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IN RICHMOND IN THE SPRING OF 1865

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

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Mrs. Varney, wife of a Confederate general, has lost one son and has another dying from wounds. She reluctantly gives her consent for Wilfred, the youngest, to join the army if his father consents. The federals are making their last assault in an effort to capture Richmond.

CHAPTER II—Edith Varney secures from President Davis a commission for Capt. Thorne, who is just recovering from wounds, as chief of the telegraph at Richmond.

CHAPTER III—Capt. Thorne tells Edith he has been ordered away. She declares he must not go and tells him of the commission from the president. He is strangely agitated and declares he cannot accept.

CHAPTER IV—Thorne decides to escape while Edith leaves the room to get the commission, but is prevented by the arrival of Caroline Milford, Wilfred's sweetheart.

CHAPTER V—Mr. Arrelsford of the Confederate secret service, a rejected suitor of Edith's, detects Jonas, Mrs. Varney's butler, carrying a note from a prisoner in Libby prison. Arrelsford suspects it is intended for Thorne. The note reads: "Attack tonight. Plan 2. Use Telegraph."

CHAPTER VI—Edith is indignant when Arrelsford tells her of his suspicions regarding Thorne. He declares the latter is Lewis Dumont of the Federal secret service and that his brother Henry is a prisoner in Libby. Edith refuses to believe and suggests that Thorne be confronted with the prisoner as a test.

CHAPTER VII—Edith detains Thorne while the prisoner is sent for. An order comes from General Varney for Wilfred to report to the front at once.

CHAPTER VIII—Edith is forced to carry out her part in the test of Thorne. She gives him the message taken from Jonas, which he reads without betraying himself. He suspects that he is being watched.

CHAPTER IX—The prisoner is thrust into the room alone with Thorne, who deceives him as his elder brother, Henry Dumont. They put up a fake fight. Henry implores his brother to shoot him in the leg. Thorne refuses and Henry accidentally kills himself. Arrelsford rushes into the room with the guard Thorne nonchalantly says: "Corporal here is your prisoner, we had a fight and I shot him."

CHAPTER X—Caroline goes to the war department telegraph office to send a message.

CHAPTER XI—Arrelsford refuses to let Caroline's message go through. It is a telegram to Wilfred simply asking forgiveness, but Arrelsford suspects a double meaning. He and Edith secretly themselves to watch Thorne, whose arrival Arrelsford expects.

CHAPTER XII—Thorne takes charge of the telegraph office and after satisfying himself that he is alone attempts to send a message, but is interrupted by the arrival of a messenger from the secretary of war with a dispatch.

CHAPTER XIII—Arrelsford and Edith see Thorne after the secretary's dispatch. Thorne is shot in the wrist by Arrelsford when he attempts to send it. Arrelsford calls the guard and when they appear Thorne turns the tables by ordering the arrest of Arrelsford.

CHAPTER XIV—The removal of Arrelsford is stopped by the arrival of General Randolph. Thorne again begins sending the dispatch. Arrelsford protests, declaring Thorne is sending a forged order to weaken the lines of defense. Randolph demands upon what authority Thorne has assumed command of the telegraph office. Miss Varney appears.

CHAPTER XV—She produces Thorne's commission as major in command of the government telegraph. She, having seen enough to convince her he is a spy, begs him not to send the forged order. After she leaves he tears it up.

CHAPTER XVI—Thorne plans to escape from Richmond.

CHAPTER XVII—Arrelsford calls at the Varney home and demands to see Edith. Mrs. Varney refuses. A secret agent appears with an order to search the house for Thorne. Wilfred Varney returns from the front wounded.

(Continued.)

"And what are you going to do with him?"

"There is no time for a hanging



"I Say That Dispatch Was Not Sent," He Roared.

now, and the court has ordered him shot."

"Oh, indeed. And what were the charges?"

"Conspiracy against our government and the success of our arms, by sending a false and misleading dispatch containing forged orders, was the particular specification."

"Well," said General Randolph, "I

regret that the court has been misinformed."

"What!" cried Arrelsford, in great surprise. "The testimony was very plain."

"Yes, indeed, sir," interposed the sergeant.

"Nevertheless," returned the general, "the man is not guilty of that charge. The dispatch was not sent."

Now Edith Varney had scarcely moved. She had expected nothing she had hoped for nothing from the advent of the general. At best it would mean only a little delay. The verdict was just, the sentence was adequate, and the punishment must and would be carried out. She had listened, scarcely apprehending, busy with her own thoughts, her eyes fastened on Thorne, who stood there pale and composed. But at this remarkable statement by General Randolph she was suddenly quickened into life. A low exclamation broke from her lips. A hope, not that his life might be saved, but that it might be less shameful to love him, came into her heart. Wilfred stepped forward also.

The terse statement of the general had caused a great deal of excitement and commotion in the room. Only Thorne preserved his calmness. He was glad that Edith Varney had learned this, and he was more glad that she had learned it from the lips of the enemy, but it would make no difference in his fate. He was not guilty of that particular charge, but there were dozens of other charges for which they could try him, the punishment of any one of which was death. Besides, he was a spy caught in the Confederate lines, wearing a uniform not his own. It was enough that the woman should learn that he had not taken advantage of her action; at least she could not reproach herself with that.

"Why, general," began Arrelsford greatly dismayed. "I hardly understand what you mean. That dispatch—I saw him myself—"

General Randolph turned on him quickly.

"I say that dispatch was not sent, he roared, striking the table with his hand. "I expected to arrive in time for the trial. There is one here who can testify. Lieutenant Foray?"

From among the group of staff officers who had followed General Randolph, Lieutenant Foray stepped forward before the general and saluted.

"Did Captain Thorne send out that dispatch after we left you with him in the office an hour ago?" asked the older officer.

"No, sir," answered Foray promptly glancing from Arrelsford's thwarted and flushed and indignant countenance to Edith Varney's face, in which he saw the light of a great illumination was shining. "No, sir," he repeated. "I was just about to send it by his orders, when he countermanded it and tore up the dispatch."

"And what dispatch was it?"

"It was one signed by the secretary of war, sir, removing Marston's division from Cemetery Hill."

"You hear, gentlemen," said the general, not giving them time to answer, he turned again to Foray. "What were Captain Thorne's words at the time?"

"He said he refused to act under that commission, and crumpled it up and threw it away."

"That will do, lieutenant," said General Randolph triumphantly. He turned to Arrelsford again. "If you are not satisfied, Mr. Arrelsford, I beg to inform you that we have a dispatch from General Chesney at the front, in which he says that no orders were received from here. He got an uncompleted dispatch, but could not make anything out of it. Marston's division was not withdrawn from Cemetery Hill, and our position was not weakened in any way. The attack there has failed." There was a low murmur of astonishment from the group of men in the room. Edith Varney did one significant thing. She made two steps in Thorne's direction. That young man did not dare to trust himself to look at her. "It is quite plain," continued the general, "that the court has been acting under an error. The president of the Confederacy is, therefore, compelled to disapprove the finding, and it is set aside. He happened to be with the secretary when the finding came in."

Arrelsford made one last desperate effort.

"General Randolph," he said, and, to do him justice, he did not lack courage, "this was put in my hands, and—"

"I take it out of your hands," he said curtly. "Report back to the war office, or the secret service office, with my compliments, and—"

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