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MODERATE CHARGES

BY THE "MASTER PEN"

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"The Empress." Lucille quickly ex-

plained.

"Well, well, well"-he rubbed his hands together in frank amazement-"to think that any one escaped from the wreck of the Empress!" Once more his lips pursed. "But why have you not reached friends?"

"I am Lucille Love," she said quietly. "I cannot go back"-

"Lucille Love, daughter of General Love?" He studied her keenly, nodding his head from side to side. "Yes, yes; your father and I were quite well acquainted when he was stationed at the Presidio here, and you will not go back because of the disgrace that caused you to leave when the orders from Washington were stolen?"

"There was no disgrace," Lucille said, her tones fairly chilling. "The papers were stolen by an outsider, sir. That was why I boarded the Empress. That is why I am here. That is why I seek money; why I am still search-

"But my dear Miss Love," he smiled. "you must realize that there is not money enough in the establishment to purchase such a wonderful necklace as the one you own. A few stones, possibly, or," he added as an afterthought, "I might purchase an option on the necklace for, say, as much of a reasonable sum as you desire at present and will then look about for a pur-

Lucille's face showed her relief.

"I will give you \$10,000 for an option to sell the necklace within six months," the man continued quickly. "Meanwhile I will keep it here and give you a receipt for it in order that I may show it to possible customers."

"Ten thousand dollars!" Lucille's eyes were wide in wonderment. It was not ten minutes later, with a mutual promise to say nothing of the transaction, that she left the shop with a certified check for the sum mentioned in her tightly clinched fist, accompanied by a clerk.

A strange shadow seemed to have fallen upon her, one which took a large part of the amusement she anticipated getting from her shopping away. She could only ascribe it to meeting with one who had known her father, who unwittingly showed her what the judgment of the world had been in regard to the missing orders, the necessity for immediately foiling Hugo Loubeque.

As she left the bank with the roll of banknotes in her hand and a warning from the clerk still ringing in her ears she thought no longer of adorning herself, had forgotten her shabbiness and her fear of meeting her sweetheart. Her thoughts were still upon clothes, the most gorgeous clothes. And her thoughts were also upon Hugo Loubeque, the international spy, the man who stood between her and the fruition of all her hopes, the man-and a warm flush suffused her cheeks, which she fought down swiftly-who was constantly proving himself but a mere man, after all; a man susceptible to woman's charms.

Her head was high, her cheeks sparkling as she entered the first fashionable shop she came to; her manner such that the crowding, jostling women made way for her as for a queen in regal attire instead of a young giri with habiliments torn and disheveled.

And always, alongside the doors of all the establishments she entered. waiting-patiently waiting, furtively waiting-a rather servile appearing man stood, respectful, quiet, contained.

Lucille's return to her apartment at the hotel was greeted with an apparent respect that spoke plainly of the arrival of the flood of packages she had ordered sent immediately that she might prepare herself for the conquest of the cabaret dancer. of Loubeque.

It was several hours later that she looked at berself in the long cheval glass, frank admiration and wonder tingling within her, mantling her cheeks with roses that no ruby necklaces could have purchased. For the first time she realized that she was wonderfully beautiful. And even as she stood there came a clear tapping upon the door. With a smile upon her lips she moved toward it, allowing it to open the slightest fraction at a time.

Hugo Loubeque stepped within, immaculate in his evening clothes, and bowed gravely, his eyes taking her in Lucille flashed a glance at Loubeque from head to toe, frank admiration and from that moment danced to him glowing in them.

lost between them, some of the strands which bound them together slackened. dropped apart never to be put together again.

Lucille merely nodded. Her heart the arch-spy. was growing larger and larger, and she found herself frightened. She restdi ed her hand upon his sleeve and albeet to the dining

In the dining room she gave herself over to a mood effervescent as the champagne that bubbled in the glass before her. Loubeque had not proven adamant against the frank admiration which went the length of the room at the appearance of Lucille.

She was playing a part she had never dreamed of playing until she caught sight of her beautiful reflection mirrored back at her from the long glass in her apartment. And a great shame was upon her, even as her growing self disgust divided itself between shame at seeing the great Loubeque falling into the net she was deftly weaving for him. She watched him narrowly, marking the constantly growing boldness of his frank admira-

A rather pretty girl whirled into the center of the big dining room and without waiting for the faint murmur of applause that greeted her appearance to subside, began to dance. Lucille noticed that Loubeque had so far given himself over to the spirit of reverie that his dishes went untouched as he watched the indifferent dancing. Inspiration came to Lucille. She saw the weak spot in Hugo Loubeque's well nigh perfect armor, thought she saw a method of reaching it. Quietly she excused herself and left the room.

Once at the end of the room her manner changed. Swiftly she turned, taking the direction she had seen the dancer leave and coming into a small room where the entertainers sat. She approached the girl, drawing her to one side.

"If I pay you well," she whispered eagerly, "would you let me dance in your place the next time-pay youpay you \$100-\$500?" she added as the girl regarded her suspiciously.

"Five hundred dollars!" Wonderment glinted in the eyes upon her. "What do you want-to get chance at cabaret work?"

wish to do it once. There is a reason cannot explain now. But it means everything to me. Please-please"-Tears glistened in eyes filled to overflowing with such honest pleading that the girl quickly nodded. "Let's see your work," she demand-

ed. "What line, miss?"

to a young man in the corner who clusion. took his guitar from its case and She dressed leisurely and for some

ain't after me job?"

and put the orchestra leader wise to the game. The dress ain't quite the stuff fer"-

Lucille nodded gayly. Hurriedly she scribbled a note to Loubeque, reassuring him as to her delay and begging him to wait a short time until she came. Then she darted to her suit, fairly tearing her gown from her in her haste. She did not know what odd whimsy had induced her to purchase the little coquettish fluff of a dancing gown that fitted the part she intended playing so perfectly.

A bit breathless she returned to the cabaret. The girl gave her a shove forward and she found herself standing in the big room, heard, as from a long way off, the stringed orchestra brilliantly playing "La Paloma."

"G'wan! Beat it!" It was the voice

Lucille knew then that she must go through with what she had started. Taking a long breath, her body swayed to the strains. Slowly, gracefully she glided into the room, her face partially concealed by the mantilla. A gasp of surprise followed her appearance, men and women leaned forward, forgetful of their dinner, lured by her infectious grace and charm. But she had eyes for but one man, the international spy, who, a surprised, puzzled expression on his face, leaned far forward in his chair, watching this woman who danced so wonderfully.

Then suddenly the music changed. and him alone. It was perfectly ob- an eight of the five. She scanned the "You will dine with me?" His man- vious to every one in the room. The result of her labors with knitted brows. ner was courteous as ever, yet there spy sank back in his chair, a bit em- | She loosed the pigeon, pointing him impish merriment, Lucille flung wide

For just a second his splendid mouth ---- than with aven that about

1月編発表面刷 strange ures at ner, his paims crackiou vigorously together as he led off the whiriwind of applause that set the glasses and cutlery dancing. The orchestral leader waved his baton toward Lucille for an encore, and from her chair opposite Loubeque, into which she had sunk, she half rose to respond with a bow.

"My God!" The voice was hoarse, terrifying in its bitterness, its scorn. Lucille turned, startled; then, involuntarily, her hands reached out toward the man who was standing, tense, a horrifled expression of disgust and unbelief upon his countenance.

"Dick!" she quavered.

Lieutenant Gibson moved away as her slender figure swayed toward him. Her hands were upon his wrists. He looked at them a second then slowly detached them and turned away, leaving the great room, leaving behind the woman who had dared everything for

And Lucille, the radiant face of a moment before gone into a mask, a frigid, icy mask, watched him as, without turning, he left her alone to tight



"My God!" said Lieutenant Gibson.

the battle for him. Loubeque touched her shoulder sympathetically. "Poor child, Lucille!" he murmured. "It was Gibson. After all you might have believed of him, to have him

turn that way instantly"-"Dick is a man," she smiled sadly. "Man is full of suspicion. But when "No-no, I can dance, but I merely a woman loves she does not ask for

> CHAPTER XXII. On Board the Terror.

UCILLE awoke to a numbed sense of failure, defeat, of loss irreparable. For a few moments she allowed her head to rest against Lucille slowly recalled an old Span- the pillows, perfectly passive, retracish dance she had learned years before, ing the course of her efforts in the one she had danced in private theatri- fight with Loubeque for recovery of cals. The cabaret dancer whispered the papers up to this disastrous con-

thrummed lightly until Lucille nodded. time was seated at her window scat-"You'll do," the girl said five minutes tering crumbs on the ledge for stray later, then, with a tinge of envy in birds. As she crossed the room a moher voice and eyes, "dead sure you ment later a me lie sound struck against her ears again and again be-Lucille pressed the money upon her, fore she was even conscious of it. She warmly assuring her over and over looked about the room, then made out again that such was not her intention. the sound coming from the window "All right then. You're due in half ledge. Curiously she regarded the pian hour. I'll fix it with the manager geon strutting about there eagerly devouring the crumbs. Upon his leg she saw a tiny brass cylinder, tap, tap, tapping with his every step.

Her heart gave her a warning, thumping violently even as she recognized the pretty creature for a carrier bird. Stepping quietly to the window of her bedroom, she stared about her, a smile crossing her face as by careful count she made out the crumbs upon the eighth window ledge from hers. That would be Hugo Loubeque's apartment.

Swiftly, softly, tremulously, for fear the bird might have fled, Lucille reached the ledge, her voice low and caressing as she reached and clasped him firmly. In a second she had detached the cylinder, taking the tiny tissue paper note from it:

Arrangements complete. Deliver papers to Ensign Howell, U. S. ship Terror, with affidavit as to sale by General Sumpter Love, now under trial. Washington, D. C. At your residence; 5:30.

Lucille gasped as she took in the meaning of the message. For just a moment she sat staring dully ahead of her, dismay and terror frozen in her eyes. At 5:30 the international spy's work would be completed and her father ruined.

She clinched her fists tightly together, pacing up and down the floor of her suit, her pretty teeth fastened upon her under lip, her very being vibrant with protest at the horrible injustice of it all. It must not be. It could not be. She stopped suddenly. It should not be. Calmly she crossed to the writing desk and added a line through the hour appointed, carefully making

was a change. Something already was barrassed but quite aglow with de- toward a window which was open. light. The music was growing slower, She knew Loubeque was growing imslower, and, with a trickling laugh of patient from that sign. Furtively she watched the eager hands clutch the her mantilla and bowed mockingly to bird and draw him from view. The window slapped shut once more.

His residence she knew must mean the house of mystery, the weird place of horrors, of sliding staircases and

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rolding rooms. That Loubeque choose such a rendezvous showed how plainly he considered the last trick in the game of his life played, how absolutely assured he now was of absolute and final success. At 5:30 Ensign Howell would be at that house. She had three hours wherein to work.

She rose and moved toward the door, closing it softly behind her. For a moment she hesitated in the hall, then stepped boldly to the suit of the spy. rapping upon the door.

Hugo Loubeque, master of men and nations, whose power was so great the course of empires halted at his spoken word of command, moodily stared out his window after the carrier pigeon he had just released. For forty years he had bent every energy of his life for this day. And now that it had come, somehow the sweet had turned bitter upon his palate.

Strangely enough, a tender smile played about the corners of his hard was the image of the Lucille of forty satisfied.

Centinued on page 7.

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