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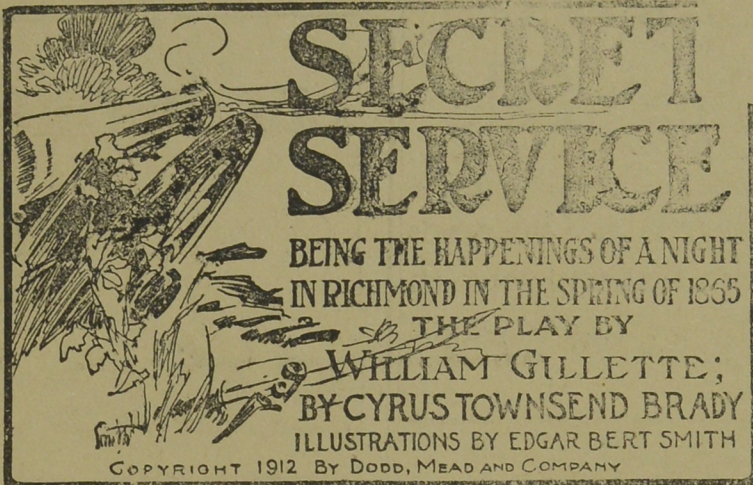
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### SYNOPSIS.

**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 reads without betraying himself. He suspects that he is being watched.

**CHAPTER IX**—The prisoner is thrust into the room alone with Thorne, who recognizes 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 alter 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, tells 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 sergeant appears with an order to search the house for Thorne. Wilfred Varney returns from the front wounded.

(Continued.)

It was Wilfred who broke the silence. He walked slowly up to Thorne and thrust out his hand.

"I would like to shake hands with you," he said admiringly, and for the first time in the long hours a slight smile quivered about the man's lips. It was a generous, spontaneous tribute of youth that gave him that moment of melancholy satisfaction.

"Oh," thought Edith, watching her brother; "if only I dared to do the like."

"Is this for yourself?" asked Thorne, "or your father?"

"For both of us, sir," answered Wilfred.

Thorne shook him by the hand. The two looked into each other's faces, and everybody saw the satisfaction and gratification of the older man.

"That's all, sergeant," said Thorne, turning away.

"Fall in the prisoner! Escort left face! Forward—march!" cried the sergeant.

At that moment a man, breathless from having run rapidly, entered the room by the window. His uniform was that of an officer, and he wore a lieutenant's shoulder straps.

"Halt!" he cried, as he burst into the room. "Are you in command, sergeant?"

"Yes, sir."

"General Randolph's on the way here with orders. You would please wait until—"

But Arrelsford now interposed.

"What orders, Lieutenant? Anything to do with the case?"

The officer looked greatly surprised at this intervention by a civilian, but he answered civilly enough:

"I don't know what his orders are. He has been with the president."

"But I sent word to the department," said Arrelsford, "that we had got the man, and were going to drum-head him on the spot."

"Then this must be the case, sir. The general wishes to be present."

"It is impossible," returned Arrelsford. "We have already held the court, and I have sent the findings to the secretary. The messenger is to get his approval and meet us at the corner of the street yonder. I have no doubt he is waiting there now. It is a mere formality."

"I have no further orders to give, sir," said the lieutenant. "General Randolph will be here in a minute, but you can wait for him or not, as you see fit."

The sergeant stood uncertain. For one thing, he was not anxious to carry out the orders he had been given now. That one little action of Thorne's had changed the whole situation. For another thing, Arrelsford was only a civilian, and General Randolph was one of the ranking officers in Richmond.

"Move on, sergeant," said Arrelsford peremptorily. "You have all the authority you want, and—"

The sergeant held back, uncertainly, but the day was saved by the advent of the general himself.

### CHAPTER XX.

The Last Reprieve.  
General Randolph was evidently in a great hurry. Public affairs of great



"You'd Better Look at Your Rifles."

moment pressed upon him, and it was an evidence of the interest he took in the case of Captain Thorne that he gave him even a minute of his valuable time. He had come on horseback, and everybody could see that he was anxious to get through with his appointed task and get away.

"Ah, sergeant," he said, answering the latter's salute as he brought the guard to attention, and then his eye fell upon Captain Thorne. "You have the prisoner, have you?"

"Just taking him out, sir," answered the sergeant, saluting again.

"To prison?"

"No, sir."

"Where then?"

"To execute the sentence of the court, sir."

"Oh!" exclaimed the general, looking hard at the sergeant. "He has had his trial, has he?"

But Arrelsford, who chafed at thus being left out of the game, now stepped over and took up the burden of the conversation before the sergeant could reply.

"We have done everything according to regulation, sir," he said, saluting in a rather cavalier manner. He did not like General Randolph. If it had not been for his interference, the affair would have been settled long ago, and he still cherished a grudge against the latter for having arrested a man so important as the trusted agent of the secret service. "The findings have gone to the secretary."

"Ah!" said General Randolph blandly. He did not like Mr. Arrelsford any better than Mr. Arrelsford liked him.

"Yes, sir."

"And he was found guilty, I presume?"

"Certainly, sir."

(To Be Continued.)

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