

The Man From Home

A Novelization of the Play of the Same Name

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By BOOTH TARKINGTON and HARRY LEON WILSON

"Look out!" he said. "The governor's stuff is coming back." And as the carabinieri returned he said casually to Von Grollenhagen:

"You'll have to get a new front tire. That one is pretty near gone. Better have Jim here put on the spare one when he gets through."

The German looked at him.

"Do you know what you are asking me to do?"

"To have a new front tire put on," answered the lawyer. The police were looking on with interest, and finally Mariano approached.

"The carabinieri, with all excuse, see that you will order the chauffeur to stop forth from the machine."

Pike made an exclamation.

"No, sir! I worked on that machine myself for three hours. He's got his hands full of auto and bolts and screws half pasted. We want to get the job finished. Tell them to get up the street with their lights of. It's a parade and come around some day when we're not here."

Mariano said a hurried consultation with the carabinieri and turned back.

"Because the chauffeur, have been engaged about the carabinieri, has ten thousand pardons, but tonight, how long he have been known to his employer."

"How long, why, he was raised on Joe's father's farm."

"If that is so," began Mariano.

"So? Of course it's so. Tell 'em, Joe."

The German looked at Mariano gravely.

"You have heard my friend say it."

"I have your permission, Herr von Grollenhagen, to reveal your thought to the carabinieri?"

"It is necessary?"

"Otherwise they will not depart."

"Very well, tell them. But I rely upon them to preserve my incognito from all others."

Mariano smiled.

"Monsieur, they depart," and bowed to the uniformed men. An instant later these swung through the gate and went their way. Pike looked after them in astonishment.

"He must have mesmerized the refugees, eh, doc?" and signed to the refugee to come out from the car. His eyes were as pathetic as a dog's as he emerged and held out his hands.

"To you both, I give thanks." But Von Grollenhagen cut in:

"My American friend has placed himself—and myself—in danger of the penal code of Italy for protecting you. Perhaps you will be good enough to let us know for what we have incurred ourselves."

CHAPTER XII

THE THIRTIETH

WITH a hasty glance about the garden to make sure he was not observed, the refugee approached Von Grollenhagen and Daniel and spread out his hands. As he stepped forward there was a movement of the window casings in the casement above the door way to the hotel, and he turned; but whatever had caused it, the movement had ceased and there was nothing apparent.

"The Italian journals call me a 'brigand,'" said the Russian, "and these they are inspired by the Russian legation at Rome. I am known as Ivanoff Ivanovitch, and I have spent nine years in Siberia, nine years of hell. It is ten years ago since I was condemned in St. Petersburg, and you, who know nothing of the horrors of Russian prisons, cannot understand what I have suffered, my friends. I was a professor of languages, a translator in the bureau of the minister of finance, and I was trusted."

For a moment he paused and pressed his scarred hands to his lined forehead, then sighed and went on:

"I was also a member of the Blue Party, a Constitutionalist, and as such was able to do a little for the cause, the cause, the same, my friend—he turned to Pike—"for which your forbears suffered and fought—the cause of liberty. I could do but little, though I tried. At last I transferred the funds of the government to the Society of the Blue Party. It was a small thing. It was for the cause—not for my sake, but for the sake of the cause."

"Not one ruble for myself," he repeated. "It was for Russia's sake, not mine."

He paused and went on wearily:

"But I committed the great Russian crime. I was caught, and through treachery there was an Englishman who lived in Petersburg. He had contacts with the government. I thought he was my friend, my best friend. I had married in the student days in Padua. He was the only one who cried bitterly. I knew the Englishman admired my wife, but I trusted her, and I trusted him, and he made my house

his home. So many have done that thing. I had 50,000 rubles in my desk—the funds I had transferred—to be delivered to my society. One day the police came to search, and they found only me—not my wife, not my English friend, not the 50,000 rubles. I went to Siberia. Now I search for those two."

He leaned against the automobile and pressed his hands over his face while Pike and Von Grollenhagen glanced at each other sorrowfully. Finally the latter asked:

"It was they who sent the police?"

And Ivanovitch replied vigorously:

"After they had taken the money and were beyond the frontier themselves. That is all I have against them."

For a moment the hunted look left his eyes, and into them came the ray of gleam of the hunting, starting wolf. His fingers clasped and unclasped themselves spasmodically, and there was a set look about his jaws that spoke of the guilty pair should they ever meet this man with the man's eyes.

The lawyer shuddered slightly as he gazed at him, and he laughed a short, hard laugh.

"Books to me as if that would be about enough to have against them," he said.

Von Grollenhagen stood combing his wiry beard with strong fingers and evidently studying the case. At last he spoke:

"Then by your own confession you are an embezzler and a revolutionist," he said, and at Ivanovitch's start of

subject misery and contrition Pike stepped forward and laid his hand on the German's arm.

"The man's down," he said gently.

"You wouldn't go back on him now?" He waited an instant and then chuckled grimly in a thin, humorous way.

"Besides, you've made yourself one of his confederates, doc," he finished.

"He spoke Von Grollenhagen glanced at him quickly, and his eyes took on a tinge of surprise.

"Upon my soul, but I have, my friend!" Then he laughed outright.

"Ah, from the first sight of you in the hotel at Napoli I saw that you were a great man."

Daniel looked at him and grinned in his face.

"What are you doing, doc—running for congress?" he asked, and the German

looked at him in the humor of the situation and then turned gravely to the Russian.

"I fear the carabinieri did not depart without suspicion."

"Suspicion!" echoed Ivanovitch bitterly.

"They will watch every exit from the hotel and grounds. What can I do until dark?" Pike interrupted him quickly and motioned to the hotel.

"Why, doc, he's got the whole lower floor of this wing. You're as clean as a sheet."

"I was about to suggest it," interrupted Von Grollenhagen in his turn, with some grimaces of manner. "I have a room that can well be spared for Professor Ivanovitch."

"How can I ever thank you? God bless you both," said the Russian, going toward them with outstretched hands.

"Hush! Don't waste time talking about it," said Pike. "I shouldn't be surprised if you were hungry."

He took the refugee by the arm and steered him in the direction of the hotel, and as the three entered the wide door the curtains above the entrance

dropped and a light came streaming down.

"I should not be surprised if you were hungry," he said.

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demanding, etc.

"Hawcastle!"

Horace looked at her with surprise.

"On the other side of the garden, Lady Crech," he answered, "down there on the terrace, and watched with some amusement, the speedy efforts of the grim old lady as she turned off. The amusement, however, rapidly gave place to a more interested pastime, for, summoning all his

courage, he set himself vigorously to tint at a possible union between himself and the noble countess.

It was evident from the first word that the lady was prepared for him and that, while she intended to offer him every bit of encouragement in her power, she would not be satisfied with anything short of a definite proposal, and more likely before witnesses if possible.

He made his initial move with some gaiety. She returned his banter with a mock seriousness and in answer to his challenge on her somber mood replied:

"But I cannot believe you are always serious, my friend."

"Try me," he demanded eagerly.

"Set me some task to prove how serious I am," she smiled at him.

"Gladly," she said. "Complete this odious settlement. Overcome the resistance of this bad man who so troubles your sweet state."

Horace took her hand and murmured:

"You promise me that when it is settled I may speak to you?"

"Yes, you may speak to me—when you please." And at the words he kissed her hand rapturously.

In the meantime the suddenly returned Lady Crech, and found her brother-in-law and had imparted to him words of the utmost importance. She had temporarily forgotten her dearest, or else the agitation that possessed her had removed it, for she was bordering upon "a state of mind."

She walked him back to the hotel where she found him and talked continuously all the way, and as she talked his excitement grew to match her own. As they approached the garden Lady Crech said to him:

"I couldn't bear distinctly, for they mumbled their words, but upon my soul, Hawcastle, even if I couldn't hear well, I saw enough."

CHAPTER XIII

THE LETTER

AS Lady Crech and Hawcastle entered the garden, where Horace was still holding the hand of the fair countess, they encountered Almeric, who was strolling in aimlessly from the direction of the village. Hawcastle beckoned to him.

"Anything unusual down there?" he asked, pointing to the village.

"Rawther! Carabiniere still hunting that bandit chap," said his hopeful son languidly.

"Don't mumble your words," snapped the old lady, and Horace and madame turned sharply and confusedly. Almeric made a gesture of impatience and, putting his head close to his relative's, he said:

"Hawcastle took him by the shoulder and said: 'What do they say about him?'"

"That he is still in the neighborhood," replied his heir, with a languid sigh.

"What did I tell you?" asked Lady Crech triumphantly. And the countess made a gesture of impatience.

"Almeric, find your betrothed and bring her here," he said. And the young man trotted off slowly. Horace came slowly forward.

"What's the row, sir?" he asked, and the earl smiled.

"My dear young man," he said, "I congratulate you that you and your sister need no longer submit to an odious dictation."

He was about to say more, but at that moment Daniel came down the steps and walked across the grass to the motor. As he passed the group he smiled gently and observed:

"Looks to me as if it was going to clear up cold."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Pike," answered the earl and motioned the others to leave.

Pike merely nodded his head, and Hawcastle came up to him.

"It is a pity that there should have been any misunderstanding in the matter of your ward's betrothal," he said, and Pike smiled grimly.

"Oh, I wouldn't call it a misunderstanding," he said, and the earl went on:

"It would be a father to press upon the subject of his son's merits," he began, but Pike cut him short.

"I won't talk with you about him," he said. "I don't want to hurt your feelings."

Hawcastle glared at him and was about to reply when Mariano entered with a letter on a tray, which he handed to the lawyer, who regarded it curiously. There was a growing menace in the earl's attitude, and as his anger grew his suavity grew with it.

"There is another matter to which I want to call your attention," he went on, and Pike absorbed him at once.

"I'll talk about anything else with you," he replied and looked up to see Ethel coming down the steps. She came forward to the earl and said:

"You wished me to come here?"

"I wish to tell you that I see light breaking through the clouds. Have another talk with our friend here, and believe me, all will be well."

With a bow he left the garden, and Ethel stood staring after him. Pike looked up quickly from the letter he was reading and crossed over to her.

"I'm glad you're come," he said.

"I've got something else I want to read to you. When I got your letter at home I wrote to Jim Cooley, our vice-consul in London, to look up those

Hawcastle folks and write me how they stand."

"You did that?" she cried in anger.

"On the audacity to pry into the affairs of the Earl of Hawcastle!"

"Why, I'd 'a done that if it'd been the governor of Indiana himself," he replied, with surprise. "Besides, Jim Cooley's 'home folks.' His office used to be right next door to mine in Kokomo. I haven't opened the letter yet, but I haven't much doubt but Jim'll have some statements in it that'll show you I'm right about these people."

"How do you know that?" she demanded heatedly.

"Because I've had experience enough of life."

"In Kokomo?" she asked scornfully.

"Yes, ma'am," he answered. "There's just as many kinds of people in Kokomo as there is in Pekin, and I didn't serve a term in the legislature without learning to pick underhand men at night. Now, that earl, let alone his having a bad eye—his ways are too much on the stripe of T. Cuthbert Bentley's to suit me. T. Cuthbert was a Chicago gentleman, with a fur lined overcoat, that opened up a bank in our town, and when he caught the Canadian express three months later all he left in Kokomo was the sign on the front door. That was painted on. But there, here's the letter. Read it for yourself."

He handed it to her and watched her while she broke the seal and then began to read:

Dear Dan—The earl of Hawcastle is one of the oldest in the kingdom, and the St. Albans have distinguished themselves in the forefront of English battles from Agincourt and Crecy to Sebastopol. The present holder of the title came into it by accident. He was a young man's orphan son and had spent some years in Russia in business with his father's firm. Nothing in his English record is connected with him, though everything he has is supposed to be his.

He finished with a look of triumph.

"What a terrible indictment!" she said scornfully. "The first was what you counted on to convince me of my mistake? I shall tell Lord Hawcastle

that you are a liar."

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