

Princess of Grätzen

LOUIS ARTHUR CUNNINGHAM

CHAPTER II

Madame Fabre-Lussignac beamed indignantly when her old butler, Rudolph, showed her coffee and her bed. Rudolph explained the clumsiness by pointing to a picture in the paper showing a man and a woman in a boat. "The Princess of Grätzen and her husband," he said, "were coming to St. Colide of Grätzen and had to arrive in Quebec to meet the duke with rich uncle in Canada. The duke admits he is the father of the princess, and explains that the duke he was the Baron Rudi de Morpin. Madame insists that she is the Chateau Pharoar and that she is the Morpin, and that the Princess and her husband are her guests.

"She would not stay in the Rudi shook his head. "Ah!" it was then he whom you vowed to golden castle." Rudolph nodded. "All women are like that. Through most see smoke from the kitchen. you, Follet, my old some servants at once. retaining, really, a smart friend, not an am I Cleopatra. You and keep quiet."

St. Didier des Montagnes three hours by car from Gabriel Follet who had a little to Madame's extravagant whim, some ed domestics up to the chateau so quickly that ed considerably of a lamp.

"The man always referred of Cagliostro or Dr. Faustus mumbled the old lady aspected the new woman's putter. The chauffeur had gone to meet the wife who that arrived at St. Didier other night. The butler accompanied him. These dame had stipulated nothing of her status and she had probed the suspicions about her. She housekeeper, Madame had left off the maid's makeup, donned a black and white cap and dress. She was a great dame.

Rudolph's eyes glowed when he saw the way the great lady had wept as the princess had counted his walks in the garden. He worshiped her. His hand in his stand was a sign of rebellion. Ah, but she was a grande dame, a noble. Madame Fabre, who had been a poor creature in St. Street long ago.

The new woman's pretentious salutation in their eyes. The princess turned. Burrows, the young man's stormy nature that was nature. She was gentle and serene. God had her head the day she was crowned. The country of golden, she had a month, though not so imperious, the new quarters was deep and dark. There had one side of the straw-colored hair, black eyes, thin lips, and suddenly Madame Fabre and Rudolph's eyes were like one came slowly to her.

"Come on, Bonhomme Fricot," said little Rosine to Pol Martin. The old lady stared. Meridol laughed, a gay, silvery laugh. "It is a nickname from a game they play. Bonhomme Fricot is a hero of his. He is like the Pica-pica. In reality he was some good old one who did much good in the village in France where they re-fused, these little ones of Grätzen were—was trampled into the ground. I was in Paris then. By luck I found Pol Martin and Rosine among the homeless tramps."

"Bonhomme Fricot," said Rosine gravely. "was shot dead by a German soldier. We saw the soldier and I saw Bonhomme Fricot's poor dear wife and child there in his hat and coat, all mud to see, for the Princes were coming to St. Colide of Grätzen and had to arrive in Quebec to meet the duke with rich uncle in Canada. The duke admits he is the father of the princess, and explains that the duke he was the Baron Rudi de Morpin. Madame insists that she is the Chateau Pharoar and that she is the Morpin, and that the Princess and her husband are her guests.

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"None of your business." She gave him her cheek to kiss. "And why are you sneaking up the back stairs?" "You told me to, over the phone—don't you remember? I'm the housekeeper's nephew now. What is all this anyway?" "It's Rudolph. He's the Baron Rudi de Morpin. The princess is

his niece. He's been letting everyone in this silly little country of his think he owns Philtberg and is worth a million. I didn't have the heart to tell these poor, hunted children that he's only the butler. Roger, it would have been cruel to do so. Had you seen them when they first walked into Philtberg this evening?" "I can imagine," said Roger slowly. He sprang out into a passageway, a tall, elegant figure in the uniform of a flight lieutenant. "I'm glad you did. I don't think of such a thing. I'll have made a mess of the situation. You and Mike are the ones who think of the fitting thing to do. I'm glad you've forgiven Mike—it's about time you brought his handsome mug out of the ash can. He was always your favorite wasn't he?" "Four generations' headstrong, irresponsible."

Roger held up his hand. "He's got all over that's why the two of you've always been fighting. You understand it all. Madame Fabre-Lussignac, Mike was the apple of your eye and you know it. The farther you walked and the louder you talked and the more you swayed and the more they saw and grumbled. You're too smart, you 'Roger'—always were 'too damned smart'."

Roger grinned, shook his head. "I'll never be able to surpass you, Dumbass. Now what about the royal guests? Is the housekeeper's nephew permitted to have a peep at them?" "They are at dinner now. I like it as you did before you came here?" "Indeed, yes. I flew up, you know—got a hit with young Tom Day. He's on his way to Quebec. I'll go down on the four tomorrow. I'm sorry I brought me here and I won't go away until it's satisfied."

"The princess is not a poppy show, married woman. I'm not down now and see that those children are having sufficient to eat and to walk that Rudolph doesn't start to walk around the table and wait on them. You say here until I come back, my son."

Roger stayed there, smoking quietly in the low summer dusk, watching the purple dusk of the hills above the chateau, loving the deep mellow green of trees and lawn. God, but life was good. How good it was, he thought, he never would have realized had he not so often been near to death and misery. These great hills, this vast green land, this blue sky—

"Where is heaven half so well? Where blows a lovelier air? What are thy sons doing here o'er the sea?" It was an old verse he had come upon in Michel's scrapbook. Michel. He stared at the picture, the dashing, laughing face of Michel, and in the twilight his expression seemed to alter, to become somber, grim and terrible. A queer duck, Mike, full of strange theories, stringy dreams and beauty in any guise. Where was he now? What had he found in the maelstrom of hell? Had he gone out in a burst of flame, in a thundercloud of glory? Had he turned his back on the whole thing and taken himself to a mountain top or a green isle in the sea.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

1,226 Men, Women And Children In Gaston, Cleveland And Lincoln Counties Receiving Monthly Old-Age And Survivors Insurance

The sum of \$17,524.26 was paid last month by the U. S. Government to persons living in the Gastonia area who are entitled to monthly payments of old age and survivors insurance. In all, there are 1,226 men, women, and children in this area now receiving such benefits.

Of the total number of beneficiaries 385 retired workers who have qualified for benefits under the old-age and survivors insurance system and who are now 65 years old or more. The sum of \$7,749.71 is being paid to these retired workers every month and in addition, a total of \$1023.82 is paid each month to 101 aged wives or retired workers. Some of these annuitants have children under 18 years of age who also receive monthly benefits. Other women in this area who receive monthly payments of old-age and survivors insurance include 35 widows who have reached the age of 65 and 169 widows under 65 years of age.

Benefits to widows in their Gastonia area total \$3262.33 while 730 children receive monthly benefits totaling \$5432.58.

Allen T. Roger, Jr., manager of the Gastonia office explained that the widow of an insured worker who has children under the age of 18 in her care receives three-fourths of the amount of her deceased husband's primary

benefit and each of these minor-children receives one-half of his primary benefit (within certain limitations).

In the Gastonia service area which includes the counties of Gaston, Cleveland and Lincoln, there are six aged parents of deceased workers now receiving an aggregate of \$65.02 per month in the form of old-age and survivors insurance payments.

Mr. Roger said that the war program is calling for workers of all ages, and many people who were drawing monthly benefits under this Government insurance system have gone to work or may soon go to work on jobs that are covered by the Social Security Act. There is no reason why they should not do this, he stated, but when they do, they should notify the Social Security Board. He explained that for any month in which a worker earns as much as \$15 (that is, over \$14.99) on any job covered by the Social Security Act, the law requires that the monthly retirement benefits he receives under the act shall be suspended. Payments to his wife and children must also be suspended during those months.

Jobs covered by the act include, in general, work in factories, mines, mills, shops, stores, offices, hotels, restaurants, laundries, telephone, telegraph, and radio services, construction work,

ty and ne. Anyone living in Gaston County and who is in doubt as to whether or not his job is covered by the Act should consult the Gastonia Office of the Social Security Board located at 204 National Bank of Commerce, Gastonia, N. C. If you live near Cherryville you can make an appointment to see a representative of the board there on the 1st or 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Write to the above address.

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There had been a sad moment when going through them she had come upon Michel's photograph.

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