"What was the Englishwoman doing when you found her?" Grundt demanded.

"Nothing in particular..."

"Was she sitting, or standing, or walking about, or what?"

"She was sitting on the sofa... Wait, there was something..." He put his hands to his head. "Ach, ja, she said she had been looking through the gramophone records..."

Clubfoot's face changed. His eyes rolled, his nostrils twitched, and he ground his teeth together. A bellow of rage burst from his lips and, raising his heavy stick, he brought it crashing down upon the table, upsetting the bottles and shivering a glass. Bottles and glasses clattered to the floor as he snatched the stick away and, swinging it over his head, plunged round the table, dragging his twisted foot after him, straight at the Pellegrini. "I'll have your life for this!" he gibbered. With a scream she covered her face with her hands and cowered on the sofa.

At that moment there came a knocking at the door.

I don't think Grundt heard it. Even as he towered above the sofa, with his arm raised to strike, his paroxysm of fury seemed to pass. He lowered the stick, breathing hard. "You shall answer to me later," he muttered, and slowly swung his glance to me. His eyes, staring and bloodshot, had lost all human semblance; they were the eyes of an infuriated man-ape. He made a vague gesture of the hand. "First, I'll deal with you...

He was coming at me when, for the second time, the door was discreetly rapped.

CHAPTER XXIV

CONCERNING A WAITER AND HIS TRAY

"Herein!" he trumpeted ragingly. The door gapèd, and I caught a glimpse of a white coat in the corridor.
without. "What is it?" Grundt demanded irritably, and, without waiting for an answer, hobbled to the door.

I heard a deferential voice say in German: "It's the waiter, Herr! With His Highness's permission I was going to clear away. . . ."

"Not now," cried Clubfoot. "In the morning will do. Go to the devil and don't come back!" And he made to shut him out.

"A moment, Herr, if you please," I heard the man reply. "A gentleman is downstairs asking for Fräulein . . . Fräulein Dunbar. He says she is with His Highness. The night porter asked me to take up the message. . . ."

I went cold with apprehension. This was the crowning catastrophe. Nigel Druce must have followed me. But what could he be thinking of to send up his name in this way.

I saw Grundt hesitate. Then, "Did the gentleman give his name?" he asked.

"Nein, Herr!" Grundt seemed to reflect.

"You can send him up . . . " he began. He glanced back into the room. "Wait!" he ordered. His fingers fumbled at the inside lock of the door. He withdrew the key and inserted it in the outside keyhole. Then, turning round, he crooked his finger at me. By the malicious glee that shone in his eyes I knew he had the same thought as I.

"A gentleman to see you, my dear," he chortled as I came slowly forward. "Shall we go down and find out what he wants?"

He held the door for me, and passing out, I came face to face with the waiter.

Just across the threshold he stood, a tray with a jug of water and some glasses in his hands, his drill jacket very white in the rays of the single electric lamp that burned a little way along the corridor. I had scarce time to identify the bright blue eyes that, for one instant smiling,
strove to kindle in mine a reflection of the brave flame that burnt there, for, as I came forth, he slipped like a flash between me and Clubfoot, who followed after, and, without the slightest warning, hurled his tray, jug and all, full in the German’s face. I heard the smothered roar with which Grundt reeled backwards merge in the clang of metal, the crash of broken glass, to cleave with horrifying din the night hush of the hotel. Then the door slammed violently, there was the click of the turning key, and a warm, firm hand grabbed my wrist. “This is where we run!” spoke a comforting English voice in my ear.

Even as we sped along the corridor, Nigel Druce and I, the uproar of Grundt’s assault upon the door rang after us. The handle was madly rattled, a great fist beat a thunderous tattoo upon the panels, and a furious shouting welled out above the hubbub, an outcry loud enough to wake the dead. But we left it behind us as, round a turn of the passage, Druce whisked me through a shabby swing-door into a service-room where, in his stride, as it seemed to me, he whipped off his waiter’s jacket and snatched up his own coat that lay on a table.

Hand in hand, we scuttled through another door on the far side. It gave on a staircase, stone-stepped and iron-railed, that dropped, flight by flight, with gaunt monotony, into a stuffy half-light redolent of coke and decaying vegetables and vague backstair whiffs. Three at a time we took those stairs until we reached, at the bottom, a narrow lobby with a time-recording machine and a time-keeper’s box where, it seemed to me, there was a movement and a shout as we streamed by.

But Druce never faltered. Across the courtyard into which we burst, a patch of gloom penned amid the soaring, window-studded walls of the hotel, a pair of gates, folded back, opened on a dim, quiet street, where an open touring car waited. Here Druce let go my hand and sprang into
the driving-seat. Even as I scrambled in beside him, a whistle shrilled, a door banged, and excited voices and scampering feet rang hollow in the narrow canyon we had quitted. Then the protesting whirr of the self-starter, swallowed up at once by the roar of the engine, drowned all other sounds, and we shot away from the kerb.

At the end of the street we swung into a broad avenue where the deserted tram-lines gleamed like silver under the swaying arcs. The square mass of the Hôtel Atlantic rose like a cliff on our right, with Clubfoot's scarlet car before the glass-canopied entrance, mirroring its sidelights in the dark and shining asphalt. The alarm had not yet reached the front. The big doors were shut for the night, and all was still.

"We haven't much of a start," said Druise, and opened up the throttle. "We'll have to make for the Tiergarten. If they get after us promptly we ought to be able to shake them off there. Damnation!" With a violent jerk the car's pace was checked. He clawed at the hand-brake, bringing us to a dead stop. They were washing the street. Dim figures in high boots, moving about on the fringes of the circle of light flung by the arc-lamp beneath which we had halted, were sluicing the roadway from a hose which, running on little pairs of wheels, barred the whole breadth of the avenue.

Druise glanced over his shoulder. "Down, quick!" he rasped at me. "They're piling into the car...." I crouched down in the driving-seat. We were moving forward again, though at a mere crawl, for the street-cleaners were dragging their hose to one side to give us passage. And then the way was free. Once more my companion's foot drove the accelerator home.

Gathering speed swiftly, we flashed into the first side street that presented itself, taking the corner at a pace that made my heart stand still. Our axles hummed as,
at the end, with a brusque turn of the wheel, we swung to
the left again and went roaring along a leafy boulevard
with imposing mansions on one side, a tan-spread ride and
the trees of a vast park on the other. I think it must
have been the Tiergarten-Strasse, where the Berlin million-
aires have their homes. I had no time to look for a
name-plate, for almost at once we took a right-hand turn
to shoot down an avenue driven arrow-straight through
the heart of the park under an endless vista of milky arcs,
strung out like a necklace of pearls. As, with a shiver,
the car responded to the throttle, I heard behind us, above
the brave hammering of the engine, the melodious call of
a motor-horn, tu-tee, tu-tee.

All too well did I know what those two notes, one low,
one high, signified. I glanced backward. Behind us the
avenue we were following stretched bare and shining like
a naked sword. I turned to the man at my side. He was
preoccupied with the driving for, at the speed at which
we were travelling, the car was rocking like a boat in a
rough sea, and his face was set: but the ghost of a smile
lingered about his lips.

"That's Clubfoot's car," I said.

He nodded, his eyes on the glistening ribbon of road un-
winding itself between the trees. "Can you see 'em yet?" he asked.

Once more I glanced behind. Now a funnel of brilliant
white light was detaching itself without perceptible move-
ment from the dark background. As I watched, the
beam seemed to grow brighter.

"Yes," I rejoined. "And they’re gaining on us, I
think!"

"We'll have to double back on our tracks," he remarked.

A single lamp-post in the centre of the road showed that
we were approaching some cross-roads. "Hang on," he
warned me, "it's a sharp turn..."
He tore at the wheel and held it grimly as we whizzed round a corner and zig-zagged wildly down another avenue, narrower and more sparsely-lit than the last. The car picked up speed again and rushed on, creaking and straining. The wind whistled in my ears and tugged madly at my hat. For the third time I looked backward. There was a white luminosity in the sky, and even as I watched I saw that brilliant path of light stand out once more in our rear.

"They're still on our heels," I said to Druce, and glanced behind again. Now my eyes were dazzled by twin circles of vivid incandescence that bore down upon us.

Druce craned his head to peep into the driving-mirror affixed to the side of the wind-screen. "Humph," he said drily, "they've got the legs of us. Listen! I'm going to skid her. There's just about room to do it. When she stops, hop out and get in among the trees. Don't worry about me, I'll be behind. Ready now: hold tight...!"

He did not wait for my answer. I braced myself as his hand dipped down and his foot plunged forward. The brakes screamed and, with a sickening jolt, the car slithered like a live thing over the gleaming asphalt. The white kerb, the dark belt of leaves, the tall, grave tree-trunks, seemed to whirl about us in an unbroken circle as we spun. Then came a fearful jerk, a heavy thud, and I opened my eyes to find myself still in my seat, the car stationary, and the solemn dark of the forest before me.

An arm went about my shoulder, and Druce's voice whispered out of the black night: "Not hurt? Good. Quick...!" He lifted me bodily out of the driving-seat and set me on my feet. The car sprawled athwart the avenue, with one front wheel, lamentably buckled, jammed against the kerb. The glare of those pursuing lamps was not a hundred paces away. I felt my hand gripped. The next moment we were running over the slippery carpet of
pine needles in and out of the tall, slim boles. Scarcely had the darkness of the wood swallowed up the road we had quitted than we heard the approaching hum of the pursuing car. Louder and louder it resounded, swelling to a steady roar, until suddenly the clamour of the engine was blotted out, the wood's secret hush rudely shattered by a booming crash, the splintering of woodwork, the reverberating clang of shivered glass. A tumult of voices rose on the still night.

There was a soft chuckle by my side as we sped along. "They've hit . . . wreck," gasped Druce. "I switched off the lights . . . on chance. My hat . . . old Club-foot, eh? Hope he's broken . . . blinking neck. Out of action for present . . . anyway. You and I . . . got to get under cover . . . quick. Only bare hour . . . before it's light. Pity . . . about the car. . . ."

The shouting grew fainter on the road behind us. There were no sounds of immediate pursuit. We plunged on through the wood, which all about us exhaled the fragrance of damp leaves, and moss, and pine-sap, into the coming dawn. Where the trees grew less dense, or where we crossed an alley, a pale moon, riding high above the sleeping city, peeped down loftily as though surprised to see us there.

We slackened pace as the arcs of another avenue glimmered through the branches ahead. For the moment I was at the end of my strength: I could not have run another yard. I halted, leaning against a trunk, and gazed at my companion. "I must rest for a minute," I panted.

He gave me his bright smile. "It was a shame to make you run like that. But the worst is over now, at least for to-night. If we're lucky, we may pick up a late cab. We'll hear it from here if one comes along the road. In the meantime, we'll take a little breather."

I was hot and dishevelled and irritable, my nerves
frayed by all I had gone through that night. "And what now?" I said despairingly.

His lean face was wan in the grey light. "We've got to lie low for a bit. They're going to turn this country inside out to find you, you realise that? Clubfoot, if he's still alive, is likely to believe that we've lost no time in leaving Berlin. At least, that's what I'm reckoning on. My plan is for you to stay somewhere quietly until the first heat of the pursuit has spent itself and I can get hold of another car. You'll have to come to my place, I think. Would you..."—his eyes questioned mine—"would you mind doing that?"

"I'll do anything you say," I answered wearily, "as long as you hide me from that terrifying man."

He picked up my hand, cold in the dawn chill, and warmed it. "Don't worry. You'll be all right with me...."

"I try to be brave," I said, and struggled against the tears that rose in my voice. "But this awful man... if you'd seen him to-night..."

It was no good. I was worn out. I began to cry. He patted my shoulder. "Don't give way, my dear! What you want is sleep and a good rest. You've been so splendid. Here..." He produced a large, clean pocket-handkerchief and handed it to me. "That's better," he added, as I dabbed at my eyes. "You must have thought I'd deserted you, didn't you?"

I nodded forlornly.

"I'm not surprised..." He dipped a hand into an inside pocket and gave me a glimpse of the blue envelope. "With that on me, I couldn't risk falling into their hands, you understand...."

There in the twilight stillness, with the birds stirring in the branches, and the first streaks of morning stealing into the sky, he told me very briefly of the events leading up to his dramatic appearance at the Atlantic.
CONCERNING A WAITER AND HIS TRAY

On arriving with the car at Kemper's, rather before the appointed hour, the presence of two stolid figures on the sidewalk, before the hotel in conversation with the driver of a limousine halted beside the kerb, had aroused his suspicions. Accordingly, he drove past the hotel and, leaving his car in an adjacent side-street, returned to investigate. From a bar opposite, impotent to warn me, he witnessed my arrival and arrest and, when I was taken away, followed in his car. "When you disappeared into that villa," he declared, "I don't mind admitting that I had a bad moment. I didn't dare go into the grounds, for fear they were guarded...."

"They were," I put in.

"I guessed as much. You see, I had a notion that Clubfoot couldn't be very far away, and the old bird don't leave much to chance. So I dodged about among the trees lining the street, keeping an eye on the gate and wondering what the devil I should do...."

"You had the document," I said. "You were quite entitled to escape without me...."

He shrugged his shoulders. "There are moments in life when a fellow needs a friend. I had a feeling that you were going through one of those moments, so I hung round on the chance. Then things began to happen. First that old trollop from the cafe drove up in a taxi, and then came another cab with a young officer...."

"That was Rudi von Linz," I elucidated.

He whistled. "The investigation progresses," was his dry comment. He cocked his head in the direction of the road. "Hark," he said sharply, "I believe that's a cab!" The brisk clip-clop of a horse's hoofs came to our ears. "I hope to Heaven it's not taken. Come on!" He gave me his hand and, scrambling up a bank together, we hurried out upon the avenue.

The cab was disengaged. But the driver, returning
from Berlin to his stable on the farther edge of the Tiergarten, was loth to make the journey back. The promise of a twenty-mark piece, however, decided him, and the next minute we were bowling smoothly over the asphalt in the direction of the faint glow in the sky I knew betokened the centre of the city. The thought crossed my mine that to charter a cab thus boldly was a venturesome undertaking in our present plight. But I was content to leave my future movements in Druce’s hands, our movements as well as our destination. All I wanted to do was to lie back against the cushions with my face to the waning moon, the paling stars, and rest . . . rest.

As we drove along my companion finished his story. There was not much to tell, for he made his contriving of my rescue from the Atlantic appear to be the simplest thing in the world. When I quitted the villa with Grundt, Druce followed after in his car. Having himself stopped at the Atlantic, he knew that Prince Karl-Albrecht kept a suite of rooms there, and when he saw me and my escort descend at the hotel, guessed at once Clubfoot’s objective. He did not dare to follow us into the hotel, nor had he any particular plan in mind (Druce said) when he left his car at the service entrance and reconnoitred the yard, or even when, seizing a moment when the time-keeper was occupied at the telephone, he slipped through the lobby and mounted at hazard the back stairs.

Once inside the hotel, he was still in a bit of a quandary (Druce proceeded), for he did not know the number of the Prince’s suite or, consequently, the floor on which it was situated. But here luck came to his aid. While prowling about one of the upper storeys, he heard a noisy party stream into the lift on the floor above and, as the cage went sliding downward past him, the Pellegrini’s name caught his ear.

It was a woman speaking (she was, of course, one of the
Prince's guests on their way downstairs), and her chance remark gave him the information he sought. "The Pellegrini," she said, "will know how to deal with the ugly brute."

Druce raced up to the next storey by the back staircase. Fortunately, he went softly, for in the service room he all but blundered upon a waiter stowing empty champagne bottles away in a crate. Druce slipped up the next flight, and waited there out of sight until the waiter emerged from the service room and descended the stairs. He had changed out of his white coat, and was evidently going off duty. (This must have been the waiter who had crossed Grundt and me in the corridor on our arrival.)

For quite a while (Druce said) he wandered aimlessly about the floor until, suddenly, as he tiptoed along the dim corridor, his attention was arrested by the murmur of voices. Creeping to the door whence the sound proceeded, he heard Grundt's deep bass: "Will Your Highness take a look at this young person," Clubfoot was saying, "and tell me if you have seen her before?"

He then realised (Druce told me) that the situation was desperate. But just how desperate it was he only discovered as that deadly cross-examination proceeded. It was clear that I was there, behind that door, and that Clubfoot was using the Pellegrini and her lover to force the truth from me. If he were to be of any service to me (Druce said), he knew he must act at once. But what could he do?

He could not remain there in the corridor, for if an hotel servant or one of Grundt's men should come, or Grundt himself should happen to open the door, the game would be up. And he had the document in his pocket. Then he thought of the waiter's coat which he had seen hanging on the wall of the service room. In the guise of a waiter he would at least have a pretext for being in the corridor. He crept back to the service room. Then, as
he donned the coat, it occurred to him that, as a waiter, if he dared to take a big risk, he might, on some excuse or other, gain access to the room. Still without any specific scheme of operations, he snatched up a tray that stood on the table and returned to his listening post outside the Prince’s suite.

As he stole along the corridor he heard Clubfoot’s voice upraised in wrath. By the time he reached the door, however, the conversation had sunk to an unintelligible murmur. He was trying to make up his mind whether to rush straight in or wait, in the hope of overhearing something further to tell him how the land lay, when (he said) there was a hoarse shout within the room, a crash and a savage bellow from Clubfoot: "I'll have your life for this!"

It was then that my indomitable friend, in the belief that Grundt was attacking me, rapped on the door. His story that some one was asking for me, made up on the spur of the moment, was intended to let me know that he (Druce) was at hand. He had purposely left the document in his coat in the service room as, it being clear that the men who had come with Clubfoot had remained below stairs, he had determined (Druce said) to drag me, by force, if needs be, out of Clubfoot’s clutches. But he had no plan of campaign more definite than this in his mind when he knocked.

How much of this simple, gallant tale I took in, as the cab rattled us through the quiet streets, I cannot say now; I expect I filled in the gaps, as it is set down here, from the many talks we had together afterwards. I listened in the dreamy silence of exhaustion, hovering in that no-man’s-land which lies between sleep and waking, too weary, too weary, to question, too weary, even, to tell of my ordeal at Clubfoot’s hands.

In the end I think I must have dozed, for when I opened
my eyes I found that the cab had stopped in a cobbled forecourt with the arched façade of a great railway station behind. Day was advancing with giant strides, and under a lemon sky pigeons were fussily picking a breakfast among the strewn oats of the cab-rank. "A cup of coffee to warm us," said Druce, helping me to alight, "and then we'll go home."

I was stiff and cold after our drive, and the coffee and hot rolls we had at the buffet did me good. "You realise," said Druce, "that Clubfoot is bound to dig out that cabby. That's why I told him to drive us here, to the Anhalter Bahnhof. No place as good as a big railway station for losing a trail. Now, if you're ready, we'll go on."

Outside the station we clambered on a tram, to leave it, after a short run, in a long and dingy thoroughfare permanently darkened by the steel carcase of the Elevated Railway straddling it. Behind nestled a cluster of small and slabby streets which, already at that hour, as Druce and I threaded them, were stirring into life.

Before little nondescript shops on the ground floor of the tall and gloomy tenements, housewives, still drugged with sleep, were beginning to struggle with the shutters or to sluice down the pavement. Old women, hooded and mittened against the eager early morning air, delivered bottles of milk from little push-carts; a hunchback girl, limping hideously, went from door to door with the morning newspaper; scavengers banged the dustbins about. Almost before the night was fully spent, this humble corner of the Weltstadt was awaking to another day.

But presently we turned into a narrow street where, in a blaze of electric light and to the jingle of an electric piano in the café at the corner, the night yet endured. It was a slip of a street, a mere hyphen between two broader arteries; but it pulsed with life. Almost every house
harboured some kind of Nacht-Lokal, as the Berliner calls it, either a little bar, with a garish façade set round with festoons of coloured lights and artificial flowers, sentinelled by a shoddy-looking porter in tarnished gold lace, or a furtive-looking café like Frau Hulda's with curtains, glowing dully with the light within, close-drawn across the steam-blurred windows. A line of cabs edged the kerb outside an archway surmounted by a weather-beaten board on which, picked out in red lights, I read:

"VENUS-SÄELE. HEUTE GROSSE BAL."

The strains of a very noisy orchestra, as discordant as a circus band, and the thudding of feet, proclaimed that within the "Halls of Venus" the aforesaid "ball" was in progress.

The spike of a policeman's helmet glittered in the lights across the way. Hastily Druce drew me into the forecourt of the dance-hall. We waited there in the shadow until the bulky, sword-girt figure had drifted out of sight.

The next house proved to be our destination. With his key my companion let us into a sordid passage-way lit by the first rays of morning struggling to enter through a glazed door at the end. Through this door we passed into a small yard, dank and fetid, and through another door on the far side into a second yard equally malodorous, where, in a corner, the foot of a dark staircase was flanked by rows of white china name-plates.

Here Druce struck a match. A lungful of foul air, clammy and close, and overladen, as it were, with an accumulation of ancient reeks, nauseated me. I shrank back. "You don't live here?" I faltered.

"Indeed I do," he retorted cheerfully. "Pretty filthy, I grant you, but it's fresher higher up. I hope you don't mind a climb. Here, I'll lead the way...."

"I... I couldn't sleep in a place like this," I said.

He cast a glance about him, then took my two hands
in his. "I know what you feel. But, believe me, there's no other way. Be brave a little longer, won't you? Every second we linger we risk being seen by some one in the house. And it's essential that no one should know you're in hiding here. . . ." He lit another match.

"Oh, all right," I capitulated listlessly.

In silence we climbed into the stuffy darkness, up and up, landing after landing, until, the staircase ending under a grimy glass lantern, we stood in a low-pitched corridor lined with doors. Druce laid a finger on his lips and went softly to the end of the passage. A key grated, a switch clicked, and a stream of light, falling through an open door, illuminated the mobile, valiant face.

"Sanctuary!" he whispered, and drew me in.

CHAPTER XXV

SANCTUARY

You know how it is when you are expecting one thing and stumble upon another: any merits the substitute may possess are apt to be overlooked in the first keen shock of the disappointment. I had looked to find a flat: two rooms and a bath, say, at the least; but I discovered that my sanctuary was nothing but an attic under the eaves.

I did not then perceive that this humble refuge, though naked as a convent cell, was also as scrupulously neat and clean. I was weary and fractious, and saw with disgust only that the walls, blotched with damp, sloped at an acute angle up to the ceiling that arched itself not a yard above our heads; that of furniture, beyond a deal table and a pair of chairs, there was none, and that, to complete the garret setting, a packing-case with a division did duty for a cupboard to store some odds and ends of crockery; and that an assemblage of chimney-pots, with rusty and