

THE SECRET OF THE SUBMARINE

Novelized From a Thrilling Photoplay Series Released by the Mutual Film Co.

By E. Alexander Powell
The Famous War Correspondent

Romantic story of an undersea boat designed to remain beneath the surface for weeks, with the beautiful daughter of the inventor figuring as the heroine in thrilling situations.

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING INSTALLMENTS.

Lieut. Jarvis Hope is detailed by the United States Naval Board to investigate and report his findings on the invention of Dr. Ralph Burke, which serves to bring the submarine to a state of perfection. The lieutenant arrives at Valdavia and is welcomed by the inventor and his daughter, Cleo. On the trial trip of the inventor's boat a Japanese diver is captured in the act of examining the mechanism of the revolving screws. His escape is foreshadowed on the shore but there are others interested in it. An attempt to burglarize Dr. Burke's laboratory fails, but here Cleo finds him murdered in his bedroom.

THIRD EPISODE.

THE murder of Ralph Burke provided the public with a ten days' mystery. Newspaper readers, satiated with the European conflict and the crisis in Mexico, eagerly devoured its details. The great newspapers of the country hurried their cleverest correspondents to Valdavia. At Hope's suggestion, the Navy Department, which was vitally interested in recovering the lost formula, detailed a secret service operator on the case, but he met with no better success than the police. On the theory that Burke had been murdered by Satsuma out of revenge, a fresh search for the Japanese was started, only to be abandoned when it was reported with much circumstantial detail that a man tallying with his description had shipped two days before the murder on a vessel bound for South America. But, though this apparently eliminated Satsuma, it only served to deepen the mystery.

As the days passed and no solution was forthcoming, newspaper readers began to turn their attention to other events.

Oiga Ivanoff, who had hurried to Valdavia in order to be on the scene of action, prepared to return to her luxurious apartment in San Francisco, though Sextus was to remain behind in order to keep in touch with any potential developments. Hope and Morton still remained, the former because he had received instructions from Washington to stay in Valdavia as long as there was a possibility of recovering the lost formula; the latter because of similar instructions from his uncle, Calvin Montgomery, who wrote that if the formula could be found he could sell it on his own terms to one of the European belligerents. It was not the illusory hope of recovering the formula, however, that kept Hope and Morton at Valdavia; the real magnet was Cleo.

Her father's tragic death weighed heavily on Cleo, and it was often far into the night before she fell asleep upon her tear-soaked pillow; but her days were seldom lonely, for Jarvis Hope and Gerald Morton were constant callers. But though she frankly welcomed the visits of the suave-mannered young New Yorker, and listened with rapt attention to his gossip of Fifth Avenue and Broadway, she never gave him her entire confidence. Though she never admitted it, even to herself, she did not entirely trust him. There was no question in Hope's mind as to his feelings for Cleo. He was wholeheartedly, desperately, madly in love with her, but, though he felt intuitively that Cleo reciprocated, his innate delicacy led him to refrain from telling her of his love at this time.

In his will Burke had left everything that he possessed to Cleo. Yet "everything" consisted of barely a thousand dollars in the bank, the furniture of the house, his extensive scientific library—and the vanished secret of the submarine. Cleo was under no illusions regarding the state of her finances.

"I must go to work, Jarvis," she told Hope, with whom she discussed her financial difficulties and her future as she would with an old family friend. "I must find something to do, for at this rate what little money I have will soon be gone. Perhaps I can get a position as a secretary, or in a library. I used to write all daddy's letters and his accounts." Her voice trembled, as it always did at mention of her father, for her grief was still very strong.

"Why don't you dispose of your father's library, Cleo?" he asked one evening when they were sitting on the vine-covered veranda discussing her affairs. "You ought to realize a considerable sum from it—enough, certainly, so that you will not need to worry about money matters for some time to come. I'm going over to San Francisco tomorrow, and if you care to have me, I will make some inquiries as to the best way to dispose of it."

"The next evening he called again. When I was in town to-day," he said, "I looked up a friend who is interested in books, and he put me in touch with a man named Dawson, the proprietor of the Dawson Auction Rooms. I want to see Dawson, who seems to be a very decent fellow, and who explained that you wished to dispose of your father's library. He tells me that he is holding an important sale next week and that, if you wish the books to go into it, they must be shipped to him at once."

"It breaks my heart to part with daddy's library," said Cleo, "but, of course, it's the wisest thing to do. I don't need the books and I do need the money. Oh, Jarvis! I don't know how I would have got through those terrible days if I had not had you to lean on and advise with."

The following morning found Cleo in a pinhead gown and Hope in his shirt sleeves hard at work listing and packing the hundreds of dusty volumes, the ubiquitous and good-natured Hook nailing up the cases. Hope was in the act of placing the much-worn Bible which had belonged to Burke, when Cleo snatched it from him.

"In the event of my death you will find the secret of the submarine in the books over my desk. One book contains the cryptogram and the other the key."

"That mustn't go," she cried. "It was given to daddy by his mother, and the very night he died he asked me to keep it always. I shall never part with it."

Daddy. For a moment she stood speechless, staring at this message from the dead. "The books, over my desk." That could refer only to the dozen treasured volumes which, from her earliest recollection, her father had kept in his workroom that they might be near him. Now she recalled their last conversation as she sat beside him in the laboratory. "I want you to remember, Cleo," he had said, with unusual solemnity, "that when I am gone there is a fortune for my little girl in those old volumes." She had supposed that he referred to their intrinsic value. And those were among the books which she had sent to San Francisco to be sold at auction. She had unwittingly let a fortune slip through her fingers! But perhaps it was not too late.

"Hook!" she cried, excitedly, waving the letter, "see what I've just found! It fell out from between the blotting sheets when I was cleaning daddy's desk! The formula is hidden in one of those books which we sent to the auction sale in San Francisco. They are being sold to-day—there isn't a minute to lose. You run down to the hotel and get Lieutenant Hope and I'll go over to the drug store and try to get the auction rooms on the phone."

Before Hook, whose faculties were none too alert at any time, had recovered from his astonishment, Cleo was flying down the garden path. As she dashed through the gate she almost ran into the arms of Gerald Morton.

"Oh, Mr. Morton," she gasped, "I've found where it is hidden!"

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed, and there was avarice in his voice, "where is it?"

"I haven't time to stop and explain now," she panted. "I must get to a telephone. The secret is hidden in one of those old books which daddy always kept in his laboratory—and they are being sold to-day at Dawson's auction room in San Francisco. I'm going to telephone and try and stop their sale." The last words she flung over her shoulder as she hastened onward. For a moment Morton stood pondering. Then he also dashed madly down the street—in the direction of the railway station.



GERALD THINKS OF A CLUE TO THE MURDER.

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Following Oiga's instructions, Sextus had made it his business, ever since the night of the murder, to keep the Burke home under surveillance and to watch those who entered or left it. As he was unknown to Cleo or her friends he was enabled to observe their comings and goings without arousing their suspicions. When, therefore, as he was sauntering along the opposite side of the street, smoking a cigarette, he saw Cleo burst out of the gate, hatless and obviously distraught, and an excited colloquy with Morton, and then go racing down the sidewalk, it was the most natural thing in the world that his curiosity aroused, he should turn and follow her. The case did not lead him far, for a block below she burst into a drug store.

"May I use your telephone, Mr. Morton?" she asked the druggist. "I must get word instantly to San Francisco."

"Certainly, Miss Burke," was the answer. "There's the phone—over in the corner. Ask the operator to give you long distance."

Sextus, following Cleo into the store, selected a cigar, lighted it, and leaning negligently against the counter, had no difficulty in overhearing the ensuing conversation, or, rather, Cleo's end of it.

"I wish to speak to Mr. Dawson of the Dawson auction room in San Francisco," she said, "and please hurry, central."

For ten minutes she waited, nervous clasping and unclasping her hands. Then the telephone bell tinkled shrilly.

"Hello," she called. "Is this Mr. Dawson?... This is Miss Burke of Valdavia speaking... You remember that last week I sent you my father's library to be sold?... Yes, the library of Dr. Ralph Burke, the inventor... The books must be sold... It is very important... What?... You have just sold them?... But the twelve big volumes with the leather bindings?... They have been sold, too?... Can you get them back again?... I will pay you anything if you can recover them... It's too late?... Do you know who bought them?... They went to different parties... But you have a list of the purchasers?... Thank God for that!... I'll start for San Francisco at once—on the first train."

As Cleo, very discouraged, hung up the receiver, Sextus quietly left the store. The moment he was out of sight, however, he broke into a run. Ten minutes later he was knocking at the door of Oiga Ivanoff's room, where he told her his story.

"We mustn't lose a moment," he concluded. "That Burke girl and her friends won't let my boss know where their feet are getting to San Francisco. Our only chance of getting the secret is to reach Dawson's place ahead of them and obtain possession of the list."

"You're quite right, Sextus," said Oiga, who was already pinning on her hat. "We must get there before they do. When does the next train leave?"

"There's a train in thirty minutes," he replied, "but they'll be on it. They would get there as soon as we would. But there's a ferry leaving in five minutes. If we can catch it we will get to San Francisco before the train."

If Oiga and Sextus, standing on the upper deck of the ferryboat, had chanced to glance shorewards, their attention might have been attracted by a yellow cloud of dust moving rapidly along the highway which links Valdavia with San Francisco. The dust cloud was caused by a recklessly-driven motorcycle which was careering along at sixty miles an hour. Bent over the handlebars, like a rider in a race, was the Japanese, Satsuma.

So incoherent was Hook Barnabe from loss of breath and excitement that even after he found Hope it was some minutes before he could deliver Cleo's message. No sooner, however, did the naval officer grasp its import than, with the seaman panting at his heels, he dashed downstairs to where the light car, which he had hired during his stay in Valdavia, was standing. They overtook Cleo just as she was entering the gate.

"We haven't waste a minute in getting on the track of those books," broke in Hook.

"Yes," said Hope, "you had better come along. I don't think there is much chance of our having any trouble with the train, even if he is after the books, but you are so fat, Hook, that if you sit in the tonneau you will make the car ride easier."

Within ten minutes after the boat carrying Oiga and Sextus docked at the ferry building, a taxicab dropped

The car leaped forward. Then, as unexpectedly as a slap in the face, there yawned before them a chasm three-score feet across! The bridge was gone. The road ended in a sheer precipice, and at the bottom, forty feet below, swirled the river. Hope caught a glimpse of Cleo, with blanched face and tight-clenched hands.

Mr. Dawson, the head of the firm, a dignified man well past the half-century mark, was at his desk in an office in the rear of the salesroom. "I am a friend of Miss Cleo Burke," explained Oiga. "You will remember that she telephoned you this afternoon regarding certain books belonging to her father's library which I understand was sold only this morning."

"These books were put into the sale by mistake and she is extremely anxious to regain possession of them. As Miss Burke was prevented, at the last moment, from coming to San Francisco to-day, she asked me to obtain from you the names of the purchasers."

"I am very glad to be of service to Miss Burke," said the auctioneer, evidently impressed by Oiga's distinction of manner. "This," throwing open a ponderous loose-leaf ledger which lay upon his desk, "contains the names and addresses of all with whom we have had dealings, and here, running his finger down the page, "are the names of those who bought the books which you are seeking. You will notice that the twelve books comprising lot 32 were sold separately, so I'm afraid that it will require considerable time and trouble for you to run down all of them."

"I see that the leaves of this ledger are detachable," remarked Oiga. "As we are greatly pressed for time I wonder if you could not let me take the pages which bear the names we wish. I will have them copied and return the page to you in the morning."

"I am very sorry, madam," said Mr. Dawson respectfully, "but the city ordinances require us to keep a list of those to whom we have made sales in our possession. The police are very strict about this, and I assist them in tracing articles that have been stolen. Not that we are accustomed to deal with thieves," he said, smiling, "but the names of five minutes, madam, my secretary will copy the names for you."

"But I can't go as I am," exclaimed Cleo, looking down at the dingy dress which she had been wearing while house-cleaning. "It will only take me a minute to dress, though. I'll hurry."

Ten minutes elapsed, however, before she rejoined Hope and Hook, who were waiting impatiently, but the lovely face under the black veil was so pathetically childish that neither of them had the heart to scold her. Hope only remarked, as he started for the car, "I'm afraid we can't make it, Cleo." His fears were well grounded, for as they whirled up to the station, the San Francisco train was pulling out, gathering headway every second. Hope uttered an ejaculation of annoyance; Hook, franker in his emotions, ripped out a hearty oath. Cleo was very white and penitent.

"It's all my fault," she said, "I'm so sorry—but I just couldn't go with you to San Francisco looking like a fright, could I, Jarvis?"

"You need never worry about your looks, Cleo," he answered. "You are always beautiful, no matter what you wear. And there is another train at six-twenty."

"Oh, Jarvis," suddenly exclaimed Cleo, a few minutes later, "I almost forgot to tell you, I caught a glimpse of some one that we know on that train."

"Who was it?" inquired Hope.

"Gerald Morton," was the answer. "I saw him going aboard the last car just as the train was pulling out."

"Yes," said Hope carelessly. "Morton has been running up to San Francisco quite frequently of late."

"I wonder," Cleo observed thoughtfully, "if his going to San Francisco has anything to do with the fact that train could have any connection with the secret of the submarine. He must have decided very suddenly. When I saw him half an hour ago he said nothing about going to the city to-day."

"You saw Morton this afternoon?" Hope asked sharply.

"Yes, I almost ran into him when I was on my way to the drug store to telephone."

"But you didn't tell him about finding the letter, did you?" anxiously inquired Hope.

"I'm afraid I did," admitted Cleo. "I was so excited, you see, that I told him about the letter and the books without thinking. It didn't do any harm did it, Jarvis?"

"I hope not," was the answer, "but I don't know, several things that have come to my attention lately have made me a little suspicious of Mister Gerald Morton. He's a young man who says that he is trying to give me the same song and dance. It's too thin, my friend, it's too thin."

"I am not a friend of Miss Burke," said Satsuma quietly. "I know nothing of these other people. I wish to obtain the books for private reasons. If you will give me the names of the people who bought them I am quite willing to pay you for your trouble, and I displayed a twenty-dollar bill."

"We'll do money talks," said Dawson, abruptly altering his tone, "and handed if I can see what harm there is in giving you the names. Sit down a minute while I copy them."

When Satsuma left he was so absorbed in his speculations as to the identity of the mysterious strangers who had preceded him, that he failed to put out his cigarette-stub which he absently tossed into the wastebasket standing beside Dawson's desk. And, during closing time, Dawson followed the Japanese out, and closed the door, and locked it, and betook himself homeward without noticing that from the wastebasket rose a thin, faint wisp of smoke.

Though the car in which Cleo, Hope and Hook were racing cityward was not a Japanese one, it made up for its lack of size by its extraordinary speed which Hope managed to coax from it. Leaving Valdavia behind them, they sped into the open country; past truer farms and vineyards and blossoming orchards they shot; past neat white farmhouses, peeping coyly out from amid their blooming gardens; past great ranches whose rolling acres were dotted with live oaks and carpeted with wild flowers; past more stately mansions, more orchards, until they reached a long downgrade where, for a dozen miles, the highway parallels the shore.

As the telegraph poles sped by and its occupants from going over the throttle and the car leaped forward like a thoroughbred which feels the jockey's spur. This speedometer needle showed that they were traveling at fifty miles an hour. The scenery was but a flying haze of green and brown. The telegraph poles sped by so quickly that they looked like thin, white, zig-zagging lines. Ahead of them there suddenly appeared, extending across a portion of the road, a huge barricade with a red flag and the sign "Danger!"

"They're repairing the road ahead but I guess that we can get through," Hope shouted in response to Cleo's warning as they swooped over the barrier. The smooth-paved grade they thundered and tumbled, as unexpectedly as a steam train, three-score feet across! The bridge was gone—evidently swept away by the spring flood. The car leaped forward like a thoroughbred which feels the jockey's spur. This speedometer needle showed that they were traveling at fifty miles an hour. The scenery was but a flying haze of green and brown. The telegraph poles sped by so quickly that they looked like thin, white, zig-zagging lines. Ahead of them there suddenly appeared, extending across a portion of the road, a huge barricade with a red flag and the sign "Danger!"

Hope, his mind trimmed for emergencies, instantly realized that it was impossible to stop. The brakes would not work in time to prevent the car from plunging over the edge of the brink into the stream below. To the car to one side was equally impossible, for the road was bordered by a steep bank, to go down which meant certain death for all of them. There was only one chance—a chance in a million—to keep straight ahead in the chasm, and that the car, now traveling at terrific speed, would have sufficient momentum to clear the chasm.

Fastening his grip upon the wheel, Hope flung his foot against the accelerator. The light of the going so fast that it seemed as though it needs no longer touch the ground. His car, out of the corner of his eye, he caught a glimpse of Cleo, with blanched face and tight-clenched hands, and he felt a great relief. Her lips were separated from the front of her face, and she was staring at him. The car leaped forward like a leaping greyhound, like a tennis ball it rebounded over the top of the barrier, quite uninjured, but with three men, faced and shaking passengers, went flying down the road in the direction of the distant city.

The clock hands on the campanile tower of the ferry building in San Francisco pointed to a quarter after six when Hope, now traveling with more respect for the speed laws, swung the car into Market Street. He started to turn into Kearney Street, but stopped at the signal of a traffic officer to let a fire engine pass. It tore up Kearney Street, its siren hooting a hoarse warning, and he followed it. Ahead of the windows of the building, more fire apparatus was coming. Every one was running and shouting. A policeman halted them with a peremptory hand. "You can't come any further in your car," he ordered. "We'll have to walk the rest of the way," said Hope, but it wasn't far. Dawson's place was somewhere in the next block. His love, it must be close to where the fire is! Pushing their way through the crowd, stumbling over the lines of fire hose, the three made their way forward until they were opposite the burning building. So dense was the smoke, however, that the building was totally obscured. Suddenly a blast of wind blew the curtain of smoke momentarily aside.

A Cleo, Hope and Hook gave a groan of despair. For on the face of the doomed structure in letters four feet high they read: "Dawson's Auction Rooms." Even as they looked there came a rending crash, and amid a swirl of smoke and a sudden burst of flame, the walls crumbled and fell. Somewhere amid that mass of smoking debris, a man beyond recognition now, was the man who had purchased the precious volumes. And in one of those volumes, now no longer traceable, was hidden the secret of the submarine.

(To Be Continued.)

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A MILE A MINUTE IN THE CHASE.