

The Silver Sabre

5th ANNUAL PRODUCTION

Like Arthur's mighty sword Excalibur and like the invincible hammer of Thor, the Silver Sabre of Vanadia is shrouded in a dim haze of heroic legend. What little is known of its true history I have gathered from the archives in the royal palace of Sacaluna.

After Constantinople fell, the warlike princes of Vanadia were Christendom's strongest defenders against the on-rushing Turk. In 1637 Frederic II crushed the Sultan at Dauidje and was rewarded by the Emperor with a cunningly wrought sabre of silvery lustre. The weapon, intended against the Paynim, proved extremely effective against Christians. With it Rudolf I checked Eugene of Austria, with it Paul IV defied Napoleon, and with it Frederic VII carved the Russians in Bessarabia.

Continuous victory made it symbolic of the high destiny of Vanadia and of the invincibility of her princes. Never did the Silver Sabre fail and never was it sheathed until the false peace of the corrupt Theodore, regent for Frederic, son of Paul VI, who was mysteriously poisoned in 1908.

While Theodore was growing fat and careless, Karl von Skoda, Margrave of Kaspia, was marking Vanadia for conquest. The blow fell in 1924. Theodore after a vain struggle lost his life at Sacaluna, which fell to the Kaspians. Von Skoda over-ran Vanadia.

Young Frederic, with the inborn genius of the Kyrelon princes, had been carrying the Silver Sabre into the heart of Kaspia, when Theodore's debacle destroyed his support. In the emergency he acted quickly and wisely, disbanding his troops that they might return to Vanadia to await the day of revolution when the Silver Sabre should strike for freedom.

"The day" is but two weeks in the future when our first act takes up the story. Frederic is disguised as a waiter at the inn of Castle Teufelstein, owned by his cousin, the Countess Tecla. His young brother, Prince Rudolf, is a student in a military school which exists by sufferance of the Kaspian conqueror. Boris Warlov, Baron Kibor, and Count Guno are in Sacaluna waiting for the time to strike. Von Skoda has heard that Frederic, whom he has never seen, is at Teufelstein, and is moving there to capture him.

But still more trouble approaches from the north. Marion and Betty Carroll, daughters of an American multimillionaire manufacturer of radio silencers, are searching the Balkans for a romantic old castle—just for a summer hovel, you understand. Now the hard part of it is that Frederic has never fallen in love and hasn't the faintest idea of what that dreadful disease is.

Trouble?—Listen, brother, love is the sickliest sickness that is. And I am the most pitiless author that is. So poor Frederic is in for trouble that is trouble.



AUSTIN WINANT



DECAMP

SCHNICKE