"Oh, my dear," he said, "everything's all right. The car is waiting for us, and we can make our way back to England together. When I came in and found you gone, and that savage in your place, I didn't care what became of me, for I thought I'd lost you. But now that I've found you again, you've given me something to live for. Olivia, dearest, you're quite safe with me. I'm going to take you home to England. Won't you speak to me?"

I opened my eyes. The floor was steady once more. "I've been so frightened," I said, in a voice that sounded in my ears like someone else's. "I thought I'd lost you, too; I never meant us to part like that. But I was angry, and when I'm angry I say and do horrid, stupid things. Can you ever forgive me... Nigel?"

His blue eyes were gazing into mine. I tried to turn my head aside to hide the tears that were very near the surface; but he held me fast. Suddenly his head dropped upon my breast, and he clung desperately to me, even as I, a moment back, had clung to him. "Olivia..." he murmured brokenly. I bent and laid my lips softly upon his raven hair.

"Nothing matters now," I told him.

At that he raised his head and fell back a pace, staring at me in wonder. For a brief instant we faced one another in the rosy flush of sunrise which transfigured that shabby room. And then I was in his arms again.

CHAPTER XXXI

IN WHICH WE PART FROM CLUBFOOT AND EMBARK ON A JOURNEY

The rapture of that moment—a n, how often in my present loneliness my thoughts fly back to it!—was speedily ended. There was a movement on the floor. Quick as
a flash, Nigel whipped round, at the same time thrusting me behind him, the pistol pointed at the figure at his feet.

Clubfoot had opened his eyes. Powerless though he was to harm us now, their expression frightened me. A sort of untamed, wild-beast fury smouldered in their depths, and the tufted, overhanging brows were drawn down in a savage scowl. He seemed to be still partly stunned, however, for he groaned feebly once, and closed his eyes again.

Side by side, Nigel and I stood, gazing down upon our old enemy. A muttered execration broke from Nigel’s lips. "If he had his deserts," he said between his teeth, "I’d give him a bullet through that ugly mug of his. But if Clubfoot could have risked a shot, we can’t afford to. It would bring the whole blinking house about our ears. Dash it all, I can hardly strangle the fellow: I’d better see about tying him up...." He consulted his watch. "We shall only just do it...." He glanced at the figure on the floor, then stooped to whisper in my ear: "The car’s due to leave in half an hour. Fortunately, the rendezvous is quite close by. And that reminds me...."

He gave me a questioning look. "Would you object frightfully to travelling as my brother?"

"Dress as a man, do you mean?"

He nodded. "The...er...party who owns the car refused at first to take anybody except me, and then only because Black Lola vouched for me. With a great deal of trouble I persuaded him to let my young brother come too. As a matter of fact, the disguise will make it easier for us getting across the frontier. You’ll find what you want in that old box of mine under the bed: there ought to be a cap there as well. Do you mind awfully, Olivia darling?"

"I’ll do anything you say, Nigel...."

He patted my shoulder. "You’re a brick. While
you’re over there, I think I could do with the straps off that trunk of mine.

I threw him the straps and retired to dress. The grey flannel suit I found did not fit too badly, for Nigel and I were much of a height. I hunted in vain for a necktie. “Don’t worry!” Nigel called out to me when I told him of this deficiency. “On this trip we belong to the dishonest poor!” So I left the blue tennis shirt I had donned open at the throat.

When at length I emerged from behind the curtain, Grundt, who was to all appearance still unconscious, was pinioned hand and foot. Nigel, kneeling on the ground, was tearing a towel into strips. “Great Caesar,” he exclaimed softly on catching sight of me, “was there ever a more perfect boy? Your name ought to be Viola, not Olivia! Classical allusion, very apt! But, oh, I say,”—acute dismay rang in his voice—“what have you been and done to your hair?”

“It had to be,” I told him. “It would stick out from under my cap and spoil everything.” I whipped off the cap and shook my shorn locks at him. “Does it look very awful?” I asked, for, now that it was done, I was not feeling too good about it. “I only had my nail scissors. I’m afraid it isn’t much of a job.

“The job’s Ar,” he said rather glumly. “But I’m thinking of your beautiful raven hair, my dear!”

“It’ll grow again,” I answered bravely. (Within a month I was a V.A.D., and I was glad to leave it short. Little did I realise that I was anticipating a world fashion that morning in Nigel’s attic.)

“You’re certainly thorough, and I love you for it,” he declared. “We’re travelling with a roughish crowd, I suspect, and I dare say it’s for the best.” He held up a strip of towel. “I’ve got to gag our friend here, in case he feels chatty when he wakes up, and then we’ll be off.”
“Are you sure it’s safe?” I questioned cautiously. “Don’t you think he has people watching the house?”
“Nobody stopped me.” His eyes searched the brutish face on a level with his. “I think he’s playing a lone hand in this. Now that we know where that report came from, one can understand the old man’s wish to avoid publicity. . . .”
“How did he track us to the Mahl-Strasse?”
Nigel hesitated. “Ottolie was shadowed,” he said rather reluctantly.
“Oh, Nigel, they haven’t arrested her?”
He shook his head. “I put her and her friend, Black Lola, on the train for Prague to-night. Lola’s a Czech, you know, though she kids the Berliners that she’s Spanish. Ottolie will be safe in Prague.” He paused. “I want to explain about Ottolie, Olivia. . . .”
I was silent. Somehow, Ottolie didn’t matter now.
“I always meant to tell you some time,” he went on. “She was one of my scouts. I arranged for her to report to me here, because it was safer. That’s why she had a key.” He hesitated. “I don’t make a virtue of it, but the fact is that we were never more than friends.”
“Oh, Nigel,” I exclaimed, “you make me feel so badly. Can you ever forgive me?”
But now he raised his head and waved me backward out of Clubfoot’s line of vision as he lay on the ground. Grundt’s eyes were open again. Defiant and unafraid, they glared up into Nigel’s face.
The huge German ground his teeth. “D’you have to truss me like a fowl to kill me?” he snarled.
Nigel’s features hardened. “What happened to Abbott?” he demanded sternly.
The dark eyes were suddenly wary, like the eyes of a wild beast at bay. “I had no hand in that,” he declared in a surly voice, “Ask the Engländerin”—he craned his
head to see me, but I shrank back out of his sight: "she'll bear me out. And, if you want to know, I broke the clumsy fool that gave the order."

"Abbott's dead, then?"

"Killed on the spot. He was shot through the head."

There was a pregnant pause. Then, "He was my friend," said Nigel.


The rolling bass was firm and insolent. I could not help admiring the courage of the man.

"Much as I'm tempted, Grundt," said Nigel, "I'm not going to kill you."

A little sigh broke from the fleshy lips, and the tigerish face melted into a crafty smile. "So, so?" Clubfoot muttered. "'Heute mir, morgen Dir!'—did I not tell you it was the motto of our guild? But I see that you're itching to place that unpleasant-looking gag in my mouth. Before you silence me, let me say 'Auf wiedersehen'! for I have a curious feeling, Herr Kollege, that we may meet again..."

The words died in his throat for, with a sort of angry growl, Nigel thrust the gag into that ogre mouth. But it was not until Clubfoot's eyes had been bandaged as well that I was permitted to come forward. "I'm taking no risks," said Nigel grimly. He put on his coat and, with a gleeful face, showed the document restored to its place in his pocket. Then he laid a finger on his lips and opened the door. He paused to lock it after we had passed out.

A moment later we were creeping down the staircase.

The last of the tenants seemed to have retired to bed:
at any rate, we met no one on the stairs. And when we peered out cautiously from the house door, it was to see the Mahl-Strasse lying deserted before us in the early morning light. It was stretched out like a funnel of silence between the tall tenements, and the ganglion of drab streets about it, too, were draped in a hush in which our footsteps echoed.

My unfamiliar attire, especially a horrible sense of nakedness about the legs, made me feel desperately self-conscious. But my bashfulness was quite uncalled for. It was Sunday morning, and there were very few people about. The rare passers-by we encountered paid no attention to the rather skinny youngster with the shabby young man at his side.

"You and I will have to talk German together, of course," Nigel reminded me, as we threaded the quiet streets. "And, oh yes, your name's Heinrich, Heinrich Held, and I'm Max. The Lynx and his friends are not communicative, and I don't suppose they'll bother you much. If I were you, I'd try and get some sleep in the car. You'll probably be glad of it by the time you see a bed again.""

I asked him about our plans.

"We're bound for Cleves," he said, "and the lads reckon on travelling straight through."

"How far is it from Berlin?"

"The best part of four hundred miles."

"How long will it take us?"

"Twenty hours at least, I should say, not allowing for stops. We ought to strike Cleves in the early hours of Monday."

"And what happens there?"

"We leave our friends and make for Holland on foot. It's only a matter of five miles or so to the frontier, and with luck we ought to do it before it's light. Otherwise,
WE PART FROM CLUBFOOT

we'll have to lie up for the day. That won't be difficult, for the frontier's pretty well wooded in those parts. Indeed, that was why I didn't want to let this chance slip. I've had Ottine scouting everywhere for a car having for the Cleves region. . . ."

"You know that part of the world, then?"

He smiled confidently. "Pretty well." He chuckled.
"You and I won't be the first British agents to scuttle out of Germany through the Reichswald, my dear?"

"The Reichswald?" I queried.

"It's the biggest forest on the Rhine," he explained, "and it lies a mile or two south-west of Cleves. The frontier line passes through its far side. They'll be on the look-out for us, of course, but the forest is pretty dense and I know the paths. . . ." He paused. "With old Clubfoot out of the way I'm pretty hopeful. Unless war breaks out before we get across. . . ."

"Is there any more news?"

His face grew sombre. "The Kaiser's due back from Norway to-day. It won't be long now before the guns go off, I'm thinking. But we've got a sporting chance. Some time on Monday, with luck, we'll be on the train for London. If only we're not too late. . . . But here we are! Throw back those shoulders of yours, young fellow, and take long strides. And don't forget to call me Max!"

We were skirtling a fence which surrounded the ramshackle sheds of what seemed to be the premises of a dealer in old iron. The fence was broken by a pair of wooden gates at which we stopped. Nigel gave a peculiar whistle on three notes, and a small door in the gates swung back. A man in a peaked cap looked out.

"Na, endlich," he muttered gruffly. "The Lynx had given you up." He beckoned us in.

We stepped through into a yard where an enormous touring car, with the hood up, was waiting. An under-
sized individual was stooping over the open bonnet. At the sound of steps he turned and disclosed his face. Narrow, shifty eyes, a long and pointed nose, and a short upper lip that unbare his teeth, gave him a furtive, rapacious air. This, I surmised, was Peter the Lynx, and a proper villain he looked.

"You’re late, verdammt," he growled, while he eyed me suspiciously. "Got the cash?"

Nigel handed over a wad of notes. 'The Lynx flicked them over with a dirty thumb, grunted, and stowed them away in his pocket. "In at the back, you two!" he ordered, and slammed down the bonnet. "Crank her up, Moritz!" He moved to the wheel.

The floor of the car was stacked with petrol tins. There was a passenger already on the back seat, an individual with a livid complexion, high Tartar cheek-bones, and stony, merciless eyes. "You haven’t met the Doctor," said the Lynx to Nigel. "Doctor, this is Max Held, a friend of Lola’s, and his brother."

The man who, in his rusty black clothes, wore a vaguely professional air, bowed ceremoniously and made room for us. His basilisk stare rested on my face. "You’re young," he remarked to me in a fluty voice, "and the young are apt to be talkative. Don’t let your tongue wag, my friend..." He patted my thigh encouragingly. "Just a word of kindly advice, nicht wahr?" His upper lip drew up in a slow smile which made him look like a grinning fox mask.

"Got your little bag, Doctor?" demanded the Lynx jovially, from the driving-seat; and I perceived that my neighbour was nursing a small black bag on his knee.

"Gewiss, gewiss," was the softly purring rejoinder.

"All right, Moritz!" said the Lynx. The man in the peaked cap started the engine and swung back the gates, the car passed through, and Moritz, having closed the
THE END OF THE JOURNEY

gates behind us, sprang into the seat beside our leader. We shot away into the streets of Berlin.

It was only when I sank back into the comfortably cushioned seat that I realised how utterly exhausted I was, body and mind. I felt too weary even to concern myself with the forbidding looks of these travelling companions of ours, or the nature of their business. If they were good enough for Nigel, I told myself drowsily, they were good enough for me. What a blessed relief to yield up my cares to him! Merely the touch of his arm against mine lent me confidence: his presence was like a buckler between me and a world of foes. I put my fears away and closed my eyes. Before we were clear of the Berlin trams, I was fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

I have but mixed recollections of that trip, excepting the shocking and terrible episode that marked its close. I was as though drugged with sleep. All through the morning I slept in snatches, as one sleeps in a car on a long journey, my impressions a jumble of vignettes: an endless ribbon of road glaring white in the sunshine of a flawless summer day; level crossings with black and white striped barriers which rose and fell to the clang of a gong; villages where the sound of bells floated on the air of our passage, and peasants, stiffly clad, and grasping large umbrellas, wended their way to church. And all the time the furious drumming of the engine throbbed like a pulse in my brain.

I remember feeling the eager nip of morning before the sun got up, and basking in its warming rays when we slowed down in a clean and bustling city which some one said was Magdeburg. Once Nigel sought to rouse me, and