

FEDORA

BY VICTORIEN SARDOU

(Continued)
SYNOPSIS

It will be remembered that Count Vladimir Boroff was killed, in a duel, in the park, and that his fiancée, Princess Fedora Romanoff, working in secret with the murdered man's father, General Boroff, believing the murderer to have gone to Paris, journeys there. There she meets the Countess Olga, and they become friends. She also meets with one Loris Ipanoff, with whom the Countess Olga is in love. Ipanoff falls in love with the Princess Fedora, and one day while he was paying her a visit, he confessed that he killed Count Vladimir, whereupon the Princess Fedora, with a horrible fear, ran from the room to her chamber, where she immediately sent a message to General Boroff, informing him that Loris Ipanoff was the murderer of his son. Nicholas Lasinsky, who was also desperately in love with Fedora, and knowing that Ipanoff, who was admired by the Countess Olga, was receiving attention from Fedora, was aroused to such a pitch of jealousy, believing that by causing friction between the Countess Olga and Fedora, he would be able to draw Ipanoff away from Fedora, he tries to arouse a feeling of jealousy in the heart of the Countess. He is not taken very seriously by the Countess, however, who seems to have defied his purpose.

Olga gave him a quick side glance, but did not ask him to whom he referred. One of the men did.

"Who is the lucky man?"

"It would not be fair to tell, but I think it will be a surprise to every one when it is known."

The man laughed, but did not press him. He had not batted his look for them, and did not expect them to bite it; but he watched the countess, and saw her glance again at him. She asked him no questions, and presently gathered up the reins as if to drive on.

The gentlemen took the hint, and lifted their hats, Lasinsky with them. She drove on a few steps, muttering under her breath:

"The little scamp! he wants me to question him. Well, for once I will please him; for I am interested."

She drew up suddenly, and turned her head, calling:

"Lasinsky!"

He was by her side in two leaps.

"Would you not like to take a little ride this fine afternoon?"

"Charming!"

Which was quite true, for he had begun to fancy that he had made no impression on her, and her invitation was like an elixir to him. It flattered hisadroitness, and it proved that he had made no mistake in his estimate of Olga's interest in the affairs of Ipanoff and Fedora.

He had had some experience with women, and fancied he knew them pretty well. It was almost a maxim with him that when one woman praised another there was sure to be war between them. Every man to his experience.

He stepped into the phaeton. The gentlemen passed them as the carriage stood waiting, and said:

"Lucky dog!"

"I am not so sure of that," retorted Olga; "the poor fellow's reputation will be endangered by being seen with me."

"Never mind," said Lasinsky, readily, "what is lost by me will be gained by you."

"You are a witty fellow," said Olga, laughing with the others. "If you only were not so bitter with it."

"I am not bitter, but one must be constantly on guard with you, and the thrust must follow the blow or it will be lost. I do not mind a passage at arms, but I should not like to be a mere target for any one's wit. If I did not meet your thrusts, how long do you suppose it would be before all the numskulls of your salon would be trying to make a butt of me?"

"Oh, you take it too seriously. You are so different from Ipanoff in that respect. He cares for nothing. I have seen your sharpest witticisms fall blunted before that superb calm of his."

"Aha!" thought Lasinsky, exultantly, "you are so eager that you begin it."

Aloud he said with an appearance of heat:

"Superb calm! Superb nonsense! Can you not see that that is all assumed to hide the passion that rages underneath?"

"Come, Lasinsky, you let your dislike of the man mislead you."

"And is it dislike that misleads you?" he demanded, quickly.

Her face flushed, but she did not answer for a moment. When she did speak it was to change the topic.

"What is your grievance against the Princess Fedora?"

"I have none. I admire her too much."

"But when one insinuates anything, no matter what, it is an indication of ill-will."

"Not in my case. Besides you are wrong. I insinuated nothing. I made a statement of fact."

"Bah! You said some one had made an impression on the princess, leading us to suppose that it was some one we all knew. And yet that is impossible; perhaps I should have said that she had made an impression."

"Oh, as to that, I will agree with you at once. No man could see her and not be impressed."

"Nevertheless, I had grounds for my original statement. What would you say if I were to tell you that a man she had met at your salon for the first time had spent yesterday afternoon with her?"

"I should say he was a happy man. I would have liked to do that myself."

"And you asked her if you might not?"

"How do you know that?"

"I heard you, and she said she was engaged. One of the gentlemen in your salon that night went to her palace, and spent the afternoon with her."

"Some one has been playing upon your credulity. Confess that you are madly jealous."

"I am madly jealous, if you will. Yes, I am jealous; but I know this is as I say, for I saw him go into the palace, and I saw him come out again."

"Played the spy," she said, bluntly.

He flushed, and cast an evil look at her.

"Call it that if you choose. I saw what I saw. But this afternoon I was not playing the spy, and I saw him come out of the palace again. Is there nothing in that? A man meets her for the first time at your salon night before last; the next afternoon he spends at her house, and the next."

"There may have been a special reason," said Olga.

"I think there was," answered he, dryly.

"Love is not the only motive for meeting."

"You said yourself that no man could look unmoved on the Princess Fedora. I know this man did not, in spite of an assumption of cynicism and superiority."

"Whoever this man is, Lasinsky, you hate him."

"He is in my way. I hate any obstacle."

"Well, I am sorry if you really care for the princess," said the countess, as if to dismiss the subject.

"Yes, I do care for her."

"Or her money."

"I will not deny that. But you are treating me unfairly."

"I do not understand."

"Yes, you do. Why did you ask me to drive with you?"

"It is such a fine afternoon, and you are so witty and amusing."

"And I knew something you wanted to know. Now I have as good as told you, and you think that is all. Why not play fair?"

"To you everything is a game."

"He winced at the thrust."

"Why not. How is it with you? Have you not played your game and won high stakes? Why should not I do the same? Come, countess, if you will not be frank, I will."

"As you please, but remember I do not urge you or invite you to."

"Is not Ipanoff of more than passing interest to you?"

The countess flushed and flashed angry glance at him.

"Admitted," she answered, curtly. "Ipanoff is the man I have spoken of."

The countess shut her teeth firmly together, and looked at her ponies for several seconds without speaking. Then she drew a hard breath, and turned a white face to Lasinsky.

"Are you telling me the truth?"

A gleam of gratified malice lighted his eye.

"Absolutely the truth. You must have been blind not to have noticed them at the piano. The appointment must have been made then. At any rate he was with her yesterday and today."

"Well?"

"You will not give me a word of

confidence? Never mind! I will speak plainly to you, if you will permit."

"I permit."

"I will say what I have to say carefully. I want the Princess Fedora—herself as well as her money. You see, I am frank, brutally frank you would say. If there were some woman who wanted Loris Ipanoff, his name, money, or self—the mistress of the grand duke grew white at the implication conveyed in the idea that she wished the cloak of some man's name—and who would aid me to separate the two, I would be glad."

The Countess Olga flicked her penes with the whip for some time before answering. Then she spoke with difficulty.

"What would you do?"

"Anything," he said, savagely. "Have you any plan at all?"

"Nothing definite."

"Shall we meet at the Princess Fedora's on Thursday?"

"I shall not fail to be there."

"What will you do in the meantime?"

"Whatever I can."

"No one knows what may happen," said Olga, with a singular expression. "Perhaps it would be better if we were not seen together too long."

"You are right. If you will draw up I will get out, and walk back."

She did so at once, and when he had alighted, she laid the whip over the backs of the already fretted ponies, and was whirled out of sight.

Lasinsky watched her, and muttered:

"She is in a mood to do the princess a mortal mischief now. Slippery little serpent!"

He sauntered back along the Bois. On the Bois de Boulogne there are many cafes, as there are elsewhere in Paris, but Lasinsky thinking how wicked Olga had looked as she drove off, passed one and another of the cafes, and went into one at last simply because he happened to think that a glass of absinthe would be soothing.

That was the cafe Gretch sat in very stupid by this time, but looking very dignified, indeed, and very erect. Lasinsky saw him, and laughed as he recalled the Russian oath out of the French-looking individual.

He looked Gretch over as a man will look over another man who has amused him, and his eye fell on a piece of paper lying on the floor at Gretch's feet. Gretch presently arose with the phenomenal erectness of a Russian who is drunk on French brandy, and went out of the cafe.

Lasinsky took the table he had vacated, and let his foot cover the slip of paper. A little later he dropped his handkerchief, and when he had picked it up the paper was no longer under his foot. It was in his pocket with his handkerchief.

The thing had been skillfully done, but it was in such things that Lasinsky excelled. It was occasionally whispered even that he was too expert at sleight-of-hand.

However, the paper was in his pocket, and presently was withdrawn leisurely, as if it had reposed there for a week. He smoothed it out carefully, and then read what was written on it. It was very unlikely that anybody was watching him, but he was naturally cautious.

If anybody had been watching, however, his precautions would have been vain, for no sooner had he read the line written by Fedora than his countenance expressed strange emotions.

"General Boroff," he muttered. "Minister of Police! Then she is an agent, and Ipanoff is her game. I might have spared myself the humiliation of that conversation with Olga."

He finished his absinthe thoughtfully, and went straightway to a telegraph agency.

If Marka had not laughed at Gretch, if Gretch had not sworn that Russian oath, or if—well, say it was chance that finally sent the telegram to General Boroff.

CHAPTER XV

Loris Ipanoff stood alone in Fedora's boudoir. The woman with whom he was so strangely, so madly, in love had but just accepted his love, and then had fled from him.

"Brute, idiot, that I am!" he groaned. "I let her go with the thought that I had murdered the man. She is soaked, appalled, I must see her again. I will not go without. She will hear me."

He paced the floor thinking she might return of her own volition after a while, but as she did not come, and as he could not bear the thought any longer that she was keeping from him in a sort of horror he rang the bell. Marka, having just dismissed Gretch, answered it.

"I must see the princess for one moment."

Marka stared at his distressed face, and tilted him. She ran to her mistress.

"The Count Ipanoff says he must see you, madam."

The princess was sitting in a chair, with her cheek resting on her hand. She looked up with a haggard face.

"Tell him to go. I will not see him—not today. Tell him I am sick—anything. But he must go, go!"

Marka had never seen her mistress like that. She said nothing more, but went quickly to Loris.

"She is too ill to see you. You must go without."

"My God! and it is I who made her ill. My girl, if you could persuade her to listen to one word from me!"

Marka shook her head sympathetically, for such distress as his was rare.

"It would be better not. Come tomorrow. I know my mistress."

"In the morning?"

Marka stared at him.

"The princess never receives in the morning."

"True," he tried to smile as if he had forgotten himself. "Then in the afternoon?"

"Yes, come then."

Marka said this thinking that a mistress had received him on two consecutive afternoons it was quite likely she would do so on the third.

Loris left the palace full of his grief. He forgot her strange manner. He remembered her only as she had been on the previous day, and it was so natural that one such as she then was should be shocked at his blunt, his brutal announcement that he had killed Vladimir Boroff.

She might even have known the man. Yes, he could distinctly recall an intonation which seemed to indicate that she was familiar with the circumstances of his death. The journals of the day had given it out that Vladimir had been found murdered.

That was it. He had said, "I killed Vladimir Boroff," and she had thought of the announcement that Vladimir had been murdered. As if he had not had a fair chance for his life.

Oh, God, could he wait until the morning? A whole day! And what should he do during all those long hours? Fedora believed—how could she help it after his statement?—that he was a murderer.

Great Heaven! would her love die of horror at the thought of it? Could she forget that she had loved him? A murderer! and she innocent, so a murderer! If she had only given him a chance to explain. Ah, what else could he expect? It was as if he had said, "I am a murderer."

And there she was sick with the horror of it and all he could do was wait, wait, wait. And when he had waited what would be in store for her? He knew full well that she could not love him as he loved her. That would be impossible. Ah, if she had said to him, "I have left Russia because I have killed," how he would have said, "It does not matter, I love you."

Yes, that was the way he loved her. Nothing could kill such a love as his, but with her it must be different. She was young and innocent. Her experience had been bad, but that was all. Perhaps she could not bear the thought of him as a murderer. It must so shock her.

He knew he showed his disturbance in his face, his mien, and so he went straight to his apartments and shut himself in, pacing the rooms in a sort of frenzy, and experiencing such an agony of mind as only a really strong man can experience.

To-morrow! He could not wait until to-morrow. He would go again that night, and entreat her to listen to him. He would write. No, he could not write it as he could say it. She would see him, surely she would see him.

Then he paced the floor again, and kept his eyes on the dragging hands of his clock. Food he did not think of. He could not have eaten it. He only thought of the time when he might go to her. And that time came at last, and coming, found him as haggard as if he had had a week's illness.

If he looked in the mirror he did not notice how he looked. A man does not at such a time. He put on his hat and coat mechanically, and went out.

As he walked along—he felt that he could not bear the inaction of a carriage ride—he tried to feel hopeful, but constantly the thought would recur that she might have been shocked out of her love—her love not being as mad, as passionate as his.

When he reached the palace he did not ask for the mistress, but for the maid. He felt instinctively that she was compassionate. Marka came to him.

"Well, will she not see me now?"

Marka shook her head.

"She has not moved from her chair since you left. What did you do? What did you say?"

Ipanoff took her hand. Marka did not snatch it away, for she knew he was unconscious of his act.

"My girl, do you love your mistress?"

"No one loves her better," answered Marka.

"Yes," said Ipanoff. "I love her better. I love her so madly that I will love her not see me. I think I shall lose my senses. It would be wrong for me to tell you this, but I was sure you did love her. I said an insane thing this afternoon, and it was that has made her ill. If she does not see me she may even cease to love me. She said she loved me. My God! will you not plead for me?"

Marka trembled before the passion of the man, that was indicated more in what he repressed than in what he said. This was love, and Marka was a woman.

"I will go to her, sir, and I will do all I can," she said.

Fedora was, indeed, sitting as she had when Loris left the palace. She did not look up when Marka entered. Marka had been to her many times before to urge her to eat, to see if she wished for anything, and she had not moved.

"Madam," said Marka, persuasively, "the Count Ipanoff has come to beg that you will allow him a word."

"Tell him that I cannot see him."

"Pardon, madam, but he is beside himself with grief."

"Tell him that I cannot see him," said Fedora, a second time, only now she looked up, and Marka shuddered, and did not dare to urge her further. Such a look of mingled agony and savage determination she had never seen on any face.

She returned to Loris, feeling in her heart that the shadow of a tragedy was brooding over her house.

"She will not see you. She says she cannot."

"Is she ill?"

"I do not know," half sobbed Marka. "She sits in her chair, and suffers. You can see it in her face."

"Let me go to her," articulated Loris, pushing past Marka. "She must listen to me. She, too, is suffering. Then she loves me, and she will listen."

Marka caught him by the arm, and clung to him.

"Do not go to her now. You do not know her. I do. She will not listen to you, and she will say some cruel thing. Give her time. It is the only thing."

"Do you think so?" he said, and his arms dropped helplessly by his sides.

"I know it. Come again to-morrow. In the morning. She need not know. I will see you, and tell you how she is."

"Good girl! What is your name?"

"Marka," she sobbed, utterly unnerved by the spectacle of so much suffering so nobly borne.

"There is a bond between us, Marka. We love the same woman."

"Oh, sir, I am sure she cannot remain as she is. We must hope for a softer mood."

"It is my own fault, Marka. Do not blame her. But I can explain it away if she will let me—if she will let me. Until to-morrow morning?"

"Early, Marka."

"Not too early, sir."

He went away to live how he could through the intervening time. How it did pass he could not have told, but it did go by, and morning came. There was but one morning for him, and that was the time when he could go again to get word of Fedora.

He went, and Marka, who had been watching for him, met him outside of the palace.

"She went to bed, and slept last night. This morning she is sitting in her boudoir with a book, but she is not reading, only pretending to. She never turns the leaves."

"My God! Do you think she will see me this afternoon?"

"You can try."

He went away. In the afternoon he returned, and was met at the door by Marka, who told him she had had orders not even to admit him. He reeled and caught at the door-post.

"What did she say?" he demanded, hoarsely.

"If the Count Ipanoff comes again, he is not to be admitted."

He put his hand to his head, and tried to collect his senses.

"Well, I will go. It cannot always be so. I do not understand it now. I will wait. She will receive to-morrow night?"

"No. Those who came are to be sent away with the words that the princess is ill, and she is ill."

"You will not desert me, Marka?"

"Every day I will meet you near the corner there, and I will tell you about her. At midday will be the best time."

After that he no longer attempted to make his way to Fedora, but haunted the corner, where the faithful girl went regularly to give him a report of her mistress.

CHAPTER XVI

The Countess Olga drove her ponies as the man, sitting upright on his seat behind, had never seen her drive them before. It seemed to be a certain sort of relief to her, for after a time her face, which had shown signs of disturbance, resumed its repose.

Then she turned about, and drove to the palace of the Princess Fedora. In response to the card sent in, Marka came out saying the princess begged to be excused, inasmuch as she was feeling too ill to receive the countess.

"Is she very ill?" demanded the countess.

"We hope it is only a bad headache," said Marka.

"Ah," said the countess, and drove off.

"She is ashamed to see me," said the countess to herself as she drove home; "but she may be ill. I will discover that to-morrow."

So the next afternoon she sent around to inquire if the princess was any better, and the answer came back that she was not, and that she begged to say that she would not receive on Thursday, and that she would send word to the countess when she was well enough to see her.

(To be Continued)

GIVES SOUND ADVICE ON PRICE QUESTION

Manufacturers' Organ Gives Warning—No Price Increases Except For Good Reason

"Industrial Canada," the official organ of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, recently contained a strong editorial on the increase of manufacturers' prices, which has come in certain industries as a result of the war revenue customs duties.

The editorial is in part as follows: If the manufacturers of Canada make a general advance in the prices of their goods with the deliberate intention to absorb the whole of the recent 7½ per cent. tariff increase, they will formulate a policy which will react disastrously upon themselves.

Such a course is certain to arouse hostility among those consumers who were of the opinion that the tariff was too high before the increase was made; and it will chill the warmth with which the remaining consumers have supported the policy of protection.

Raising prices up to the new limit will operate directly against the "Made-in-Canada" campaign. The 7½ per cent. tariff increase gives the Canadian manufacturer an advantage over foreign competition. If he raises the price of his article 7½ per cent. he immediately loses that advantage. Consequently, the "Made-in-Canada" article which might be sold, is in the same danger of being replaced by the foreign article as it was in before the tariff increase was made.

Creates Confidence

Now is the time, under the shelter of a slightly increased protection, to encourage the habit of using Canadian goods in preference to foreign goods.

Raising prices also tends to diminish output. The buying power of Canadians at present is restricted and every addition to the selling prices of goods makes it more difficult for consumers to buy them. On the contrary, lower prices will allow a greater volume of sales, will diminish the consumer's hardship, will give more employment to workers and will lighten the grip of Canadian manufacturers upon their home market.

If the manufacturers will concentrate upon the problem of keeping the prices as nearly as possible at the old level they will create a permanent asset in the gratitude of hard-pressed consumers.

Consumers, however, must not hastily conclude that there will be no increase in the prices of manufactured goods. While any general advance, aiming at the unjustifiable absorption of the 7½ per cent. tariff increase cannot be too strongly opposed, it is absurd to argue that no prices should be advanced. Each article must be separated from any enveloping general policy and dealt with on its own merits. What are the items entering into its cost of production? Have they been increased? If they have, it is only fair that the price of the article should be increased. If they are not then the price of the article should stand.

Influence of War

There is, in some quarters, a most unfair attempt being made to lay on the recent tariff measures the entire blame for increased prices in spite of the fact that in countries where no tariff increases have been made, prices are rising. According to the "New York Analyst," the average wholesale price of twenty-five food commodities, representing a theoretical family's food budget, has risen 139 in 1913, 146 in 1914, now fluctuates around 154.

Scarcity, interruption to communications, shrinkage in production, and other allies of war are sending prices up all over the world. War always increases the cost of living. It would be strange if Canada should escape the general law. We cannot have it both ways. We cannot profit by war's high prices for what we have to sell and avoid war's high prices for what we have to buy.

A man out of a job, or only partially employed, is a poor customer. You much prefer, don't you, to deal with customers whom you know are earning good wages in thriving local industries? Their credit is good—they pay their bills.

IF YOU ARE A TRADESMAN

Demand of your jobber that he give you "Made-in-Canada" products. Advertise and push merchandise made in Canada. Use "Made-in-Canada" window cards.

London, May 14—(2.55 a. m.)—"The Council of Ministers," says Reuters' Rome correspondent, "considering that it did not possess the unanimous consent of the constitutional parties regarding the international policy which the gravity of the situation demands, has decided to hand its resignation to the King. An official note to this effect was issued tonight. The King has reserved his decision as to whether the resignation will be accepted."

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