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(To be continued)

**SECRET SERVICE**

BEING THE HAPPENINGS OF A NIGHT IN RICHMOND IN THE SPRING OF 1865

THE PLAY BY WILLIAM GILLETTE; BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

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She confronted Arrelsford with a bitterly reproachful glance, before which his eyes for a moment fell, and he was glad indeed to turn to another orderly who had just entered the room.

"Have you kept track of him?" he asked in a low voice.

"He's coming down the street to the department now, sir."

"Where has he been since he left Mrs. Varney's house?"

"He went to his quarters on Carey street. We got in the next room and watched him through a transom."

"What was he doing?"

"Working on some papers or documents."

"Could you see them? Did you see what they were?"

"They looked like orders from the war department, sir."

"He is coming here with forged orders, I suppose."

"I don't doubt it, sir."

"I surmise that his game is to get control of these wires and then send out dispatches to the front that will take away a battery or a brigade from some vital point, the vital point indicated by 'Plan 3.' That's where they mean to attack tonight."

"Looks like it, sir," agreed the orderly respectfully.

"Plan 3, that's where they will hit us," mused the secret service agent. "Is there a guard in the building?"

"Not inside, sir," answered the orderly, "there's a guard in front and sentries around the barracks over in the square."

"If I shouted they could hear from this window, couldn't they?" asked Arrelsford.

"The guard in front could hear you, sir. But the time is getting short. He must be nearly here; you'd better look out, sir."

Edith Varney had heard enough of the conversation to understand that Thorne was coming. Of course it would never do for him to see her there.

"Where am I to go?" she asked.

"Outside here on the balcony," said Arrelsford. "There is no closet in the room and it is the only place. I will be with you in a moment."

"But if he should come to the window?"

"We will step in at the other window. Stay, orderly, see if the window of the commissary general's office, the next room to the left, is open."

They waited while the orderly went out on the balcony and made his inspection.

"The window of the next room is open, sir," he reported.

"That's all I want of you. Report back to Corporal Matson. Tell him to get the body of the prisoner out of the Varney house. He knows where it's to go."

"Very well, sir."

"Mr. Foray," continued Arrelsford, "whoever comes here you are to keep on with your work and don't give the slightest sign of my presence to any one on any account. You understand?"

"Yes, sir," said Foray from the telegraph table in the center of the room.

He had caught something of the conversation, but he was too good a soldier to ask any questions, besides his business was with the telegraph, not with Mr. Arrelsford.

"Now, Miss Varney," said the secret service agent, "this way, please."

He opened the middle window. The girl stepped through, and he was about to follow when he caught sight of a messenger entering the room. Leaving the window, he retraced his steps.

"Where did you come from?" he said abruptly to the young man.

"War department, sir."

"Carrying dispatches?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know me, don't you?"

"I've seen you at the office, sir, and—"

"I'm here on department business," said Arrelsford. "All you have to do is to keep quiet about it. Weren't you stopped in the hall?"

"He wasn't in his office a short time ago, sir," said the messenger.

"Very well, find him. He has probably gone home and he has to have this message."

"Very good, sir."

The key kept up its clacking. In a short time another message was written off.

"Ready here," cried Thorne, looking at the other messenger. "This is for the secretary of the treasury, marked private. Take it to his home."

"He was down at the cabinet meet-



"Look Out for Yourself, Captain."

ing a little while ago, sir," said the second messenger.

"No difference, take it to his house and wait until he comes."

The instant the departing messenger left him alone in the room Thorne leaped to his feet and ran with cat-like swiftness to the door, opened it, and quickly but carefully examined the corridor to make sure that no one was there on duty. Then he closed the door and turned to the nearest window, which he opened also, and looked out on the balcony, which he saw was empty. He closed the window and came back to the table, unbuttoning his belt and coat as he came. These he threw on the table. The coat fell back, and he glanced in the breast pocket to see that a certain document was in sight and at hand, where he could get it quickly. Then he took his revolver, which he had previously slipped from his belt to his hip pocket, and laid it down beside the instrument.

After a final glance around him to see that he was still alone and unobserved, he seized the key, on which he sounded a certain call. An expert telegrapher would have recognized it as a dash, four dots in rapid succession, then two dots together, and then two more (— . . . . .). He waited a few moments, and when no answer came he signaled the call a second time, and after another longer wait he sent it a third time.

After this effort he made a longer pause, and just as he had about reached the end of his patience—he was in a fever of anxiety, for upon what happened in the next moment the failure or the success of the whole plan absolutely turned—the silent key clicked out an answer, repeating the same signal which he himself had made. The next moment he made a snap upon the key, but before he could send a single letter stroke—were heard outside in the corridor.

Thorne released the key, leaned back in his chair, seized a match from the little holder on the table and struck it, and when another messenger entered he seemed to be lazily lighting his cigar. He cursed in his heart at the inopportune arrival. Another uninterrupted moment and he would have sent the order, but as usual he gave no outward evidence of his extreme annoyance. The messenger came rapidly down toward the table and handed Captain Thorne a message.

"From the secretary of war, Captain Thorne," he said saluting, "and he wants it to go out right away."

"Here, here," said Thorne, as the messenger turned away, "what's all this?" He ran his fingers through the envelope, tore it open, and spread out the dispatch. "Is that the secretary's signature?" he asked.

The messenger came back.

"Yes, sir; I saw him sign it myself. It's his personal messenger."

"Oh!" said Thorne, spreading the dispatch out on the table and O.K.-ing it. "You saw him sign it yourself, did you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. We have to be pretty careful tonight," he explained, "there's something on. You are sure of this, are you?"

"I could swear to that signature anywhere, sir," said the messenger.

"Very well," said Thorne, "you may go."

**CHAPTER XIII.**

The Tables Are Turned.

As soon as the door was closed behind the messenger Thorne laid his finger down on the table. Then he picked up the dispatch from the secretary of war which the messenger had just brought in and folded it very dexterously. Then with a pair of scissors which he found in a drawer he cut off the lower part of the secretary's dispatch containing his signature. He put this between his teeth and tore the rest into pieces. He started to throw the pieces into the waste basket but after a moment's reflection he stuffed them into his trousers pocket. Then he picked up his coat from the back of the chair and took from the inside breast pocket another document written on the same paper as that which had just come from the secretary of war. Spreading this out on the table he cut off the signature and quickly pasted to it the piece of the real order bear-

ing the real signature. He carefully wiped this pasted dispatch with his handkerchief, making an exceedingly neat job of it.

As he did so he smiled slightly. Fortune, which had dealt him so many rebuffs had evened up matters a little by giving him this opportunity. He had now in his possession a dispatch bearing the genuine signature of the secretary of war. Even if he were interrupted the chances were he would still be able to send it. So soon as he had doctored the dispatch he sat down at the instrument and once more essayed to send the message.

Now during all this rapid bit of manipulation Thorne had been under close observation, for Arrelsford and Edith Varney had come from the commissary general's office, where they had concealed themselves while Thorne examined the porch, and had stepped back to the nearest window and were intently watching. Fortunately his back partially concealed his actions and the watchers could not tell exactly what he had done, although it was quite evident that he was in some way altering some kind of a dispatch.

Just as Thorne began to send the message Arrelsford accidentally struck the window with his elbow, making a slight sound. The instant he did so, he and the girl vanished from sight. Once again Thorne released the key, and his hand moved quietly but rapidly from the instrument to the revolver. The instant it was in his hand he sprang to his feet, whirled about, leaped to the gas bracket and turned off the light. The room was left in darkness, save for the faint illumination of the moonlight through the windows.

Immediately he turned off the light he ran to the doors leading into the hall. They were provided with heavy, old-fashioned bolts which he shot swiftly, locking them on the inside. Then with the utmost caution he edged around the wall until he came to the first window. He waited with his left hand on the catch of the window, and with his right advanced his revolver. After a moment's pause he threw it open quickly and stepped out on the balcony. It was empty as before.

He must have made a mistake, he thought, since no one was there, and he blamed the whole incident to his over-activated nerves. Indeed, what he had gone through in the preceding two hours would have shaken most men's nerves, might have broken most men's. He was annoyed at having wasted precious time, and turned to the table again, stopping on his way to relight the light.

Once more he seized the key. He could telegraph equally well with either hand. He did not lay down his revolver on the table this time, but kept it in his right hand while the fingers of his left hand touched the button. He had scarcely made a dot or a dash when there was a sudden flash of light and the sound of an explosion, that of a heavy revolver, mingled with the crash of shattered glass. Captain Thorne's fingers fell from the key and a jet of blood spurted out upon the table and the papers.

He rose to his feet with incredible swiftness, his revolver in his right hand, only to be confronted by Arrelsford at the front window. The latter held in his hand, pointed fairly and squarely at Thorne, the heavy service revolver with which he had just shot him in the left wrist. Thorne made a swift motion with his right hand, but Arrelsford was too quick for him.

"Drop that gun!" he shouted. "Drop it quick, or you are a dead man!"

(To be Continued.)

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