

GOOD ROADS,
GOOD HOMES,
BEST CHEESE

CLOVERDALE COURIER.

The Nestucca Valley First,
Last and all the
Time.

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PEARL of the ARMY

Guy W. McConnell

SYNOPSIS.

Capt. Ralph Payne, U. S. A., is given secret plans of defense to deliver to Panama. He attends a ball at the Granada embassy with Colonel Dare's daughter, Pearl. As a climax to a series of mysterious incidents he is arrested for treason. The ambassador of Granada is found dead and the plans missing from Payne's coat. Major Brent, Payne's rival, enters into suspicious negotiations with Bertha Bonn. Pearl Dare follows a burglar from her home; is drugged and left in a field, and later overhears plotters, who almost capture her. Payne is sentenced to life imprisonment. A train carrying Pearl, Bertha Bonn and Payne on his way to prison is wrecked and Pearl sees Payne's lifeless body at her feet. She meets a mysterious stranger who offers her his services to trace the traitors. She learns that he has the plans. Pearl finds Adams in Washington and learns of his peculiar actions. Adams warns Senator Warfield that he is in danger from a ring of spies. While they talk the senator's office is attacked by conspirators. Bertha Bonn asks Pearl to hand Adams a package which proves to be the plans. Adams is made Colonel Dare's orderly. They are ordered South. The Granadians capture Pearl and Adams to get the plans. Pearl begs Adams to let her take his belt which contains the defense plans. They escape and Adams steals the belt from her. Brent confronts Adams communicating with the enemy and sells him his freedom for the packet of plans. Bertha Bonn warns Pearl against her professed friends. Pearl is captured again by the Granadians.

SEVENTH EPISODE

For the Stars and Stripes.

The dexterity of the chauffeur was taxed to the utmost in steering the swiftly moving automobile safely over the dangerous desert road and in consequence his replies to Pearl's eager questioning were brief. Pearl was not over the shock of finding Toko and not Adams at the wheel.

"Whose car is this? How did you come to be at the scene of the hold-up?"

"I get away from Bolero—tell you about that later. See you fall out of train. Save you. Grab car at railroad station. How you get on railroad train?"

Pearl told him that she and Major Brent were en route to Washington with the recovered canal defense plans when the train was attacked by the Silent Menace and Bolero's ruffians; that the plans were stolen again; she didn't know what had happened to Major Brent; had Toko seen him? and so forth.

Toko shot a curious glance at the

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thick black muffer spread out on Pearl's lap. She had picked it up from the floor of the automobile and wondered whence it came, for the Silent Menace always wore a thick black muffer, and surely Toko was not the Silent Menace.

"Yes. I see Major Brent," replied Toko shortly.

"I recall that he fought with the Silent Menace in our private car. Was he hurt?"

"He had that on his head," Toko answered, even more short than before. "I do not know. He drop muffer and I pick it up when he run into station. Guess he not much hurt."

"This muffer!" exclaimed Miss Dare, wrinkling her forehead. "Impossible, Toko! This is the mask of the Silent Menace!"

But Toko stuck to his story. "I no trust Major Brent," he finally announced to his astonished mistress. "No trust Adams, too."

"What do you know about the major and—Adams? The latter may be a spy, but the major is my closest friend, whom you should not doubt without reason."

"Spy?" echoed Toko, with a queer catch in his voice, ignoring her question. "How you find that out?"

Then he told her what had happened



"So Major Brent Has Shown Me Up?"

to him during the past forty-eight hours. During the raid on the Paso del Norte he and Bertha Bonn were captured by Bolero. Even now the girl was hostage for his return from a mission on which he had been sent by her with the consent of the bandit chief.

"A mission for this mysterious Bonn woman?" interrupted Pearl, who listened to his tale with rapt interest.

"To you with a note. I lost it. Adams, he pick it up. We fight. Someone shoot at me. I run away. When I sneak back, Adams gone. Note gone. That's why I no trust Adams, mebbe." He paused to see the effect of his words on Miss Dare. She was too confused to speak.

"I hunt all day," continued Toko. "See Adams tonight and follow to railroad station. Demand note. He say not got it and call me fool. I not know it Adams till I pull black muffer off his face. We fall in river in another fight. He get away once more. See?"

"Another muffer? A note to me? So you were the man fighting with Adams! Why, Toko, I was the person who fired that shot!" Pearl finally blurted out when she could find her voice.

Light now dawned on Pearl! "Oh! That note—the note of warning against Adams!" she cried rapidly. "An army scout found and brought the note to my father."

"Army scout?" quizzed Toko, who appeared to be nonplussed.

Pearl explained, then, how a scout in the army's employ went in search of trace of her, Adams, himself and Miss Bonn; how he found the note somewhere not distant from the scene of Toko's scrap with Adams; how it was at first misunderstood by both her father and herself, for its wording seemed to apply to Major Brent and not to Adams; how she discovered Adams to possess the canal defense plans secreted in Captain Payne's military belt all the time; how Major Brent captured the document from Adams and delivered it to her father, after she escaped by airplane and told them where she thought Adams might be found.

To all of which Toko lent a listening and dumfounded ear, for he knew that it was of Major Brent the warning had been sent, and that the message was justified, for it told the truth.

He did not tell Miss Dare this, however.

"I can't understand why the major had his face covered with this muffer," ruminated Pearl.

Toko muttered something unintelligible. "I say no more about Major Brent till I know more," he said aloud. "Toko make sure next time." And both fell silent.

Meanwhile Pearl glanced around to get their bearings. They were miles distant from the American line, toward which the car was headed. The hour was well advanced into the night.

Pearl sighed in a pathetic way. Although she felt secure with Toko as her guide and guard, never before was she so utterly depressed.

But presently Miss Dare's unhappy thoughts fled before dangers new and imminent; for out of the night there loomed across the trail the figure of a man on horseback. It was Bolero.

"Jump!" cried Toko, smothering an oath and clamping on the brakes. In another moment they were dodging around bush and dune.

"Sacre!" cried the bandit chief. "The colonel's daughter—she has the military document!"

"Shoot him, Toko!" Pearl urged in their dash toward neighboring hills.

"I no got gun!" he groaned.

They ran faster, hearing Bolero's mocking laugh. Then came the wild yells of followers lurking in the shadows.

Bolero was not altogether sure that Pearl and her chauffeur were unarmed, and he kept a cautious distance while from various directions horsemen galloped up. One more impetuous than the rest plunged straight at Pearl, caught her by the waist and pitched her across the pommel of his saddle and veered with bold challenge to his rapacious comrades.

Now ensued a quarrel for the prize. Shielding Pearl as best he could, her captor fired his revolver twice, and two opponents toppled on the sand.

Bolero, who had looked on in amusement, put an end to the fight. "The girl is yours!" he gusted lustily. "I'll take the Jap, who'll not get away soon again!"

Toko was thrown on a pony. Bolero assumed the lead and the whole party cantered away.

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Miss Dare exposed her pale features to the ruffian behind her, observing at the same time that his clothes were damp as from a recent wetting. Their eyes met. Her fears doubled. Her captor was T. O. Adams.

"Don't budge and keep quiet, girl," he whispered commandingly, yet his smile was pleasant. "Not a hair on your head's goin' to be harmed."

She sat erect, alert, scornful. "I can't get you all back t-to safety, jes' yit," he continued, in a kindly way. "That canal document ain't safe on you. Let me have it till I can deliver you and it b-both to the colonel."

"T. O. Adams, or whoever you are, the document belongs neither to you nor to me. Its owner is the United States of America. You know that I do not have it. I know that you stole it from me. Why are you putting up this pretense? If you will pose, why not be natural?"

He regarded the back of her head steadily.

along on my trail, and seen' you haven't got the canal defense plans, I've got to go a long way. The g-goin' ain't goin' to be easy on a man, let a-alone a lil' girl like you."

She looked him squarely in the eyes. A sudden inspiration had come to her. "T. O. Adams, I've got you at a disadvantage, and I have concluded to keep you there. I intend to play a game with you. An open game, however. I shall go wherever you go. You will not find me unaccustomed to roughing it in every sense of the word."

The man stood flabbergasted. "You don't know what you're s-sayin'!"

She smiled faintly. He snorted. Refreshments were now served. Afterwards Adams and the woman engaged in a long and whispered conversation about Pearl and her proposition.

Pearl noted with surprise that in the Granadian language Adams did not stammer.

When they were through talking, Adams returned to Pearl's side. "Do



Adams Interposes His Objections to the Execution.

"Go ahead!" she went on, contemptuously. "Serve your own ends. Be the rogue you really are and the coward Major Brent proved you to be."

"So Major Brent has shown me up?"

"He has," Pearl observed with uneasiness that they were no longer attached to Bolero's band. It was far ahead in the desert fast fading from view.

The helplessness of her position flashed in her mind. Her body trembled. Her heart began to thump.

Adams headed into a wooded region and after an hour or so stopped at the abandoned silver mine before the threshold of the hut of the Castilian woman of previous acquaintance.

He lifted the half-dazed girl very gently and carried her into the hut. It was very dark inside. Placing her in a chair, he uttered several sharp sentences in the Granadian tongue. Instantly a candle light appeared in adjoining room and his aged friend presented herself in the doorway, bowing low and reverentially.

Adams ordered the woman to provide food and refreshment. While they waited he sat down and gravely regarded Pearl.

"Miss Dare," he began, after a long hesitation, "I've got to tell you something for your good and mine. I've got to send you back to your dad. I don't exactly know how I'm goin' to do that. But I'm thinking about it leavin' you here for the night, where you'll be safe, anyhow. I can't take you

you s-till intend to s-stick to me to a finish?" he inquired, gazing at her intently.

She nodded in a spritely fashion. "I do," said she with firmity.

Adams turned abruptly to the Castilian. He spoke tersely. "Hurry! She must go as a Granadian!" And he hastened outdoors.

The aged person beckoned Pearl into an adjoining room. There, not without a little dismay, Pearl learned that she was to be invested in Granadian clothes.

"These are the clothes of a man!" gasped Pearl, blushing.

A faint luster of long ago shone in the Castilian's eyes. She smiled wistfully.

"Senor Vendre would have it so."

"Senor Vendre!" echoed Pearl, stopping short and marveling at the woman's fine English accent.

"Senor Vendre," repeated the latter, with a sidelong glance at Pearl.

"Is that his name?"

"Did you not know?"

"I—we know him as—Adams."

Pearl paused, alive with sudden curiosity. "How long have you known Senor Vendre? What is your name, may I ask?"

"I am Senora Vendre," responded her hostess, after a moment's hesitation. "The man you know as Adams is—but perhaps we better not speak of that just yet."

Continued on last page.

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