

## **“The Peculiar Escapades of Wolfgang and Grant: The Incognito Candlestick”**

By Bella A. Minyo

The gloomy castle loomed above Wolfgang and Grant as they leisurely strolled through the courtyard. The dark turrets protruding didn't help the atmosphere feel any less eerie. Just past the thick bushes that consisted of roses, lilacs, and bluebells, the glinting of a candlestick was barely visible in the third-story window. At the apex of the castle, a tattered flag bearing the Morana family crest sailed through the roiling night. Despite being an obscurity to the world, Morana Palace was filled with raucous noises tonight, since there was a grand ball being held in the honor of the late King Sephtis. Wolfgang glanced over at Grant, his friend, and colleague who shared the same passion for mystery and the unnatural. They are at Morana Palace this evening on the business of keeping an eye out for people with malicious intent.

“Is there anything we know about this ostentatious contingent we were directed to join in the name of protecting King Sephtis's prized possessions?” questioned Grant.

“Do we know anything about the King himself? Yes. The partygoers? No, unfortunately, we were not given much information on those in attendance this evening.” Wolfgang dejectedly replied.

“Ah, rats! If only we were more prepared for this. That puerile and nonchalant assistant chief of the Blair Police Department set us up for failure on this mission! I most certainly will file a scathing report when this is all over. Serves him right!” jibed Grant.

“Now, now, don’t be so cynical, Grant,” said Wolfgang, “We know much about King Sephtis. He was a very gullible King, I’m surprised he managed to stay in rule for so long without being exploited by those around him. Sephtis also was a megalomaniac who loathed anyone who upstaged him. King Sephtis had many affairs and suitresses, and when writing letters to them, using a pseudonym. Anything he did was the opposite of discreet, which made it impossible for him to travel without being noticed. Surprisingly though, King Sephtis was very diligent in his studies. He had a particular fascination with the different languages of the world.”

“One, are you a walking encyclopedia? You practically sound like you wrote a biography about him! Two, was he a polyglot?” asked Grant.

“Perhaps I am a walking encyclopedia, it seems quite plausible. And yes, he was a polyglot. King Sephtis was fluent in ten different languages, giving him some leverage when it comes to foreign affairs.” answered Wolfgang.

“Huh, that’s very intriguing. I never would have thought such a well-educated person could be so gullible and easily exploited. Wasn’t King Sephtis also known to always have a slaver dog around him? It was his pet if I’m not mistaken.” replied Grant.

“Yes, that is correct. His dog, Gary, was known to drool all over visitors. After a while, people stopped traveling to his palace in fear of getting their attire ruined.”

Suddenly, a piercing sound broke through the chilly night. An earth-shattering scream tore through the walls of the palace and reached the ears of anyone in a mile radius. Morana Palace was in contention! Partygoers were streaming out of the gates and caroming off each

other! A figure was crawling out of a window on the third floor. An object gleamed and glinted in their hand. Guards marshaled on the muddy terrain of the palace grounds and attempted to fire at the figure to hamper the person's escape. Wolfgang and Grant bolted across the lawn to the guards in an attempt to make sense of what occurred. Upon reaching their destination, Grant interposed one of the guards to ask what had happened.

“That man just stole valuable gold tableware that belonged to King Sephtis!” shouted the guard.

Another guard was able to forestall the shadowed figure’s attempt to escape by shooting at the turret near the thief. The figure got what appeared to be vertigo from the height and nearly toppled over the side of the castle. The crowd gasped in a state of excitement and began to point at another figure racing across the rooftop!

“Who is that?”

“Hopefully someone to stop that thief!”

“It appears to be a man! I wonder who it is!”

Grant, with a feeling of dread in his stomach, glanced to his side to search out Wolfgang. He was nowhere to be seen.

“Darn you, Wolfgang. Always have to risk your life to save the day you heroic rascal” mumbled Grant.

Wolfgang’s figure caught up to the thief and was able to engage in a fight with him. The unknown shadow punched Wolfgang square in the jaw, throwing them both off balance.

They both began to inextricably slide down the roof over the edge of Morana Palace!

Women cried out in horror and children whimpered on their father's shoulders. Grant put his hand to his mouth in shock, terrified of the outcome of the situation.

Out in the dark somewhere, a voice rhetorically called out in a joking tone, "Am I dead yet? Or did that already happen?"

"Wolfgang!" shouted Grant as he rushed over to the voice.

The two figures were laying in thick bush figurines that resembled the shape of horses, lions, tigers, and dragons.

"Are you well?" asked Grant in a visibly concerned voice.

"Other than a few bruises, I think I will be just swell," said Wolfgang, "This guy, however, might need to be taken to the infirmary then to the penitentiary. I got a good look at his face when I approached him from behind. It's Octavius Penchrou, wanted for crimes of theft, murder, and treason."

"No one would have expected him to be here tonight because of his flux of crimes the past few months. And since this was the place of his undoing," remarked Grant.

"What did he steal?" asked a man in the crowd.

“Yes, I saw something glinting in his hand when he crawled out of the window. I couldn’t get a good look so I assumed it was the gold tableware set out in the late King’s room.” said a palace guard.

Wolfgang, with confidence, pulled the leather satchel used to steal the gold dinnerware out of Octavius’s hands. The guards rushed to restrain the wanted criminal who had given them such a difficult time over the past few months.

“The only thing this thief had in mind to steal was the candlestick we saw in one of the windows. None of the dinnerware has been stolen, I assure you,” announced Wolfgang.

“But, why?” asked Grant.

“Octavius Penchrou was a trusted advisor of King Sephtis. Octavius had been plotting to kill the King in his sleep, take the famous Morana sapphires, and leave in the night for South America to never be found again. He was only able to achieve one of those things, killing the King, since one of the palace maids called for help when she overheard Octavius’ intentions. Unfortunately, the Blair Police Department arrived too late to prevent him from killing the King, but they did prevent him from getting away.” said Wolfgang.

“Octavius Penchrou escaped from Blair Penitentiary five months ago, and has since been terrorizing the citizens of Blair and those who follow the Morana family,” said Grant, “How does that lead him to the palace now, on one of the biggest events of this year when security would have been high, to steal a mere candlestick?”

“Octavius chose tonight because his flight for South America leaves tomorrow morning, although he won’t be making it since he will be spending the rest of his life in prison. As for the candlestick, which is no mere candlestick, has the Morana sapphires stored inside it.”

The crowd is in shock at such a claim.

“Impossible” whispered a man.

“It couldn’t possibly be true, could it?” said a woman.

“Outrageous!” shouted two older aristocrats.

“It is all true, not a hoax. I can prove it to you all, right there,” smiled Wolfgang, “The candlestick that was stolen is here in my hand. On the bottom, there are the initials of the Morana family, MV, which stands for Morana-Victoria. If you take into consideration the unusual shape of the candlestick itself, much larger than the average, and feel the weight of it, which is far less than the weight of pure gold, you can conclude that the Morana sapphires are stored here.”

“Yes, yes, that is very nice, but how do we open it.” says an insolent woman.

“Just watch,” replies Wolfgang.

Everyone watches intently as Wolfgang pulls out a match and lights it. He holds it underneath the faux gold seal at the bottom of the candlestick. The gold drips off to reveal a wood frame. Wolfgang then turns the wooden piece at the bottom right twice and left

once, then it opens. Outfalls several sapphires that glimmer in the moonlight, reflecting the light in every direction. The crowd gasps at the sight.

“Octavius, being a trusted adviser to the King for many years, knew of this secret hiding place. That is why he was so eager to find the sapphires so he can make a fortune off it and live a reclusive life in South America,” says Wolfgang.

“Thank you very much, young sir, for risking your life to save the Morana sapphires from getting into the hands of evil. You have my deference as well as the whole kingdom for ensuring the safety of something so valuable to our late King Sephtis. What can we do to repay you for your courageous deeds?” says the Chief of Morana’s Palace Guard.

“Oh, I don’t need anything, capturing Octavius is enough,” replies Wolfgang, “Although, there is one thing...”

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“This was a great idea you had, Wolfgang!” exclaims Grant.

“Why thank you, having the chance to fly in a plane doesn’t come every day around here!”

“You’re right, I can’t wait to tell all the other detectives back at headquarters that we flew there!” says Grant.

“The look on their faces will be priceless!” agrees Wolfgang.

