

WARING'S PERIL

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Waring's Peril by Charles King

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WARING'S PERIL



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BY
CAPT. CHARLES KING,
U. S. ARMY,

AUTHOR OF "THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," "FOES IN AMBUSH," "AN ARMY
FORTIA," "TWO SOLDIERS," "A SOLDIER'S SECRET," ETC.



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WARING'S PERIL.

CHAPTER I.

"ANANIAS!"

"Ye-as, suh?"

"What time is it?"

"Gyahd-mountin' done gone, suh."

"The devil it has! What do you mean, sir, by allowing me to sleep on in this shameless and unconscionable manner, when an indulgent government is suffering for my services? What sort of day is it, sir?"

"Beautiful day, Mr. Waring."

"Then go at once to Mr. Larkin and tell him he can't wear his new silk hat this morning,—I want it, and you fetch it. Don't allow him to ring in the old one on you. Tell him I mean the new 'spring style' he just brought from New York. Tell Mr. Ferry I want that new Hatfield suit of his, and you get Mr. Pierce's silk umbrella; then come back here and get

my bath and my coffee. Stop there, Ananias! Give my pious regards to the commanding officer, sir, and tell him that there's no drill for 'X' Battery this morning, as I'm to breakfast at Moreau's at eleven o'clock and go to the *matinée* afterwards."

"Beg pahdon, suh, but de cunnle's done ohdered review fo' de whole command, suh, right at nine o'clock."

"So much the better. Then Captain Cram must stay, and won't need his swell team. Go right down to the stable and tell Jeffers I'll drive at nine-thirty."

"But——"

"No buts, you incorrigible rascal! I don't pay you a princely salary to raise obstacles. I don't pay you at all, sir, except at rare intervals and in moments of mental decrepitude. Go at once! Allez! Chassez! Skoot!"

"But, lieutenant," says Ananias, his black face shining, his even white teeth all agleam, "Captain Cram stopped in on de way back from stables to say Glenco 'd sprained his foot and you was to ride de bay colt. *Please* get up, suh. Boots and Saddles 'll soun' in ten minutes."

"It won't, but if it does I'll brain the bugler. Tell him so. Tell Captain Cram he's entirely mistaken: I won't ride the bay colt—nor Glenco. I'm going driving, sir, with Captain Cram's own team and road-wagon. Tell *him* so. Going in forty-five minutes by my watch. Where is it, sir?"

"It ain't back from de jeweller's, suh, where you done lef' it day before yist'day; but his boy's hyuh now, suh, wid de bill for las' year. What shall I tell him?"

"Tell him to go to—quarantine. No! Tell him the fever has broken out here again, sir, and not to call until ten o'clock next spring,—next mainspring they put in that watch. Go and get Mr. Merton's watch. Tell him I'll be sure to overstay in town if he doesn't send it, and then I can't take him up and introduce him to those ladies from Louisville to-morrow. Impress that on him, sir, unless he's gone and left it on his bureau, in which case impress the watch,—the watch, sir, in any case. No! Stop again, Ananias; *not* in any case, only in the gold hunting-case; no other. Now then, vanish!"

"But, lieutenant, 'fo' Gawd, suh, dey'll put you in arrest if you cuts drill dis time. Cunnle

Braxton says to Captain Cram only two days ago, suh, dat——”

But here a white arm shot out from a canopy of mosquito-netting, and first a boot-jack, then a slipper, then a heavy top-boot, came whizzing past the darky's dodging head, and, finding expostulation vain, that faithful servitor bolted out in search of some ally more potent, and found one, though not the one he sought or desired, just entering the adjoining room.

A big fellow, too,—too big, in fact, to be seen wearing, as was the fashion in the sixties, the shell jacket of the light artillery. He had a full round body, and a full round ruddy face, and a little round visorless cap cocked on one side of a round bullet head, not very full of brains, perhaps, yet reputed to be fairly stocked with what is termed “horse sense.” His bulky legs were thrust deep in long boots, and ornamented, so far as the skin-tight breeches of sky-blue were concerned, with a scarlet welt along the seam, a welt that his comrades were wont to say would make a white mark on his nose, so red and bulbous was that organ. He came noisily in from the broad veranda overlooking the parade-ground, glanced about on the dis-