uniform remained on his feet, a stout man with a purple face, his tunic unbuttoned at the throat, who swayed as he stood. In stentorian tones he was declaiming:

"Jeder Schuss ein, Russ,
Jeder Stoss ein, Franzos,
Jeder Tritt ein, Brit. . . ."*

The whole restaurant broke into hand-clapping and laughter. Some one pulled the officer down into his chair and the band broke into "Puppchen," the popular song of the day. Rudi laughed happily. "Infantry, obviously," he remarked drily. "The trouble about these Line fellows is that they can't hold their liquor. But though the man's drunk, he speaks the truth. We Germans are ready, Olivia, and . . ."

But I scarcely heard him.

Floria von Pellegrini had just come into the restaurant.

CHAPTER XVIII

I ESCAPE FROM TWIN PERILS TO MEET WITH DISASTER

The Pellegrini certainly knew the value of an effective entrance. Every other woman in the place had an escort; but she came alone. As she paused upon the threshold to gaze upon that animated scene, she looked superb. She was in décolleté, as though she had been to the Opera—I remembered noticing that Burian, the great Wagnerian tenor, was billed to sing Siegfried that night—her exquisite figure moulded in an ivory satin frock, quite plain but marvellously draped, with a bodice that left her gleaming shoulders bare. Her gorgeous hair was loosely gathered up to lie in a thick coil upon her shapely neck, and looped up to show her small and beautifully-moulded

* "A Russian with every shot,
A Frenchman with every thrust,
A Briton with every kick."
ears, to which a pair of emerald ear-rings, each a small but marvellously fine cabuchon stone, the only jewellery she displayed, drew the eye.

Her appearance sent the waiters scurrying in all directions. Hector, the maître d'hôtel, with his old-fashioned mutton-chop whiskers, was before her in an instant, bowing low. But for the moment she ignored him, disdainfully surveying the room, while a sort of suppressed murmur ran from table to table.

Her curious green eyes were veiled in sullen arrogance. With a sort of dreadful fascination I watched her gaze slowly traverse the restaurant. Now she was looking at us; but her eyes passed me by. They rested for a moment on Rudi, who was staring at her through his eye-glass with unabashed admiration, as was, incidentally, every other man in the place; and I reminded myself that, in the Pellegrini's profession, it is men, not women, that matter.

My thoughts went back to Vivian Abbott. So this was the woman who had betrayed him. She looked spoilt, luxury-loving, but not vile, as a woman who sells her lover must be. Indeed, in her shimmering white frock, she had almost a virginal air. With her entrancing colouring; her coquettish nose, the nostrils rather wide; her eager mouth, pretty as a cupid's, but a thought too heavy; her ravishing form, she was a splendid and alluring creature. I could understand any man falling in love with her.

Amid a buzz of comment they conducted her to a table apparently reserved for her on the far side of the room. Rudi was talking excitedly in my ear, a string of scandal . . . " . . . the best-gowned woman in Germany . . . von Dagen, of the Paşewalker Cuirassiers, shot himself over her . . . ruined half a dozen men besides . . . now with Prince Karl-Albrecht . . . "

But I paid scant attention. I was trying to grapple with the situation with which the Pellegrini's unexpected
appearance had confronted me. She had only caught a
glimpse of me at the flat; and could I avoid meeting her
face to face, could I but slip away before the restaurant
began to empty, I might yet pass unrecognised. The
Prince was the danger: he, I felt sure, would know me
again. Since she was alone, it looked as if he might join her.

I roused myself from my reverie to find a tall officer in
uniform bowing before me. He was, I think, the thinnest
man I have ever seen, a regular bodkin of a figure, but-
toned into a bright blue tunic, skin-tight and wasp-
waisted. Rudi was on his feet, murmuring a name—
Baron von Something-or-other.

The Baron smiled at me most ingratiatingly out of a
perfectly vacuous face. “If the gnädiges Fräulein will
have the extraordinary goodness to put up with my com-
pany for a little . . .” he drawled in a ridiculously affected
voice. “The Colonel is asking for our friend. Du, Rudi,”
he went on, addressing the boy and ogling me most des-
perately the while, “you needn’t hurry back. If I hadn’t
drank so much champagne,”—he swayed a little as he
spoke, and sat down rather abruptly—“I should speak
English with this most lovely lady. But ach je! I can
think of only one word,”—he grinned at me expansively—
“Meexed Peeckles!”

Rudi laughed and clapped him on the shoulder. “Miss
Dunbar speaks German as well as you do, Helmuth.” He
turned to me. “You don’t mind my rushing off? The
Colonel won’t keep me long. Helmuth will look after you,
won’t you, old man . . . ?”

I had been watching the Pellegrini. Her unexpected
appearance had brought back to my mind with horrifying
vividness that old familiar terror of mine, a vision of the
clubfooted man, lowering somewhere out of sight behind
this scene of gaiety, with its brilliant uniforms, pretty
women, laughter, music. A knot of men pressed about
her table. It seemed a good moment to slip away. I glanced at my watch: a quarter to eleven. Three-quarters of an hour to my rendezvous outside Kemper's. What on earth was I to do with myself in the meantime? But it was dangerous to stay.

"If you don't mind, Rudi," I said, "I think I'll be going now...."

He swung round aghast. "Olivia, not yet!"

"I've got one or two things to see to. And... and my head's aching rather. I'll find my way back to the hotel all right. There's no need for you to come...."

"But at least I'm going to see you home," he cried. "Wait there for me! I shan't be five minutes...."

"Really, I can go quite well by myself," I protested.

"I won't hear of it," he flashed back. "I'd rather put old Westfried off...."

"Don't be absurd," I told him. "Of course you must see your Colonel...."

With an obstinate look on his face he dropped into his chair. "I'll get my bill and come with you," he announced.

"I won't hear of any such thing," I told him. "Go to the Colonel at once, Rudi!"

"Not unless you promise to wait for me!"

The Baron suddenly emitted a loud groan. "I am more drunk than I thought," he announced solemnly. "The English Miss is frightened of me." He shook his head forlornly. "And everybody has drunk more than I have. The Adjutant is at least a bottle ahead...."

I could not help laughing, he was so desperately in earnest. "It's nothing to do with you," I assured him.

"It's only that I'm tired and I've a long journey before me to-morrow."

"Give me five minutes, Olivia," Rudi pleaded. "It's our last night together. Heaven knows when I shall see you again!"
"Maid Joan departs and never more returns!" declared the Baron lugubriously—I recognised the quotation: it is from Schiller's 'Jungfrau von Orleans,' and hard-worked at that. "Stay, most beautiful lady, and"—his eyes brightened—"we'll have a bottle at Rudi's expense...."

A plump officer, round as a ball, bustled up. "Mensch," he squeaked at Rudi in the nasal tones the Prussian Guardsman affects, "have you taken leave of your senses? The old man's hunting for you everywhere. You'd better make haste if you want to see him. He's just leaving...."

I had risen from my chair, for I was determined to get away. But it was no easy matter, penned in as we were by tables.

"You'll wait a minute, Olivia?" Rudi begged.

"Of course she'll wait," cried the Baron. "We'll take care of the Gnädige in your absence, mein Junge!"

Rudi flung me an imploring glance and hurried off.

I wavered; and on the instant was lost. The Baron stood up and gravely presented his plump friend. "I really must be going," I declared. But the pair of them barred my passage, waving me back into my seat.

"Um Gottes Willen," the fat man ejaculated, "you wouldn't leave our Rudi in the lurch, on this night of all nights, when he's coming back to us! Be patient a little, meine Gnädige: he won't be long. Colonel Westfried has a train to catch. . . ."

Colonel Westfried? The name sounded familiar: surely I had heard it quite recently?

The Baron had got his bottle of champagne. He was solemnly filling up three glasses, spilling a good deal of wine on the tablecloth in the operation. "We will now drink," he gravely announced, "to the so lovely ladies of Old England. Meeched Peeckles, goddam!" He forced a glass into my hand and clinked his glass with mine, while his companion followed suit,
At any other time I might have laughed, he was so charmingly absurd in his intoxicated state. But, the presence of that woman oppressed me: I was on fire to be off. I put my lips to my glass, set it down upon the table and stood up. The Baron and the other stared at me in dismay. It was then I became aware that, from the far end of the restaurant, a stream of officers in uniform, noisy and flushed with wine, were slowly forging their way down the restaurant between the closely packed tables.

A spate of blue tunics eddied about us. Suddenly I saw my two companions simultaneously spring to their feet and stand stiffly at attention. The crowd divided; and I found myself face to face with Floria von Pellegrini’s friend, the Prince. All too late, I then remembered in what circumstances I had heard Colonel Westfriéd’s name. Westfriéd, of course, was Prince Karl’s Commanding Officer, of whom Grundt had spoken so contemptuously at the Pellegrini’s flat.

The Prince was smoking a large cigar and laughing uproariously, his suety face from heavy drinking more pallid than ever and beaded with moisture. Like the rest, he was in uniform, with a cross dangling from a riband about his neck and a row of medals glittering on the breast of the bright blue tunic into which his gross and flabby torso was crammed as tightly as a sausage in its skin. A slim Hussar officer, gorgeous in scarlet and gold, with a saturnine face, held him by the arm and recounted some facetious story to which the Prince was listening abstractedly, while those little pig eyes of his fluttered from table to table, now to bestow condescending recognition upon an acquaintance, now to linger suggestively upon a woman in a brazen and lecherous stare.

Hedged in as I was, I could not flee. As they fell back on either side before him, the officers eddying about our table formed a lane which led directly to where I stood
between the Baron and his portly friend. Beyond our immediate vicinity the life of the restaurant proceeded as usual: with its military clientèle I imagine that princes were three-a-penny at Schippke's. But I was caught up in this torrent of Guardsmen, and I wished that the ground might open and swallow me up, or that I might take a header and disappear among the outer fringe of tables where the cheery buzz of chaff and laughter, the constant to-and-fro of the diners, contrasted with the sudden chilling hush, the line of stiffening backs, among the blue tunics surrounding me.

He recognised me instantly, as I had felt it in my bones he would. I saw his eyebrows go up, a pink hand grope for his monocle. With a curt gesture he silenced his companion and came straight up to me.

It seemed to me that every drop of blood had drained away from my face. Was this denunciation? I glanced desperately across the restaurant to where the Pellegrini had her table. But the seething crowd obscured her from my view.

Screwing his glass in his eye, the Prince tittered shrilly.

"Donnerwetter, die kleine Engländerin!"

He paused and looked interrogatively from one to the other of the two officers flanking me.

I was aware that the Baron was nudging me and whispering something behind his hand. "Knix machen," he muttered hoarsely. "Knix machen!" and, to illustrate his meaning, sublimely oblivious of the fact that some fifty people were watching him intently, he dropped a most elegant curtsey. I bobbed hastily. The Prince burst into a peal of throaty laughter. "Klossal!" he gurgled. "You should be in the ballet, Baron! One of these days we'll put you in a frilly skirt and see if you can shake a leg as gracefully as this poor von Hülsen used to."

This was a joke, and His Highness glanced round the
circle for approbation. Everybody roared, and there were
murmurs of deferential delight—"Ausgezeichnet!"—
"Ein vorzüglicher Witz!"—"Hoheit sind unglaublich
komisch!" I should have been better able to appreciate
Prince Karl's peculiar form of humour had I known then,
as I was to discover later, that, at a house-party at Prince
Fürstenberg's some years before, Field-Marshal Count
Hülsen-Häslér, in a ballet skirt and with his face painted,
had dropped dead in the presence of the Emperor while
giving his famous imitation of a ballet dancer.

Expectantly the Prince pursed up his thick, wet lips,
and his small eyes gimleted into mine. He turned to my
companion. "Well, Baron," he said jovially, "aren't
you going to present the lady?"

The Baron swayed slightly and steadied himself by
gripping the edge of the table. "His . . ."—he swallowed
with an effort—"His Highness Prince Karl-Albrecht of
Traubheim-Zwickau," he announced very formally. He
waved a hand airily in my direction. "Mees . . . Meexed
Peeckles!" He smiled seraphically and gently collapsed
into his chair.

The Prince shrieked with laughter. "Man, you're
drunk!" he shotlled.

"Not drunk, Hoheit," replied the Baron, with dignity,
"not drunk, only forgetful. Herr von Linz, with whom
the gnädiges Fräulein is dining, told me her name, but it
has escaped me with the rest of my English. . . ." He
struggled to his feet.

"Then," said His Highness, with a significant glance
round the circle, "I must find out the name for myself!"

On that the Hussar officer fell back discreetly, and the
eddy of blue tunics began to move forward again, carrying
with it the Baron and his friend. Prince Karl motioned
me to a chair and took one himself. What was I to do?
I sat down.
He placed his soft, plump hand over mine. "Na," he remarked confidentially, "die kleine Engländерin is a friend of our Rudi, was? So that’s why you were so cruel to me this morning! All day long I’ve been wondering what the reason could be. . . ."

I was beginning to feel easier in my mind. For some reason or other the Prince appeared to be unaware of Clubfoot’s interest in me. It was not much after eleven o’clock. If I could get rid of the Prince before Rudi came back, all would be well.

He grunted and mopped his shining face with a handkerchief as fine as a woman’s, and embroidered with a large coronet. "Verflucht," he muttered thickly, "you’ve quite bewitched me with your great big eyes and your pitch-black hair. Do you know that ever since this morning I’ve done nothing else but think about you, you . . . you sweet little morsel. . . ." The snouting nose was thrust forward at me.

The sweet little morsel repressed an inclination to laugh. I stand five feet eight in my stockings, and I weighed then, as I weigh still, about one hundred and forty pounds in my birthday suit. But as he suddenly bent down I caught a glimpse of his eyes, and the mirth died in me. His gross and horrible lips fumbled for my hand. I snatched it away.

"Such maidenly modesty," he chuckled, "and yet what fire! I tell you what, little woman, you and I must meet again. I’ve decided to overlook your foolishness of this morning: you were, of course, unaware of my rank. You shall come out and have a little supper with me somewhere quietly, to-morrow or the next day. . . ." He produced a gold pencil and pushed up the cuff of his tunic. "Just give me your name and telephone number," he said, with pencil poised. "I’ll ring you up in the morning, and tell you when and where. . . ."

I had been thinking swiftly. Time pressed, for Rudi
might return any minute now. I could see only one possible means of shedding this preposterous clown. "I suppose Your Highness knows that Frau von Pellegrini is sitting over there?" I observed gently.

He whipped round like a shot rabbit. "Üm Gottes Willen, where?"

The Pellegrini was not to be discerned in that crowd; but I indicated the direction of her table. The Prince scrambled to his feet. "Herr Je," he murmured, "I'd forgotten I'd told her to meet me here. She'll make a fearful scene if she catches us together again. Ring me up at the Hôtel Atlantic, Kleine: I'm staying there for a few days. O Gott, O Gott...!"

He bounced off, his fat face awry with an expression of utter dismay. I let him get clear, then stood up swiftly and made for the door. It had proved easier than I had ever dared to imagine. Looking neither to left nor right, I passed out into the lobby, where I gave the attendant the ticket for my travelling coat. It was twenty minutes past eleven. I had not a moment to lose.

The bearded lady in charge of the cloak-room helped me into my overcoat. I gave her a mark, and was turning to go when the door of the telephone-box on one side of the lobby opened suddenly, and the Pellegrini came out.

The passage-way was narrow and thronged with people collecting their hats and coats. To reach the street door I had to brush past the woman. Pulling down my veil, I sought to slip by; but it was too late. Her emerald eyes seemed to flame as they fell on me. With a resolute air, she put herself in my path.

"I want a word with you," she said, but for all her bold front, her voice shook a little as though some strong emotion gripped her. I sought to appear collected.

"There's some mistake," I rejoined, making another attempt to pass. "I don't know you!"
She cast a slow, sidelong glance about her out of her oddly lambent eyes. There was a wariness in her whole mien that filled me with an obscure dread. "No mistake, Fräulein Dunbar," she rapped back in a hurried undertone, and emphasised my name. "You will hear what I have to say or face the consequences." The green eyes were menacing. "Bitte..." She indicated a door that stood ajar a little way along the vestibule. "We shan't be disturbed there. . . ."

I made a final effort to shake her off. "I tell you I don't know you. And anyway, I can't wait now. I . . . ."

Scathingly her voice broke into mine. "You little fool, d'you know who rang me up just now? It was Grundt... . . ." She was quick to see the fear which must have shown in my face, for she added brusquely: "Now will you listen to me? Or shall it be to him?"

Half-dazed with apprehension, I allowed her to shepherd me into a little office where she clicked on the light. I saw a roll-top desk, some chairs, a stack of files, a calendar. She motioned to me to shut the door, leaning against the desk, incessantly twining and untwining her long white fingers.

"I've one word of advice to give you, meine Kleine," she said as I faced her. "Go back to your own country at once!" I noticed the drawling Viennese lilt to her speech. I took my courage in both hands and tried to brazen it out.

"Of course, I remember you now," I said as easily as my thumping heart would let me. "I didn't recognise you without your hat. You're Frau von Pellegrini, aren't you? I brought you a shawl to see this morning. I want to assure you that I was in no way to blame for the very unpleasant incident that occurred at your flat. It is not my fault if your friends try to kiss me. . . ."

She cut me short with a gesture. "Why did you come to my apartment?" she demanded, with angry brusqueness.
Her insolence touched up my Highland blood. "Not to be insulted by your friends, anyway!" I retorted.

She stamped her foot. "No evasions! Answer me! Why did you come?"

I had foreseen this question. "To try and sell my shawl...."

Her gaze swept me up and down, contemptuous. "Are you so poor, then?"

"I'd lost my purse with my ticket to London in it...."

She looked up eagerly. "Is this true?" Then doubt reappeared in her face. "Who gave you my name?" she demanded quickly. She bent forward, and again I saw the nameless fear that lurked in the green pools of her eyes. "It was Abbott, niet?"

I caught hold of myself, prepared to meet the danger. "Who?" I asked, and sought to make the question sound indifferent.

"You were at Schlatz when the Englishman got away," she said, and her lips trembled. "He sent you to me, nicht wahr?" Her voice rose to a shrill whisper. "It was Abbott who sent you, wasn't it? Answer me, can't you?" She caught my wrist.

I shook myself free. "I was at Schlatz when some prisoner escaped," I told her, "but whether he was English or German, I can't say, for I never saw him or spoke with him...."

She was watching me narrowly. "Is this true?" she asked again, and this time her voice was soft as with some immense relief.

"Certainly," I lied stoutly.

"Then who gave you my name?"

I was prepared for this, too. "The chambermaid at the hotel. I asked her if she knew of any fashionable actress who might buy a shawl, and she mentioned you...."

"So....?" The exclamation was like a sigh of con-
tentment. She opened her purse, a beautiful thing of green, gold and platinum chain-work, set in alternating stripes, with an emerald clasp, and took out a handful of notes. She thrust the money in my hand. "Listen to me, Kleine! What you've got to do is to get out of this city as fast as you can and never come back. If you value your safety, you'll make a point of leaving Berlin without a moment's delay, now, this very night. And if you're wise you'll say nothing to any one about your adventure at Schlatz, or about seeing me. You can take the money," she added, observing that I had laid the roll of notes upon the desk. "I have plenty more. Or, if it isn't enough . . . ?"

She broke off, and then, seeing that I made no move, with a nervous laugh she stuffed the wad back in her purse. "As you will. But remember, I speak for your own good. Grundt suspects you, and whom Clubfoot suspects . . . ." She checked herself: there was terror in the glance she gave me. "Oh, this man appals me," she wailed, distraught, of a sudden, with fear. "You look kind-hearted, Fräulein. Promise me that you'll go away at once and say nothing. . . ."

"You may rely on me," I answered coldly; for I could not forget that it was this creature who had sent my poor little Major to his death. Then I walked out of the office and left her there. As I hurried through the lobby to the street, I had a glimpse of the Prince hovering nervously about the threshold of the restaurant.

It was 11.35. I walked until I was clear of the lighted approach to Schipke's, then hailed a passing taxi.

*   *   *   *   *

The Mauz-Strasse lay quiet and deserted, its asphalt roadway shining in the dim light of the street lamps like a dark river flowing under the stars. As we rattled down the street, I saw that in front of Kemper's a ruby gleam
spilled a pool of blood athwart the kerb. A closed car was there, its tail-lamp towards us. I stopped my cab a few yards from the hotel, paid it off, and hastened towards the car. As I drew near I discerned a shape immobile in the driving-seat. "Here I am!" I cried softly.

The figure at the steering-wheel did not move, but at that moment a shadow seemed to detach itself from the gloom under the house walls. A short, square-shouldered man, with a large moustache, stepped up to me. He laid a finger to his bowler. "Fräulein Dunbar?" he said politely in German.

His matter-of-fact tone disarmed me: I took him to be a messenger from Druce. "Yes," I said. Then I started, for two other men had appeared noiselessly at my elbow.

"We are the police," said the first man. "You must come with us to Headquarters."

I sprang back. "The police?" I repeated. "Why? What have I done?"

"False registration," was the curt reply, as the speaker flung open the car door. "Get in with her, you two: I'll sit next to Fritze. . . ."

They hustled me into the car, and we were whirled away over the gleaming asphalt.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CROUCHING BEAST

If there be any courage in my composition, it is of that common brand which asserts itself only when confronted with the inevitable. And there was something essentially finite about the two large and stolid plain-clothes men who bore me company as the limousine sped quickly through the streets.

In the first shock of my arrest I was angry rather than