

## THE RUSSIAN PRINCE

### Background

In 1914 the British ruled half the world, and they did not know (except perhaps subconsciously) 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 steam years of Victoria's reign were being spent with gusto. People ate and drank hugely, five large meals a day sometimes. Houses were enormous, entertainment was lavish, clothes were gorgeous. 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 <sup>could</sup> not be worn closer to London than Ascot. Fancy dress parties <sup>were</sup> all the rage. <sup>It was</sup> This was the time of Diaghilev's scandal ballet, the shock of post-Impressionism, the scandal of mixed bathing, subrogates, the tango and ragtime.

There was, of course, another England. The slums of Edwardian London ~~had~~ were worse than they had been in Dickens' time. The East End was characterized 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 starved, emaciated or sick to learn anything. In many houses people ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> standing up because there ~~are~~ <sup>were</sup> 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 and June. The temperature in London on 1 July was 94°. It was the last long summer of the British Empire.

Domestic politics were even hotter. In 1905 a liberal government had been elected. At first this made little difference to anything. Then in 1908 the Prime Minister, Campbell-Bannerman, died, and a government of young firebrands came to power. Asquith was the first Prime Minister without a country estate. His home secretary was the bellicose young Winston Churchill, and as Chancellor of the Exchequer he picked the Welsh nationalist hothead Lloyd George. Thus began a period in politics more bitter and angry than any this century. The liberals brought in (or tried to) a land Tax, Home Rule for Ireland, a cheaper and more modern Army and Navy, old age pensions, universal 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 sit down at the same dinner table. Outside the framework of establishment politics the status quo was under threat from the nascent women's movement, the growing labour party, strikes, and 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 is no smarter than other European monarchs - which is to say that~~ The Kaiser was the Donald Regan of his time - conservative, militaristic, and very stupid. In the past year Germany's war preparations had become increasingly obvious. The government ~~was~~ imposed a one-off special tax to raise one billion marks, the highest levy in European history, and the money <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ used to step up conscription (so that it ~~was~~ included all fit men without exception) with corresponding increases in military hardware. On the harder money market German firms ~~had~~ <sup>were</sup> factoring credits, i.e. discounting bills for early payment, with the result that Germany had collected all her debts while still owing money to the rest of the world.

But most important was her navy. For some time English policy had been that the British navy must be larger 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 arms limitation treaty.

Needless to say, the problem looked different from when viewed from the other side of the fence. Germans were proud of their country's uphill struggle to greatness; and where, they asked, is it written that Britain shall rule the world and Germany shall always be a second-class power? Germany was in danger of being cut off from the rest of the world - notably the US, Africa and the Far East - because of the policy of "encirclement" masterminded by Britain. Germany was largely surrounded by hostile nations: France, Belgium, Britain and Russia. Italy was wavering and the Balkans were turbulent. Germany's ~~only~~ route to North America was via the North Sea, where Britain ruled the waves (so a naval limitation treaty, which Britain ~~kept~~ <sup>kept</sup> propping up as though it were the essence of sweet reason, would <sup>have</sup> simply maintained the status quo and ~~kept~~ <sup>kept</sup> 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 the Balkans. Her

only way to the far East was via Persia, a territory which Britain and Russia ~~have~~ 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~~ <sup>made</sup> in Africa was denounced as troublemaking by the Powers which ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> already sitting on rich possessions. ~~Was~~ <sup>Was</sup> there any way for Germany to avoid being suffocated? None 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 neutralise Russia. And for the same reason England and France would ~~like~~ <sup>have</sup> liked to extract from the Russians a firm commitment to join in on the Allied side if and when war breaks out.

Strategically, England and Russia ~~may~~ <sup>have</sup> been natural allies, but other factors ~~kept~~ <sup>kept</sup> them apart. The regime of the Czar was brutal and reactionary. (If the Kaiser was like Reagan, the Czar was like Idi Amin.) This difference of philosophy between the rulers of the two countries was crystallised in the problem of dissidents. England at the time had no restrictions on immigration. Consequently London became a haven for refugee revolutionaries from Eastern Europe. This mightily annoyed the Czar, but British public opinion - and the conscience of the liberal government - would not allow the dissidents to be sent back home to be imprisoned, tortured and executed. Anglo-Russian relations were therefore inhibited by an uneasy non-alignment.

### Character.

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 imposed his own self-discipline on himself as much as on others. ~~Young Stephen learned to ride before he could walk and to shoot before he could write.~~ Young Stephen ~~always defied~~ <sup>rebelled against</sup> his father but absorbed most of the old man's <sup>basic</sup> values, <sup>\*</sup> inheriting nothing <sup>feminine except</sup> but a deep and hidden gentleness from his sweetly insane mother. He went to Eton, where he misbehaved, and 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's taste was for loose women. In 1893 he had a <sup>\*</sup> relationship, knowledge and hard work

wildly romantic affair with a singer, Bonnie ("Bonnie") Curtis (real name Maudie Curtis). He even gave her a present of a small house in St John's Wood, the area of London which was at that time Midsomer. 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 young 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, hearing 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.) And the diplomats' wives never failed to be charmed by his sincere gentility. Nevertheless he would leave these elegant rooms in his 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. "Good," he said, and seemed to go into a trance. Aitchard got him out of it by calling him "My lord". From the moment he realized he was the eighth Earl of Walden, Stephen 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 involved in foreign - especially Russian - affairs, and was occasionally used as a confidential diplomatic messenger. He knew 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 have permanently 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 now looks back on that as the triumph of his life.

In the domestic political battle Walden — who sits in the horse of heads, remember — 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 vintage port, 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 desire to wander. He is as proud as much 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!" His only regret was that he did not have more children (however it was not for want of trying).

He is the best of the 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 <sup>major</sup> fault is that they cannot see why things must now change. His tenants and his employees are on his side: they already get pensions and social security from him, and they see no point in the government's taking money from him in house tax in order to give them what they already get from their master.

So Walden, a man who has found a happiness he thought would be permanent, finds his life under attack. But soon his country and his family too will face ~~all~~ danger from another, foreign source.

LYDIA is a woman haunted by a guilty secret, a secret which will be revealed, bit by bit, to her increasing dismay, through the summer of 1914.

Back in 1895 she was the belle of St Petersburg society. Then aged 19, she was beautiful in a frail, colorless sort of way, and terribly respectable: neatly dressed, obedient to her parents, respectful to her elders, a devout churchgoer, hopelessly impractical, and

liable to faint at the slightest suggestion of impropriety. However all of this was to some extent an act, serving to conceal a passionate Bohemian nature. The married Walden under some pressure from her father, an elderly Russian count.

Nineteen years later she is still beautiful. Her public image is not much changed, except insofar as it is Anglicized. She is still highly respectable, she plays the part of an Edmondian 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 feels very protective toward her. Lydia's life task is to bring up Charlotte and see her safely married.

Charlotte is an only child who has grown up among adoring family and servants. She is too good-natured to be quite spoiled, but she is at least willful (like Walden). Both in 1845 both ~~Charlotte~~ her parents in their different ways suppressed the Bohemian sides of their personalities in favour of respectability, and the unexpressed 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 protected childhood. Charlotte has never seen 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 German and scholarly 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, cultured, overprotected... she has one more crucial trait: idealism. She realizes 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.

Finally, Charlotte is as beautiful as her mother. At present her beauty is entirely natural: an innocent smile, a clear complexion, a graceful walk. But soon she will learn to dress like a woman, and then she will be devastating.

She recently asked her governess, Marya: "What will I do after I get married?"

Manga replied: "Why, my child, you will do nothing." Charlotte has always adored her mother and seen her as perfection personified; but now she realises that Lydia and the other Edenian ladies, although they are continually busy with social events, in fact do nothing. Charlotte feels, like any teenager, that she is faced with a decision about what kind of person she is going to be; and for the first time she is entertaining the unsettling idea that she may not want to be a replica of her mother. This is Charlotte's personal version of the perennial adolescent identity crisis. It will come to a head during the summer of 1914; and when it is over she will know who she is.

Levits Meronov was born in Russia, the son of a poor country priest. His father was a somewhat saintly man - dedicated, selfless and devout. Levits inherited his selflessness but not his piety. He grew up with a deep and sincere compassion for the world's downtrodden and a bitter contempt for the church which supported and even protected by the status quo.

Nevertheless, the priesthood was the only way for a poor boy to get educated, and Levits went to theological college in St Petersburg. There he discovered a system of beliefs more to his liking: anarchism. Anarchists believe that all government is tyranny, all property is theft, and all organisation is coercion. As soon as people realise this, they will rise up and destroy the state. However, because anarchists are in principle opposed to organisation, they cannot form a cohesive political movement. The only way for them to encourage the revolution is by propaganda and by example - e.g. by assassinating politicians. In a caring political theory leads to murder. This is the central conflict of anarchism, and Levits epitomises it with his contradictory qualities of compassion and ruthlessness.

He has been in love once, when he was a student. He was then a tall, gaunt, white-faced fanatic, mad as hell at the whole world yet tender and vulnerable as a lover, and both lascivious and pious in bed. But the girl remained someone else. About that time he was arrested by the Ochrana, the Czar's bestial secret police, and tortured. After he was released he wandered the Russian 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 (which, like England, tolerates anarchists).

Now aged 40, hardened both physically and in his convictions, he is an

impressive figure: intense, dominant, magnetic and mesmeric. He is tall, thin, hardy and nose 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 a turmoil: the Czar is a halfwit, the Duma (parliament) is inept, the oil workers are at war with the London, and a million workers are on strike. The country is a powder-barrel waiting for a spark, and Feliks wants to be that spark. But he knows that as soon as he sets foot on Russian soil he will be sent to Siberia (this has already happened to the Frater) and he could do nothing in Siberia. But what can he do outside Russia?

He is about to find out.

Drithend, Walden's ~~valet~~ valet, is the cynical, intelligent son of a London Christmucker. As a boy he ran away to sea then jumped ship in Zanzibar. He met Walden in Africa in 1877, when Walden was 23 and Drithend 17. They hunted together and became friends. As well as being valet Drithend has responsibility for Walden's car (his personal domain), and sometimes takes a glass of port with his master in the green room late at night. He is intensely loyal to Walden despite a biting (but largely theoretical) contempt for the British ruling class.

He has a running battle with Marga, Chudette's governess, an immensely plain woman in her late thirties. In the servants' hall Drithend will attack the aristocracy and Marga will defend them. Drithend loves to embarrass her by sexual innuendo. However, beneath their bickering may lie some kind of mutual attraction.

On Marga's day off Chudette is reprieved by Annie, an easygoing young housemaid who has much sensuality and little sense.



## The Plot

### One

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

"Yes, my lord," the butler said.

"Send the blighter 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 damn here, he knows damn well I won't see him —

The butler coughed.

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

"Mr Churchill told me you'd be 'not at home', my lord, and said I must give you this."

Walden noticed that the butler was carrying a letter in a bag. "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.

Sunday, 24 May 1914

Whitehall Palace

My dear Walden,

You will see young Winston.

George R.

Walden recognized the handwriting. It was the King's. He hesitated 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 hell-bent on destroying 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. The admiral is Prince Alexei Andronovich Orlov, aged 30, a nephew and favorite of the Czar and a distant relation of Lydia. Churchill has already portrayed what was to have been an

exchange of views into a breezy negotiation. The Crew insists that Ottomov talk to Walden, whom he trusts. The general opinion is that Walden is probably the only man who could bring off a real treaty.

To obscure the secret purpose of the visit, Ottomov - a very eligible bachelor - will stay at Walden's farm house and be introduced to human 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 awestruck by the importance of his task, which is no less than to get the Germans on our team. 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.

\*

Hydia leaves the men talking politics and strolls into the garden. She walks around the vast, lovely old house and wanders aimlessly through the luscious park. The mention of Ottomov has unseamed 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 when in fact she was in love with another man. Walden knows nothing of this, but Hydia, despite appearances, has kept alive the memory of that adolescent passion.

Hydia sees her daughter, Charlotte, deep in conversation with Belinda. Hydia thinks: Dear God, please let me keep my secrets.

\*

Charlotte and Belinda are talking about being debutantes (both are due to be presented at court this summer), marriage (which is supposed to follow soon after) and sex. This last is a subject upon which they are breathtakingly ignorant. (No doubt 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 chickens, 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 babies get washed: they assume it happens spontaneously around the age of 20 or 21, and for them this explains why they are

prepared to marry as soon as possible after the age of 18.

Belinda is merely curious, but Charlotte is strong-willed. There are books in a locked cupboard in the library, she says; I know where the key is. Belinda immediately gets cold feet but Charlotte insists. They get two books and sneak upstairs. (Annie, who is supposed to be repairing them, is meeting her boyfriend in the woods.) Charlotte leads the way through the dimmed nursery into a space under the roof which used to be her secret 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 stables all across roof, Charlotte says. They look at the books, but they get little help either from the internal diagrams in the medical textbooks or from the bizarre, and to them incomprehensible, pornographic novel.

\*

Meanwhile Feliks' boat is docking at Dover.

The Swiss anarchists have learned, through a traitor in the Ochrona, of Orlanov's planned visit to England and its purpose. Feliks is horrified by the prospect of a European war. The idea of young men being sent, by Kaiser and Czar and Prime Ministers, to be killed and maimed in a cause they do not understand, is just the kind of thing that makes Feliks an anarchist. As far as he is concerned the purpose of Orlanov's visit is to murder thousands of young Russian men. So he plans to sabotage the talks by killing Walden and Orlanov.

The effects of such a murder would be greater than might immediately be apparent. Firstly it would of course bring the talks to an abrupt halt. Secondly, were it become known that the ~~murder~~<sup>murderer</sup> perpetrator was a Russian anarchist, the old quarrel between Russia and England over expatriate dissidents would flare up again and probably prevent the talks continuing with replacement negotiations. Thirdly, Feliks (or, if he is dead, his Swiss colleagues) would announce to the world that Orlanov was killed because he was scheming to drag the Russian people into a war they do not want; and Russian popular reaction to that news might set off a chain-reaction of events leading ultimately to revolution.

Feliks is home, excited, apprehensive and happy. He may die soon, but for now life has 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 they had gone to England. He remembers how she used to yell "Help!" at the moment of dinner. Now, after all this time, he will be in the same country as she. Will he see her? Her name was Lydia.

## Two

Feliks is at Victoria Station for the arrival of Adamov. Adamov is travelling in a private coach (bought from the King) at the back end of the train. He steps out of the coach and into Walden's carriage. Feliks gets a glimpse of a handsome, expensively-dressed young man. Adamov had a mountain of luggage on to the carriage and it drives 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 - Feliks is soon able to establish - is the town home of the Earl of Walden.

Inside the house Lydia greets Adamov. He talks about Russia, and this pillar of the Tsar's regime turns out to be something of a radical. He speaks earnestly of the need for change in Russia: for land reform, mechanised agriculture, modern industry and parliamentary democracy. He is a rather appealing young man. But Lydia is thinking: could he possibly know?

When Charlotte appears we find out why this handsome, charming, wealthy prince is still a bachelor at thirty: he is chronically shy with girls. Charlotte has suddenly turned into a real charmer. Adamov drops his beard, his hair, and suddenly acquires a thick Russian accent. But now Charlotte's hidden talents begin to emerge, and with her unique voice she begins to put him at his ease. Observing this, Walden and Lydia exchange a secret smile of pride.

Outside, Feliks walks in the park and ponders what he has seen. Clearly Adamov is wary of showing himself in public: he will not be an easy target. (Perhaps the possibility of an assassination has occurred to him, too.) Getting close to him will tax Feliks' ingenuity.

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Walden and Adamov formally begin their talks, and Adamov drops a bombshell.

The Russian navy's great long-term aim is to have a warm-water port. She has her Black Sea coast, but the Black Sea is connected with the Mediterranean only by a narrow strait, the Bosphorus, at Constantinople, and both banks of the Bosphorus

are held by Turkey. Armenia has been supporting Slav nationalism in this region in the hope that when the Slavs throw the Turks out Armenia will be granted free passage through the Strait. But before them Slav control of the Bosphorus would be Russian control; and Clemens now announces that if Armenia is to fight on the Allied side in the coming war, the price of her participation will be Britain's recognition of the Balkans as a Russian sphere of influence. Of course Walden is not mandated even to discuss this, and he must consult with Churchill before the bells go any further.

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Meanwhile Feliks is buying a gun and reading the society paper.

### Three

Charitable is presented at court. This is the biggest and most gorgeous ceremony of British royalty, when the aristocratic youth of the kingdom parade before the monarch. "best dress" is obligatory. For women this means a white dress with a low bodice and a train three to four yards long, plus a waon with three white plumes. Men wear velvet knee-breeches with white silk stockings and all their medals. In the main part of the ceremony the King and Queen sit on thrones while the debutantes pass before them one by one. Arthur is there as a member of the party from the Russian Embassy. Walden feeling optimistic about talks - talks Churchill. \*

Charitable's debut is marred by an (historically true) incident. The girl ahead of her in line drops to one knee in front of the King 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 Charitable is furious. She assumes the girl is completely mad, and for now no one will tell her different.

Outside in The Mall Pritchard, who is acting as footman tonight, waits with the Waldens' carriage (among a hundred or so others). He goes into the park to take a leak and is hit over the head with something hard.

Feliks takes Pritchard's top hat and livery, then ties him up and gags him. He puts on the clothes. When he hears the call "The Earl of Walden's carriage" he drives up to the Palace gates. The four passengers get in.

Feliks stops the carriage in the middle of the park. He pulls his scarf up over his face (so that the women, whom he does not seem to kill, will not be able to describe him afterwards). He jumps down, takes his gun from his pocket,

and throws open the carriage door.

Hydia screams "Help!" in Russian - just as she used to when Feliks made love to her. Feliks freezes. Hydia! Here in this carriage! My own 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 turns and runs away.

\*

Feliks remembers the last time he saw Hydia. She came to his dingy room and snatched an hour with him before going to a reception at the British Embassy. That night Feliks was arrested by the Ochrana. They beat the soles 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 Hydia had left for England with her new husband the day before.

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Walden, Adams and Churchill sit in the library. Cheryl shows him how to kill Adams with my again. Walden proposes that Adams should move into the Russian Embassy for the time being. Churchill tells Walden: "It is your responsibility to make sure the security arrangements are water-tight." Churchill looks at Walden.

\* Churchill also instructs Walden to make the Russians a counter-offer: the Bosphorus to be an international waterway with freedom of passage for all nations guaranteed jointly by Russia and Britain.

As Churchill leaves, he says to Walden: "The assassin really wants to kill you, too. But let him." Walden thinking of danger to Hydia + Charlotte, mad about ~~attack~~ attack on Pinchard.

Hydia has not recognized Feliks, except subconsciously. She faints when he runs away. She has been told that it was an attempted robbery. She has been put to bed with a dose of laudanum. She dreams about Feliks, and when Walden comes to bed and embraces her, she makes love to him without waking up, dreaming all the time of another man.

four

Charlotte reads in the papers that the "incident" at Buckingham Palace was a suffragette protest. She talks to Pritchard about it. He explains the reference to working women: suffragettes who are jailed go on hunger strike, and are force-fed by a painful and degrading process. Charlotte refuses to believe this.

That night his coming-out ball is held at the Savoy 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 "fast" 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 Charlotte, who is shocked.

On the way home from the ball at dawn Charlotte is horrified to see a woman sleeping on the pavement. Manya reluctantly explains that thousands of men, women and children have nowhere to sleep but the streets of London. She invites on stopping the carriage and speaking to the woman. It turns out to be Annie, the housemaid who used to domesticate for Manya at Walden Hall. Annie explains that she got pregnant and was fired without a "character". She subsequently had a miscarriage and is now destitute. Charlotte says, "Come home with me." Annie knows better than to accept. Charlotte tells her to come to the house tomorrow afternoon.

Charlotte is grieved and by the revelation of the night. Next day she screams at her parents: "Why did nobody tell me?" Walden and Lydia don't know how to deal with this. Pregnant housemaids are always fired, it's the only way; but in truth they cannot feel proud of themselves. Charlotte invites on taking Annie on as her personal maid. Walden reluctantly agrees.

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Walden is kind of shocked by all this. First an anarchist attacks him in his own carriage in the middle of London; then his daughter seems to regard his values as immoral. What is happening to the world?

\*

Belkiss is depressed. He has lost the element of surprise. He watches the house for a couple of days. Each time a carriage comes and he follows it to its destination and sees who gets out, but it is never Adeline: clearly the prince is no longer staying at the Walden house. This is hardly surprising but it puts

Feliks is in a quandary. Orlow could be anywhere, and Feliks cannot set a watch on every London hotel, every Cabinet Minister's residence, every house here owned by a Russian, etc. So, in desperation, he decides to ask Lydia.

He knocks on the front door. He gives his name as Countessine Danilovicha, 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 probably be vaguely familiar to her, for it is the name of a character in Anna Karenina.)

The butler shows him in. Lydia looks at him with an automatic smile, then frowns, then turns as white as a sheet.

Eventually she tells him why she married Walden. Her father found out that she was having an affair with Feliks and forbade her to see him. Defiantly, she married straight to Feliks' home. Of course he had been arrested. Her father told her that, furthermore, he was being tortured. But she refuses to count them told her that Stephen Walden, who was now an Earl, had formally asked for her hand in marriage; and that if she would marry him, Feliks' torture would cease immediately and he would be released from jail as soon as Lydia had left for England. Of course she agreed.

Feliks wants to kiss her. No, she says, all that is half a lifetime away. Now that you know the truth, go away and never come back.

Feliks consents - for now - but spins her a yarn about wanting to petition Orlow for the release of a young anarchist sailor who is in jail. Lydia tells him Orlow is at the Russian Embassy.

Chapter? As Feliks leaves, Lydia thinks: Thank God, he hasn't even guessed the truth.

Charlotte learns much about sex from Annie.\*

Now that Charlotte is beginning to understand the real world, what can she do about it? She discovers that as a woman she cannot even vote. The action of Leticia de Voies, the debt in the court incident, now appears in a different light. Charlotte calls on her. Since the incident the de Voies family has been ostracised as a matter of course by "good" society, so they are delighted to see the daughter of the Earl of Walden. Mrs Pankhurst is there. Charlotte is ripe for conversion. She promises to go on a suffragette march.

During an argument in the servants' hall, Annie declares that Mrs Pankhurst is a "real lady", Annie knows because Charlotte said so. Marya



reports to Lydia that Charlotte has met Mrs. Blankenshaw. Lydia is agitated. She makes Walden prohibit further Charlotte to leave the house alone.

\*

Lydia begins to think about the interview with Feliks. She knows he was and probably still is an anarchist. How he told her the truth about why he needs to contact Orlow? Perhaps he wants to kill Orlow. It might even have been Feliks in the park that night! She tells Walden: "A man called this morning, a Russian whom I remembered vaguely from Dr. Blankenshaw, asking for Orlow... I told him the Russian Embassy. I hope that was all right..."

Walden conceals his anger. This is the last thing he needs. Orlow is holding 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 dreadnoughts to pass between the North Sea and the Baltic. Every day Lord makes a deal with Russia's new request; but the unknown Russian seems irrepressibly daring and ingenious.

But perhaps he can turn this latest development to advantage. If the Russian goes to the Russian Embassy he can be caught...

\*

Felix puts together a bomb.

Then he writes an envelope: "Prince Orlow, Russian Embassy." He gives an usher a shilling to deliver the envelope in ten minutes' time. By then he is in the hall of the Embassy, waiting while the staff try to find a letter for him which he insists must be here.

The small boy comes in and hands over the letter. Felix watches carefully to see where it goes. Suddenly the boy is surrounded by body guards who seem to have materialised out of the walls. Walden appears and begins to question the boy.

Felix leaves.

five

~~Felix is seen to plot Charlotte's escape with Annie to be able to break out of the house~~

Lydia finds herself longing to see Feliks again & told to her husband.

five

\*

Charlotte is determined to go on the next suffragette march. Annie helps her to sneak out of the house.

Walden to Butler: It hasn't called again tell  
\* Pinkard. To Pinkard: Follow him.

Feliks sees a girl coming out of the Walden house by a side gate. "Nadia!" he says. She gives him a puzzled look and walks past him. Nadia is Feliks' sister; and after a moment's thought he realizes that, although Nadia looked just like his ~~twenty years ago~~, when she was 15, he has not seen her for twenty years and she now looks very different. Who is this girl? He follows her. An incredible possibility is beginning to dawn on him: that this is Charlotte, Lydia's daughter, and that she looks like Nadia because ~~she is~~ Feliks, not Walden, is her father...

The King has refused to give Mrs Pankhurst an audience, so the suffragettes are marching on Buckingham Palace. The police have been ordered to repeat them 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 bystanders join in. Feliks sees Charlotte go down in a scuffle. He is suddenly filled with paternal rage. He wades in and carries her clear.

He takes her to a cheap cafe and buys her a cup of tea. They talk. She is fascinated by him, for he has answers to questions which trouble her: Why are there poor people? Why are there wars? Why is sex secret?

Feliks says he knew Lydia a long time ago in Russia. Charlotte had reminded him of his sister. Maybe we're related. Charlotte says idly. Feliks forces himself to smile and say, I doubt it.

They arrange to meet again.

\* Feliks assumes Oswald has been moved from the American Embassy. He decides to try following Walden around. One day Walden spends a normal London day: an appointment in the City in the morning, lunch at his club, a couple of calls in the afternoon, dinner at home, the opera at night, a supper ball. Next day he leaves home early in his car. Feliks follows on his bike, but as soon as they reach Lamb Central London the car picks up speed and Feliks loses it.

\*

Walden is in fact nothing to Walden Hall, which is Ostrowski's new hideout. The Archduke Franz-Ferdinand has been assassinated at Sarajevo. Walden sees no way to avoid war.

Ostrowski, who is in daily contact with the Russian Embassy by messenger, presents a modified demand: Russian control of that area of the Balkans which is currently European Turkey.

Walden could scream with frustration. Instead he rushes back to heridan to try that one on Churchill.

\*

feliks faces a dilemma. He has found a daughter he never knew he had - and she may ~~hold the key~~ know where Ostrowski is. Should he use her?

He tells her he was tortured by the Ochranas. There are many Russians languishing in those infernal cells, he says. But we must do something! Charlotte cries. feliks suggests kidnapping Ostrowski and holding him to ransom against the release of political prisoners. "Marvelous!" says Charlotte.

"but where is Ostrowski?" feliks asks her.

Charlotte says, "I don't know."

\*

Walden is thoroughly depressed. The cabinet is trying to come up with yet another counter-proposal. Charlotte continues to deride him. Lydia has turned cold toward him. He can't catch the assassin. The Kaiser has promised to back Austria in any action she may take in the Balkans following the murder of Franz-Ferdinand. Nothing goes right any more.

Walking around and brooding, he finds himself near the house in Dr. Lora's Wood which he gave to Bonnie. He wonders what she is like now. My God, she must be fifty.

A truck drives up and a woman gets out. Walden, watching from a distance, recognizes Bonnie. She is rather plump, and a little over-dressed, but the smile she gives the driver tugs at Walden's heartstrings.

She looks in his direction. He walks away, not knowing whether she has seen him.

\*

When he gets home the house is in turmoil. Charlotte and three other

subrogates have been caught setting fire to letterboxes. She is in jail. Walden has to go and get her out. He has to promise to keep her out of trouble. He tells her she must leave London for the rest of the term.

Six

At last Churchill comes up with a new counter-offer: Walden is authorized to offer Russia control of the Bosphorus with Constantinople to guard it. With Germany's gold reserves at a record high, Walden chairs down to Walden Hall, taking Charlotte, to make the proposal to Colonel.

\*

Back in London, Walden calls on Bonnie. Yes, she did see him the other day, and she has been waiting ever since for him to call. She is now living on her carefully-hoarded savings, and a little lonely. ~~Walden~~ tells them to go to bed together. Walden needs consolation. Afterwards the conversation turns to birth control. 'I never used any precautions with you, Bonnie tells him. At first it was because I wanted your baby. When that didn't happen I realized precautions were unnecessary with you. You must have realized that sooner or later...

'I must be you who can't conceive, Walden says. No, says Bonnie, I've had three children.

But I've got a daughter.

When was she born, exactly? says Bonnie —

and Walden realizes that Charlotte is not his.

\*

Meanwhile Feliks, now desperate, calls on Lydia again. He asks her point-blank where Oskan is. She will not tell him: "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 done for me?" They quarrel like lovers who have betrayed one another. At the height of the row they kiss passionately. She runs out of the room. The butler brings Feliks his coat. He leaves.

Andrew follows him.

\*

and come from O accepting?  
When Walden gets home there is a note from Pritchard. "I am at the Inn and back in Treney, watching Mr Herin's front door. Come quick. Wear my clothes."

Walden notes that Lydia has not told him that Mr Herin called again. Just what is her relationship with the assassin? he wonders. He feels like he's going crazy.

\*

When Feliks gets home he finds a letter from Churchill: "Admon here at Walden Hall. Meet me any morning on the bridle path in the woods north of the house."

\*

Walden and Pritchard follow Feliks to the railway station. Pritchard stands behind him in the ticket queue and buys a ticket to the same destination plus a platform ticket.

Feliks gets on the train. Pritchard finds out where he is sitting, then comes back and tells Walden.

Walden gets on the train & he gives Pritchard a letter for Churchill. The train pulls out.

## Seven

Churchill orders the train stopped.

Walden wanders checking Feliks' whereabouts.

Walden tells the police where Feliks is.

Feliks is gone.

Feliks disconnects the guard's van and <sup>it</sup> runs back down the hill. He steals a motorcycle.

Pritchard & Churchill arrive. Pritchard & Walden go after the stolen motorcycle.

Feliks purchases their tyres.

Feliks reaches the vicinity of Walden Hall & hides in the woods.

## Eight

Walden has the police throw a dragnet all around Walden Hall.

Charlotte, out riding, picks up Feliks. She gets him back to the stables and takes him up, over the roof, to the attic.

## Nine

Hyacin enters all to Walden.

Feliks places the bonds in the night.

## Ten

Austria withdraws.

The treaty is signed.

Charlotte realises about the bonds: You can't kill my father!

He's not your father! She rushes into the room.

Feliks runs after her and tries to drag her out. She will go. The clerk strikes three. Feliks throws himself on the bonds.

## Epilogue

Anna sees the day.

- gets Luxembourg.

- and resolution.