

RASPUTIN—DEVIL OR SAINT

by The Princess Radziwill

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plot to kill the "Prophet," that about a dozen persons, some of them belonging to the best and to the highest social circles, were concerned in it, and that at last lots were drawn to select the man who was to execute the victim. Among those persons were members of the Conservative faction of the Duma, some officers of several guard regiments, and even ladies of the smartest set of Petrograd. That something was known concerning this plot in governmental circles can be seen from the fact that the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Protopopoff, who had always been one of the most ardent disciples of Rasputin and who had been working with him for the conclusion of a peace which both considered to be useful to their personal interests, learning that he was going to have supper at the house of

during the meal, and that the pretext for it was the conduct of Rasputin toward one of the ladies present at the table. Other people relate that they waited until the "Prophet" was on the point of departing, and that as he was putting on his overcoat the young man who had drawn the lot designating him for the deed shot him with his revolver at the foot of the stairs. The body was then wrapped up in a blanket and put into the automobile of a very high personage, which was waiting in the garden of the house where the event took place, and driven to the Neva, where it was dropped under the ice. It seems that after this had been accomplished one of the conspirators went to Tsarskoie-Selo and informed the Tzar of what had taken place, as well as of his own share in the deed.

In the meanwhile the authorities had become suspicious. At 3 o'clock in the night screams had been heard by a policeman on duty at the corner of the street in which was situated the house of Prince Youssouppoff. He also noticed several persons coming out of the house, not by the usual entrance, but by the garden, which had a door leading into another street. After this, an automobile was seen driving out of that same garden, an altogether strange circumstance. This automobile was seen by another policeman about one hour later in the islands which surround Petrograd, driving

"The joy of the public at the murder of Rasputin could not be suppressed, notwithstanding the fear of the police. In all the theatres and public places the national anthem was sung with immense enthusiasm. Only a few hysterical women wept over the end of his wicked career."



Prince Youssouppoff, the man who shot Rasputin, in native costume.

CHAPTER VIII (Continued)

WHY his feelings had undergone such a change it is impossible to say, but one may make a pretty near guess as to the motives which actuated him. One of the principal motives undoubtedly was the idea that existed among a certain circle of persons that if peace were made with Germany, the English and French officials working with Russian officials in perfecting the defense of the fatherland, and whose presence already had prevented so many malversations, would depart. This would leave once more a free field for the rapacity of all the civil and military functionaries of the War Office and Commissariat Departments, who could make a new harvest of rubles as a result of the unavoidable expenses which the liquidation of the war would necessarily entail.

Prince Youssouppoff, sent there the Prefect of Petrograd, General Balk, with instructions to watch over the "Prophet." When the Prefect appeared upon the scene, he was politely asked by the master of the house to withdraw, as his presence was not required. Young Prince Youssouppoff, who, by the way, is well known in London, is the husband of the Princess Irene of Russia, the first cousin of the Czar. By virtue of his position he could do whatever he liked, even to dismiss curtly the principal police official of the capital. At the supper which he gave on the night when Rasputin was killed about a dozen people belonging to the best circle of Petrograd society were present. What passed during the meal and how the murder itself was committed is not known even now, though several versions of the crime are given. Some say that it was done

close to the Neva and not on the usual road. The next day the garden of Prince Youssouppoff was searched by Secret Service agents, who found some blood traces on the snow, but the servants of the Prince declared that it was the blood of a dog that had been shot the day before. No one dared say or do anything more against the supposed murderers, especially as the body of their victim had not yet been found. The river was dragged and it was not until twenty-four hours after the event that the dead man was discovered under the ice in a frozen condition, with the features so completely battered that they could be recognized only with difficulty.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

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CHAPTER XI (Continued)

THIS was the Colonel's moment. "I will tell you!" he said, with a sneer at O'Reilly. "I am something of a genius at mechanical inventions, and therefore I am not for a moment deceived by this fellow's common lies. This"—he paused dramatically and held his brother officers with a burning glance—"this instrument, in my opinion, was devised for the purpose of injecting fulminate of mercury into dynamite."

great sigh of relief, followed by a subdued titter at the Colonel's expense. The latter was chagrined. Having made himself and the commandant ridiculous, he took refuge behind an assumption of somber and offended dignity. But it was plain that he still considered these Americans dangerous people, and that his suspicions were as keen as ever.

Cuban rebels, and her relations with Spain are becoming daily more strained; ill-feeling grows, and all because of the exaggerations, the mendacities, that have gone forth from here to your newspapers. We are determined to put down this uprising in our own way; we will tolerate no foreign interference. War is never a pleasant thing, but you journalists have magnified its horrors and misrepresented the cause of Spain until you threaten to bring on another and a more horrible combat. Now then, you understand what I mean when I say that you are more dangerous than a powder expert; that

your pen can do more injury, can cause the death of more Spanish troops than could a regiment of Americans with dynamite. Your English friend makes no secret of his business, so we shall escort him to Nuevitas and see him safely out of the country, once for all."

and you have a way with you—there's no denying it. Under other conditions it would be a pleasure to know you better. "It grieves me, therefore, to warn you that your further stay in Cuba will not be pleasant. I almost regret that there is no conclusive evidence against you; it would so simplify matters. Come now, hadn't you better acknowledge that I have guessed your secret?" O'Reilly's perplexity was changing to dismay, for it seemed to him he was being played with; nevertheless, he shook his head. "I would only be deceiving you, sir," he said.

General Antuna stilled. "Then I see embarrassments ahead for both of us." "More arrests?" "Not necessarily. Understand me, I speak as one gentleman to another, but you must have noticed that Americans are unpopular with our troops. They are impulsive, these troops; accidents cannot be prevented. Suppose something should happen to you? There is the trouble. You came to Cuba to enjoy its climate; you cannot be expected to remain indoors. Of course not. Well! Among our soldiers are many new recruits, patriotic, enthusiastic young fellows, but—careless. They are wretchedly unproficient marksmen, and they haven't learned the dangers of promiscuous rifle fire. They are forever shooting at things, merely to score a hit. Would you believe it? Oh, I have to discipline them frequently. To think of you going abroad through the streets, therefore, worries me intensely."

Johnnie could not summon an answering smile, for his heart was like lead. He realized now the utter futility of resistance; he knew that to remain in Puerto Principe after this thinly veiled warning would be to court destruction—and destruction of a shocking character against which it would be impossible to guard. Even an espionage stricker than that to which he had been subjected would utterly defeat his plans. After a moment of thought he said gravely: "I appreciate the delicacy of your consideration, sir, and—I shall go." General Antuna leaped to his feet, his grim face alight; striding to O'Reilly, he pressed his hands—he seemed upon the point of embracing him. "I thank you!" he cried. "You render me a supreme service. See, I breathe easy. Permit me to offer you refreshment—one of our famous Spanish wines. No? Then the best cigar in all Cuba!"



"Evidently one inserts the tube into the dynamite, so and presses the bulb—"

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)