

## FRENZIED FICTION



# *Frenzied Fiction*

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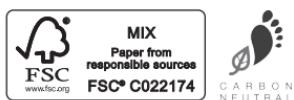
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## FRENZIED FICTION



## MY REVELATIONS AS A SPY

**I**N MANY PEOPLE the very name ‘spy’ excites a shudder of apprehension; we spies, in fact, get quite used to being shuddered at. None of us spies mind it at all. Whenever I enter a hotel and register myself as a spy I am quite accustomed to see a thrill of fear run round the clerks, or clerk, behind the desk.

Us spies, or we spies – for we call ourselves both – are thus a race apart. None know us. All fear us. Where do we live? Nowhere. Where are we? Everywhere. Frequently we don’t know ourselves where we are. The secret orders that we receive come from so high up that it is often forbidden to us even to ask where we are. A friend of mine, or at least a fellow spy – us spies have no friends – one of the most brilliant men in the Hungarian Secret Service, once spent a month in New York under the impression that he was in Winnipeg. If this happened to the most brilliant, think of the others.

All, I say, fear us. Because they know and have reason to know our power. Hence, in spite of the prejudice against us, we are able to move everywhere, to lodge

in the best hotels, and enter any society that we wish to penetrate.

Let me relate an incident to illustrate this: a month ago I entered one of the largest of the New York hotels, which I will merely call the B. Hotel, without naming it – to do so might blast it. We spies, in fact, never *name* a hotel. At the most we indicate it by a number known only to ourselves, such as 1, 2 or 3.

On my presenting myself at the desk the clerk informed me that he had no room vacant. I knew this, of course, to be a mere subterfuge; whether or not he suspected that I was a spy I cannot say. I was muffled up, to avoid recognition, in a long overcoat with the collar turned up and reaching well above my ears, while the black beard and the moustache that I had slipped on in entering the hotel concealed my face. ‘Let me speak a moment to the manager,’ I said. When he came I beckoned him aside and, taking his ear in my hand, I breathed two words into it.

‘Good heavens!’ he gasped, while his face turned as pale as ashes.

‘Is it enough?’ I asked. ‘Can I have a room, or must I breathe again?’

‘No, no,’ said the manager, still trembling. Then, turning to the clerk: ‘Give this gentleman a room,’ he said, ‘and give him a bath.’

What these two words are that will get a room in New York at once I must not divulge. Even now, when the veil of secrecy is being lifted, the international interests involved are too complicated to permit it. Suffice it

to say that if these two had failed I know a couple of others still better.

I narrate this incident, otherwise trivial, as indicating the astounding ramifications and the ubiquity of the international spy system. A similar illustration occurs to me as I write. I was walking the other day with another man, on Upper B. Way between the T. Building and the W. Garden.

'Do you see that man over there?' I said, pointing from the side of the street on which we were walking on the sidewalk to the other side, opposite to the side that we were on.

'The man with the straw hat?' he asked. 'Yes, what of him?'

'Oh, nothing,' I answered, 'except that he's a spy!'

'Great heavens!' exclaimed my acquaintance, leaning up against a lamppost for support. 'A spy! How do you know that? What does it mean?'

I gave a quiet laugh – we spies learn to laugh very quietly.

'Ha!' I said, 'that is *my* secret, my friend. *Verbum sapientius!*  
*Che sarà sarà!\** *Yodel doodle doo!*'

My acquaintance fell in a dead faint upon the street. I watched them take him away in an ambulance. Will the reader be surprised to learn that among the white-coated attendants who removed him I recognised no less a person than the famous Russian spy, Poulispantzoff? What he was doing there I could not tell. No doubt his orders came from so high up that he himself did not know. I had seen him only twice before – once when we were both disguised

as Zulus at Buluwayo, and once in the interior of China, at the time when Poulistantzoff made his secret entry into Tibet concealed in a tea case. He was inside the tea case when I saw him — so at least I was informed by the coolies who carried it. Yet I recognised him instantly. Neither he nor I, however, gave any sign of recognition other than an imperceptible movement of the outer eyelid. (We spies learn to move the outer lid of the eye so imperceptibly that it cannot be seen.) Yet after meeting Poulistantzoff in this way, I was not surprised to read in the evening papers a few hours afterwards that the uncle of the young King of Siam had been assassinated. The connection between these two events I am unfortunately not at liberty to explain; the consequences to the Vatican would be too serious. I doubt if it could remain topside up.

These, however, are but passing incidents in a life filled with danger and excitement. They would have remained unrecorded and unrevealed, like the rest of my revelations, were it not that certain recent events have to some extent removed the seal of secrecy from my lips. The death of a certain royal sovereign makes it possible for me to divulge things hitherto undivulgeable. Even now I can only tell a part, a small part, of the terrific things that I know. When more sovereigns die I can divulge more. I hope to keep on divulging at intervals for years. But I am compelled to be cautious. My relations with the Wilhelmstrasse, with Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay are so intimate, and my footing with the Yildiz Kiosk and the Waldorf-Astoria

and Childs' Restaurants\* are so delicate, that a single faux pas might prove to be a false step.

It is now seventeen years since I entered the Secret Service of the G. Empire. During this time my activities have taken me into every quarter of the globe – at times even into every eighth or sixteenth of it.

It was I who first brought back word to the Imperial Chancellor of the existence of an entente between England and France.

‘Is there an entente?’ he asked me, trembling with excitement, on my arrival at the Wilhelmstrasse.

‘Your Excellency,’ I said, ‘there is.’

He groaned. ‘Can you stop it?’ he asked.

‘Don’t ask me,’ I said sadly.

‘Where must we strike?’ demanded the Chancellor.

‘Fetch me a map,’ I said. They did so. I placed my finger on the map.

‘Quick, quick,’ said the Chancellor, ‘look where his finger is.’

They lifted it up. ‘Morocco!’ they cried. I had meant it for Abyssinia, but it was too late to change. That night the warship *Panther* sailed under sealed orders. The rest is history – or at least history and geography.

In the same way, it was I who brought word to the Wilhelmstrasse of the *rapprochement* between England and Russia in Persia.

‘What did you find?’ asked the Chancellor as I laid aside the Russian disguise in which I had travelled.

‘A *rapprochement!*’ I said.

He groaned. ‘They seem to get all the best words,’ he said.

I shall always feel, to my regret, that I am personally responsible for the outbreak of the present war. It may have had ulterior causes. But there is no doubt that it was precipitated by the fact that, for the first time in seventeen years, I took a six weeks’ vacation in June and July of 1914. The consequences of this careless step I ought to have foreseen. Yet I took such precautions as I could.

‘Do you think,’ I asked, ‘that you can preserve the status quo for six weeks – merely six weeks – if I stop spying and take a rest?’

‘We’ll try,’ they answered.

‘Remember,’ I said, as I packed my things, ‘keep the Dardanelles closed; have the Sanjak of Novi Bazar properly patrolled, and let the Dobruja\* remain under a *modus vivendi*\* till I come back.’

Two months later, while sitting sipping my coffee at a Kurhof in the Schwarzwald,\* I read in the newspapers that a German army had invaded France and was fighting the French, and that the English expeditionary force had crossed the Channel. ‘This,’ I said to myself, ‘means war.’ As usual, I was right.

It is needless for me to recount here the life of busy activity that falls to a spy in wartime. It was necessary for me to be here, there and everywhere, visiting all the best hotels, watering places, summer resorts, theatres and places of amusement. It was necessary, moreover, to act with the utmost caution and to assume an air of careless indolence

in order to lull suspicion asleep. With this end in view I made a practice of never rising till ten in the morning. I breakfasted with great leisure, and contented myself with passing the morning in a quiet stroll, taking care, however, to keep my ears open. After lunch I generally feigned a light sleep, keeping my ears shut. A table d'hôte dinner, followed by a visit to the theatre, brought the strenuous day to a close. Few spies, I venture to say, worked harder than I did.

It was during the third year of the war that I received a peremptory summons from the head of the Imperial Secret Service at Berlin, Baron Fisch von Gestern. 'I want to see you,' it read. Nothing more. In the life of a spy one learns to think quickly, and to think is to act. I gathered as soon as I received the dispatch that for some reason or other Fisch von Gestern was anxious to see me, having, as I instantly inferred, something to say to me. This conjecture proved correct.

The Baron rose at my entrance with military correctness and shook hands.

'Are you willing,' he enquired, 'to undertake a mission to America?'

'I am,' I answered.

'Very good. How soon can you start?'

'As soon as I have paid the few bills that I owe in Berlin,' I replied.

'We can hardly wait for that,' said my chief, 'and in case it might excite comment, you must start tonight!'

'Very good,' I said.

‘Such,’ said the Baron, ‘are the Kaiser’s orders. Here is an American passport and a photograph that will answer the purpose. The likeness is not great, but it is sufficient.’

‘But,’ I objected, abashed for a moment, ‘this photograph is of a man with whiskers, and I am, unfortunately, clean-shaven.’

‘The orders are imperative,’ said Gestern, with official hauteur. ‘You must start tonight. You can grow whiskers this afternoon.’

‘Very good,’ I replied.

‘And now to the business of your mission,’ continued the Baron. ‘The United States, as you have perhaps heard, is making war against Germany.’

‘I have heard so,’ I replied.

‘Yes,’ continued Gestern. ‘The fact has leaked out – how, we do not know – and is being widely reported. His Imperial Majesty has decided to stop the war with the United States.’

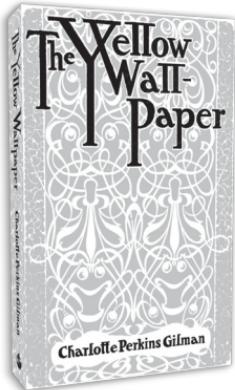
I bowed.

‘He intends to send over a secret treaty of the same nature as the one recently made with his recent Highness the recent Tzar of Russia. Under this treaty Germany proposes to give to the United States the whole of equatorial Africa, and in return the United States is to give to Germany the whole of China. There are other provisions, but I need not trouble you with them. Your mission relates not to the actual treaty, but to the preparation of the ground.’

I bowed again.



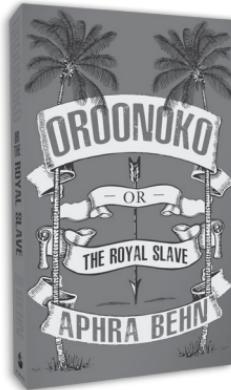
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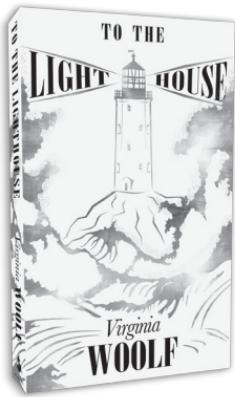
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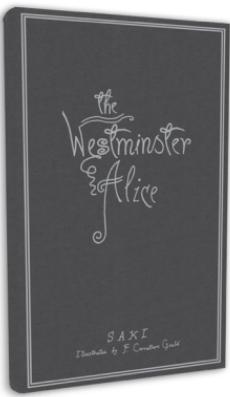
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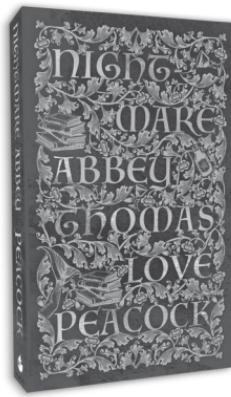
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