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 INSTALMENTS.

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 in Vallejo and is welcomed by the inventor and his daughter Cleo. On the trial trip of the inventor's boat a Japanese helper is surprised in the act of examining the mechanism of the ventilating device. Hope reports favorably on the new device, but there are others interested in it. An attempt to inaugurate Dr. Burke's laboratory fails; but later Cleo finds him murdered in his bedroom. Cleo sets her father's library to get money, later she finds a note from which she learns that the books contain the secret formula. With Hope she runs to the gentleman's store, only to find it in flames. Olga Ivanoff and Gerald Morton, two spies in search of the formula, attempt to capture Cleo where she calls at the home of Stephanoff, the Anarchist. Hope rushes to her aid; Morton shoots at him, but the bullet hits a bomb in the cellar which explodes, Stephanoff dies in the wreck of his house; the others escape. Hope and Cleo attend a ball at Mrs. Dalliver's where another has two of the missing books. Mahlin, a spy, attempts to steal the books, but is discovered by Hope. In the excitement that follows the books disappear. Mahlin escapes. Hope and Cleo take a boat for an island out in the bay. The conspirators follow in other boats. Mahlin and the Jap turn out the island light. Morton's boat, with the Countess, strikes a stray mine in the bay. After a violent storm Hope and Cleo arrive on a strange island and discover that the man they hunt is there. But Mahlin and the Japanese also reach the island and put up a fight for the books. They escape from Hope, but return and dynamite the shack. The conspirators fall to fight Hope and Cleo. They manage to reach Sandsboro, where Dr. Owen has one of the books. The others approach the doctor, but he refuses to hear them. He arranges to meet Hope at the hotel with the book. Morton comes as Hope and but for an earthquake would have possessed the volume.

NINTH EPISODE.

THOUGH the earthquake caused considerable material damage to Sandsboro, partially wrecking the hotel, a bank and several smaller buildings, but few casualties and no fatalities resulted. Within an hour Hope, Cleo and Dr. Owen, their clothing still showing traces of dust and falling plaster, were seated about a table in the latter's study, poring over the book which Cleo had snatched from Olga during the panic in the restaurant.

"There's nothing in this one, either," said Hope disgustedly, as he turned the last leaf and slammed the cover. "That leaves six more books to look for. Things are narrowing down, in any event."

"Where do we go now, Jarvis?" asked Cleo.

"The next name on the list," said Hope, taking from his pocketbook the page from Dawson's ledger, "is Richard Patten, care general delivery, Santa Eulalia."

"And where is Santa Eulalia?"

"It's at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, Miss Burke," said the physician. "Right in the edge of the mountains. It's only a small place. You shouldn't have difficulty in finding your man there."

When Hope and Cleo descended from the branch line local at Santa Eulalia late in the following afternoon they found that they were, as Owen had said, in the edge of the mountains. Santa Eulalia is one of those rural communities where everyone is, or professes to be, familiar with the details of every one's else's business. In such towns there are three recognized fountainheads of information: The hotel, the general store and the barber shop, and, as the proprietor of the general store was also postmaster, it was to him that Hope, having settled Cleo in the only hotel that the town boasted, addressed his inquiries.

"Do I know Dick Patten?" repeated the store keeper in response to Hope's question. 'Well, I reckon I do. I've sold a heap of goods to Dick. He's outfitted with me for's much as fifteen years."

"What is his business?" asked Hope.

"Well," said the merchant reflectively, "I reckon you might call Dick a prospector and not be far wrong. At any rate, that's what he's been doing as long's I've known him. Never made a strike that I heard tell of, but he always has money to pay his bills. A queer fellow, Dick is. Quiet sort, fond of books, never talks about himself, seems to like his own company. He comes into town every two or three weeks, stays just long enough to get his mail and load up his burro with provisions, and then he's off for the mountains again. He takes a trip to 'Frisco once or twice a year and when he comes back he usually has a lot of old books with him. Gets 'em to read when he's off prospecting, I reckon. Come to think of it, he'd just got back from the city the last time I seen him."

"How long ago was that?"

"About a week—ten days, mebbe."

"Have you any idea where I could find him?"

"Not the least in the world, friend. Were you wanting to see him about something particular?"

"Yes," said Hope, "I want to see him very much indeed."

"Then the best thing you can do, friend," the storekeeper asserted, "is to sit right down here in Santa Eulalia and wait for him.

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The Kern County Fair had opened its gates and the people of the country for half a hundred miles around were pouring into Bakersfield in motor cars, in wagons, and on horseback, by trolley and by train. As 4 o'clock drew near, the crowd deserted these attractions and slowly drifted toward the field where Bob Smith, "the Daredevil of the Sky," was advertised to give his hair-raising and perilous aeroplane exhibition.

As Smith, a slim, wirily built fellow, clad in the leather garments of an aviator, was crossing the field from the hangar to his waiting aeroplane, he was hailed by a tall young man, who, accompanied by a fashionably dressed woman, had, with considerable difficulty pushed his way through the crowd.

"Hello, Bob!" hailed the stranger, evidently an Easterner by his dress, "don't you remember me now that you've become famous?"

"By Jove," exclaimed the aviator, running forward with outstretched hand, "if it isn't Gerald Morton! What on earth are you doing here?"

"Oh, I'm spending a few days down the valley, near Santa Eulalia," Morton replied, a trifle evasively. "I have a little business there that requires my attention. Let me introduce you to my friend, the Countess Ivanoff."

"Mr. Smith," continued Morton, turning to Olga, "is responsible for my interest in aviation. He taught me to drive a machine when he had a school on Long Island, two years ago."

"I didn't know that you could drive an aeroplane," said Olga in surprise.

"You bet he can drive, Countess," said Smith. "If he hadn't gone in business with that rich uncle of his he could have made a living as an aviator. He's one of the few amateurs I know that I'm not nervous about riding with. Don't you want to go up with me now, Morton? I've got a two passenger tractor."

"Do I want to?" shouted Morton, as excited as a boy, "well, I should say I did. How about it, Olga? Do you mind waiting for me?"

"Not in the least," she answered. "Go, by all means. I'll wait for you in the car."

"Run over to the hangar, then," directed Smith, "and tell one of the boys to fix you up with a coat and cap and goggles. And be as quick as you can, Morton. It isn't good business for us professionals to let a crowd get too impatient."

Five minutes later, with Morton, goggled and leather-clad, seated beside him, Smith, signalling to his helpers that he was ready, threw on the power and the great propellers began to revolve, haltingly at first, but rapidly gathering speed until their roar drowned out all other sounds. Smith threw over his starting lever and the machine rolled forward across the turf, faster, faster, and then, in response to the depression of the planes, left the ground and soared like a great white bird, into the air. For twenty minutes Smith performed his aerial manoeuvres for the benefit of the multitude with strained necks and upturned faces a thousand feet below; then turned his machine in the direction of the mountains.

"Now," he shouted, putting his lips close to Morton's ear so that his words could be heard above the roar of the propellers, "the business part is over and we'll have a little pleasure spin."

Higher they climbed and higher, until the fair grounds and the city and the great plain of the San Joaquin lay spread below them like a map in bas-relief. Soon the plain below them merged into foothills and the foothills lost themselves in a wilderness of peaks and cliffs and canyons, and, almost before Morton realized it, they were hovering over the great San Bernardino range. Circling and swooping above the mountain tops like a gigantic hawk, Smith apparently found the spot for which he was looking, for he suddenly shut off the power and the machine began to volplane downward at appalling speed. So rapidly were they descending that it seemed as though the mountains were fairly leaping toward them. Morton, experienced aviator though he was, was frightened. "Something's happened to the engine," he thought. "We're in for a smash, for we can never make a landing on those mountains." Scarcely had the thought leaped through his mind when what had looked an instant before like a rocky and inhospitable mountainside resolved itself into a grass-covered mesa on which the machine landed as lightly as a bird.

The mesa, or tableland, on which they stood apparently ended, a few hundred feet away, against a sheer wall of rock which rose skyward as abruptly as the side of a house. In the base of this cliff was a square, black hole, evidently the entrance to an abandoned mine and nearby stood a rudely built and dilapidated cabin. The cabin, he now saw, was built on a narrow shelf of rock; behind it rose the sheer cliff; before it was an abyss. It stood, indeed, on a veritable island in the air and the only way to reach that island was by means of a wire cable which was stretched across the chasm. From this cable, red with rust, but apparently still strong, hung a sort of basket, roughly constructed, by means of which one could ferry himself across the river of space. "Great place for kidnappers or counterfeiters, eh? The police wouldn't find 'em here in a year of Sundays."

Morton had started toward the machine but, at Smith's remark, he turned and walked back to the edge of the chasm, where he stood staring at the cabin on the ledge, apparently lost in thought.

"The place seems to interest you," said Smith, laughing. "Thinking of opening up the mine?"

"No," said Morton thoughtfully, as he turned away, "but I have just thought of another way in which it might be made to pay."

"Bob," said Morton, as he and the aviator sat that evening at a table in a cafe, "what are you going to do after you have finished your engagement here?"

"I haven't any engagements ahead," Smith answered gloomily. "I'm thinking of taking a run east to see if I can't book a few dates."

"Going to take the machine with you."

"No. Freights too high and it's too much of a speculation. I'll leave it on the coast until I get something."

"The trip you gave me this afternoon seems to have reawakened my enthusiasm for aviation," said Morton lightly. "I find that I shall have to stay around here for the next few weeks and I'd like to pass the time with something more exciting than golf. Why not rent me your machine? I'll assume all the risks and I'll pay you enough to make it worth your while. How about it?"

Before Smith and Morton separated the latter had become the temporary owner of the aeroplane.

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Morton and Olga fully realized that, as a result of their desperate but unsuccessful attempt to obtain possession of the book from Dr. Owen in the restaurant at Sandsboro, they had shown their hand and that henceforth they might as well play their game in the open. Recognizing that Hope and Cleo could have no object in continuing their search for the books had they discovered the lost formula in the one which Fitzmaurice had loaned to Dr. Owen, the two conspirators followed the naval officer and the girl to Santa Eulalia, where they learned by a few inquiries that Patten was prospecting in the mountains and that it was uncertain when he would return. As the hotel at which Hope and Cleo were staying was the only one in Santa Eulalia, Morton and Olga established themselves in the nearby town of Ellenville.

On their way back to Ellenville Morton unfolded his scheme to Olga.

"It was that cabin on the ledge," he explained, "that gave me the idea. It's as remote and inaccessible as an island in the Arctic. Suppose we left the girl there for a week or two. I fancy she would then be willing enough to tell us anything she knows, eh? How does my plan strike you?"

"As far as it goes," said Olga, "it is admirable. You seem, however, to have overlooked one rather important detail. You tell me that this cabin is practically inaccessible. How do you propose, then, to get the girl to it?"

"By aeroplane," Morton exclaimed triumphantly.

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On an afternoon early in the following week Cleo, as had become her custom, was strolling along a quiet lane in the outskirts of Santa Eulalia. To-day she was alone, however, for Hope had been called to Los Angeles on business, and Hook, seated on a cracker barrel, was entertaining the habitues of the general store with sea yarns. So completely absorbed in her thoughts was Cleo that she paid no attention to the large closed car, with drawn curtains, which rolled silently up behind her. Just as it came opposite her the door swung open, a man leaped out, a blanket was thrown over her head, muffling her screams, and she was dragged into the car, the whole performance being enacted in far less time than it takes to tell it. She struggled desperately to free herself from the enveloping folds, but unseen hands pinned her against the cushions while some one held a sponge, saturated with something that smelled sweet and sickly, over her nose and mouth. A few inhalations and her struggles ceased.

When Cleo recovered consciousness she found herself in a small and unkept room. Its walls, which were of unplaned boards, were covered with pictures cut from the illustrated papers; its furniture consisted of a small iron stove, much the worse for rust, an oilcloth covered table, a chair and the foul-smelling bunk on which she lay. In the chair with his back to her a man was sitting. She must have made some sound, for the man turned. It was Gerald Morton!

"So you're awake at last, my dear," he said, coming toward her. "How are you feeling?"

At sight of Morton she attempted to rise, but a wave of giddiness swept over her and she sank back upon the bunk.

"I feel ill," she moaned. "My head feels as though it were going to burst . . . . where . . . . where am I? . . . and what are you doing here, Mr. Morton? . . . have I had an accident? . . . has anything happened? . . . I can't remember."

"Nothing has happened—yet," said Morton coolly.

"You're in a cabin in the mountains, my dear, and quite a lonely place it is, too."

"But how did I get here?" she asked, striving desperately to keep her composure.

"I brought you here," was the answer. "I wanted a quiet little talk with you where we would not be disturbed, and this seemed just the place."

"What . . . what do you want of me?" Cleo asked in a voice scarcely above a whisper.

"I want you to marry me," said Morton, seating himself on the edge of the bed and attempting to draw her to him.

For an instant she gazed at him in mingled disbelief and anger, then sprang to her feet. The next instant he had taken her in his arms.

"And you're going to marry me, too, my beauty," he repeated, his breath hot upon her cheek, and he bent forward to kiss her, but, with a sudden movement, she wrenched herself free.

"Marry you?" she cried contemptuously. "Marry you, you cur, you cad? I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man left on earth!" and, as he again attempted to kiss her, she slapped him in the face.

"You little devil," he snarled, livid with anger, "you'll kiss me now, and before I'm through with you you'll be glad to marry me," and he made as though to seize her, but, eluding his grasp, she reached the door, opened it, and fled with Morton at her heels. A hundred yards she ran blindly; then stopped abruptly, trembling with terror and excitement, for at her very feet a chasm yawned. But as her pursuer approached she turned defiantly.

"If you attempt to touch me, Mr. Morton," she said steadily, "I shall jump. I would rather be dead than have you lay a hand on me."

"Come, come, my dear," he said soothingly, as though he were talking to a frightened horse, "there's nothing to be frightened of. I'm not going to hurt you," and he cautiously advanced toward her a step or two.

"One step nearer," warned Cleo, in a strange, strained voice, "and I shall jump." And he knew that she would make good her threat.

"You need a chance to cool down and think things over," he said. "I suppose my proposal was a little sudden. So I'll just leave you here for a few days, my dear. You will find a basket of food on the table, and there will be no one to disturb you. It's a quiet, restful place—no one could find you here in a thousand years. Sure you won't change your mind and give me a kiss, my dear? No? Well, then I'll be going. When I come back again I fancy that you'll be a little more cordial."

She saw him walk briskly along the edge of the cliff to a cable arrangement which, in her panic, she had failed to notice; saw him climb into a basket which was suspended from a pulley-wheel which ran upon the cable; saw him haul himself across the chasm by means of a rope, get out of the basket, detach it from the pully, and disappear with it behind the screen of bushes which lined the opposite cliff. A few minutes later she heard a sudden roar, as of a motor car with its muffler open, and before her astonished eyes an aeroplane soared skyward.

Having convinced herself that escape from the ledge was impossible save with assistance from outside, Cleo returned to the cabin, less worried than might have been expected, for she knew that Hope and Hook, once they discovered her absence, would move heaven and earth to find her. On the table was the basket of provisions brought by Morton. Continuing her investigations she discovered a cupboard which contained matches, candles, a bag of salt, some tins of fruit and vegetables, and a meal sack filled with what felt like books. Untying the string, she emptied the contents of the sack upon the floor—then gave a cry of astonishment and joy. For, amid the tattered dog-eared volumes, was one she recognized. It was a work on metallurgy—one of the dozen books which, since her earliest recollection, had stood on the shelf above her father's desk. She opened it with trembling fingers. Written in a firm, bold hand across the flyleaf was the name, "Richard Patten." By one of those coincidences which causes fiction to hang its head, Morton had brought her to the cabin of the very man for whom they were all searching. Now she recalled the storekeeper's description of Patten as Hope had repeated it to her: "A queer fellow . . . quiet . . . fond of books . . . has a cabin up in the mountains somewheres." And now, by a chance in a million, she had found Patten's cabin and the book. Slowly she turned the leaves, carefully scanning each in turn. But she found nothing. Disheartened, she was about to close the book when, at the very foot of the last page, in letters so faint and minute as to be almost indistinguishable, she saw a line of writing. "Philosophy," it read, "p. 61, every seventh word." It was the key to the formula!

Three days dragged by—three days which, in that awful solitude, seemed like three years. The resources of the ledge Cleo soon exhausted; she cleaned the cabin; lighting a candle, she explored the abandoned mine working; she attempted to beguile the time reading the books which she had discovered in the sack, which proved, however, to be dry-as-dust scientific works; and every few hours she peered over the edge of the precipice in the faint hope that she might see some one in the canyon below. On the morning of the fourth day her patience was rewarded, for she saw two boys fishing in the mountain torrent which raced and roared along the bottom of the canyon. She called to them; again and again she screamed, but the distance and the noise of the river drowned her voice. Gathering a handful of pebbles, she stretched herself on the edge of the cliff and commenced methodically to bombard the boys below. A dozen pebbles she threw without attracting their attention, but at last, when she had almost abandoned hope, a pebble struck one of them on the shoulder. Whirling about to see where it had come from, he saw Cleo on the ledge, half a thousand feet above. He called to his companion and they both stood staring up at her. Frantically she beckoned to them, but they shook their heads; it was evident that they knew of no path by which to reach the ledge. She tried to call to them, but it was impossible to make them hear. Suddenly a thought struck her. Running to the cabin, she looked wildly about for pencil and paper, but could find neither. On the table lay the book which contained the code. Tearing out the flyleaf she lighted match after match, let them burn for a moment, blew them out, and, using the blackened ends in lieu of a pencil, scrawled her brief call for help: "Held prisoner by Morton in cabin on ledge in mountains. Come quickly. Cleo." Folding the sheet, she addressed it to Jarvis Hope, Shaftsbury Hotel, Santa Eulalia. Now her problem was how to get the message to the boys below, for, should she let it flutter down it would, in all probability, be carried away by a gust of wind, and if she tied it to a stone it might plunge into the river and be lost. All at once there came to her the recollection of an amusement of her childhood. With her handkerchief and a piece of string she made a miniature parachute, such as children use, weighted it with a small stone, and tied to the stone the message. Returning to the cliff, she first held up the parachute for the boys to see, then tossed it out into space. Almost instantly the handkerchief billowed out, thus checking its descent, and it sailed gently downward into the boys' upstretched hands. She could see them slowly deciphering the ill-written message, and then glance up at her again, whereupon she gestured frantically that they were to take it to the town. They quickly caught her meaning and, giving her a wave of encouragement, started down the canyon on a run.

Hope did not return from Los Angeles until the day following Cleo's disappearance. He was met at the railway station by Hook, who, almost beside himself with anxiety, told him the news. He wired to Los Angeles for detectives. Stirred by Cleo's youth and beauty and the mystery which enveloped her disappearance, posses of cowboys and citizens scoured the surrounding region, afoot and on horseback and in automobiles.

It was on Monday afternoon that Cleo disappeared. Shortly before noon on Friday two panting boys, their dust-grimed faces streaked with rivulets of perspiration, burst into the hotel in Santa Eulalia.

"Say, mister," one of them demanded breathlessly of the clerk, "is there a feller named Jarvis Hope a-staying here?"

"There he is, over by the door," said the clerk.

"Say, mister," piped the boy, tugging at Hope's sleeve, "is your name Jarvis Hope?"

"That's my name, son," said the officer. "What do you want of me?"

"I reckon this letter's fer you, then," and the boy displayed the note from Cleo.

Hope eagerly devoured the few ill-written lines.

"It's from Cleo!" he exclaimed, turning to Hook, who was peering eagerly over his shoulder. "Thank God, she's alive! That hell-hound Morton has her a prisoner up in the mountains. In a cabin on a ledge, she says."

"Do you think you could show me the place where you saw her?" Hope asked the boy.

"Sure. I been fishin' there a lot of times."

"Come along, then!" cried Hope, and, followed by Hook, he fairly dragged the boy into his motor car. Throwing in his clutch, he jammed his foot on the accelerator and the car leaped forward toward the mountains.

So excited were Hope and Hook at the prospect of finding Cleo that neither of them noticed that another car was following them, nor, when the roughness of the country compelled them to leave their machine and proceed on foot, did they notice that the two men in the other did likewise.

For two hours the boy led them along the winding course of the river until at last they reached the gloomy defile, with its perpendicular walls of rock, known as Dead Man's Gulch.

"There's where I seen the lady—up there," said the boy, pointing to where, far above them, the sheer face of the cliff cut the sky.

"Do you know how to get up there?" demanded Hope.

"Nope," was the answer. "I ain't never been up here 'cept for fishin.'"

"Come on, Hook," called Hope. "There must be a trail to the top somewhere if we can only find it." His clothes torn by thorns, his face and hands scratched and bleeding, the young officer pressed doggedly upward, splashing across mountain torrents, forcing his way through almost impenetrable walls of underbrush, scrambling over bowlders, leaping crevasses, skirting the edges of dizzy chasms, but working steadily upward, ever upward. At last, streaming with perspiration and staggering from exhaustion, he reached the mesa where Morton had landed in the aeroplane. A few score yards away he could see, above a line of bushes, a weather beaten cabin, and standing in the doorway—God be thanked!—was Cleo. They saw each other at almost the same instant. Running to the brink of the chasm which separated them, Hope tried to call across to her, but the distance was too great; she could not catch his words. But he saw her pointing to the cable. Hurrying to the end of it, he glanced about for the basket, but it was not to be seen. Rendered reckless by his love for Cleo, and taking no thought as to how he was to get back, he grasped with both hands the pulley hook from which had hung the basket and swung himself off into space. He was half way across the appalling abyss when Cleo, who had been watching him in terrified fascination, uttered a piercing shriek of horror. She had seen a man emerge suddenly from the bushes which lined the opposite cliff—a man whose evil face she recognized. It was Mahlin! Frozen with horror, she saw him run toward the end of the cable from which Hope was dangling. She saw him swing an ax high above his head; she saw it whistle through the air and bite deep into the rusted cable; she saw the strands of wire part, one by one; she saw her lover's face turn pallid—and then she fainted.

(To Be Continued.)

MORTON ABDUCTS CLEO IN AN AEROPLANE.

Hope grasped the pulley-hook and swung himself off into space. He was half-way across the appalling abyss when Cleo, who had been watching him in terrified fascination, uttered a piercing shriek. She had seen a man emerge from the bushes. She saw him run toward the end of the cable from which Hope was dangling, and then swing an axe high above his head.

CLEO, HOPE AND HOOK START FOR SANTA EULALIA.

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