened cautiously, just sufficiently far to permit the appearance of a bearded face at the aperture.

"Two gentlemen who have lost their way on the mountain in the storm," announced Thorgensen, in German. "Open, my good man, and permit us to enter. We are drenched and half famished."

There was something in the Norwegian's tone which reassured the porter, and he hastened to comply. Another man took their horses and led them away in the darkness, and the travelers were speedily shown into the warm and dry quarters adjoining the gate. They were given a warm place near the fire and a pitcher of mulled beer seasoned with pepper was set before them.

It was evident that Thorgensen had provided himself for this emergency, for, having questioned the porter concerning the name of his master, he gave him, instead of a card, a letter to deliver. Whatever it contained—and even Craddock had been, until that moment, unaware of its existence—it was potent, for they were presently escorted to the lodge, where they were made welcome with thorough German hospitality. Their saddlebags were brought to them, so that by the time their host sent word that he was ready to receive them, nearly all the evidences of the night journey through the forest and the storm had been removed.

When they entered the library, which had more of the appearance of a sportsman's arsenal than a place for reading and study, they found themselves in the presence of a man whose stature was almost as great as Thor's. Past middle age, rugged and big, he was the typical German lord, who governs principalities with almost feudal rights; who prefers the vastness of his forests and the solitude of his mountains to the most brilliant court of Europe and who

"LET THE GOD WHO HAS IMPLANTED THIS LOVE IN OUR HEARTS DECIDE OUR FATE."

can be induced to leave it only by the peremptory summons of his master, the emperor.

"You are welcome, gentlemen," he said, advancing with extended hand, and greeting first one and then the other. He spoke in his own language. "May I ask which of you was the bearer of this letter from Stockholm?"

"I am Herr Thor," replied the Norwegian. "This gentleman is Mr. Craddock an American. We are traveling companions. I happened, your highness, to mention to your cousin in Stockholm that I intended to travel this way and he begged me to call upon you, but I did not think to appear in the night and in a storm. We had lost our way utterly and it was only after your porter had admitted us that I discovered at whose home I had claimed hospitality."

"You are welcome, gentlemen; twice welcome, since you come from my friend and cousin. Your baggage, I suppose, is not far away. In the morning I will be glad to supply your needs. And now, if you will join me at the table—there are several gentlemen present; the ladies have retired—I will see that one want—for you must be very hungry—is supplied without delay. Do not mind your appearance, I beg. During the hunting season we put aside all unnecessary observances of dress.

* * * * * *

The following morning was glad with brilliant sunshine and the foliage glistened as though it were bejeweled. Craddock had asked only one question concerning their reception at the lodge and that with some sternness. He had demanded to know if the letter which had secured them such a cordial welcome was authentic and the Norwegian had replied:

"The letter is genuine. It was written by a crown prince and was his own suggestion, not mine. For the present let that suffice."

Their host was bluff, hearty and thoroughly cordial. In the honesty of his own nature he had not a suspicion that these men were not what they seemed; and indeed they were not otherwise. He made them wholly welcome, and they were presented to the other guests without comment or reservation. The ladies they did not encounter until evening, and then the princess was not present. Craddock watched Thor narrowly, but he could not discover one sign of impatience or doubt. The face of the Norwegian was as placid and as full of confidence as it ever had been.

On the morning of the second day, when the hunting party left the lodge, Thor was not among those who comprised it. Craddock, however, made his excuses, for he noticed that the princess was also absent. Thor had said nothing to him of his determination to absent himself from the hunt that day, but the American could be ready-tongued when occasion required and he invented a satisfactory excuse; so the party went on its way, and the only guests who were left behind were Thor, the Norwegian, and Carlotta—or Charlotte—a princess of Denmark.

An hour after the departure of the merry hunters the tall figure of Thor appeared among the tamaracks and spruces near the house, and presently from their depths came the weird yodel cry which once heard from the throat of a Norwegian would never be forgotten. A dog—a Great Dane—heard it and barked. Then he approached the grove, sniffing suspiciously along the path; but a calm, strong voice spoke to him as he passed under the boughs and presently he stood wagging his tail and licking the hand of the man who had alarmed him.

A half hour later the cry once more echoed through the ground and among the evergreen branches of the trees. The Great Dane looked up at his companion and whined. He seemed to know that the man was calling for somebody who would not come. He trotted out of the grove towards the house and barked, then he returned to the man and licked his hand again. When another half-hour had passed the yodel sounded for the third time and then, immediately afterwards, a fourth time, and again the dog barked.

Ten minutes later the figure of a woman appeared in the path approaching the grove and Thor, observing it, clasped his hands together and moved his lips silently. Then a smile glowed in his eyes and he waited without moving for her to come to him. In another moment they were face to face under the tamaracks and as the princess raised her eyes to Thor's a shaft of sunlight stole down through the branches and rested with caressing touch upon her upturned face. It was as though a halo had fallen upon her. Beside them the Great Dane, seated upon his haunches, looked on, and Thor dropped his right hand until it rested on the dog's head and waited for the princess to speak.

"Was this necessary?" murmured the princess at last, when the silence seemed filled with the sounds of unspoken words. "Does it not add to your suffering and to mine? Is it generous of you, who love me, to demand this sacrifice of my pride and of my womanhood? Speak. When we last saw each other you were silent, because I demanded it, and I have felt that I was unjust. You, who dared so much to see me, should at least have been permitted to speak. I will hear you now, even though I fear my own powers of resistance; but I know that you love me, and I feel no sense of shame in the knowledge that I love you. On your strength as a man to preserve that love the holy thing it is now I rely. Speak, then, and I will hear you. Deliver your message to me and—go. But, in saying what you have to say, remember who I am. Remember what I am and remember that if you were of royal birth and I more lowly the conditions would be the same. I who listen to you am promised to another."

"It is to tell you that I am of royal birth that I am here, princess," he said, calmly. "My lineage is as old as yours—older and greater than that of the royal personage who has promised to restore—who has already restored to me—the rights and privileges and the name which are mine by right of birth, and who has said that he will intercede with your august father for you and for me. It is to get your consent to that intercession that I am here. There remains a month yet before you are to be given to another and much may be accomplished in that time. My friends will not ask in vain for the hand of Princess Charlotte, the favorite daughter of Denmark's king, if that daughter will add to the request her own prayers and hopes."

He paused and the princess did not reply. She stood with clasped hands and downcast eyes. She breathed rapidly while her face flushed, became pale and then flushed again; and the great Dane withdrew his massive head from beneath the hand of Thor and, going to her, thrust his nose beneath her palms and held it there. She did not at once perceive the dog, which seemed to be pleading the cause of the man, but suddenly, and without warning, she sank upon one knee, wound her arms around the neck of the animal and wept.

Thor neither moved nor spoke. He waited; and presently, when the paroxysm was past, the princess, from her recumbent position and still retaining her hold upon the dog as if she were afraid to remove her arms lest they should act without her sanction and outstretch themselves toward the man who stood so patiently before her, raised her eyes in which tears still glistened and looked upon the face of Thor. When she spoke it was in a low, tremulous voice.

"I believe you," she said. "Go, then, and request his majesty to intercede with my father. I know to whom you refer. Our host here has told me of the letter you brought from Stockholm. If the writer of that letter and his august father will do as you have said, it is true that they may not plead in vain. Go, my beloved, and be sure that my prayers and hopes go with you. Take with you this Great Dane. He is rightly named Royal. Take him, as a present from me, to his majesty of Norway and Sweden, or to his son, the crown prince. My name is engraved upon the collar. Inside I have had inscribed your name. It is the only message I can send."

Thor made one stride toward her then, but she started to her feet and drew back from him.

"No," she said, sadly, but with irrevocable firmness, and answering his unspoken thought. "Do not defile this holy moment with a caress. Go as you came, with dignity and honor. Leave me as you found me, undefiled. Our love is great; let us be as great as that love. Within the week you will be in Stockholm. Before two weeks have passed I will be in my father's palace. At that time send his majesty's emissary. Let the good God who implanted this love in our hearts decide our fates. Go before my strength fails—before yours overmasters you. Royal, yonder stands your master; go with him," and she stooped and kissed the dog's great head.

Thor, trembling as he had never done before, even in moments of direst peril, dropped upon one knee and bowed his head. The princess went nearer to him and for an instant rested one hand upon his tawny hair; then she turned and traced her way to the ledge, and the Norwegian did not rise until he knew that she had passed out of his view.

* * * * * *

That evening, an hour after the departure of Thor and Craddock a tired courier arrived at the hunting lodge of the German prince, where the princess was a guest. He came from the king of Denmark and the letter that he delivered bore the royal seal. It announced the death in the hunting field of Prince Charles of Roumania and directed that Charlotte should at once return to Copenhagen to enter upon a period of mourning with proper respect for her betrothed husband.

* * * * * *

One year after the interview beneath the tamaracks and spruces Thor and Charlotte met again, but this time the interview was held in the great reception room of the palace of the Danish king. Then their interview had no auditors, now they were surrounded by nobles, dignitaries and ambassadors from every court in Europe, for it was the occasion of the formal betrothal of the Princess Charlotte of Denmark to Thor of Norway, now a prince.

Two persons who truly love are ever inventors of opportunity and so it was that before the hour came for the departure of Thor from the palace he found himself for a moment alone with the princess. They were concealed from the throng of courtiers only by the heavy curtains which shrouded the window in which they stood and their time was limited to a moment, but a thousand years would not have been too much to have lived for that one supreme moment. He reached out his arms and she glided within their embrace. He bent his head downward and she raised her face to his. Their lips met. They remained thus for a moment, silently, and then, gliding from his embrace, she returned to her guests, but there was a new light in her eyes and a new joy in her heart. Her words to Thor, spoken under the tamaracks and spruces, had been prophetic. The good God who had implanted this love in their hearts had decided their fates.

(The End.)

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QUEER THINGS FROM THE SEA.

Clam Diggers Bring All Sorts of Articles to the Surface.

More than half the clams sold in the markets of this city, says the New York Mail and Express, come from the lower and Sandy Hook bays. Except when freezing weather prevails, hundreds of boats daily drag their big rakes along their bottom and it is safe to say that there is hardly a square foot of this sandy area which has not been furrowed by the clam diggers.

Among the inhabitants of the north shore of New Jersey there is no more interesting individual than the "clammer." His yarns, while not "fishy," are decidedly "clammy," have enough spice of the sea about them to make them quite palatable. But his stories of marvelous catches, midnight runs to the West Tenth street market with articles full and rough experiences off a lee shore lose much of their interest when he begins to tell of the countless number of things besides clams he has raked up from the sandy bottom of the bay.

The most valuable catch ever made by one of these men was a canvas belt, containing 500 sovereigns, which a Keyport clammer brought to the surface with a rakeful of clams in the main ship channel two years ago. Closely following this an old sword, crumbling in its scabbard, was brought to light and still later a stiletto of wonderful beauty and design was added to the scanty adornment of the modest little home of another clammer.

Two 500-pound anchors, each at the end of thirty fathoms of chain, were the result of a haul made by a clammer dredging just inside the point of Sandy Hook a month ago. He sold them at Fulton market the next day for $60.

An old, grizzly, weather-beaten veteran of the clamming fleet was asked the other day if he had ever "raked up" anything which he could use in his home or on his boat.

"Nawthin' much," he said, "I jist took from the bay this past summer enough coal to keep me and me woman warm this winter half through. And every one of them dishes, pans, pots and kettles you see in the cabin there and that there oil stove and them lanterns I got from Davy Jones' locker."

Hammers, monkey-wrenches and cables, oil-skin suits, old trousers and women's dresses were among the other articles which this old bayman had seen daily brought to the surface in the clutches of the clam rake.

But all clammers agree that next to the succulent bivalve their richest harvest, numerically, is one of beer bottles. On the fishing flats, off the point of Sandy Hook, beer bottles thrive in greatest abundance, mute witnesses to the habits of the "all-day fishermen." A rake, when brought to the surface a day or two before the last election, contained ten clams snuggling close up against five empty beer bottles. The boatman looked puzzled for a moment, as he surveyed his catch, and then remarked:

"I don't know whether them clams be democrats or republicans, but they crinkly do not know how to celebrate."

Of course much which is raked up from the bottom of the bay is of little use to the clammer because it is found in all stages of decay. But often the men are fortunate enough "to hook on to something" soon after it has gone to the bottom.

Five hundred pounds of the best steel wire cable, whoch was lost overboard from Sir Thomas Lipton's Shamrock when the yacht was anchored in the Horseshoe two years ago brought to a clammer who recovered and sold it enough money to pay for extensive and much needed repairs on his boat. Jewelry and pieces of money are sometimes caught in the rakes. Not long ago a boatman brought up a penknife and a 50-cent piece in one haul. A gold watch and a purse containing three valuable rings and $5 in silver were among the articles which made the heart of a certain clammer glad during last summer's busy season.

Petrified clams and wood, old flint tomahawks and crustaceans of all sorts, locked together in most fantastic shapes, are some of the other curiosities now and then brought to the surface. Often the clam rake helps the sea give up its dead. Scores and scores of times have its sharp teeth caught in the clothing of some unfortunate man or woman and brought the body once more to the light of day. The bodies of many persons have been restored to friends and relatives only after the clam rake has rudely disturbed their slumbers at the bottom of the bay.

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Boston About Ready for Service.

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 16.—The cruiser Boston, which for months has been undergoing repairs at the Mare Island navy yard, will soon be ready for sea. The gunboat Alert, which has also been laid up at Mare Island, will also go into commission within a few weeks and sail for the Philippines to be used in the inter-island service. The cruiser Marblehead is in dry dock and will not be ready for service again for a long time. The revenue cutter Thetis is at the navy yard, where considerable work is to be done on it.

A Cure for Lumbago.

Sufferers from lumbago or rheumatism in the back will be pleased to know that quick relief may be had by applying Chamberlain's Pain Balm. Mr. W. C. Williamson of Amherst, Va., says: "For more than a year I suffered with lumbago. I finally tried Chamberlain's Pain Balm and it gave me entire relief, which all other remedies had failed to do." For sale by all druggists.

Vigilancia's Passengers Safe.

HAVANA, Jan. 16.—The passengers of the Ward line steamer Vigilancia, which went ashore Monday morning on the reefs of Los Coronados, about 100 miles west of this city, in a fog, have arrived here on the steamer Orizaba, which went to its assistance with two tugs and lighters. The wind has veered southward and there is no sea running. It is thought the vessel will be saved if the weather holds.