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THE MYSTERY OF GRASLOV

By Ashley Towne

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SYNOPSIS

Prince Neslerov wants to marry Frances Gordon, the charming daughter of an American...

"Then the princess came the servants have had enough to do without talking about two prisoners of whom they know nothing...



Winding and turning among the passages, they crept stealthily.

"By the help of a traitor, and I will know that traitor and slay him!" said Neslerov.

"This is no time to talk, whether to have told or not, he must be brought back to me to be punished; I will destroy him as I feel! God bring him back to me!"

CHAPTER XVI. MAMMA PAULPOFF AVENGER. It was midnight in Tomsk, and the palace of the governor was still...

But Neslerov was not asleep. Ever so impatient, he sat in his room, awaiting the return of his police with the American, whose liberty was a menace to the life of Neslerov.

"Why are you awake?" he asked harshly. He was too excited to think of phrases.

"I could not sleep, and I knew you were not in bed," she answered. "I came to talk."

"You brought me wine that was drugged, and my prisoner escaped."

"That is false. I heard then speak of you to Unsethrop. Will you guide me to his dungeon? Open the door!"

"What! You disloyal to Neslerov?" The officer smiled and looked at Olga.

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A Christmas Declaration of Independence

"I'm going to turn over a new leaf this year, so I am, and it's not a New Year's leaf either, but a Christmas leaf, here and now."

"Christmas giving has been degraded into a mere favor buying, present swapping, charity bestowing, fatiguing, hysterical, extravagant show business, and we dread the very thought of its approach."

"The first one I cut off will be my own husband. I love him, of course I do, she said energetically, but I have no money of my own, not a cent."

"Then there's Mrs. Bunkum, whose husband was any husband's old school mate. Of course we are friends, intimate friends, but I know that every year Mrs. Bunkum goes beyond her means to send me an expensive gift-silver, lace or fur or china or something-just to show me how much better off Bunkum is than my husband."

"Then there's the whole breed of smirking creatures with the spirit of a mental who expect something in a really black-mailing way. This year I turn them every one down. I declare my independence of them too. There's that Tom, the caretaker at the White Globe club rooms. All the rest of the year he is so lazy and grumpy he won't even bring urgent messages to the ladies, but as the 25th of December approaches he pushes himself into my presence on every trivial pretense, rubbing his hands, grinning from ear to ear, bobbing his head fairly down to the ground and saying: 'I wish you a very merry Christmas, ma'am, so that always I've felt fairly forced to give him some money. This year I won't. I turn down the whole crew of waiters, maids, people too lazy and shiftless to earn a good living and the vulgar, greedy ones who are always trying to get something for nothing.'

"Who are left? There are the children, bless them! They are the only ones who cannot pay you back, except in affection, for your gifts, the ones who are honestly selfish and have a right to be. I must be generous to them. Then I will give what I can really afford-not a cent more in charity. Now who's left? There's dear Susie Snow, who is wearing her coat the fourth winter so that her sister Nell can have the last year in normal school. I'll give her a pretty box to make the old coat look nice. And that's all, except a few Christmas card greetings."

Mrs. Perkins did exactly what she proposed to do and had the happiest, most comfortable Christmas she had enjoyed since she was a girl.

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