

THE RUSSIAN PRINCE

Background

In 1914 the British ruled half the world, and they did not know (except perhaps unconsciously) that for them this was the beginning of the end. The playboy king, Edward VII, had died in 1910, but this was still the Edwardian era: the wealth, power and prestige amassed during the sixty-three solemn years of Victoria's reign were being spent with gusto. People ate and drank hugely, sometimes five large meals a day. Horses were enormous, entertainment was lavish, clothes were gorgon. Small fortunes were made by the Bond Street and Savile Row outfitters who supplied the many clothes necessary for different social occasions and even different times of day. The rules of etiquette had attained unparalleled complexity - for example, brown boots could not be worn nearer to London than Ascot. Fancy dress parties were all the rage. It was the time of Diaghilev's seasonal ballet, the shock of post-impersonism, the scandal of mixed bathing, subrogates, regimens and the tango.

There was, of course, another England. The slums of Edwardian London were worse than they had been in Dickens' time. The East End was characterised by dirt, disease, awful poverty, drunkenness and fierce exploitation. One baby in three died before its first birthday. When school medical examinations were introduced at about this time one child in six was found to be too stunted, venereal or sick to learn anything. In many homes people ate standing up because there were no chairs. The official overcrowding level was 214 people per acre, but Whitechapel had six thousand per acre.

The weather that year was unusually sunny and warm. Almost no rain fell in April, May or June. The temperature in London on 1 July was 94°. It was the last long summer of the British Empire.

Domestic politics were even better. In 1905 a liberal government had been elected. At first this made little difference to anything. Then in 1908 Campbell-Bannerman, the Prime Minister, died, and a new government of young firebrands came to power. Asquith was the first ~~British~~ Premier in British history who did not have a country estate. His Home Secretary was the bellicose young Winston Churchill, and as Chancellor of the Exchequer he picked the Welsh nonconformist hot-head Lloyd George.

Thus began a period in politics more bitter and angry than any this century. The Liberals introduced, or tried to introduce, a Land Tax, Home Rule for Ireland, a cheaper and more modern Army and Navy, old age pensions, national health insurance, and - horror of horrors - a diminution in the powers of the House of Lords. Before it was over the army would threaten mutiny, the lords would defy the constitution, the monarchy would be dragged reluctantly into the political arena, and - a rare thing in Westminster - members of opposing parties would refuse to hit down at the same dinner table. Outside the framework of conventional politics the status quo was under threat from the militant new trade unions, the nascent women's movement, the burgeoning Labour Party, and the anarchists.

International politics was no more reassuring. Viewed from England, Europe appeared menaced by an increasingly wealthy and aggressive Germany. Germany's annual steel production, for example, had overtaken that of Britain and was still accelerating. The Kaiser was the Donald Reagan of his time - conservative, militaristic and stupid. In the past year Germany's war preparations had become increasingly obvious. The government imposed a one-off special tax to raise a million marks, the biggest levy in European history, and the money was used to step up conscription (to that it included all fit men of call-up age without exception) with corresponding increases in military hardware. On the London money market German firms were factoring credits, i.e. discounting bills for early payment, so that Germany had collected all her debts while still using money to the rest of the world.

But most important was her navy. For some years British policy had been that the Royal Navy should be bigger than the combined navies of the two next biggest sea powers, to guarantee the safety of the island's vital trading arteries. Now Germany was catching up, and refused to negotiate an arm limitation treaty.

Needless to say the problem looked different from the other side of the fence.

Germans were proud of their country's uphill struggle to greatness; and where, they asked, was it written that Britain should rule the world and Germany should forever be a second-class power? Germany was in danger of being cut off from the rest of the world - notably the U.S., Africa and the Far East - because of the policy of "encirclement" masterminded by Britain. Germany was partly surrounded by hostile nations: France, Belgium, England and Russia. Italy wavered and the Balkans were turbulent. Germany's route to North America was via the North Sea, where Britain ruled the waves (so a naval

limitation treaty, which Britain kept proposing as though it were the essence of sweet reason, would have simply maintained the status quo and kept Germany trapped]. Her route to Africa and the Middle East was via her ally Austria-Hungary and the Balkans, which was why Germany encouraged Austria's aggressive domination of that area. Her only way to the Far East was via Persia, a territory which Britain and Russia had recently carved up between them (Britain incidentally securing Persia's oil, the fuel for a new generation of fast warships). Germany wanted colonies like everyone else, but each move she made in Africa was denounced as troublemaking by the Powers which were already sitting on rich possessions. Was there any way for Germany to avoid being suffocated? None, it seemed, but war.

The problem facing the German general staff was - as always - the danger of war on two fronts: against France in the west and Russia in the east. For this reason the aim of German diplomacy was to neutralize Russia. And for the same reason England and France would have wanted to extract from the Russians a firm commitment to join in on the Allied side if and when war broke out.

England and Russia were natural allies strategically, but other factors kept them apart. The regime of the Czar was brutal and reactionary. This difference of philosophy between the two countries crystallized in the problem of dissidents. Britain then had no restrictions on immigration. Consequently London became a haven for refugee revolutionists from Eastern Europe. (Netherlands was similar.) This infuriated the Czar, but British public opinion, and the conscience of the ruling liberal party, would not allow the dissidents to be sent back home for imprisonment, torture and execution. Anglo-Russian relations were therefore complicated by an uneasy informal alignment.

Characters

Stephen Walden was born in 1864. His father, the seventh Earl of Walden, was one of the great Victorian aristocrats: a man of wide general knowledge, politically active, and physically energetic; a man who inspired his stern self-discipline on others as well as on himself. Young Stephen rebelled against his father but absorbed the old man's values of rationalism, knowledge and work, inheriting nothing feminine except a deep and hidden gentleness from his mother, who was sweetly insane and died young. He went to Eton, where he misbehaved, and ~~Worcester~~ Oxford, where he surprised everyone by graduating (in history). In 1887 he made his first trip to Africa, where he fell in

love with big-game hunting and picked up Pritchard, the manservant who was to be with him for the rest of his life.

As a young man Walden pursued loose women. In 1893 he had a nifty notoriety affair with a singer, Bonita "Bonnie" Carter, real name Maudie Jenks. He even gave her a present of a small house in St John's Wood, the area of London which was at that time Mirkmire. However Bonnie threw him over when the Prince of Wales took a fancy to her.

Even before that Stephen found England suffocating - there did not seem to be room enough for both him and his father - and he spent little time at home. A restless, troubled and deeply unhappy man who lived for kicks, he went on safari once a year and travelled the world in between. Being the heir to an earldom he was entertained by Britain's ambassadors in the world's capital cities. The diplomats, having heard of his reputation as a hell-raiser, were surprised to find that he was intelligent and knowledgeable about international politics and had a flair for languages. In fact he was laying the foundations for what would later be a considerable expertise in foreign affairs. The diplomats' wives never failed to be charmed by his gentility. Nevertheless, he would leave these elegant rooms in his immaculate evening dress and spend the rest of the night drinking, gambling and whoring, and might even have to be got out of jail by the Ambassador in the morning.

In 1895 he was painting St Petersburg red when he heard that his father had died. He showed no grief. From the moment Pritchard called him "my lord", he changed radically and permanently. He proposed marriage to Lydia, the beautiful daughter of a Russian count. He took his bride back to England and they moved into the ancestral home of Walden Hall. Walden took his seat in the House of Lords and seemed in every way to become the man whose title he had inherited.

He found the family fortunes somewhat diminished due to the late-Victorian collapse of agricultural prices. While other country landowners clamoured for tariff protection, Walden switched money into London property and railways, and soon he was richer than his father had ever been.

While the Conservative party was in power he was often consulted on foreign - especially Russian - affairs, and was occasionally used as a confidential diplomatic sides man. He knows the Czar and is related to him through Lydia. When in 1906 the Kaiser persuaded the weak-willed Czar to sign the Treaty of Bjorko - a treaty which would permanently have upset the European balance of power - it was Walden who was

dispatched to St Petersburg to talk Nicholas II out of it. He succeeded, and ~~always~~ ^{now looks} ~~looked~~ back on that as the triumph of his life.

In the domestic political battle Walden is firmly on the side of the Conservatives and Tradition, against the liberals and change. Since he became the eighth earl he has found deep contentment in the life of an English aristocrat. He is now fifty, and is one of those men who are in their prime at that age. His big, beefy body has yet to collapse into fat, although he has a gouty leg and sometimes walks with a cane. His sharp intelligence is concealed by a jolly, hearty manner. He thoroughly enjoys life: he likes society parties and hunt balls, the opera and the music-hall, bitter ale and wiskey pot, the company of young men and mature women, and any game from chess to poker. He adores his wife, although he feels he has never really possessed her; nevertheless she is desirable, intelligent, and always good company, and he has no serious desire to wander. He is as proud as punch of his lovely daughter Charlotte, and can hardly wait for the moment when she makes her debut in London society and all his friends say: "Damn fine filly, Walden!" He regrets not having more children, but it was not for want of trying.

He represents the best of the English aristocracy. His lands are scrupulously well maintained and scientifically farmed. His tenants' cottages are in good repair, his servants are well cared-for, his home is beautiful, he is a patron of the arts. He is shrewd, knowledgeable and humane. He and his kind have ruled Britain during its period of greatest glory, and their worst fault is that they cannot see why things must now change. His employees and his tenants agree with him: they see no point in the government's taking money from him in land Tax in order to give them what they already get from him.

So Walden, a man who has found a happiness he thought would be permanent, feels that his ~~the~~ way of life is under attack. But soon it will be threatened from another, foreign source.

Lydia is a woman haunted by a guilty secret. Her secret will be revealed, bit by bit, to her increasing dismay, during the summer of 1914.

Back in 1895 she was the belle of St Petersburg society. Then aged 19, she was beautiful in a frail, childless sort of way, and kindly respectable: modestly dressed, obedient to her parents, respectful to her elders, a decent churchgoer, hopelessly impractical, and liable to faint at the slightest suggestion of impropriety. However all

of this is to some extent an act, serving to conceal a passionate behaviorist nature. She married Walden against her will, under severe pressure from her father, an elderly humanist count.

Nineteen years later she is still beautiful. Her public image is not much changed, except insofar as it is amplified. She is still highly respectable, she plays the part of an Edvardian lady with conviction, and the passionate side of her nature is well under control. Her guilty secret has prevented her having a warm, candid relationship with Walden, but she has grown enormously fond of him, indeed she would say that she loves him, and she would never be unfaithful to him. She loves her daughter and is feels very protective toward her. Lydia's life task is to bring Charlotte up properly and see her safely married. Lydia is superb at telling and showing her daughter how to walk, dress, talk, and behave generally; but no good at explaining more intimate or emotional matters.

Charlotte is an only child who has grown up among adoring family and parents. She is too good-natured to be quite spoiled, but she is at least willful (like Walden). Back in 1845 both her parents in their different ways suppressed the libertarian aspects of their personalities in favour of respectability, and the submerged drives have surfaced in the offspring.

Nevertheless her upbringing has been narrowly restricted. She has always been educated at home. Her only real friend is her cousin Belinda, who is the same age (18) and has had a similarly ^{restricted childhood} ~~restricted upbringing~~. Charlotte has never been poor people's homes, indeed she has never seen the servants' quarters of her own home, and she was never allowed to play with the children of servants or tenants. Her schooling has been heavily biased toward the impractical. She knows a lot about music and art, and she speaks fluent human and schoolgirl French, but she knows little of history or geography and nothing at all about science, mathematics, politics or finance. She is therefore cultured and intelligent but has a hopelessly one-eyed view of how the world works.

Willful, willow, overprotected... she has one more crucial trait: idealism. She realises that only white European aristocrats are entitled to be wealthy, powerful and idle, but she knows of no reason why the whole world should not be fed, clothed and happy. And all the people she meets are relatively fortunate, for her father is the archetypal paternal country squire.

countryside, dressed as a monk, preaching the anarchist gospel. Eventually he was arrested again and sent to Siberia. He escaped from there, killing a guard (the only time he has killed, despite his beliefs) and made his way to Switzerland — a journey which taught him ingenuity and survival.

Now aged 40, hardened both physically and in his convictions, he is an impressive figure: intense, dominant and magnetic. He is tall, thin, hairy and none too clean, but there is an animal energy in him which a few women find completely hypnotic.

In Switzerland he is deeply discontented. Russia is in turmoil: the Czar is a halfwit, the Duma (parliament) is inept, the old workers are at war with the Soviets and a million people are on strike. The country is a powder barrel waiting for a spark, and Kotel's wants to be that spark. But he knows that as soon as he sets foot in Russia he will be sent to Siberia (this has already happened to Fred Smith) and he could do nothing in Siberia. But what can he do outside Russia?

He is about to find out.

Pritchard, Walden's valet, is the cynical, intelligent son of a London shirtmaker. As a boy he ran away to sea then jumped ship in Zanzibar. He met Walden in East Africa in 1887, when he was 17 and Walden was 23. They hunted together and became friends. As well as being valet, Pritchard is responsible for motor cars, his personal possessions. (The Waldens run horse-drawn and motor vehicles.) Pritchard often takes a gun & put with his master in the gun-room late at night. He is intensely loyal to Walden despite a biting (but largely theoretical) contempt for the British ruling class.

Pritchard has a running battle with Manya, Charlotte's governess, an insufferably prim woman in her late thirties. In the servants' hall Pritchard will attack the Establishment and Manya, who like many governesses is more loyal than the king, will defend them. Pritchard is always able to defeat her by descending to coarseness and making her leave. However, beneath this bickering is a weird mutual affection.

On Manya's day off Charlotte is supervised by Annie, an engaging young

housemaid who has too much sensuality and not enough sense, and is disliked by Mangan both for the excess and for the lack.

Plot.

One

"Churchill? Winston Churchill?" said Walden. "Here?"

"Yes, my lord," the butler said.

"Send the messenger away," Walden said. "I'm not at home." He turned and walked to the window, thinking: Young whippersnapper, I don't know where he gets the nerve, first calling on me in London then following me down here, he knows damn well I won't receive him —

The butler coughed.

Walden looked at him with irritation. "Still here?"

"Mr Churchill ^{has} said you'd be not at home, my lord, and ~~asked~~ said I must give you this."

Walden realized the butler was carrying a letter on a tray. "Give it back to him — no, wait." He had seen the seal on the envelope, and for once the Earl of Walden was intimidated. He opened the letter.

Beckingham Palace

24 May 1914

My dear Walden,

You will see young Winston.

George R.

Walden recognized the handwriting. It was the King's.

He hesitated only a moment longer, then said: "Ask Mr Churchill to come in."

Churchill is now first lord of the Admiralty, which means not that he is a lord but that he is in charge of Britain's navy. He is of course a minister in the liberal government, so from Walden's point of view he represents the people who are trying to destroy England. However, Churchill wants Walden to do a job which transcends domestic politics. He explains that he has arranged for a young Russian admiral

to come to London for secret naval talks - at least, "naval" talks was the original proposal, but Churchill is parlaying the whole thing into a defense treaty. The admiral is Prince Alexei Androvitch Orlow, aged 30, a nephew and favorite of the Czar and a distant relation of Lydia. It is the Czar who has insisted, in a personal telegram to King George V, that the English side be represented in the negotiations by Walden.

To obscure the real purpose of the visit, Orlow - a very eligible bachelor - will stay at Walden's town house for the London "season" and will be introduced to society, while it is whispered about that he is looking for a wife.

Walden is no stranger to the world of international diplomacy, but even he is somewhat awed by the importance of his task, which is no less than to get the hammer on our beam. Of course he has strong personal reasons for wanting this: he loves Russia, his wife is Russian, and he has rather a lot of money invested in the Trans-Siberian Railway. But more importantly, it seems to him that if Russia remains neutral, Germany will conquer Europe.

Lydia leaves the men talking politics and strolls into the garden. She walks around the vast, lovely old house and wanders through the landscaped park. The mention of Orlow has unnerved her: she remembers him as a ten-year-old boy at her wedding, and she remembers that as the unhappiest day of her life. She was coerced into marrying Walden although she was in love with another man. She remembers how, when they made love, she always used to feel almost as if she were drowning in pleasure, and she used to shout "help!" when she came. Walden knows nothing of this, but Lydia, despite appearances, has nourished the memory of that adolescent passion.

Lydia sees Charlotte deep in conversation with Belinda, and thinks: Mease, God, let me keep my secrets.

Charlotte and Belinda are talking about being debutantes (both are to be presented at court this season), marriage (which is supposed to follow soon after), and sex. This last is a subject upon which they are breathtakingly ignorant. Most children learned about sex despite the notorious Victorian conspiracy of silence, but Charlotte and Belinda are unusually protected. They realize that babies grow inside women, but cannot imagine how they come out. Charlotte knows where eggs

emerge from children, and Belinda once saw a cow drop a calf, but they agree that their own bodies have no apertures big enough for a baby. They wonder whether they suffer from a congenital deformity. There is no one they can consult about this. They do not consider the question of how a baby gets started: they assume it happens spontaneously around the age of 21, and for them this explains why girls are pressured to marry at 19 or 20.

Belinda is merely curious, but Charlotte is made of sterner stuff. There are forbidden books in a locked cupboard in the library, and the house where the key is. Belinda immediately gets cold feet, but Charlotte overrules her. They get the books and sneak upstairs. (Annie, who is supposed to be supervising them, is making her big friend in the woods.) Charlotte leads the way through the deserted nursery to an attic under the roof which used to be her hiding-place when she was little. From here you can see across the several acres of roof which cover Walden Hall. There is a way to get up here from the middle, all across roof, says Charlotte. They look at the forbidden books, but they get little help from the internal diagrams in the medical textbooks and none at all from the bizarre, and to them incomprehensible, pornographic novel.

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Meanwhile Feliks' ship is docking at Dover.

The Swiss anarchists have learned, through a traitor in the Ochrana, of Alden's planned talks with Walden. Feliks is horrified by the prospect of a European war. The idea of young men being sent, by Kaiser and Czar and kings, to be killed and maimed in a cause not their own is exactly the kind of thing that makes Feliks an anarchist. As far as he is concerned, Walden and Alden are impying to murder millions of young Russians. So he plans to kill them both.

The effects of such a murder would be greater than might immediately be apparent. Firstly and obviously it would bring the talks to an abrupt halt. Secondly, once it became known that the perpetrator was a refugee Russian anarchist, the old quarrel between Britain and Russia about expatriate revolutionists would flare up again and prevent the talks continuing with replacement negotiators. Thirdly, Feliks (or if he is dead his friends) will announce that the two men were killed because they were scheming to drag the Russian ^{people} into a war they do not want; and Russian popular reaction to that might set a chain-reaction of revolt leading ultimately to revolution.

Feliks is tense, excited, apprehensive and happy. He may die soon, but for now like him suddenly started opening doors again.

As he sets foot on English soil for the first time in his life, there is something else on his mind. The woman he loved, nineteen years ago, married an Englishman. Feliks never knew the man's name, but he heard that they had gone to England. Now, after all this time, he will be in the same country as she. He remembers making love to her, and how, at the moment of climax, she always used to yell "help!"

Two

Feliks is at Victoria Station for the arrival of Otkomar. The prince is travelling in a private coach (borrowed from the King) at the back end of the train. He steps out of the coach and straight into Walden's carriage. Feliks gets a mere glimpse of a handsome, expensively-dressed young man. Two servants (who appear to be travelling with Otkomar) load a mountain of luggage on to the carriage and it pulls away. Feliks, on a bicycle, follows it through the crowded London streets to a large house on the edge of St James's Park - a house which, he is soon able to learn, is the London residence of the Earl of Walden.

Inside the house a reluctant Lydia greets Otkomar. He is a rather appealing young man. He talks about Russia; and this pillar of the Czarist regime turns out to be something of a radical. He speaks earnestly of the need for change in Russia: for land reform, mechanised agriculture, free speech and parliamentary democracy. But Lydia is thinking: could he possibly know about me?

When Charlotte appears we find out why this handsome, charming, incredibly wealthy young prince is still a bachelor at thirty: he is chronically shy with girls. When he sees Charlotte - who, in grown-up clothes, has suddenly become a real dish - he drops his beard, blushes, and acquires a thick Russian accent. But now Charlotte's hidden talents begin to emerge, and with her unique naive charm she puts him at his ease. Observing this, Walden and Lydia exchange a secret smile of parental pride.

Outside, Feliks wanders walks in the park and ponders what he has seen. Clearly

Osman is wary of showing himself in public: he will not be an easy target. (Perhaps he, too, is wary of showing himself in public the possibility of an assassination has occurred to him, too.) Getting close to him will need Felix's ingenuity.

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Walden and Osman begin their talks, and Osman springs a surprise.

The Russian navy's great long-term aim is to have a warm-water port. They have their Black Sea coast, but the Black Sea is an inland sea connected with the Mediterranean only by a narrow strait, the Bosphorus, off Constantinople, and both banks of the Bosphorus are held by Turkey. Russia has been supporting Slav nationalism in the Balkans in the hope that when the Slavs throw the Turks out Russia will have free passage through the Strait; but better than Slav control of the Balkans would be Russian control; and now Osman announces that if Russia is to fight on the Allied side in the coming war, the price of her participation will be British recognition of the Balkans as a Russian sphere of influence. Walden talks around this idea a bit, then they adjourn.

Felix learns from the society papers that the Waldens and Osman will be present at the King's Court on 4 June. He buys a gun.

* (or Three)

The King's Court is the biggest and most gorgeous ceremony of British royalty, when the aristocratic girths of the kingdom parade before the monarch at Buckingham Palace. "Court dress" is obligatory. For women this means a white dress with a low bodice and a train three to four yards long plus a tiara with three white plumes. Men wear a uniform if they are entitled to one, otherwise velvet knee-breeches with white silk stockings, and all their medals. Senior politicians, nobles and diplomats attend.

Meanwhile, outside in the Mall, the Waldens' footman William waits with their carriage (among a hundred others) watched by Felix.

In the main part of the court ceremony the King and Queen sit on thrones while the debutantes pass in front of them one by one. Charlotte's debut is marred by an (historically true) incident. The girl ahead of her in line suddenly drops to one knee and says:

"Your Majesty, for God's sake stop torturing women!" She is hustled away by two footmen. The royal couple pretend not to notice, but Charlotte is distressed. She assumes the girl is completely mad, and for now no one will tell her differently.

William goes into the park to take a leak. Feliks hits him over the head, takes his top hat and lining coat, and ties and gags him. Then he goes to the Walden carriage.

At the supper after the ceremony Walden tells Churchill of Colonel's proposal. Walden suggests a counter-offer: the proposal to be an international waterway, with free passage to all nations guaranteed jointly by Britain and Russia. Churchill accepts it.

Feliks hears the call: "The Earl of Walden's carriage." He drives up to the Palace gates. He keeps his back to the family as they get in. He drives away. He stops the carriage in the middle of the park. He pulls his seat up over his face (so that the women, whom he does not mean to kill, will not be able to describe him afterwards). He jumps down from his seat, takes his gun from his pocket, and flings open the carriage door.

Three (or four)

Hydia screams "Help!" in Russian - just as she used to when Feliks made love to her. Feliks freezes. Hydia! Here in this carriage! May can Hydia -

Walden, who is never frozen with shock, lashes out with his cane, hitting Feliks' wrist. Feliks drops the gun. He has forgotten the assassination and is staring at Hydia, who is still screaming hysterically. Walden hits him again. Feliks runs away.

Feliks remembers the last time he saw Hydia. She came to his dingy room and smothered an hour with him on her way to a reception at the British Embassy. Later that night Feliks was smothered by the Assassins. They beat the tiles of his feet in an attempt to make him reveal the names of other anarchists. The torture stopped without explanation, and six weeks later - equally inexplicably - he was released. On the day he came out he learned that, the day before, Hydia had left for England with her new husband.

Walden, Armore and Churchill sit in the library. Churchill is mad at Walden for almost letting Armore get killed. Walden is angry, too, at himself and at the unknown assassin who hit William over the head and scared Lydia half to death. They agree to move Armore to an hotel and forget about introducing him to society. Churchill tells Walden: "I hold you personally responsible for the safety of the Prince." Armore says: "You too should be guarded, Walden. The gun was actually pointed at you."

Lydia has not recognized Feliks (except perhaps unconsciously). She faints when he runs away. She believes that what happened was an attempted robbery. (So does Churchill.) Lydia has been put to bed with a dose of laudanum. She dreams about Feliks. When Walden comes to bed she wakes her to him without waking up.

* (or five)

Charlotte, who is reading the newspapers for the first time in her life, learns that the "incident" at the court was a suffragette protest. She talks to Pritchard about it. He explains the reference to breaking women: suffragettes who are jailed go on hunger strike and consequently are force-fed by a painful and degrading method. Churchill refuses to believe this.

That night her coming-out ball is held at Clavidge's Hotel. It is a glittering occasion, with all the girls in fabulous gowns and the young men in white-tie-and-tails. Belinda is there. She has joined the "fuss" set: she wears ankle-revealing dresses, does the Turkey Trot, smokes cigarettes in restaurants, and goes to boxing matches. Since that day at Walden Hall she has learned the sexual facts of life, and now she relays them to Churchill, who is threatened.

On the way home from the ball at dawn Charlotte is horrified to see a woman sleeping on the pavement. Myra explains that thousands of men, women and children have nowhere to sleep but the streets of London. Charlotte simply did not know that people could be that poor. She insists on stopping the carriage and speaking to the woman.

It turns out to be Annie, the housemaid who used to defecate for Myra at Walden Hall. She explains that she got pregnant and was fired without a "character". She subsequently had a miscarriage and is now destitute. Churchill says: "Come home with me." Annie knows better than to accept, but she asks for mercy. Churchill tells her to come to the house tomorrow afternoon.

Charlotte is groaned out by the revelations of the night. Next day she screams at her parents: "Why didn't anybody tell me?" It seems to her that her education so far has been little better than a conspiracy to deceive her. She practically accuses her parents of murdering Annie's unborn child.

Walden and Lydia use somewhat the same. Prognostic housewifery are always fixed, it's the only way to run a respectable house. But in truth they cannot feel proud of themselves.

Walden in particular is really shocked. First an ~~amoralist~~ ~~eminent~~ ~~eminent~~ attacks his family in the middle of London, then his daughter tells him his moral standards are evil. What is the world coming to?

Charlotte says she wants to take Annie on as her personal maid. Lydia is aghast; Walden less so; reluctantly they consent.

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Feliks is really down. He has lost the element of surprise. Reading the society papers he notes that the name of O'Monroe no longer appears in great letters: the prince has obviously gone into hiding. The two Russian servants ~~are~~ no longer go in and out of the Walden house, so he is not hiding there. This is hardly surprising but it puts Feliks in a quandary. O'Monroe could be anywhere. Feliks cannot check every hotel, every Cabinet Minister's residence, every London house owned by a Russian, etc. In desperation he realises that there is one person who might simply tell him where O'Monroe is: Lydia.

He writes what he is here Walden is out; then he knocks on the door.

Law (or his)

He gives his name as Constantine Dmitich Levin, and tells the butler that he must see Lady Walden immediately, it is a matter of urgency, and he is sure she will remember him from St Petersburg. (The name he has chosen will be vaguely familiar to her because it is that of a character in Anna Karenina.)

The butler shows him into the morning-room where Lydia is writing letters. She looks up with an automatic smile, then frowns, then looks as white as a sheet.

Eventually she tells Feliks how she came to marry Walden. Her father had found out that she was having an affair with Feliks. The old count forbade

her ever to see Feliks again. Deftly she rushed straight to his lodgings, to be told by his landlady that he had been arrested as a subversive. Her father calmly informed her that Feliks was being tortured. She was distraught. Then the warden told her that the Count of Walden had formally asked permission to court her. If you promise to marry Walden, said the count, Feliks' torture will end today and he will be released as soon as you leave for England. Lydia consented.

As she tells this story, watching Feliks' face, she feels more and more the desperate need to touch him.

Feliks is much moved by her story. He goes to his law. No, she says; all that is half my lifetime ago. Now that you know the truth, go away and never come back.

Feliks has to go. Then: "I came to ask you something..." He reminds himself of the importance of his mission, and presses himself to repeat his proposed speech, a yarn about wanting to petition Obdurate personally for the release of an anarchist sailor who has been jailed. Lydia tells him Obdurate is at the Barry Hotel.

As Feliks leaves, Lydia thinks: Thank God, he hasn't guessed the truth.
* (or seven)

From conversations with Annie, Cherette is learning about poverty, the role of women. But now that she is beginning to understand the real world, what can she do about it? She discovers that as a woman she cannot even vote! The protest of Lebia de Vries, the debt in the court incident, now appears in a different light. Cherette calls on her. Since the incident, the de Vries family has been ostracized by "good" society, so they are delighted to see the daughter of the Count of Walden. Mrs. Parkhurst was there. Cherette is ripe for conversion. She promises to go on a suffragette march.

Lydia thinks over her meeting with Feliks, suppressing for the moment her still-strong physical desire for him. She knows he was and doubtless still is an anarchist. Did he tell her the truth about why he wanted to see Obdurate? Perhaps he wants to murder Obdurate. It might even have been Feliks in the park that night! The more she thinks about it the more worried she is that she may have betrayed Obdurate to an assassin.

She tells Walden: "A man called this morning, a Russian whom I remembered vaguely from the Petersburg, asking for Orlanov... I told him the busy hotel, ~~was~~ I hope that was all right..."

Walden says: "Don't worry about it."

Walden is concealing his anger. Things are getting on top of him. Orlanov is taking an unconscionably long time to reply to the British counter-proposal. It is now mid-June, and the Germans have completed the widening of the Kiel Canal, a strategically vital project which will enable their dreadnaughts to pass between the North Sea and the Baltic. Every day which passes makes a deal with the Russians more urgent. The million assassin seems incredibly daring and ingenious. Now once again he has located Orlanov. But perhaps ~~that~~ Walden can turn this to advantage and catch the man.

Feliks buys the necessary materials and makes a bomb.

During a political argument in the servants' hall, Annie makes a mistake: she declares that Mrs Parkhurst is "a real lady", she knows because Mrs Charlotte said so. Marya reports to Lydia that Charlotte has met Mrs Parkhurst. Charlotte is suspected and forbidden to leave the house alone.

Feliks writes on an envelope: "Prize Orlanov, busy hotel." He gives an usher a penny to deliver it in 15 minutes' time. By then Feliks is in the hotel lobby, reading a newspaper, apparently waiting for some one. The boy comes in and hands over the letter. Feliks watches carefully: his plan is to follow the envelope all the way to Orlanov. Suddenly the usher is surrounded by plain-dressed policemen who seem to have materialised out of the walls.

Walden is summoned from an office off the lobby. He questions the usher. He opens the envelope and finds it empty. He begins to suspect what this is all about. He looks around.

But the lobby is empty.

five (or eight)

Hydia finds herself longing to see Felix again. This feeling, and its associated guilt, makes her act toward Walden.

Walden moves Adornas again. He tells his brother: "If 'Mr Herrin' should call again, I want you to admit him, then tell Pritchard immediately." He says to Pritchard: "If 'Mr Herrin' calls, follow him when he leaves."

Felix tries following Walden around for a couple of days. The first day, Walden has lunch at his club, makes two calls in the afternoon, goes to the opera and finishes up at a ball. Next day he leaves early in his car. Felix follows on his bicycle, but as soon as the car leaves Central London it picks up speed and Felix is left behind.

There is nothing for it but to try Hydia again.

Charlotte is determined to go on the suffragette demonstration. The King has refused to give an audience to Mrs Pankhurst, so the suffragettes are meeting at Buckingham Palace. Annie announces that Charlotte is in bed with a headache and is not to be disturbed. Then Charlotte sneaks out of the house.

Felix sees his sister coming out of the Walden house. "Nadia!" he says. She gives him a puzzled look and walks on by. Felix realizes that he has not seen Nadia for twenty years, and although she looked like that when she was nineteen she certainly doesn't now. So who is this girl? ~~She is~~ Presumably Charlotte, Hydia's daughter, whom Felix has not seen only from a distance. He follows her. [→] one night when where Adornas is.

The police have been ordered to repel the suffragettes with a minimum of arrests, because the women are more trouble in jail than out. Lacking the weapon of arrest the police resort to violence, and idle male by-standers join in. Felix sees Charlotte go down in a ruffle. He rushes in and rescues her.

He takes her to a cheap cafe and buys her a cup of tea. They talk. So Hydia has a daughter who looks just like my sister... An incredible

suspicion begins to dawn on Feliks. He asks Charlotte her exact date of birth. She tells him.

Then he knows: she is his daughter.
* (or Niece)

Walden is at Walden Hall, which is Olman's latest hideout. Olman is in daily contact with the czar, via the Berlin Embassy, by messenger and coded cable. He now presents a modified demand: German control of that area of the Balkans which is presently European Turkey. Walden dashes back to London to consult with Churchill again.

Charlotte is fascinated by Feliks, for he has answers to the questions which trouble her: why is there poverty? Why are there wars? Why is the secret?

Feliks says that he knew Lydie in Armenia long ago, and that Charlotte reminded him of his sister. "Maybe we're related," Charlotte says idly. Feliks catches his breath, hesitates, then says: "I doubt it."

They arrange to meet again.

Walden and Churchill come up with a new counter-proposal: German control of the Bosphorus plus Constantinople. Walden thinks the Germans will go for that. Churchill says he must get Cabinet approval.

Feliks faces a dilemma. He has found a daughter he never knew he had -- and she may know where Olman is. Should he use her?

He reads in the newspaper that the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand has been assassinated at Sarajevo.

He must use her.

They hear the National talking together. He talks to him knowledgeably about the picture. He feels so proud.

He tells her that the assassination at Sarajevo means war. He explains that Walden and Olman are trying to bring Armenia into the war, and says that in order to stop them he must kill Olman. Charlotte does not accept this easily, but in the end he convinces her. Then he asks her where Olman is.

She does not know.

But she will find out.

Six (or Ten)

Charlette asks her father where Oswald is. He replies: "Better you don't know."

Walden walks around London, brooding. His wife is as cold as ice, his daughter is running out money, and the uranium is still at large. Meanwhile the German Kaiser has promised to back Austria in any reprisals against Poland. Walden's whole world is falling apart.

He finds himself ^{in S.D.W.} outside the house he gave to Bonnie Carter in 1892. He wonders what she is like now. May God, she must be fifty.

A hansom cab comes up and a woman gets out. Watching from across the street, Walden recognizes Bonnie. She is rather plump and a shade overblown, but she smiles the gives the driver kops at Walden's heartstrings. She looks in his direction. He knows quickly and walks away, uncertain whether she saw him or not.

When he gets home his home is a hornet. Charlette and her other girlfriends have been caught sitting fire to mailboxes. Walden has to go and get his daughter out of jail. He promises to send her away to keep her out of trouble.

The cabinet approves his proposed new number-offer to the Americans, so next day he drives to Walden Hall to put it to Oswald. He takes Charlette with him and leaves her there.

Walden is due to meet Charlette again that day. He waits all day for her but of course she does not turn up.

* (or Eleven)

^{Thursday}
Next day, back in London, Walden calls on Bonnie. Yes, she did see him that day, and she has been waiting ever since for him to call. She is now living on her savings, comfortable but lonely. They make love. Afterwards she tells him that she knows (from experience) that he is infertile. He says: "But I've got a daughter." Bonnie says: "When was she born, dear... exactly?"

Memorable Feliks calls on Lydia and asks again where Adman is. Lydia says: "You're trying to use me to help you murder him!" Feliks says: "All these years I had a daughter... do you realize what you've taken from me?" They quarrel like lovers who have betrayed one another. At the height of the row they kiss passionately. Lydia breaks away and runs out of the room. Feliks leaves.

Pritchard follows him.

When Walden gets home there are three messages.

One is from Churchill. Astina has sent Astoria a new ultimatum with a 48-hour deadline.

The second is from Adman, accepting the new deal. Walden notifies Churchill and proposes the papers should be signed Saturday at Walden Hall.

The third comes from the head him post in Troy. Pritchard is watching the front door of the house where Feliks lives. He writes: "Come immediately. Wear my clothes." Walden sends a message to Churchill then leaves.

Seven (or Twelve)

At Feliks' house there is a letter from Churchill: "Adman is here at Walden Hall. Meet me any evening on the middle path in the woods north of the house." Feliks begins methodically to pack his trunk.

Walden and Pritchard follow Feliks to the railway station. Pritchard gets behind him in the queue and buys a ticket to the same destination, a market town close to Walden Hall. Pritchard gets on the train, establishes where Feliks is sitting, then comes back and gives his ticket to Walden. Walden scribbles an note for Pritchard to take to Churchill, then gets on the train. The train pulls out.

Churchill gives orders for troops to stop the train and arrest everyone on board.

Pritchard dashes back to the house. He tells Lydia what is happening. Then he takes the bells and heads pell-mell for the place where they plan to

Stop the train.

The train slows to a halt on an uphill slope. Looking out of the window, Feliks sees a ring of lights surrounding the train. He gets up and heads for the ~~back~~ end carriage.

Walden sees him pass and fall.

Walden, on the train, is wondering why Feliks did not tell him that 'the train' had called again, and whether there has any connection with what Bronnie was saying. The train slows to a halt on an uphill slope. Walden looks out. The train is surrounded by soldiers. Walden sees Feliks go by, heading for the back end of the train. He gets up and goes the same way.

Feliks gets into the guard's van, the last carriage in the train, and releases the brake. Then he dynamites the coupling. The van begins to roll backward.

Walden leaps the gap and attacks Feliks. The fight is unequal. Walden is thrown out.

The moving carriage gathers speed and bursts through the column of soldiers.

Eight (or Thirteen)

Polkoff arrives. Walden is not seriously injured. The soldiers form up and begin to search.

When the carriage comes to a stop Feliks takes off over fields. He reaches a main road. A car comes along. He stops it, throws the driver out, and takes the car.

The soldiers set up a roadblock. Feliks marches through it.

Walden and Polkoff give chase in the hills.

Feliks has a puncture. He drives the stolen car off the road and hides it. He shatters its windscreen and plants shrapnel & dynamite in the road. Then he heads across country.

Walden and Polkoff drive over the glass and get two punctures.

They begin to walk, looking for somewhere to hire horses.

Feliks steals a horse from a field. He arrives in the vicinity of Walden Hall around 3 a.m. ^{on Friday}. The area is crawling with police, but the man who escaped from Siberia has little to fear from English country policemen.

Nine (or fourteen)

Walden and Ditchford arrive just before dawn and organise a police dragnet to search the area.

Churchill goes riding before breakfast and picks up Feliks in the woods. She tells him back to the stables then leads him up over the roof to her attic hiding-place. She tells him that Manner's room is guarded day and night, windows and doors. However they are going to sign the treaty at 3 pm on Saturday in ~~one~~ ^{various} ~~various~~ a room called the Octagon.

Lydia arrives from London. After what Ditchford told her last night she has deduced that Churchill must be helping Feliks. She must tell Walden this, and in so doing she is obliged to reveal the secret of Churchill's parentage. Walden was somewhat prepared for that by Bonnie. He and Lydia forgive one another and resolve to start afresh.

Meanwhile Churchill is confined to her room and the house is searched. When the searches reach the attic Feliks goes out on to the roof and evades them.

In the night he sneaks through the deserted house and plants a bomb in a large flower-pot in the Octagon. He sets it to go off at 3.15.

ten (or fifteen)

On Saturday Austria declares war on Serbia.

At three o'clock the secret treaty is signed by Walden and Manner in the presence of Churchill and the Russian Ambassador. The four men drink a celebratory glass of champagne.

Churchill is released from her room. She goes straight to the attic

and tells Feliks: "It's too late - they've signed it."

Now so, he says: They will all be blown up in ... two minutes."

Charlotte says: "But you can't tell my father!"

"It's not your father," says Feliks. "I am." You see, he and I were lovers, and —

"It makes no difference!" says Charlotte — and she runs off.

Feliks goes after her, terrified above all that now she will die.

Charlotte runs into the Octagon at 3.14.30. She says: "Get out, everybody —"

Feliks comes in behind her and tries to drag her out. Walden and Adamov jump on him.

It is 3.14.50.

Feliks struggles. For an instant he gets free.

It is 3.14.59.

Feliks picks up the power plug and, clutched to his chest, dashes inward through the window.

The bomb goes off before he hits the ground.

Charlotte runs to Walden. He puts his arms around her. "Father," she says.

Postscript.

In the first few months of the war, the Russian threat to Germany's eastern frontier drove troops away from the ~~regions of~~ France and thus helped played a crucial role in halting the German advance. In 1915 the Russians were officially given Constantinople and the Bosphorus. And in 1917 the Russian people overthrew the Czarist regime. Of course Feliks was not alive to see the outcome of his life's work. But perhaps it was just as well.