

The Archduke's Tea

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R. Reginald Fortune, M.A., M.B., B.Ch., F.R.C.S., was having a lecture from his father.

"You only do just enough," Dr. Fortune complained. "Never brilliant. No zeal. Now, Reginald, it won't do. Just enough is always too little. Take my word for it. And do be attentive to the Archduke. God bless you!"

"Have a good time, sir," said Mr. Reginald Fortune, and watched his father settle down in the car (a long process) beside his mother and drive off. They were gone at last, which Reginald had begun to think impossible, and the opulent practice of Dr. Fortune lay for a month in the virgin hands of Reginald.

"Beautifully patient the mater is," Reginald communed with himself as he ate his third muffin. "Fretful game to spend your life waitin' for a man to get ready. Quaint old bird, the pater. Death-bed manner for a tummy-ache. Wonder the patients lap it up."

But old Dr. Fortune was good at diagnosis, and he had his reasons for saying that Reggie lacked zeal. At Oxford, at his hospital, Reggie did what was necessary to take respectable degrees, but no more than he could help. It was remarked by his dean that he did things too easily. He always had plenty of time, and spent it here, there, and everywhere, on musical comedy and prehistoric man, golf and the newer chemistry, bargees and psychical research. There was nothing which he knew profoundly, but hardly anything of which he did not know enough to find his way about in it. Nobody, except his mother, had ever liked him too much, for he was a self-sufficient creature, but everybody liked him enough; he got on comfortably with everybody from barmaids to dons.

He was of a round and cheerful countenance and a perpetual appetite. This gave him a solidity of aspect emphasized by his extreme neatness. Neither his hair nor anything else of his was ever ruffled. He was more at his ease with the world than a man has a right to be at thirty-five.

It is presumed that he had never wanted anything which he had not got. Old

Dr. Fortune possessed a small fortune and a rich practice, and Reggie enjoyed the proceeds and proposed to inherit both. The practice lay in that pleasant outer suburb of London called Westhampton, a region of commons and a large park, sacred to the well-to-do, and still boasting one or two houses inhabited by what auctioneers call the nobility.

In Boldrewood, the best of these places, there lived at this moment in Reggie Fortune's existence the Archduke Maurice, the heir-apparent to the Emperor of Bohemia. You may remember that the Archduke came to live in England shortly after his marriage. It is, however, not true, as scandal reported, that his uncle the Emperor sent him into exile. There is reason to believe that the Archduchess, a woman equally vehement and beautiful, was not liked in several European courts. On her return from the honeymoon she made a booby trap for that drill serjeant of a king, Maximilian of Swabia, and for some weeks the Central Powers were threatening to mobilize. But she was a Serene Highness of the house of Erbach-Wittelsbach, which traces its descent to Odin, and had an independent realm of nearly two square miles, with parliament and army complete, and even the Emperor of Bohemia could not pretend that Maurice had married beneath him. History will affirm the simple truth that the Archduke and the Archduchess sought seclusion in England because they were bored to death by the Bohemian court, which was perpetually occupied in demonstrating that you can be very dull without being in the least respectable. The Archduke Maurice was a man of geniality and extraordinarily natural tastes. His garden—a long walk—a pint of beer in one of the old Westhampton inns made him a happy day. The Archduchess was not so simple, for she loved to drive her own car, a ferocious vehicle. But Archduchesses may not do that in Bohemia.

Reggie, having eaten all the muffins, lit his pipe and meditated on the cases left him by his father. Old Mrs. Smythe had her autumn influenza, and old Talbot Browne had his autumn gout, and the little Robinsons were putting in their whooping-cough. A kindly world! . . . He was dozing in the dark when the telephone bell rang.

Was that Dr. Fortune? Would he come to Boldrewood at once—at once. The Archduke had been knocked down by a motor-car and picked up unconscious.

"Poor old pater!" Reggie grinned, as he put his tools together. The pater would

never forgive himself for being out of this. He loved a lord, did the pater, and since he had been called in to remove a fish bone from the archducal throat he could not keep the Archduke out of his conversation. The royal geniality of the Archduke, the royal disdain of the Archduchess—Dr. Fortune had been much gratified thereby, and Reggie was prepared to loathe their Royal Highnesses. Thank Heaven, the pater was safe on his holiday! If his head swelled so over an archducal fish bone, he would have burst over an archduke knocked down.

Reggie was practical, if without sympathy; he made haste in his neat way, and the sedate chauffeur of Dr. Fortune was horrified by instructions to let the car rip. The streets of Westhampton are not adapted to this. The district has tried hard to keep itself rural still, and its original narrow winding lanes remain ill-lighted and overhung by trees. Boldrewood stands high, and its grounds border upon Westhampton Heath, across which there is one lamp per furlong. Just as Reggie's car swung round to the heath it was stopped with a jerk.

"What's the trouble, Gorton?" Reggie said to the chauffeur.

Gorton was leaning sideways and peering into the gloom of the gutter. A gleam from the sidelight winked at a body which lay still. "Give me a turn," Gorton muttered. His face showed white. Reggie jumped out, but Gorton was quicker. "Lumme, it's the Archduke!" he said, and his voice went up high.

"Don't be futile, Gorton." Reggie bent over the body. "Get the lamps on him."

Gorton backed the car and the body came into the light. Its face was crushed. Gorton gasped and swallowed. "But it's not him neither," he muttered.

After a minute Reggie stood up. "He was a fine chap about an hour ago," he said gently.

"All over, sir?" Reggie nodded. "Some hog done him in?"

"As you say, Gorton. Running-down case. Big car. Took him in the back. Went over his head. But I don't see how he got into the gutter." He walked round the body, moved it a little, and picked up two matches—unusual matches in England—very thin vestas with dark blue heads. "Why did you think he was the Archduke, Gorton?"

"Such a big chap, sir. Not many his measure. And there's something about the

make of the poor chap that's very like. But thank God's it's not the Archduke, anyway."

"Why?" said Reggie, who was without reverence for Archdukes. "Well, let's take him along."

They brought the dead man to the lodge at the main gates of Boldrewood, and there left him with a message to be telephoned to the police.

The hall at Boldrewood is in the Victorian baronial style, absurd but comfortable. Reggie was still blinking at the light when a woman ran at him. His first notion of the Archduchess Ianthe was vehemence. She came upon him, a great fur cloak falling away from her speed, panting, black eyes glowing, and then stopped short, and her pale face was distorted with passion. "Dr. Fortune! You are not Dr. Fortune!" she cried.

"Dr. Fortune, Junior, madame. My father is away, and I am in charge of his practice." She muttered something in a language he did not know, and looked as if she was going to kill him. His second notion of her was that she was wickedly beautiful. A Greek perfection in the pale face, but, Lord, what a temper! The daintiest grace of body, but it moved and quivered like a whip lash.

"My dear Ianthe!" A man came smiling from behind the screen by the fire. He was tall and slight and dandyish: a lot of colour in his clothes, an odd absence of colour in him. A bright blue tie with an emerald in it, a bright blue handkerchief hanging half out of the pocket of the silver-grey coat. But his face had a waxy pallor, his hair, his moustache, and little pointed beard were so fair that they looked like patches of paint on a mask. "We are much obliged by Dr. Fortune's coming so quickly."

The Archduchess whirled round. "He is too young," she said in German. "Look at him. He is a boy."

"I beg your pardon, madame," said Reggie in the same language. "May I see the patient?"

The man laughed. "I am sure we have every confidence in your skill, Dr. Fortune." All the laughter was smoothed out of his face. "And your discretion," he said in a lower voice. "I am the Archduke Leopold. You may be frank with me. And

rely upon my help."

Reggie bowed. "How did the accident happen, sir?"

The Archduke turned to his sister-in-law. "You know that I do not know," she cried. "I was out in the car."

"As my sister says, Dr. Fortune, she was out in the car." The Archduke paused. "She drives herself. It is with her a little passion. My brother was out walking alone."

"Those long walks! How I hate them!" the Archduchess broke out.

"Again, it is with him a little passion. Well, he did not come back. I grew anxious. I am staying here, you understand. My sister was late too. I sent out servants. My brother was found lying in the road not far from the gate of the lodge. He remains unconscious. I fear——" He spread out his hands.

"You—you always fear!" the Archduchess cried. They exchanged glances like blows.

"May I go up, madame?" Reggie said solemnly. She whirled round and rushed away.

"The Archduchess is much agitated," said the Archduke.

"It is most natural," Reggie murmured.

"Most natural. Pray follow me, Dr. Fortune. I will take you to my brother."

The Archduke Maurice lay in a room of austere simplicity. A writing-table, a tiny dressing-table, three chairs, and a narrow iron bed were all its furniture. Only three small rugs lay on the floor. At the head of the bed a man stood watching. The Archduchess was on her knees, her face pressed to her husband's body, and she sobbed violently.

The Archduke Leopold looked at Reggie, made a gesture towards her, and said, "My dear lanthe!"

She looked up flushed and tear stained.

"I beg your pardon, madame. This is dangerous to the patient," Reggie said.

She gave a stifled cry and rushed out of the room.

The Archduke Leopold seemed to intend to stay, but in a moment the voice of the Archduchess was heard calling for him. "Better go to her, sir. Keep her out of here," Reggie said, and turned to his patient. It was obvious that the Archduke did not relish so brusque an order. But the passionate voice was not to be denied.

The man by the bed and Reggie took each other's measure. "English?" said Reggie.

"Yes, sir. Holt, I am. The Archduke's valet."

"You undressed him?"

"Yes, sir. Was that wrong?"

"Depends how you did it." Reggie began his examination.

The Archduke Maurice was a big man. That is a habit in his family. He had their fairness, but even in coma his cheeks showed more colour than his brother Leopold's, and his yellow hair and beard had a reddish glow. A bold, honest face with plenty of brow. Reggie went over his body with an anatomical enthusiasm for so splendid a specimen.

"Get me some warm water, will you?" Holt went out of the room. Reggie bent over the broad chest. From it, from just above the heart, he drew out a thin sliver of steel. He made a face at it and put it away. Holt came back, and there was sponging and bandaging.

"You washed him before, I see. Any one else touched him but you?"

"Only carrying him, sir. I've been with him the whole time. I found him."

"Oh. Lying on his face, I suppose?"

"No, sir. On his back. Just like he is now."

"Oh. Notice anything?"

"No, sir, I wish I had. I'd like to have the handling of the boulder that did it."

"Well, well, we mustn't get excited. Preserve absolute calm, Holt. He's well liked, is he?"

"Why, sir, we'd do anything for him. He—oh, he's a gentleman."

"Quite so. You mustn't leave him a moment. No one—see, no one—is to come into the room. I'll be back soon."

"Very good, sir. Beg pardon, sir." The good Holt flushed. "What's the verdict?"

"It's not all over yet!" Reggie went downstairs.

And it appeared to him that he interrupted the Archduke and the Archduchess in a quarrel. But the Archduke was very pleased to see him, effusive in offering a chair, and so forth. Reggie was not gratified. "I must have nurses, sir," he announced. "I should like another opinion."

"You see!" the Archduchess cried. "It is as I told you. This boy!"

"The Archduchess is naturally anxious," the Archduke apologized. "By all means nurses. But another opinion—you must have confidence in yourself, my good friend."

"I have. But I want Sir Lawson Hunter to see the case."

The Archduke shrugged. "It is serious then, Dr. Fortune? We do not wish a great noise. Is it not so, lanthe?"

"I would give my soul to be quiet," she cried.

"Quite," said Reggie.

"Very well. Discretion, then, you understand, my good friend."

"I'll telephone to Sir Lawson at once."

"Indeed? It is serious, then?"

"It's a bad concussion." Reggie bowed and made for the door.

"You—Dr. Fortune——" the Archduchess cried. "Will he—what will happen?"

"There's no reason we shouldn't hope, madame," Reggie said, and paused a moment watching them. Emotion plays queer tricks with faces. They were both in the grip of emotions.

Sir Lawson Hunter is rather fat and his legs are rather short. His complexion is

greyish and his eyes look boiled. People call him dyspeptic, though his capacious stomach has never known an ache: or imagine that he drinks, though alcohol and physicians are his chief abominations. His European reputation as a surgeon has been won by knowing his own mind.

Reggie met him at the door and took him upstairs before that puzzling pair, the Archduke and the Archduchess, had a sight of him. "Glad you could come, sir. It's an odd case."

"Every case is odd," said Sir Lawson Hunter.

"He was knocked down by a car. The—"

"If he was, I can find it out for myself. Damme, Fortune, don't bias me. Most unprofessional. That's the worst of general practice. You fellows must always be saying something."

Reggie held his peace. He knew Sir Lawson's little ways, having been his house surgeon. The faithful Holt was turned out of the room. Sir Lawson Hunter went over the senseless body with his usual speed and washed his hands.

"Splendid animal," he remarked. "They run to that, these Pragas. I remember his uncle's abdominal muscles. Heroic. Well. He was walking. A big car driven fast hit him from behind on the right side, fractured two ribs, and knocked him down. Impact of his head on the road has caused a serious concussion. That car should have stopped."

Reggie smiled. "Oh, one of the odd things is that it didn't."

"There's a damned lot of road hogs about, my boy," said Sir Lawson heartily. He was himself fond of high speed. "Well. They sent out, I suppose. Found him lying on his face unconscious."

"No, sir."

"What?" Sir Lawson jumped.

"He was lying on his back."

"Oh, that's absurd."

"Yes, sir. But I've seen his valet who found him."

"These fellows have no observation," Sir Lawson grunted, but there was some animation in his boiled eye. "Damme, Fortune, he ought to have been on his face."

"Yes, sir."

"Miracles don't happen."

"No, sir."

"Now these abrasions on the legs. As if the car had been driven at him again while he lay. A queer thing. Or have there been two cars at him?"

"And there is this too, sir." Reggie held out the sliver of steel.

"I saw the puncture. I was coming to that. Humph! Whoever put this in meant business."

"And didn't know his job. It slipped along the bone and missed everything."

Sir Lawson turned the thing over. "A woman's hatpin. About half a woman's hatpin."

"Fresh fracture. Broke as it was pushed in."

"They're a wild lot," said Sir Lawson, and smiled. "You have no nerves, Fortune?"

"I believe not, sir."

"This ought to be the making of you. You want shaking up. You must stay in the house. By the way, who's in the house?"

"The Archduchess, of course——"

"Ilanthe. Yes. Aunt's in a mad-house. Ianthe. Yes. Crazy on motoring. Drives her own car. And have you see Ianthe—since?" Sir Lawson nodded at the body on the bed.

"She is very excited."

"Is she really?" Sir Lawson laughed. "Is she, though? How surprising!"

"She is surprising, sir."

"What? What? Be careful, my boy. Handsome creature, isn't she?"

"Yes, sir." Reggie declined to be amused. "The Archduke Leopold is staying with them."

"Leopold. He's the dandy entomologist. He's tame enough. Well, he's the head of the house after this fellow. Better tell him." He blinked at Reggie. "You have nurses you can trust? Well, we'll stay in the room till one comes, my boy. Our friend of the hatpin won't miss a chance. These Royal families they're a criss-cross of criminal tendencies. Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, Pragas, Wittelsbachs—look at the heredity."

"There was another running-down case here tonight. The man was killed—fractured skull. He was left on the road too. And another queer thing—he was much the same build as the Archduke Maurice."

"Good Gad!" Sir Lawson was startled out of his omniscient manner, an event unknown in Reggie's experience. "There's something devilish in it, Fortune. One murder—the wrong man dead—and then try again at once the same way. Imagine the creature looking at that poor dead wretch and jumping on the car again to drive it on at the other man. Diabolical! Diabolical!"

"I don't think I have much imagination, sir," said Reggie, who was not impressed by ineffective emotion.

There was a gentle tap at the door, a nurse came and was given her instructions, and the two men went down to the Archduke Leopold.

He had changed his clothes. He was now in a claret-coloured velvet which did violence to his complexion and his pale beard. He sat in the smoking-room with a book on the entomology of Java and a glass of eau sucrée. He smiled at them and waved them to chairs.

"I have to tell you, sir, that your brother lies in grave danger," said Sir Lawson. Reggie looked at him sideways.

"Ah, the concussion! It is serious, then? I am deeply distressed."

"The concussion is most serious. There's another matter. In your brother's chest above the heart, at which it must have been aimed, we have found—this."

"Mon Dieu! It is a hatpin—a woman's hatpin. But it is incredible! It is murder."

"Attempted murder."

"But what do you suggest, sir? Do you accuse some one?"

"Not my function. That pin was driven at your brother's heart by some one. Can you tell me any more, sir?"

The Archduke buried his face in his hands. "I will not believe it," he muttered—"I will not believe it." After a little he controlled himself. "Gentlemen, you have a right to my confidence. I will tell you everything. I trust you to do all that is possible for my poor brother and for the honour of our family, which to him, as to me, is dearer than life. You know that he is the heir to the throne of Bohemia. My uncle, the Emperor, has long been vexed with his living in England. I came here to persuade my brother to go back to his country. My poor brother had made his home here at the wish of the Archduchess, who dislikes the duties of royalty. He was passionately, madly, in love with her. But, alas! in these love marriages there is often difficulty. They were not of the same mind upon many things, and the Archduchess is of a vehement temper. I fear—but you will forgive me if I say no more. I take one small thing. My brother loved to go walking. The Archduchess is passionately fond of her motor-car, drives it herself, loves wild speed. My brother detested motor-cars. I fear that my coming gave them cause for fresh quarrels. My brother was ready to go back to Bohemia. The Archduchess was violently opposed to it. I confess to you, gentlemen, I have feared some scandal, some madness. I thought she would leave him. But this—it is appalling."

"The Archduchess was out in her motor-car tonight?" Sir Lawson said.

"Yes. Yes. It is true. But this—must we think it?"

"We have to think of nothing but our duty to our patient," said Sir Lawson.

The Archduke grasped his hand. "You are right. I thank you. I shall not forget your fidelity."

The Archduchess whirled into the room. She, as Reggie remarked, had not cared to change her clothes. She had not even touched her hair, which was escaping in a wild disorder from under her hat. "They will not let me see him," she cried. "Leopold——"

"It is by my instructions, madame," Sir Lawson said. "I am responsible for the

Archduke's safety."

She bit her lip. "Is he so hurt?" she said unsteadily.

"He lies in very grave danger, madame. I permit no one in his room."

She stared at him, her throat quivering, her great eyes bold and bright. Then with a little shrug she turned away and, plucking at the gold things which jingled from her waist, took out a cigarette and lit it. Reggie saw one of those foreign matches with the violet heads.

Sir Lawson made his bow, and Reggie went with him to his car. "Why did you tell them that the Archduke was in grave danger?" he said.

"He'll be safer if they believe he is going to die," said Sir Lawson.

"Oh, do you think so?" said Reggie, as the car shot away.

Then he made an excellent supper and slept sound.

He found his patient peaceful in the morning. No sign of consciousness yet, but more colour in the cheeks, a deeper breathing and a stronger pulse, more warmth. "The Archduchess has come twice in the night to ask about him, doctor," the nurse said. "I told her he was no better."

"Did she make a noise?" Reggie frowned.

"No, she was very good."

Reggie went out to take the air, and the air is not bad on the Westhampton heights. He made a good pace under the great beeches of Boldrewood, and came out on the open road across the heath. Just there he had found the dead man. A dull red stain could still be seen. It was farther on that the Archduke was struck. Just beyond the turn to Brendon. He found the place. There was a loosening of the road, as if a heavy car had been brought up sharply or made a violent swerve. He walked to and fro scanning the ground. Another of those foreign matches.

He was just picking it up when a motor-car stopped a few yards away. Two men jumped out and came towards him. One was middle aged and singularly without distinction. The other had a youthful and very jaunty air, and it was only when he came near that Reggie saw the fellow was old enough to be his father. An actor's face, with that look of calculated expression, and an actor's way of dressing,

a trifle too emphatic. His present part was the gay young fellow.

"Dr. Fortune, I think?" He smiled all over his face.

"I am Dr. Fortune."

"Reconstructing the crime, eh? Oh, you needn't be discreet. I'm Lomas—Stanley Lomas—Criminal Investigation Department, don't you know? Sir Lawson Hunter came round to me last night. Patient's doing well, I see. That's providential. Just a moment—just a moment." He skipped away from Reggie to his companion, and they went over the ground. But Reggie thought them very superficial. Lomas skipped back again. "He didn't bleed, then. The other man did, though—the man you found."

"In the middle of the road. And I found him dead in the gutter."

"It's quaint what the criminal don't think of. I'm surprised every time. Did you find anything here?"

Reggie held out his match. "There were two more like that by the other man."

Lomas turned it over. "Belgian make. You buy them all over the Continent, don't you know?"

"The Archduchess carries them."

"Now, that's very interesting. If you don't mind I'll walk up to the house with you." Upon the way he praised the beauties of nature and the quality of the morning air.

As they came to the door of Boldrewood a big car passed them with the Archduchess driving alone. Lomas put up his eyeglass. "She's not overcome with grief, what?"

"Not quite."

"Might be bravado, don't you know?"

"I don't know."

"It takes some of them that way," Lomas said pensively. He turned on the steps of the house and looked after the car as it wound in and out among the beeches. "Striking woman. Yes. I'll come up to your room, if you don't mind."

"I thought you wanted to say something," Reggie said.

Lomas did not answer till they were upstairs. "Well, no. Not to say anything," he resumed, and lit a cigarette. "I want another opinion, as you fellows say. Sir Lawson Hunter has made up his mind."

"Oh, he always does that."

Lomas lifted an eyebrow. "Well, look at it. Somebody in a car laid for our Archduke. The other poor devil was cut down by mistake. And the somebody had nerve enough to go on. That's striking. The Archduchess comes of pretty wild stock. In love or out of love she wouldn't stick at a trifle. You find her matches by each body. You find a hatpin in the Archduke. That's a blunder, what? Yes, but it's a woman's blunder. She finds he isn't quite dead after all her trouble, she is desperate, and—voilà." He made a gesture of stabbing.

"So you've made up your mind too, Mr. Lomas?"

Lomas blew smoke rings. "I'm wasting your time, doctor. I want to know—has it occurred to you—the Archduchess and the Archduke Leopold—working it together? If she's fallen in love with Leopold. That straightens it out, don't you know."

"Guess again," Reggie said.

Lomas lit another cigarette. "Well, that's what I want to know. You saw them together just after the crime." He lifted an eyebrow.

"Nothing doing," said Reggie.

"I'm afraid so. I'm afraid so. It's a disturbing case, doctor. Nothing doing, as you say. If I had all the evidence in my hands, I expect there's no one I could touch. You can't indict royalty. The Archduke's smash—well, let's say it's all in the family. But this poor devil they killed! Who's to pay for him? These royal dagoes come over and run amuck on an English road, and I can't touch them. Disheartening, what? That's the trouble, doctor."

Reggie nodded and, as his breakfast made its appearance, Lomas rose to go. He would not have even coffee. "Better get busy, don't you know. We must see if we can put the fear of God into them. If they'll go scurrying back to Bohemia it's

the best way out." He skipped off, his jauntiness put on again like a coat.

Reggie was standing at the window with his after-breakfast pipe when the Archduchess brought her car back. She was very pale in spite of the morning air, and her face had grown haggard. "Something'll snap," Reggie was saying to himself, when a voice behind him said aloud, "Nice car, sir." He jumped round and saw standing at his elbow the insignificant little companion of Mr. Lomas. "After all, there's nothing like an English car," said the little man.

"Oh. You've noticed that?" Reggie said. "You do notice something, then?"

"Of course we aren't gifted, sir. But we're professional. Something in that, don't you think? Yes, sir, as you say: we have noticed something. It was a foreign car, and foreign tyres did the trick last night. And the Archduchess drives English. And yet—did you know we had the other half of the hatpin? I picked it up last night." He held out a scrap of steel with a big head of wrought silver. "German work, they tell me."

"Viennese," Reggie said.

"You know everything, sir. Such a convenience. But Vienna being quite near Bohemia, as I've heard—looks awkward, don't it?"

"Is that what you came to say?"

"Not wholly, sir. No. I am Superintendent Bell. Mr. Lomas sent me to you. He considered you might find it convenient to have some one in the house who could keep an eye open."

"Very kind of Mr. Lomas."

There was a tap at the door. The Archduke Leopold's valet appeared. The Archduke Leopold was much surprised that Dr. Fortune had not brought him news of the patient. The Archduke Leopold desired that Dr. Fortune would come to him immediately.

"Really?" Reggie said. "Dr. Fortune's compliments to the Archduke, and he is much occupied. He can give the Archduke a few moments."

The valet, having the appearance of a man who has never been so surprised in his life, retired.

"It's a gift," Superintendent Bell murmured. "It's a gift, you know. I never could handle the nob's."

Reggie began to get together some odds and ends: a bottle full of tiny white tablets, a graduated glass, a jug of water, a hypodermic syringe. "You'd better clear out, you know," he said to Superintendent Bell.

"Will he come?"

"He'll come all right," Reggie said, and took off his coat. When he turned, Superintendent Bell had vanished.

"Just setting the stage, sir?" said a voice from behind the curtain.

"Confound your impertinence," Reggie growled. "Here——"

But the Archduke came in. He was now a decoration in a russet brown. "You are very mysterious, Dr. Fortune," he complained. "I expect more frankness, sir."

"My patient is my first consideration, sir."

"I desire that you will consider my anxieties. Well, sir, how is my brother?"

"You may give yourself every hope of his recovery, sir."

The Archduke looked round for a chair and was some time in finding one. "This is very good news," he said slowly, and slowly smiled. "Mon Dieu, doctor, it seems too good to be true! Last night you told me to fear the worst."

"Last night—was last night, sir," Reggie said. "This morning we begin to see our way. All the symptoms are good. I believe that in a few hours the patient will be able to speak."

"To speak? But the concussion? It was so dangerous. But this is bewildering, doctor."

"Most fortunate, sir. You might talk of the hand of Providence. Well, we shall see what we shall see. He may be able to tell you something of how it all happened. You'll pardon me, I'm anxious to prepare the injection." He dropped a tablet in the glass and poured in water. "Fact is, this ought to make all the difference. Wonderful things drugs, sir. A taste of strychnine—one of these little fellows—and a man has another try at living. Two or three of 'em—just specks,

aren't they?—sudden death. Excuse me a moment. I must take a look at the patient."

He was gone some time.

When he came back the Archduke was still there. "All goes well, doctor?"

"I begin to think so."

"I must not delay you. My dear doctor! If only your hopes are realized. What happiness!" He slid out of the room.

Reggie went to the table and picked up the glass of strychnine solution. From behind the curtain Superintendent Bell rushed out and caught his arm. "Don't use it, sir," he said hoarsely. Superintendent Bell was flushed.

"Don't be an ass," said Reggie. He put the glass down, took up the bottle of tablets, turned them out on a sheet of paper, and began to count them.

"Good Lord!" said Superintendent Bell. "You laid for him, did you? What a plant!"

"You know, you're an impertinence," Reggie said, and went on counting.

"I'll get on to Mr. Lomas, sir," said the Superintendent humbly.

"Don't you telephone or I'll scrag you."

"Telephone? Not me. I say, sir, you're some doctor." He fled.

Reggie finished his counting and whistled. "He did himself proud," said he. "The blighter!" He shot the tablets back into their bottle, found another bottle and poured into it the solution, and locked both away. "Number one," he said, with satisfaction. "Now for number two." He went off to his patient and spent a placid half-hour chatting with the day nurse on dancing in musical comedy. But it was hardly half an hour before the Archduchess tapped at the door.

Reggie opened it. "This way, if you please, madame." He led the way to his room. "I have something to say." She stood before him, fierce, defiant, and utterly wretched. "I can promise you that the Archduke will recover consciousness."

She caught at her breast. "He—he will live?" It was the most piteous cry he had ever heard.

"He will live, madame!"

She trembled, swayed, and fell. Reggie grasped at her, took her in his arms, and put her in a chair and waited frowning. . . . She panted a little and began to smile. Then faintly, softly, "No, no. No more now. Ah, dearest." It was in her own language. She opened heavy eyes. "What is it?"

"The Archduke has spoken, madame. He said—your name."

Then she began to cry and, holding out both hands to Reggie, "Let me go to him—please—please."

"Not now. Not yet. He must have no emotions. You will go to your room and sleep."

"You—you are a boy." She laughed through her tears, and thrust her hands into Reggie's.

"I beg your pardon, madame," Reggie said stiffly. The creature was absurdly adorable.

"You? Oh—Englishman." It was made plain to him that he was expected to kiss her hand. He did it like an Englishman. Then the other was put to his lips.

He cleared his embarrassed throat. "I must insist, madame, you will say nothing of this to any one. It's necessary the household should suppose the Archduke still in danger."

"Why?" A spasm crossed her face. "You are afraid of Leopold!"

"And you, madame?" Reggie said.

"Afraid? No, but"—she shuddered—"but he is not a man."

"Have no anxieties, madame. I have none," Reggie said, and opened the door. Then, "She's a bit of a dear," he said to himself, and rang for his lunch.

Four times that afternoon the Archduke Leopold sent to ask for news of his brother, and each time Reggie answered that the patient was much the same. "Leopold will be doin' some thinking," Reggie chuckled. "Happy days for Leopold."

Towards tea-time the Hon. Stanley Lomas arrived jauntier than ever.

“Well, doctor, been enjoying yourself, what?” He shook hands heartily. “Best congratulations and all that. Sound scheme. Ve—ry sound scheme. Well, I expect you’ll be glad to be rid of Leopold, what? I conceive I can put the fear of God into him now. Free hand, don’t you know. Let’s take him on.”

It was announced to the Archduke Leopold that the Hon. Stanley Lomas of the Criminal Investigation Department desired to confer with him. The Archduke, who was drinking tea, was pleased to receive Mr. Lomas. He also received Reggie. “Dr. Fortune? You have something to tell me?”

“There is no change, sir.”

“No change yet! And you gave me such hopes this morning. These are anxious hours, Mr. Lomas.”

“I can imagine it, sir. But I hope to relieve some of your anxieties. I believe we shall discover who was responsible for last night’s outrage.”

“So! And so soon! But you are wonderful, you English police. You will sit down, Mr. Lomas.” He looked at Reggie, whose lingering naturally surprised him. “Is there anything more, Dr. Fortune?”

“Dr. Fortune is part of my evidence, sir,” said Lomas.

“Is it possible? But you interest me—you interest me exceedingly. Permit me one moment.” He slid out of the room.

Lomas turned in his chair and lifted an eyebrow at Reggie, who was settling his tie before an old Italian mirror. “Probably gone to change his clothes,” Reggie said. “He’s only worn one suit to-day.”

A footman brought in more tea-things, and a moment after the Archduke came back.

“I am all impatience, Mr. Lomas. But pray take a more comfortable chair. Dr. Fortune—I recommend the chair by the screen. Let me give you some tea.” He was all smiles.

“Have you made arrangements to leave England, sir?” Lomas said sharply.

“Mr. Lomas!”

"You have time to catch the mail to-night."

"I hope that I do not understand you, sir. You appear insolent."

"Oh, sir, there will be no delicacy in handling the affair. You went to Dr. Fortune's room this morning." The Archduke gave a glance at Reggie, who sat intent on stirring his tea. "He was preparing an injection of strychnine for his patient."

"Hallo, what's that?" Reggie cried, and nodded at the window. "Oh, I suppose it's the car, Lomas. Your fellows will have found her and brought her round."

"The car, sir?" the Archduke said, and Lomas put up his eyeglass.

"The car that did the deed."

The Archduke slid across to the window. Lomas, too, stood up and looked out. They turned and stared at Reggie, who was sipping his tea. Lomas frowned. "There's nothing there, Fortune."

The Archduke smiled. "Dr. Fortune has hallucinations," and he pulled out his handkerchief and dabbed his face, sat down, and drank his tea in gulps.

"We'll keep to the point, if you please." Lomas was annoyed. "Dr. Fortune told you that two of his strychnine tablets would kill a man. He went out of the room. While he was gone you dropped half a dozen tablets into the injection prepared for your brother. I have to demand, sir, that you leave England by the next boat."

The Archduke burst out laughing. "The good Dr. Fortune! As you have seen, he has hallucinations. He hears what is not, dreams what never was. But if I were a policeman, Mr. Lomas, I should not make Dr. Fortune a witness. You become ridiculous."

"He is not the only witness, sir. One of my men was behind the curtain."

The Archduke poured himself out another cup of tea. "May I give you some more, Dr. Fortune? No? I fear you are malicious, my friend." He laughed a little. "And you, sir. We sometimes find a policeman corrupt in our country. We do not permit him to trouble us."

"You brought a German car into England, sir," Lomas said. "Where is that car?"

“Your spies do not seem very good, Mr. Lomas. Come, sir, enough of this. I —” The Archduke started from his seat with a cry. His body was bent in a bow. A horrible grin distorted his face. He fell down and was convulsed. . . . He gasped; his pale cheeks became of a dusky blue. He writhed and lay still. . . .

“So that’s that,” Reggie said. “I wondered what he wanted with half a dozen.”

“What is it?” Lomas muttered.

“Oh, strychnine poisoning. He’s swallowed a grain or so.”

“My God! Can you do anything?”

Reggie shrugged. “He’s as dead as the table.” . . .

After a while, “Well! It’s a way out,” Lomas said. “But I can’t understand the fellow.”

“Oh, I don’t understand it all,” Reggie admitted. “He was out to kill his brother. That meant being Emperor. But why kill him now more than before? And the Archduchess. She is straight enough, I know. But just how she was to this fellow I don’t see.”

“There’s not much in that,” Lomas said. “Maurice couldn’t stand the Court, and it was common talk he meant to resign the succession. While he was quiet over here in England Leopold felt safe. But lately they tell me Maurice has been making up his mind to go back. Duty to his country, don’t you know? The Archduchess was strong against it. She hates all the business of royalty. But Maurice is a resolute sort of fellow even with a woman. Leopold came over to see what he could do. I suppose he set the Archduchess on to make Maurice give up the idea and stay quiet. They worked together—or that’s the notion at the Bohemian Embassy. She’s a gipsy, what, but she’s straight. She is not in this. It wasn’t her car. Well, when Leopold found there was nothing doing he set about the murder. He was a bad egg, don’t you know? There was a woman in Rome—they kicked him out there. But it was a sound scheme. He had it all straight—except the wrong tyres on his car. Good touch, the hatpin. Seemed like a woman in a rage. He knew a lot about women—one kind of woman.”

There was a tap at the door. The two walked forward.

"Sir Lawson Hunter, sir." The footman tried in vain to see the Archduke.

"Yes, bring him up," Reggie said.

Sir Lawson bustled in. "New case for you, sir." The two men moved apart and Sir Lawson saw the body.

"Poisoned himself. Taken strychnine," Lomas said.

"Oh, don't bias him," said Reggie. "He doesn't like that."

"Good Gad!" Sir Lawson's eyes bulged.

"Yes, that beats me, Fortune." Lomas waved his hand at the body. "I would have sworn he hadn't the pluck."

"Oh, he hadn't. He meant it for me. I changed the cups."

"You——" Lomas stared at him. "That was when you heard the car!"

"That was why I heard the car."

"And you let him take the dose!"

"Yes. Seemed fair. You see, I picked up that poor fellow he smashed last night."

"Good Gad!" said Sir Lawson.

The footman was again at the door. Dr. Fortune was wanted at the telephone. "There's one here, isn't there? Put me through." The footman, hardly able to speak at the sight of the dead Archduke, retired gulping.

The bell rang. Reggie took up the receiver. "Yes. Yes. At once," and he put it down. "I must be going. Serious case. Mrs. Jones's little girl may have German measles."