

DOCTOR JACK.

By St. George Rathborne.

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CHAPTER VII.

Jack has heard about this "den" before, and is a little curious to see what he believes the essence of Don Carlos to have him smoke arises from his desire to show his snar bachelor...

There are lights here and there upon the Calle del Prado, and these help the stranger in a degree. Time was, and not very long ago, when the honest citizen of this burgh desiring to go out at night had to take a guard...

Don Carlos meets several slouching fellows, who look at him inquisitively, and with such evident menace in their manner that, considering the circumstances surrounding him, the American may well be pardoned for holding himself in readiness to do battle.

Music greets his ear. Beyond a wall of the evening in the midst of her friends, perhaps with a starry and gallant lover seated at her side. Over the way the music is more weird.

Jack has already found it warm work, and removing the light overcoat, carried it upon his left arm. Later on he had cause to rejoice that it was not hanging from the other, or worse still, on his back.

Progress is being made, though of a somewhat costly nature, but this man has not abandoned a project that he was not ready to devote all his energies to in order to execute, and he will reach his goal in due season.

He has never mind getting any light overcoat. There is something about Jack's look that you have to remember when I am far away, my friends are too few to allow them to keep me when I am away.

Don Carlos, even now, with pleasure to his eyes he will be back with him in a minute, and can vouch for it.

When Don Carlos returns with the rest of his arm hardly a minute has elapsed. He discovers Doctor Jack leaning back on a divan, holding the cigar between his fingers, and looking at the smoke curling upward with an expression of ecstatic bliss.

Don Carlos grins, and mutters "Carlos the drug is already having an effect," but in this he deceives himself, for it is only the smoker's content that his possession. Then he admits the stupor that has made him so decided, beauty—and in loud in his thanks.

They sit here for some little time in silence. Jack smoking furiously in order to use his cigar up as speedily as possible, and the Spaniard watching the pull of the corner of his eye while he talks.

To his surprise shows no signs of giving way to the seductive god. Something is undoubtedly wrong; either the drug has lost its power or else Don Carlos has a very different opinion of its other possibility.

He grinds his teeth in secret rage, and yet feels compelled to act pleasant, but the task is such a hard one that Doctor Jack perceives he is troubled.

At length the American athlete tosses the butt of his cigar into the receptacle near by, and rises to his feet, donning his light overcoat as he does so.

There are lights here and there upon the Calle del Prado, and these help the stranger in a degree. Time was, and not very long ago, when the honest citizen of this burgh desiring to go out at night had to take a guard with him, and unless the moon shone, have a look-boy run ahead to light up the way. The Madrid of today has made great strides, however, though far in the rear of such a brilliant city as Paris.

his life. Just as he turns, something strikes him a severe blow—it is a knife that has been meant for his heart, through his back. Now it cuts into his coat—a terrible gash that ruins the garment as the blade passes through many folds, and just draws blood from his arm.

Thus the little affair in the Calle San Pablo is commenced. Doctor Jack is a fair and square man—he does not like to have the favours all on one side. It for that is a good motto under the circumstances.

Accordantly that terrible right arm of his, so admired by the observing Don Carlos, shoots forward with unerring impetuosity. There is heard upon the night air a hollow thud, like the stroke of a trip hammer, and the stricken wretch measures his length upon the cobble stones five feet away.

By this time the other two have reached the spot. They either do not realize what has happened, or to their companion, on account of the darkness, or else have determined to observe his fall, for they come at the American at bay with the impetus of twin cyclones.

It is all over in almost a wink. The two ruffians have struck a smug, rather serene the wayfarer. The third man, who their intended victim was the hero of the bull-ring, about whom all Madrid is talking, really could never have hired them to attempt an act.

Every one of them has had a little experience with the muscle-knotted arm of the athlete—the first still lies where he fell, and the other two, groaning as they attempt to crawl or stagger away.

As for Doctor Jack, he has no complaint to make, but resumes his journey toward the plaza, which will soon boom up before him bright with light and gay with people, a tremendous contrast to the avenue which he has used in order to reach it.

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