

VALDMIR THE MONK

He looked into the night. Not a ray of light reached his struggling soul. She opened her eyes of promise in vain for the light seemed to glow in the distance of the blackness of Despair.

"Never fear," returned the gun-maker. "Be sure he only brings me danger to himself, for my efforts will find their point in the muscles of my sword."

part of the blow, would not be upon thy shoulders now." But the Count was beyond all reason. In his madness he saw that his sword had been broken on purpose. He did not know that he had been the victim of a trick. But his friends saw it all.

"I do not think this is mortal," the surgeon reported, as he carefully felt the wound. He was mad beyond all self-control, and his eagerness to kill me was only equalled by his eagerness to be overthrown by one whom he had hoped easily to conquer."

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"TRUTH" BIBLE COMPETITION

NO. 20. AN IMMENSE LIST OF REWARDS

An unusual interest was taken in the last Truth Competition and at the urgent request of the publishers offers are made of a list of rewards of a very large and the prizes valuable. They are so arranged that even if you do not see this notice on the first appearance, you have as good an opportunity for winning a reward as if you had provided always that your answers are correct. Do not delay, however, any longer than you can possibly help.

The questions are as follows: Where in the Bible are the following words first found?—1. WIVES; 2. LIES; 3. FEET.

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"I think you are right, my master," the boy returned, who had beheld the trial of the blade with unbounded admiration.

"But," he added, "would you not temper a blade like that?"

"Perhaps, if I had the steel. But I have it not. The steel of these two blades came from the same furnace, and was originally in one weapon—a panderous, two-handed affair, belonging to a Bengal chieftain. The metal possesses all the hardness of the finest razor, with the elasticity of the most elastic spring.

Now, for the first time, that contemptuous look passed from the Count's face. As his eye caught his antagonist's position—as he noticed the calm, dignified quietude of every limb; and as he caught the deep, mystic fire of those expressive eyes, he knew that he had no common amateur to deal with.

At length Conrad Damonoff started back, and a quick cry escaped his lips. His antagonist had touched his bosom—it had pressed against his heart, and had not been driven home. Well he knew that his life was no longer for the gun-maker had gained it, and—spared it.

"You know well," he gasped, struggling to regain his composure. "You are not a novice," returned Ruric calmly, at the same time allowing his point to drop.

"Come on," the Count uttered, now gathering all his energies for another effort.

And again the weapons were crossed. This time Damonoff was more guarded. Before he had been impelled by his own sword, but now he was forced to regard his opponent's power. Ruric quickly found that the other was more careful than at first, and he carried his own point accordingly.

"I have a fair one. I think it will not deceive me," returned Ruric. "I asked," resumed Orel, "because Damonoff prides himself upon the weapon he wears. It is a German blade, and he thinks he can cut in twain the blade of any other weapon in Moscow with it."

"I have a good weapon," Ruric said quietly, "and one which will bear the test of the most swords will bear. And after some further remarks he related the peculiar circumstances attending the making of the sword, and his possession of it."

At length they struck upon the river, and in half an hour more they reached the appointed spot. The day was beautiful. The sun shone brightly upon the glittering snow, and the air was still and calm. The sharp frost of the atmosphere was only to be traced by the frost upon the grass, and the trees which he might breathe more freely. He had been upon the ground but a few minutes when the other party came in sight around the head of the river.

As soon as the Count and his second arrived, and the horses had been secured, the lieutenant proposed that they should repair to the building which was close at hand. This was a large open building, which had been used as a storehouse for the winter, and which was now proposed to be used as a place of refuge for the fugitives.

"But, man of mortality, even now your life is in peril," the Count cried, springing to where his sword had fallen, and snatching it up.

"Sir Count," he spoke Ruric, calmly, with marked contempt, "you should not blame me for what I have done, for I have tried to break my sword."

"Then try it again!" Damonoff returned. "Take my sword again if you can."

"Perhaps not," our hero returned. "But be sure your sword shall be used no more on my account."

"Ha! Brag not, but strike. If you can—"

The conclusion of the sentence was drowned by the second stroke the Count made against his antagonist's heart. Ruric sprang quickly aside, and with the whole power of his good right arm he struck Damonoff's blade close to the haft and broke it in twain.

"My other sword! my other sword!" the Count shouted, now blinded by absolute darkness. "Oh, give me my other sword!" he cried both the surgeon and Stephen Urtes in concert. "You are mad, Conrad."

"Mad!—Oh, I shall be mad! I yelled, casting the reckless man where, leaving the bladeless pistol in his hand. "My other sword! my other sword!" the Count shouted, now blinded by absolute darkness. "Oh, give me my other sword!" he cried both the surgeon and Stephen Urtes in concert. "You are mad, Conrad."

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