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BY JOHN ROE GORDON

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Amazed, half conscious of what was doing, the prince followed. She led him down a staircase to a stone carridor. The captain of the prison guard came to meet them. The visor of her cap was pulled down. She stiffened up and addressed the guard with dignity.

"I am Prince Delinikoff, inspector general of prisons. Here is the seal of



"Our lives depend upon your discre

the czar. I am here to examine your

the captain. "There are but few of] us here tonight. The governor's ball"-"I know. I just left there."

"But you need an escort through the "I never have an escort. I wish to see for myself. My orderly is escort

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Delinikoff stood silent, marveling at this splendid acting. "Have I really known the girl before?" he asked him-

"What prisoners have you?" but few. They are waiting for transportation to Siberia."

"Do you keep all prisoners for Sibe-'a in the lower dungeons?"

'es, excellency," knew the general plan of the the found the key that un-

n door that led to the a toasts at the

His head drooped. With a strength she thrust him into an empty cell and Then she locked the door. Swiftly, breathlessly, with panting bosom and trembling hands, she opened door after

was Harvey Irons asleep. "Wake up! Wake up, M. Irons!" Alma whispered. He sat upright.

"Who are you?"

door. In almost the last cell of the row

"Hush! Our lives depend upon your silence and obedience. I am Alma, now acting as the inspector general of prisons. Come with me!"

"Alma! Alma Jurnieff!" he whispered as he looked at her in bewilder-"Yes. Come with me. I will help you

to escape. They will kill you here.

Come, now. Wear this cloak and do not speak." Marveling, he staggered to his feet ond donned the cloak.

"Follow me," she whispered. "Do not speak. Our lives depend upon your Harvey obeyed her injunctions. She

led him to the corridor. "How did your excellency find things?" asked the captain of the guard

"In good condition, all but the atmosphere. It is so close it has made my orderly ill. We will step out into the cool air for awhile, after which we will return and resume our inspection."

The bunch of keys was heavy, and as the guard took them from Alma's hand abstracted. He hung the bunch in its accustomed place. A moment later the doors of Tiffis prison had closed behind Alma Jurnieff and Harvey Irons.

CHAPTER XL PRISON ALARM.

OVERED by their long cloaks, unnoticed by the few who Harvey Irons went toward the river. Several times Harvey tried to speak, but Alma would not permit it. Winding through the narrower streets, met twice by sentries and giving the password, which she knew, Alma led him safely to the wharf where the hayboats lay. Lanterns moved here and there, but most of the boatmen were asleep. Alma knew where the boat of Charka of Ashkar was moored and hurried to it. It could not well be mistaken, for it was the largest of the "Yes, your excellency." stammered | hayboats, and its cargo had not been

"Charka!" she said as the two stepped upon the boat. "Charka of Ash-

"Who calls Charka of Ashkar?" asked the sleepy boatman as he emerged from the dingy little box he called his

"It is I, Charka, who purchased your hay and bargained for you to deliver it at Astrabad with a passenger." "Good. You were long coming. The

hay has been wanted many times. But "In the lower dungeons there are I knew you would come, so I did not

"M. Irons," said Alma, turning to Harvey and putting out her hands, "I can do no more. Knowing that you were in danger of being killed or of ing sent to Siberia, where your identity would be lost and all hope of rescue gone, I determined that I would set you free if possible. I have purchased this hay, and Charka will deliver ityou, rather - at Astrabad, where you will be safe from the persecutions of

"But what of you, my darling girl, my bravest? You have sacrificed

yourself for me." "They dare not kill me," said Alma.

"They would do anything. But I anot go like this. Give me just a at. Let me take you in my arms!" | also an orderly." o. with a fine sense of propri-· * back to his little box.

could repay you, dear," 'ing her in his arms. · life could pay you one, how gladly "! But what spector general said they would go out

go without keys. He trembled and turned white.

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I will go back and give myself "Dear one, do not speak like that! It is ungrateful!" "So it is, darling. You have cut off your hair, your beautiful hair, that I

rescue? Tell me what you did?" Alma told Harvey the whole story. "I even gave myself up to abandon for your sake, dear one," concluded Alma. "I permitted his lips to touch mine; I allowed his arm to encircle my waist. Oh, the thought of it burns

loved. How did you accomplish my

but it was for you!" "Great heaven! What a woman! main and fight for you." "And be killed! You must go at

once. Kiss me, dear one! It may be "It shall not! Hark! The alarm gun

Charka, rushing from his box. "The soldiers will awarm along the river in

"My uncle has thought we were gone too long," said Alma, trembling with the weakness of reaction. "He has search: ed for us in the palace and, not finding questioned the servants and learned the hay, Charka, where can he hide? He is your friend, and your enemies are after him!"

With a sweep of his hand Charka showed them the immense cargo of hay. It rested upon many long planks that met in the middle of the boat and extended some feet over each side. Under the planks was a vacant space. "Under there," said Charka. "There

you will be safe. Hurry! The dogs of Muscovites will soon be here." "You shall not go back to imprisonment or death," said Harvey. "Come with mel We will go to America. where you will be safe and happy. Come, my darling, come." Alma hesitated. Again sounded the

alarm gun. Perhaps the thought of solitary imprisonment, perhaps the knout, perhaps Siberia, came to her. "I will go," she said simply. The two crawled under the hay, and Charka lay down on the boat as if

Everything happened as Alma had supposed. The ball had been deprived of its most brilliant lights. With Alma and Delinikoff gone, it grew dull. A half hour passed, and Colonel Jurnieff | dead or alive. got uneasy.

"Where are your beautiful niece and Dellnikoff?" asked the governor. "The prince said they were going to

find a secluded spot and talk things over. I asked Alma, and she consented to the announcement of their betrothal, know what keeps them."

versation with a girl like Alma. It is almost time for the supper. I hope they will not forget." The governor showed his anxiety as

the time for him to take the highest of his guests to supper arrived. "I am filled with misgivings, your

excellency," said Jurnieff. "There is something wrong."

"Wrong! What can be wrong?" "Something, I know not what. The girl bewitched us all tenight. I had never seen her so gay, so reckless. She acted as if she had drunk too much wine, and she seldom drinks any, and him. She was in love with an Amer. | into the hay.

"Where is the American?" "He is in our prison. He is implicated in the abduction of Koura Biar-

"And you think-what do you think? Speak, man!"

"I cannot think. I am going to the prison to see what has happened."

He called for his carriage. It was gone. He took the nearest one-one in which a Chinese mandarin had come to the ball-and hurried to the prison. He dashed to the living apartments. Marie was asleep. He roared for her, and, trembling in every limb, she came

"Has my niece returned from the

"She did return, colonel. I went to her, but she dismissed me and told me Jurnieff ran to Alma's rooms. On the

floor he saw her long brown tresses. "What deviltry is here tonight?" he He dashed to the prison. The captain

of the guard started when he saw the pallor of the colonel's face. "Has any one visited the prisen to-"Yes; the inspector general."

"What! Do you mean Prince Dell-"Yes, my colonel. He had with him

"Was my niece here?" "I did not see the young lady." "What did the inspector general do?" "He and his orderly went into the dungeons where the prisoners for Siberia are kept. They soon came back, as the orderly was not well. The in-

in the air a short time and return. They did not return." "Open that door to the dungeons!" The captain took down the bunch of

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QURE SICK HEADACHE.

himself from disgrace. "The door must be broken in. Go for

The locksmith was roused from his Jurneiff rushed in and began opening the cells. In one he found Delinikoff, aleeping as if drunk. He dragged him

out to the light. "Drugged!" he exclaimed. "The girl has tricked us all! Where is the Amer-

His cell was opened. It was empty. "Fire the alarm gun! They are still in Tiflis! The guards will find them! Get out every man! Have the garrison turned loose! I must go and report to | miles and tied up at the rotting wharf the governor.'

In ten minutes the ball was over. Chinese mandarins and Persian princes were hustled off and chattered together in bewilderment. Every Russian at tive, with orders to bring him back

CHAPTER XII. THE SEARCH FOR THE FUGITIVES-THE

HAYBOAT STARTS. C HARKA of Ashkar pretended to waken from a deep slum to waken from a deep slumsubordinate officer, came rushing down the wharf.

"Ho, there, on board this hayboat!" "Masters, I am here," said Charka,

light of the lanterns they carried. "What has happened?" "A prisoner of the czar has escaped! Assisted by a woman who is a traitor, be escaped from the prison at Tiflis tonight and must be, with his companion, somewhere in the city."

"Well, am I the prisoner?" "No, you pig."

"Am I, then, the woman?" "Curses upon you!" "Why am I awakened with these shouts? I am a peaceful man from Ash-

kar, trying to sell my hay." "Oh, your hay!" shouted one of the now, when she is not here, with her soldiers, with a laugh. "With the busibeauty and her wit to ensuare me. I ness of finding a prisoner of state on recall how she hated the prince. She | our minds, we must think of your hay!" never said so, but she refused to marry | As he spoke he thrust his bayonet deep

"By the gods," exclaimed another, "that is an idea! This man is from Astrakhan and would no doubt assist the American to escape."

"Shut your mouth, fool?" said the officer. "There is no American. It was a Russian who escaped."

"Pardon! I forgot. But the Astrakhans do not love the czar." "How much you love the czar!" re-

plied Charka. "It is fear, not loyalty, that makes you curse me and stab my "By heaven, we will stab you! What did you come to Tiflis for?"

"To sell my hay. It has been pur chased, but not yet paid for." "Insolent pig! And do you think we want hay from you?" "It is for beasts of a higher class ! keep my hay," said Charka calmly.

A volley of curses answered him and a bayonet pricked his leg. "Charge the hay!" said the officer. "They may be hiding in it."

"Burn the hay!" laughed a soldier. "That will settle it." "Burn it if you dare! I have something in my pocket."

"A pistol, which you would use on the soldiers of the czar?" "No; a passport to safety signed by the governor."

"Do not burn his hay!" shouted the officer as one of the soldiers made a light by twisting a wisp of the hay into the flame of the lantern. "We are after prisoners. We do not wish to run against the passport." The soldiers were crawling over the

hay, jamming their bayonets deep inte it. The officer was slashing it with his "Dogs of Muscovites! When I get my

you to depart at once. There will then

be no chance of your doing mischief.

money, I will not stay in this place!" "What is that?" demanded the of ficer, turning on Charka. "You call us dogs-we who are your masters?" "You should tell the mollah that. Ho would be pleased." "Are you a follower of the mollah?"

"Who else? It is so written. Charka of Ashkar was never false to the "Then leave Tiflis. The governor's passport will save you from harm, but in the name of the czar I command

We know the fugitives are not with you now. But if they came you would "I say truly I would do so if they

"Loosen your boat from its moorings and take yourself to the Caspian." "It is robbing no one. There is plenty of hay, and you say the payment

has not been made. Go, or I will for get the passport." With assumed reluctance Charks went to the door of his box, into which two soldiers had gone to investigate, and cause out with two sleepy Astra-

"We have sold our hay, but before

"It will destroy the hay. There will be no profit from the fair," said one fair and yet follow the moliah against Charks made a sign. The men'ss mee began refeasing the boat, amid the shouts and eries of soldiers and dis-Hundreds of soldiers flocked along the wharfs, invaded boats, routing out

spect the most secret places. Charks, grumbling and with much make believe anger, slowly got under quiet night. So the men resorted to long poles, and the big boat crawled

The search throughout Tiffis went on. Generals and colonels, many of them informed for the first time that an American, joined in the hunt, Offiworking garb and searched bazaars coffee houses and churches. There was not a square foot of ground in Tiflis that was not searched/mor a building that was not entered.

Mystified, baffled and enraged, Jurnieff raved and cursed as he paced the prison corridor. But while he raved and soldiers searched, Charka and his boat continued slowly down the river. By daylight Charka had made twenty of a small town. Leaving his men in charge; he went ashore to buy food. He returned with a sufficient supply for the day, and the boat went on. A little steam launch containing soldiers came puffing up behind him.

"Who are you?" demanded the offi cer. "Why do you leave-Tiflis with a load of hay? The markets are there." Charks, with a sad wall, "Many days nights I lay and thought of my profits.

"Enjoy yourself, fanatie, Go ask the mollab to buy your hay. He has many

"Aye, and men and guns," muttered Charka as the launch sped on.

"Have you seen two escaped prisoners?" came back a voice. "I have seen many men. No one in-

"One.was a woman /"



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