

# RASPUTIN—DEVIL OR SAINT

by The Princess Radziwill

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Rasputin and His Aid, the Chief of the Secret Police, Went Too Far in Their Scheme of Blackmail, Attacking the Director of One of Russia's Great Banks—He Did Not Submit Meekly, as Others Had Done, but Went Directly to the Military Authorities

Was This Fatal Mistake of Having Overstepped the Limits of Safety in Their Certainty of Immunity That the Sudden Ending of Rasputin's Career Is Directly Traced—The Outraged Sensibilities of Respectable, Loyal Russians Could No Longer Be Held in Check

## CHAPTER VII (Continued)

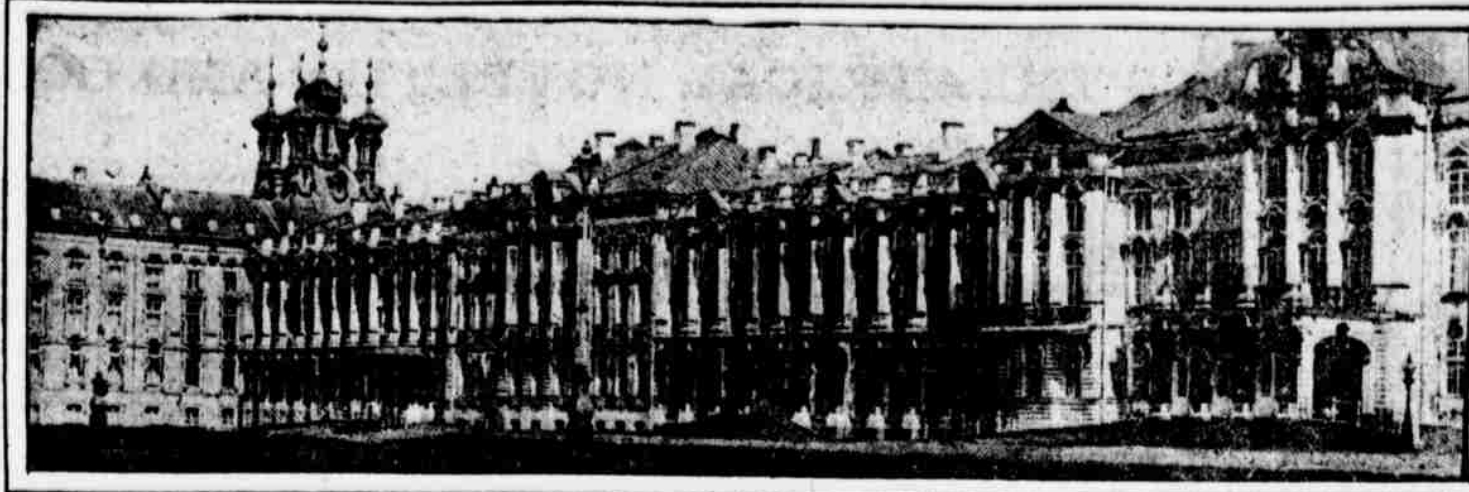
OUT the people who surrounded Rasputin and with whom he was working were not grateful for the labor of love which Great Britain and France had assumed. They began to complain of the interference of foreign elements with the details of the Russian administration. Some went even so far as to say that Russia was becoming an English colony. All the plunderers, all the thieves who had had their own way for so many months, perceiving that they would no longer have the opportunities which they had enjoyed before to add to their ill-gotten gains, tried by all means in their power to discredit the sovereign whose firmness they had found in their way. They joined all the pro-Germans of whom, what there existed but too many in the country, in an effort to bring about a peace, the shame of which would have been quite different to them.

### The Smoldering Opposition to Rasputin

It is not at all wonderful if those shameless adventurers started the conspiracy for the success of which they required the moral influence of Rasputin and the authority of his person. It was, after all, such an easy matter to say that in such and such a case he had been acting in conformity with the imperial will. No one could dispute the truth of the assertion, and in that way the Emperor was made responsible for all the unwelcome things which were going on. He was supposed to have given his sanction to all these things simply because it had pleased, not even Rasputin himself, but individuals like Mr. Manussewitsch-Maniuloff, to declare that they had been done with his knowledge and approval.

Can one feel surprised if in the presence of this artificial atmosphere, and still more artificial position, an intense feeling of disgust took hold of real patriots, and made them contemplate seriously the possibility of trying at least to unmask Rasputin and his crew and bring to the ears of the Tsar all the different rumors which were in circulation concerning the "Prophet" and what was going on around him? Men of experience and of weight seriously thought how this could be done. They made no secret of the fact, unfortunately for themselves as well as for the success of their plans. What was going on very soon came to the knowledge of Manussewitsch-Maniuloff and made him more frantic than he had ever been to overthrow what he called "foreign influences" in Russia. He applied himself with renewed energy to bring about, by fair means or foul, the conclusion of a peace on which depended his whole future destiny. And he might perhaps have succeeded if circumstances had not turned against him and put an end to his machinations, at least for a time.

Mr. Sturmer was but a tool in the hands of this artful, clever



The grand palace of Tzarskoie Selo, the Imperial home, always open to Rasputin.

private secretary whom he had been persuaded, or rather compelled, to take, Manussewitsch-Maniuloff had managed to get hold of him and to keep him securely bound to his own policy. He had been the man who had contrived to put him into the position of authority which he enjoyed, and Mr. Sturmer, whatever may have been his other defects, had a grateful nature. Besides, Maniuloff amused him, and took an immense amount of trouble of his hands. He could rely on his never doing anything stupid, even when he did something very dishonest. Mr. Sturmer was absorbed in great political combinations and was looking toward a long term of office. He felt absolutely safe in the situation which he occupied, where at any moment he liked he could speak with the Tsar and explain to him what he thought to be most advantageous to the interests of his party, or the events of the day as they followed in quick succession.

Alas for this security! An unexpected incident was to destroy it in the most ruthless manner. Rasputin, together with Mr. Maniuloff, went too far in the system of blackmailing which they had been practicing with such skill for so many long months. For once they found their master in the person of one of the directors of a large banking establishment in Petrograd, who, upon being threatened with all kinds of unpleasantness unless he consented to pay a large sum of money, did not protest as others had done before him in similar cases, but gave it immediately, first having taken the numbers of the banknotes which he had handed over to Mr. Maniuloff. He went with these numbers to the military authorities and lodged with them a formal complaint against the blackmailers. The result was as immediate as it was unexpected. The General Staff had been waiting a long time for just such an opportunity to proceed against Rasputin and the members of his crew. That very same night, in obedience to orders received from the military commander of Petrograd, Mr. Manussewitsch-Maniuloff's house was searched from top to bottom, and he himself conveyed to prison, without even having been allowed to acquaint his chief, Mr. Sturmer, with what had happened to him.

## CHAPTER VIII

THE arrest of the Prime Minister's private secretary produced, as one may well imagine, an immense sensation in Petrograd and intense consternation among the friends of Rasputin. They were thus deprived of the one strong ally capable of guiding their steps in the best direction possible under the circumstances, and, moreover, of the one who was possessed of information which no one else could possibly get at. Mr. Sturmer himself was more than dismayed at this step taken by the military authorities without consulting him and resented it as a personal affront. He tried to interfere in the



Prince Felix Youssouppoff, one of the principal plotters against Rasputin, and his wife, the Princess Irene, one of Russia's most beautiful women.

matter and went so far as to demand as his right the liberation of Manussewitsch-Maniuloff. But his intervention, instead of helping the person in whose favor it had been displayed, gave on the contrary the signal for a series of attacks against Mr. Sturmer himself, attacks of which the most important was the speech made by Mr.

Miliukoff in the Duma, where he publicly accused the Prime Minister of being in league with Germany and of working in favor of a separate peace with that country.

### Immediate Effect of the Coup

Of course, the remarks of the leader of the opposition in the Chamber were not allowed to be published, but so many persons had heard them and so many others had heard of them that the contents of the address of Mr. Miliukoff very soon became public property. No one had ever cared for Mr. Sturmer, whose leanings had always been for autocracy. While Governor of Twer he had distinguished himself by the zeal which he displayed in putting down every manifestation of public opinion in his government. In addition he had been connected with various matters where bribery played a prominent part, a fact which had not helped him to win any popularity in the province which he administered. His only merits lay in his ability to speak excellent French and in his having very pronounced English sympathies. These sympathies, however, by some kind of unexplainable miracle, died out immediately after his assumption of office. He at once fell under the influence of a certain party that clamored for the removal of foreigners from the administrative and political life of Russia. He was not clever, though he had a very high idea of his own intelligence and knowledge.

Though he had never carried his knowledge beyond a thorough grasp of the precedence that ought to be awarded to distinguished guests at a dinner party (which he had acquired while he was master of the ceremonies at the Imperial Court), yet he was convinced of his capacity to fill the most important offices of the Russian State. These he looked upon with the eyes of a farmer in the presence of his best milking cow. He was not a courtier, but a flatterer by nature, and an essentially accommodating one, too. There was no danger of his ever turning his back on persons who he had reasons to think were in possession of the favor of personages in high places. And he had a wonderful faculty for toadying wherever he expected that it might prove useful to his career.

For some years he had vegetated in a kind of semidisgrace and fretted over his inactivity. When he found himself able once more to make a display of his administrative talents he took himself and these talents quite seriously and imagined that perhaps he could become the savior of Russia, but surely a very rich man. This last idea had been suggested to him by Mr. Manussewitsch-Maniuloff, who in conversations with him had imbued Mr. Sturmer with the conviction that it would be a proof of careless neglect on his part if he did not make the most of the many opportunities his important position as Prime Minister put in his way, and did not assure the prosperity of his old age, when he had at his disposal all possible sources of information out of which he might make a profit. Mr. Sturmer was no saint, and the weaknesses of the flesh had always appealed to him. There is nothing wonderful in the fact that he listened with attention, and even with satisfaction, to the confidences which were poured into his ear by his private secretary, of whose talents he had a most exalted opinion.

When his Fidas Achatas was arrested and thrown in to a more or less dark dungeon Mr. Sturmer was so dismayed that he allowed himself to be drawn into the mistake of identifying himself with the prisoner and claiming his liberty as a right. It is related that when the object of his solicitude heard of the various steps undertaken by the Prime Minister on his behalf he gave vent to words of impatience at what he considered an imprudence likely to cost a good deal to the guilty ones.

"Sturmer ought to have known that a man like myself does not allow himself to be arrested without having taken the precaution to be able to impose on those who had ventured to do so the necessity of liberating him," he had exclaimed.

(CONTINUED MONDAY)

# RAINBOW'S END

By REX BEACH

Author of "The Spoilers," "The Barrier," "Heart of the Sunset"

A novel of love, hidden treasure and rebellion in beautiful, mysterious Cuba during the exciting days of the revolt against Spain.

## CHAPTER VIII (Continued)

THIS exactly suited the elder woman, who knew something about the slumbers of youth. Nevertheless, dawn was still a long way off when, true to her promise, Rosa emerged from the hut with an apology for having slept so long. Evangelina protested, though her eyes were heavy and she had been yawning prodigiously for hours. But for once the girl was firm. "I can't sleep," she declared. "Why force me to lie staring into the dark while you suffer?" Having finally prevailed in her determination, she seated herself in the warm place Evangelina had vacated, and, curling her small feet under her, she settled herself, chin in hand, to think of O'Reilly. It was a good time to think, for the jungle was very still and the night like a velvet curtain.

"We had better leave the horses here," Pancho Cueto hesitatingly addressed the dim blur which he knew to be Colonel Cobo. The Colonel of Volunteers was in a vile temper, what with the long night ride and an error of Cueto's which had considerably lengthened the journey.

"Where is the house?" growled the officer.

"Not far. But the path is rocky and the horses' feet—"

"God, yes!" There was a creak of saddle leathers and a groan as the Colonel dismounted. "Now, my good Cueto," he threatened, "another of your mistakes and I'll give you something to remember me by. Damnation! What a night! As black as hell."

"It will be daylight before we know it," the other said nervously.

"Excellent! Then I can see to deal with you if you've fooled me." A cur ordered brought his men out of their saddles. One of their number was detailed to guard the animals, while the rest fell in behind Cueto and followed him up the trail by the starlight.

## THE STORY THUS FAR

JOHNNIE O'REILLY, more commonly known as THE O'REILLY, has fallen in love with ROSA VARONA, one of the orphans of DON ESTEBAN VARONA, a wealthy slave owner and sugar planter of Cuba. Don Esteban had hoarded a vast fortune in precious stones, old Spanish coins and modern currency in a secret chamber at the bottom of a well. In building this well he was assisted by SEBASTIAN, a faithful slave, the only other person to share the secret.

When Don Esteban's first wife died he became the target for many match-makers, who knew vaguely of his hidden fortune. DONA ISABEL succeeded in becoming the second wife and immediately set about intriguing to learn of the fortune. Hoping to get information from Sebastian, she succeeds in having his daughter EVANGELINA sold. The slave, infuriated, murders his master and several others before he is shot. Thus in a few minutes the only two persons who know the whereabouts of the fortune are killed.

Isabel tries vainly to get information from PANCHO CUETO, the manager of the plantations. Instead, he threatens to claim the estate as his because Don Esteban left no deeds to the property. That night Isabel falls into the well and is drowned. The body is recovered by ESTEBAN, ROSA's brother and a spy for Colonel Lopez, the leader of the Cuban insurrectionists. Pancho Cueto finds a letter with information which Esteban had dropped and turns it over to the authorities. Rosa and Esteban then escape up the valley to the hut of Evangelina, their old nurse.

O'Reilly, back in New York at the office of the firm which he represented in Cuba, anxiously awaits information from his sweetheart. His many letters do not bring a reply until months later, when Rosa tells him of the misfortunes that have befallen since he left Cuba. O'Reilly determines to rescue his beloved, and for that purpose calls upon Mr. Enriquez, head of the Cuban junta in New York, who helps him to return to the tropic island. There O'Reilly, in common with other Americans, is suspected, and he attempts to fool his hotelkeeper by stating that he came to Cuba for his rheumatism. After conferring with a Dr. Alvarado, O'Reilly moves on to Puerto Principe, nearer the scene of action, where he meets Leslie Branch, an American consumptive, trying to get cured or killed.

In the meantime, Esteban has been harassing Pancho Cueto by burning his sugar fields. The latter goes to Colonel Cobo, in charge of the Spanish troops, with the proposition that in return for exterminating Esteban and his guerrillas the colonel can have Rosa. Esteban during the rest between raids shows Rosa a Spanish doublet which he took from Isabel's clenched fist as he raised her from the well, thus establishing the location of the treasure. When he and his band leave for an attack Rosa goes to sleep first while Evangelina keeps watch.

ing of feet upon the dirt floor of the hut, the rickety, bark-covered walls bulged and creaked. Over all sounded the shrieks of the negroes battling in the pitch-black interior like an animal in its lair. Then some one set fire to the thatch; the flames licked up the dead palmleaves to the ridge pole, and the surroundings leaped into view.

Rosa saw a swarthy, thick-set man in the uniform of a Colonel of Volunteers, and behind him Pancho Cueto. Tearing the hand from her lips for a moment, she cried Cueto's name, but he gave no heed. He was straining his gaze upon the door of the bohio in the immediate expectation of seeing Esteban emerge.

He clutched a revolver in his hand, but it was plain from the nerveless way in which he held the weapon that he had little stomach for the adventure. He was, in fact, more inclined to run than to stand his ground. Rosa shrieked his name again; then she heard the officer say:

"Where is the young fellow? I hear nothing but the squeals of that common senseless rascal!" "Where are they?"

"Gone!" she gasped. "Gone!" She struggled weakly toward Cueto, imploring him, "Pancho, don't you know me?"

"Well, we've taught him a lesson," said Cueto, grinning apprehensively at Rosa. "We've accomplished something, anyhow, eh?" He nodded at Rosa. "She's all that I told you. Look at her!"

Colonel Cobo took time to scrutinize his prisoner. He turned her about in the light from the burning dwelling; then he agreed.

### Captured

"Yes! She's a pretty little spy—quite a prize, truly. Now then?" His thick lips spread; he spoke to her more gently. "I want you to tell me about that brother of yours, eh? Cueto said I would find him here. Had I still frightened, I see, well, I have a way with women; I dare say you'll be glad to tell me everything by and by. Then, seeing that his men risked a scorching in their search of the hut and were already quarreling over the scanty plunder which it afforded, he turned from Rosa to call them away.

Profiting by his inattention, Rosa wriggled out of his grasp and ran to Evangelina, who lay face down in the dirt, her limbs sprawled loosely. She flung herself upon the prostrate body and cried the black woman's name, but she could awaken no response.

The first pink of dawn was now deepening in the east, and as soon as it had grown light enough to see to travel Colonel Cobo prepared to return to his horses. The roof and walls of the bohio had fallen away to ashes, its skeleton of poles alone were smoldering when he called his men together and gave the word to go.

"Come, my sweetheart!" He addressed himself to the girl. "Leave that carrion for the buzzards."

Rosa looked up to find him leering at her. She brushed the tears from her eyes, crying:

"Go away! In God's name haven't you done harm enough?"

"Oh, but you're going with me."

"The girl rose; her face was colorless; she was aquiver with indignation. "Leave me!" she stormed. "What have I done to you? Don't—"

"Caramba! A temper. And you have strength, too, as I discovered. Must I bind those pretty hands or—"

Colonel Cobo reached forth, laughing, and encircled her in his powerful arms. Rosa fought him as she had fought at the first moment of desperation, but he lifted her easily and went striding across the field behind his men.

Esteban's party made good time over the hills and into the San Juan, for Asencio knew the country well. Midafternoon and then in sight of La Joya. Cueto's



"Come, come!" Colonel Cobo was saying. "Why don't you answer me?" He dragged Rosa farther from what was now a roaring furnace. "Where is your precious brother?"

cane was thick and high; it was ready for the knife or for the torch. Making a detour, the incendiaries approached it from the east in order to have the trade-winds at their backs. They dismounted in the shelter of a wood and removed the bags which they had carried on their saddles. Inside these bags were several snakes, the largest perhaps eight feet in length. To the tail of each the negroes fastened a leather thong, and then to each thong a length of telegraph-wire, the end of which had been bent into a loop to hold a bundle of oil-soaked waste. These preliminaries accomplished, they bore the reptiles into the cane-fields at widely separated places and lighted the wick.

Esteban, from his saddle, saw the first wisps of smoke arise and grow and unwind into long ribbons, reaching deep into the standing crop. Soon tongues of flame appeared and the green tops of the cane began to shrivel and to wave as the steady east wind took effect. From the nearest conflagration a great snapping and crackling of juicy stalks arose. The thin, dry strappings with which the earth was carpeted formed a vast tinder bed, and once the fire was started there was no checking it. Smoke billowed upward and was hurried westward before the breeze; in a dozen places the fields burst into flame.

Esteban waited only until he saw that his work of devastation was done.

way, then he led his followers back toward the hills. At sunset he reined in upon the crest of a ridge and looked behind him into the valley. The whole sky was black with smoke as if a city were in flames.

### Revenge

Removing his wide Jipi-japa hat, the young man swept a mocking salutation to the east.

"So now, good Pancho Cueto," he cried, "I leave you the compliments of those twins you love so well."

In the shelter of a ravine the party took time to eat supper, their first meal since leaving home, and it was after dark when they finished. The negroes, who were thoroughly tired, were for spending the night here, but Esteban, more cautious than they, would not have it so. Accordingly, the men remounted their weary horses, though not without some grumbling, and set out.

"A weary ride," Esteban yawned. "I shall sleep for a week."

Asencio agreed. "That Cueto will be furious," said he. "Some day, perhaps, he and I will meet face to face. Then I shall kill him."

Esteban reined in his horse. "Look!" said he. "Yonder is a light."

The other horsemen crowded close, staring through the darkness. It was very still in the woods; dawn was less than half an hour away.

"What is Evangelina thinking about?" Asencio muttered.

"But, see! It grows brighter." There followed a moment or two during which there was no sound except the breathing of the horses and the creak of saddle leathers as the riders craned their necks to see over the low treetops below them. Then Esteban cried:

"Come! I'm afraid it's our horses. Fear gripped him, but he managed to calm himself. 'Where are the boys?'

Esteban waited only until he saw that his work of devastation was done.