

FOLLOWING CANADA'S LEAD

Canada's example in instituting free distribution of forest tree seedlings, cuttings, etc., to prairie homesteaders for planting out as shelter belts, etc., bids fair soon to be followed by the United States Department of Agriculture. The prospect is that this distribution will be made from the newly established Field Station at Mandan, N.D. Mr. W. A. Peterson, the superintendent of the station, lately visited the Dominion Forestry Branch's Nursery Station at Indian Head, Sask., in order to investigate Canadian methods of carrying out the enterprise.

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LUCILLE LOVE

THE GIRL OF MYSTERY

BY THE
"MASTER PEN"

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PROLOGUE.

In print, as on the moving picture screen, "Lucille Love" is a thrilling, rapid fire story. It takes its heroine, a young woman of charm and beauty, into the strangest of situations. There she braves the perils of sea and land for the sake of her love. As the situations unfold, with the swiftness and ease of the moving picture, the reader finds himself following, as he would the living movements of the reel, the fortunes of Lucille, her foe, Loubeque, the international spy, amid scenes of shipwreck and the wildness of nature, on sea, among the islands of the cannibals and elsewhere. But Lucille and her arch foe are not the only two in the picture and story whose movements are followed with the tribute of intense interest. The old general, Lucille's father; her lover, Lieutenant Gibson; the chief of the savages and others all stand out distinctly in the panorama of picture and story.

CHAPTER I.

The Work of a Spy.

HE was swift; he was certain; he was sure. Faintly sweet the tantalizing perfume lingered in the room, and the rustle of Lucille Love's skirts seemed still to sound against the walls of the tiny room which General Sumpter Love used as his private office; the echo of Lieutenant Gibson's pleading tones had not departed when the door leading to the servant's quarters moved. A cautious fraction of an inch at a time, a sound so faint that nothing lived between it and silence succeeded the departure of the general's aid and the girl he loves, the girl he means to marry. As the butler's face framed itself on the threshold the door was opened that led to the ballroom, a burst of music vibrated there, then all was silence. The butler closed the door swiftly behind him and glided across the floor, stopping before the safe, his dexterous fingers manipulating the knobs with a careless certainty



Lucille Love.

that spoke of the master cracksman, his face against the cold steel, his ears fairly peaked with the tenacity of his listening for the click of falling tumblers. His expression betrayed no anxiety. He knew his worth, knew the pregnability of the safe in which his master placed so great confidence and to which he had consigned the papers and orders he had just received from Washington until the ball was over and he had time to study the instructions at his leisure. The cracksman heaved a sigh of relief as his sensitive finger tips told him the last tumbler had fallen. The great iron door swung open to his tug. He was swift; he was certain; he was sure. Not a paper was disarranged. His fingers fluttered like little white birds, drifting among the general's papers with a certitude that bespoke great familiarity. With a sigh

of relief he stared at the sealed packet he had just seen the army officer receive and place there. The butler thrust it into his pocket, drawing out a package of bank notes and putting it in the tiny vault where the papers had been. The door closed softly, the knobs whirring under the man's touch. Again he waited, listening, listening. The vibration of the dancer's feet continued for a second, the strains of music died. With the noiseless glide of a panther the butler slipped across the floor and closed the door behind him. Not one motion had been wasted. For months he had served in his mental capacity for this one opportunity.



"It's about Dick's promotion, dad."

For months to come he would continue to serve in order that no suspicion might rest upon him. Ten minutes later Thompson, alias Tommy the Dude, alias "Chi" Tom and wanted for just such jobs in many police departments of the world, glided out the rear of the house, scurrying across the moon splashed parade ground and losing himself in devious windings among the officers' homes upon the military reservation. Slipping down a narrow side street, lined with disreputable houses that leaned at drunken angles toward one another, the filthy windows winking bleakly to their neighbors, he paused before the largest of these places. His hand reached toward the bell pull. From some distant part of the house came back an echo. Slowly, very slowly, the door swung open, swallowing up the figure of the thief-butler. And there the butler and his employer made their plans.

General Sumpter Love, U. S. A., smiled tolerantly to himself as he overheard the low voices of his aid and Lucille coming from the little cozy corner in which the young lieutenant had hidden his sweetheart away from the avid dancers who would have taken her away from him. Then he sighed heavily as he realized he stood on the threshold of another change; that the courtship of his aid had finally been successful and another household would soon be occupied in Officers' row, leaving him alone in this great house.

He wondered if all fathers felt this way, wondered if he could gladly give his daughter to another man and be happy watching that other remold her world. And the time was so short. That very boat in the harbor now might bear the senate's confirmation of young Gibson's promotion to the rank and pay of captain. The two men had agreed that the marriage should wait on that, and the general had to admit that the aid had lived up to his word. But, then, Gibson always did that.

Again the general shook his shoulders, striding briskly to his private office. Only in work could he get relief from these fits of depression. And there was always work to be done, for the little brown people loved their fighting, were never satisfied with peace and quiet. He pressed the annunciator on his desk, curtly commanding the soldier who responded to send Lieutenant Gibson to him.

General Love permitted a smile to play about the corners of his stern mouth as the rustle of a woman's skirt reached his ears simultaneously with the click of his aid's boots. Came a brief whispered conversation outside the door, then the aid stood upon the threshold at attention, Lucille hiding behind him in an attitude of mock timidity. The old man bit his mustache viciously, then smiled broadly. "Well," he demanded, fumbling among the papers that littered his desk, "what have you got to say for yourself, young woman?"

Lucille slipped across the floor, twining a pair of white arms about her father's neck, the soft velvet of her cheek smoothing his brown, leathery one. It was the way she had coaxed him when a child, the way she had never outgrown or known to fail.

"It's about Dick's promotion, dad,"

she whispered. "It hasn't come on the Empress, and that means wait at least another month. If there was any chance of the senate's failing to confirm it we wouldn't bother you, but a month is such a long time, and— and Dick has some money now."

"Yes, yes, yes," the general retorted gruffly, a twinkle in his eye that belied the tone. "But from what I've seen tonight and the last week since Harley started his aeroplane maneuvers I thought there might be some change in your plans."

Lucille flushed prettily, her eyes flashing a mocking smile at the stal-



The telephone rang and the boy stiffened in his chair.

wart young officer, who stood now with her, holding her hand.

"Mr. Harley's a very nice man," she defended, "even if Dick does get jealous. Besides, a girl has to be amused somehow when busy old generals keep their officers working all day and night."

"I'll think it over, dear," the general said kindly, "immediately I get through with the orders that came tonight. Lieutenant," he said briskly, "you put the orders and papers from Washington in the safe, as I told you? Will you get them for me?"

The aid flushed a bit, his fingers playing at the gold strap at his side.

"Why—why, general," he stammered, "I left the combination memorandum in my room. Lucille was waiting and"—

"Get it!" snapped the old man. The slightest infraction of military system touched his heart on the raw.

He studied his aid curiously when he returned and began fumbling with the knobs of the safe. The door opened, and the lieutenant's hand automatically reached inside toward the place where he had put the packet. An expression of incredulous dismay was upon his face as he drew out a bundle of banknotes.

"Why, I don't remember these!" he cried. Then with an expression of relief, "You have already been here, sir?"

"No," General Love's tone was peremptory, crackling. He did not relish delay of any sort. "Come, come—the papers I gave you, lieutenant."

"General, they are—not—there." "Not there!" Like the crackling of fire in dry twigs was the old man's voice. "Not there, sir! Then perhaps they, too, may be in your room."

"No, sir. I distinctly recall placing them in the order box. There was no money there at the time."

But two men had access to that safe; but two men knew of the arrival of



"Oh, father!"

the orders and papers. General Love suddenly rose, the chair scraping raspily upon the tense silence.

"Lieutenant Gibson," he began, his voice rivaling the sound of the scraping chair, "Lucille mentioned a moment ago that you had suddenly acquired sufficient money to justify an immediate marriage."

"Yes, sir. A legacy?"

General Love snorted his disbelief. "Leaving the combination of this safe, with secrets which are invaluable to the United States, with secrets that would be of untold value to the enemies of the United States, with secrets that might mean the sacrifice of not territory, but countless lives—does that not strike you as strange, not to say suspicious, that such a precious thing

Continued on page 7.

A Human Churn



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