



## The Green Door

LET US THINK ABOUT ADVENTURE.

You are walking along Broadway. You like looking into the shop windows and you are deciding which theater to go to. You are asking yourself, Do I want something to make me laugh, or something to make me feel sad?

Suddenly a hand is placed on your arm. You turn to look deep into the eyes of a beautiful woman, wonderful in jewels and richly dressed. Quickly she puts into your hand a piece of hot—very hot—bread and butter. She cuts a small piece of cloth from your coat. She speaks one word and it means nothing to you. Then quickly she runs down a side street, looking back fearfully over her shoulder.

That would be pure adventure. Would you accept it?

No. Your face would turn red. You would drop the bread and butter. You would walk straight along, with one hand over the hole in your coat. This you would do, if you are not one of the very few in whom the pure spirit of adventure is not dead.

There have never been many true adventurers. You can read stories about men called adventurers. But they were really businessmen. There was something they wanted—lady, or money, or a country, or honor. And so they got it. But a true adventurer is different. He starts without any special purpose. He is ready for anything he may meet.

There have been many half-adventurers. And they were great men. History is rich with their stories. But each of them had a special purpose. They were not followers of true adventure.

In the big city of New York, Romance and Adventure are always waiting. As we walk along the streets, they are watching us. We look up suddenly and see a face in a window. The face seems to interest us strangely. Or in a quiet street we hear a cry of fear and pain coming from a house where no one lives. A cab takes us to a strange door, instead of to our own. The door opens and we are asked to enter. At every corner, eyes look toward us, or hands are raised, or fingers point. Adventure is offered.

But few of us are ready to accept. We are ready to do only the things we do every day. We wish to do only the things that everyone else does. We move on; and some day we come to the end of a long quiet life. Then we begin to think. Then, when it is too late, we are sorry that we have never known true Romance and Adventure.

Rudolf Steiner was a true adventurer. There were few evenings when he did not go out seeking something different. He was always interested in what might be waiting around the next corner. Sometimes adventure led him into strange places. Two times the cops arrested him. Again and again he discovered that he had lost all his money. One night his watch was taken from him. But he continued happily to accept every offer of adventure.

One evening Rudolf was walking slowly along a street in the older part of the city. Many people were walking along the street that night.

Some were hurrying home. Others were going to have their dinner at some restaurant.

The adventurer was a pleasant and good-looking young man. By day, he worked in a music shop.

He walked quietly and watchfully.

He passed a busy restaurant and saw beside it an open door. Above the door a sign was hanging, a sign for a doctor's office. A very large black man stood at the door. He was strangely and brightly dressed in red and yellow. Quietly, he was offering small pieces of paper to those who passed by.

Rudolf had often seen such a thing before. The black man's small pieces of paper would have the name of the doctor in the office on the third floor. Usually Rudolf walked past without taking the paper that was offered. But tonight the paper was put into his hand very quickly. He kept it, smiling.

When he had walked on further, he looked down at the paper. Surprised, he turned it over, and looked again with interest. On one side there was nothing. On the other side were three words: "The Green Door."

And then, three steps beyond, another man threw down the paper the black man had given him. Rudolf picked it up. There was the doctor's name, with the street and the number. This was what Rudolf had expected to find on his own piece of paper.

The young adventurer stopped at the corner to think. Then he went across the street, walked further, and returned across the street to the first side.

Now he again walked past the black man. Again he received a piece of paper. Ten steps away, he looked at it. There were the same words that had appeared on the first paper: "The Green Door." Three or four other pieces of paper were lying in the street where they had been dropped. He looked at them. Every one had the doctor's name on it.

Two times, now, Adventure had asked Rudolf to follow. He was ready.

He walked slowly back to where the big black man stood. This

time as he passed, he received no paper. The papers were offered to some, but not to all who passed. It seemed to Rudolf that the large black face looked coldly at him.

The look was painful to Rudolf. It seemed to say that he had failed. It seemed to say that he was not a true adventurer.

Standing away from the crowd of people, the young man looked up at the building. He believed that his adventure must be somewhere inside. The building was five floors high. A small restaurant was on the ground floor.

On the floor above that was a hat shop. Above the hat shop was the doctor's office. Above this were several signs, of dressmakers, music teachers, and other doctors. On the top floor, people seemed to have furnished rooms.

Rudolf entered the door and walked quickly up.

On the second floor he stopped. The hall was not very well lighted. There were two gas lights, one far to his right, the other nearer, to his left.

He looked toward the nearer light and saw a green door.

For one moment he waited. Then he remembered the cold face of the black man at the door below. He walked straight to the green door, striking it loudly with his hand. Then he waited to see who would open the door.

In the moments that passed then, he could feel the quick breath of true adventure. What might not be behind the wood of that green door! Bad men planning bad acts, or beauty in trouble, or death, or love—anything might be there.

A soft sound was heard, and the door slowly opened. A girl not yet twenty stood there. Her face was very white, and she was very weak. She put out one hand, and started to fall. Rudolf caught her and carried her inside and put her down on a bed.

He closed the door and looked around. It was very clean, but she was very poor. That was what he saw.

The girl lay with her eyes closed. But now she opened them, and the young man looked at her face. He had never seen it before, but he

knew that it was a face he had always hoped to see some day. Her eyes were gray, her nose was small, her hair was brown. It was a face to make this a wonderful adventure. But her face was very thin and it had no color.

The girl looked at him and then smiled. "I fell, didn't I?" she said. "That is what happens when you don't eat for three days."

"What!" cried Rudolf. "Wait till I come back."

He rushed out the green door and down to the street. In twenty minutes he returned. Both arms were full of things from a food shop and from the restaurant. He put them on the table—bread and butter, cold meats, cakes, fish, milk, and more.

"Only little fools," said Rudolf, "stop eating. You must not do things like that. Dinner is ready." He helped her to move to a chair at the table, and asked, "Is there a cup for the milk?"

"There, by the window," she answered.

He filled the cup. "Drink that first," he ordered. "And then you shall have something else. And may I be your guest?"

He moved another chair to the table and sat down.

A little color began to come into the girl's face. She started to eat like some small wild animal that has been without food for a long time. She seemed to think it was not strange that this young man was helping her. Her need had been so great that she was ready to accept any help.

But slowly, as her strength returned, she began to tell him her little story. There are a thousand stories like hers in the city every day. It was the shop girl's story—not enough pay, illness, a lost job, lost hope. And then the adventurer at the green door.

But to Rudolf it was not a little story. It was a big story.

"And you suffered all that!" he said.

"It was really bad," said the girl.

"And you have no family or friends in the city?"

"None."

"I am all alone in the world, too," said Rudolf.

"I am glad of that," said the girl. And it pleased the young man

to hear that she was glad he was alone.

Very suddenly her eyes closed. It was not easy for her to open them again. "I'm falling asleep," she said. "And I feel so good."

Rudolf rose and took his hat.

"Then I'll say good night. A long night's sleep will be fine for you."

He held out his hand and she took it and said, "Good night." But her eyes asked a question.

He answered with words. "I'm coming tomorrow to see how you are."

Then, when he was at the door, she asked, "How did you happen to come to my door?"

He looked at her for a moment, and felt a sudden pain. What if those pieces of paper had been placed in some other man's hand? Quickly he decided that she must never know the truth. He must never let her know that he knew that she had taken such a strange way to call for help.

"I was looking for someone else," he said.

The last thing he saw was her smile.

Outside the door he stopped and looked around the hall. And then he went along the hall to the other end. He came back and went to the floor above, and walked to the far end of that hall. Every door in the house was painted green.

He went down to the street. The black man was there. Rudolf showed him the two pieces of paper with the words, "The Green Door."

"Why did you give these to me?" he asked.

"I give some of those and some with the doctor's name," the black man said. "I'm paid a dollar to give those."

"But what do they mean?" Rudolf asked.

The black man smiled. "There it is," he said. He pointed his finger down the street. "But you are a little late."

Rudolf looked down the street. There he saw a theater, and over the theater was a big sign, in electric lights. It said, "The Green Door."

In the shop on the corner near his home, Rudolf stopped to buy a newspaper. As he stepped outside again he said to himself, "I know

that it was planned that I should meet her that way. I know it.”

For Rudolf Steiner was a true follower of Romance and Adventure.