

# THE MYSTERY OF GRASLOV

By Ashley Towne  
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(Continued from last week.)

## CHAPTER X.

### JANSKY, SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE.

NESSLEROV lay in his palace in Tomsk, slowly recovering.

His heart was filled with rage, and he longed for vengeance.

His closest confidant now was Jansky, who, owing to his meritorious conduct in the apprehension of so great a gang of conspirators as the Paulpoffs, was promoted at the request of Nesslerov to a post where he could assist his superior in his plans and ambitions.

He had told Jansky the story of the ride from Moscow, and it was of course colored to suit his purpose. Jansky had received his commission—the first important one since his arrival at Tomsk—to watch the American and find an opportunity to wreak vengeance.

About twenty miles from the city of Tomsk was the village of Tivolofsky, a small mining town frequented by convicts. To this town the Paulpoffs had been sent. Vladimir was useful in the mines. With his tremendous strength he could do the work of two, and in his simple obedience to the mandates of his superiors he never uttered a complaint. The old people did menial work, cooking for the convicts who had no families or cleaning in the houses of the officers.

This new life came hardest upon the old people, and to their sufferings that made Vladimir ease under his breath.

One day Jansky entered the room where Nesslerov sat or half reclined.

"Well, what is it? I see you have something to say," said Nesslerov.

"I have, your excellency," replied the superintendent of police. "It concerns him—your enemy."

"The American?"

"Yes, I have obeyed your commands—he has been constantly watched. And at last we are in a position to strike."

Nesslerov said nothing, he kept the superintendent of police, "It concerns him—your enemy."

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understanding by Papa Paulpoff that on account must be breathed a word to any person concerning the visit of which Jansky spoke.

"Come, out with it!" stormed Jansky. "The came—I do not know why he came," murmured the old woman in despair.

"I will tell you. He came to conspire against the life of Nesslerov, governor of Tomsk."

"No, no! I swear he did not."

"Good! Then if he did not do it, you must know why he did come here. Out with it, now, if you value your life."

"My life! Ah, you would not harm a helpless old woman?"

For answer Jansky brought his whip down on her bony shoulders.

"Have mercy!" cried the unfortunate. "Will you tell why the American visited this house?"

"I know not."

"Take her, her thumbs—there, over the door!" he commanded savagely.

"Now, then, old hag," said Jansky, "understand I have come for the truth and will have it. If you do not give it to me, I will kill you. I will get the truth from Paulpoff, who has more than you. Now, what was the business that brought the American here?"

"I know not!" whispered the woman, with a great sob.

"The lash!" roared Jansky. One of his police swung his heavy whip, and the lash came down across the naked shoulders. A livid mark told the course, and Mamma Paulpoff cried out in agony.

"Either you or some one must tell. What brought the American here? Was it concerning a picture?"

"I know not!" said the woman.

"The lash!" roared Jansky. A white line and a red one marked the blows of the whip. Mamma Paulpoff screamed in her awful torture. Her limbs grew weaker, and she hung by the cords tied to her thumbs. The thumbs were black.

"You will learn!" said Jansky. "The officers of the car must take these steps to protect his empire. With the lesson you have had, tell the truth. What brought the American here?"

"I know not!" answered the woman. "Hill's furries upon her!" said Jansky, almost beside himself. "The lash! Three times!"

"Your arm was weak," said the police officer who had done no whipping. "Let me try."

A snarl of horrible cruelty crossed his face as he stepped by the side of the horse of the whip. Mamma Paulpoff screamed in her awful torture. Her limbs grew weaker, and she hung by the cords tied to her thumbs. The thumbs were black.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE PRINCESS OLGA.

THE train from Moscow came snorting and screaming into the station, and among the passengers, mostly officers and convicts or men connected with the railway, were two women. One of these was about fifty years of age,

thin and sublimed in appearance, and her face bore the marks of suppressed anxiety. The other was scarcely more than a girl, twenty at most—but her carriage was noble, and her entire appearance that of one born to command. Her lovely face and well shaped head rose above a collar of ermine, although it was not winter.

"To the palace of Nesslerov, governor of Tomsk," she said to a drosky driver, and she and her companion were soon on the way.

Nesslerov was at dinner when a servant announced the Princess Olga.

"What about the Princess Olga?" he asked.

"The princess is here—she has asked to see your excellency."

"Here! Olga Nesslerov, here!" rising from the table. He had improved much in the last few days, and his face wore a calm look that had not been there since his meeting with Denton.

He found the princess in the reception room.

"Princess Olga!" he exclaimed, kissing her hand. "Fair cousin, what happy circumstances brought you here? And why have you come unannounced and uninvited?"

"I saw no reason to herald my approach," she answered, "and I am not uninvited. This is my mother's house, and I have come to see her."

"The woman continued and looked uncomfortable, but Nesslerov paid her not the least attention.

"Well, since you are here, I am pleased to see you," said the governor.

"A branch of the Nesslerov family had mine have not been too friendly. I am glad that at last one of you has had