

"THE MYSTERY GIRL THEY TELEVISED"

One of This Week's Grand
Stories For Schoolgirls.

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GIRLS' CRYSTAL ^{3^D}

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"



"A SPEED GIRL
IN SECRET"



The MYSTERY GIRL THEY TELEVISED

SEEN ON TELEVISION

NOEL RAYMOND, the famous detective, switched on the table-lamp and bent forward to turn the knob of the television set in his cozy study.

"The screen flickered softly, revealing a floodlit ball-room thronged with dancing couples, many in fancy dress.

"A pop June's not here!" Noel murmured. His thinking.

"She'd have been interested in this broadcast. She met Sandra Horton when we visited America, though they haven't kept in touch recently. June Gardner, Noe's young partner, was holding his own (though, so he was on his own in the dot. For some days he had been enormously ill owing to flu, and now that he was up and about again he was missing his niece's company."

Leaning back on his chair, he turned his attention to the screen.

The programme included a visit to the coffee-stall-end of a popular young debutante, the daughter of an American business associate who had recently rented a country house in Kent.

"This fine old manor house," declared the commentator, "has just been the scene of such sparkling gaiety for many a year. Nearly a hundred guests have been invited, and Sandra Horton too was all hearts with her share. Standing watchfully beside the straggling entrance to Mr. Horton's alert young English secretary, whose duty it has been to check the identity of every guest."

The television camera moved so that a glimpse of the girl secretary appeared on the screen.

"Great guess!" ejaculated Noel, starting up suddenly from his chair. "That girl looks awfully like—"

Just then the screen secretary turned smiling brightly in response to a jolting remark of her employer's.

Noel caught in his breath, for he could hardly fail to recognize that expression of a young girl recently changed by the brown-rimmed spectacles—the bobbed hair and even the dainty evening gown—his own present to his niece!

"It's June!" he exclaimed, blink amazement in his eyes. "But what on earth is she doing down in Kent, acting as secretary to Wilbur Horton?"

He stared at the screen again, but the camera had now swung on to the dance floor itself, where an old-world minuet was in progress.

Noel switched off the set. It was some days now since he had heard from his young partner—just an

affectionate note begging him to take care of himself, and promising to be home at the end of the week. Why should she suddenly appear in Kent, apparently settled in a brand new job, had Noel completely baffled.

"It's not like June to change her place without telling me," he muttered. "Something pretty important must have turned up, and perhaps I was out when she planned. She may need my help. Anyway"—he grinned boyishly—"I'll give her a little surprise."

He was pulling on his overcoat as he spoke, and a few minutes later he had left the flat, hurrying round to the news where he kept his car.

The powerful Midlands did not take long to cover the distance to the little Kentish village, some sixty miles from London. Hurdley Gables—the country mansion rented by Mr. Horton—was ablaze with lights when Noel presented himself at the door, handing his card to the man-servant.

"I should like to speak to Mr. Horton on a business matter," he said. "I shan't keep him more than a few minutes."

He decided that it would be best not to ask outright for his niece, in case he inadvertently spoilt June's little game—whatever it might be.

A few minutes later he was ushered into Mr. Horton's study. The gratified American came forward to greet him, a look of surprise on his rugged face.

"I guess this is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Raymond," he declared, shaking hands warmly, and stood from your niece that you had been very ill."

Noel raised his eyebrows, smiling faintly. For some reason June must have exaggerated his mild attack of flu, though why he could not imagine.

"Oh, it was really nothing, sir," he rejoined. "I'm as fit as a fiddle now. I just looked in to have a word with your young partner—if it is convenient."

"Sure—sure!" said Mr. Horton. "She'll be in her office, adjoining the ball-room. Miss Gardner's position as my secretary is, of course, only a cover—while she is investigating the little mystery that has cropped up here."

By PETER LANGLEY

"It was a bit of luck that your niece happened to be in the district and called on us," added the American simply. "When Sandra told her what had happened she generously offered to help us. And she mentioned that she did not want you to be bothered."

Noel's perplexity deepened as he followed his host across the decorated ball-room. So there was a mystery at Hurdley Gables, and June was investigating it—without having told him.

"There is Miss Gaynor's office, in the corner behind the palms," murmured Mr. Horton. "That gives her an opportunity to watch the dancers without being seen. The warning message my daughter received may have been sinister, but we're taking no chances. To avoid alarming the guests, Miss Gardner suggested that it would be better not to have the police actually in the house—"

He broke off as a manservant approached with a message.

"May please inform me, Mr. Raymond," he added hurriedly, "but an urgent phone-call has just come for me. I'm very Miss Gardner will explain all the facts."

He hurried away, and Noel walked thoughtfully to the doorway behind the palms. Though his host's explanation had covered up part of the puzzle, he was still baffled by June's presence in Kent and her strange secret.

He went into the office, but June was not there. A shaded reading-lamp glowed on the desk, and Noel walked across to it, glancing down curiously at the papers neatly arranged there. There he noticed a gleam of interest in his eyes.

He picked up a letter on top of the pile—obviously the warning message referred to by the American. It was written on expensive stationery, in a noticeably disguised hand, and addressed to Sandra Horton.

Its contents were brief but startling:

"Dear Miss Horton—For your own sake, and for the sake of your guests, I beg you to take special

Ever-popular June Gaynor And Noel Raymond Are Featured in This Thrilling Long, Complete Detective Story.

proceedings on the night of your capture—of a bad. An audacious girl crook has planned to come on time to the house—and anything may happen!

"Believe me,

"A FRIEND."

Noel whistled softly, resting the letter on the desk. There was a grave expression on his face. "That's the best," he muttered. "June's taken on something pretty big—and she should have phoned me. Lucky I decided to switch on the television this evening. I don't like the look of this note. I don't like the look of this girl either. She took a look at my magnifying-glass and examined the newspaper. There was a blurred ink-mark in one corner—the faint impression of a thumb. The young detective was still studying it when he tossed the note on the table. A slender figure appeared on the other doorway. The newcomer gave a little gasp.

"Nunky! What—what are you doing here?" The young detective's grim expression relaxed as he saw the startled expression on the attractive face thrown into shadow by the reading-lamp.

"Come to that, June," he said, smiling quietly. "I might ask the same question. What was the big idea of keeping me in the dark about all this? Own up, young lady!"

His tone was falling, affectionate, but June seemed strangely agitated so she drew away from him. "Nunky, please don't get so into all that talk," she breathed. "I had a good reason, and—and I'll explain everything later. If you really want to help me, please keep quiet on this—because I'm a girl, and it's a nuisance. Something may happen—so stay quiet!"

Noel regarded her keenly, rather suspiciously. He had never known June to behave like this. Though not naturally a cold letter-writer, he had even behind the best-timed spectacles held an almost reckless plan.

He glanced down at the warning message.

"You believe, then, June," he asked, "that this supposed girl crook may get into the house—in spite of your precautions?"

"I'm afraid of that, nunky!" She stepped forward, adjusting the reading lamp so that the light fell directly on the letter, while throwing her own face more completely into the shade. "I'm certain the note isn't just a bog-trail, though Nunky thought it might be."

"What do you say, you certain?" asked Noel, staring curiously at the slender hand resting on the lamp.

"Well, nunky, you've often told me that I'm a good judge of character—"

—but I'm not a little case of character now—and I'm convinced that this note was written that letter was in deadly earnest!"

A startled light crept into Noel's eyes. His expression hardened.

"And I believe you're right, young lady," he declared gravely. "The letter was written by a reckless girl who was determined to get into the house for reasons of her own. By starting a fake scare, and offering to help clear it up, she obtained a post as Mr. Horton's temporary secretary."

"Nunky! What—what do you mean?"

Noel caught at the slender hand as it was withdrawn from the lamp. "I mean," he said, "that the writer has given herself away by carelessly leaving a thumb-print on the letter—a print showing an unmistakable scar. How did you get that scar, by the way? I haven't noticed it before."

"Nunky, you're hurting my wrist!" There was something like a sob in the appealing voice.

Noel's eyes became more grim.

"You call me 'Nunky'—but I'm no more your uncle than you are June Clayton!" he said sternly. "You're

a clever young impostor—and thanks to them having observed you I'm in time to stop your little game!"

Even as Noel spoke, the girl twisted from his grasp. A moment later the electric desk-lamp and the light in the adjoining ball-room flared out suddenly, plunging everything into semi-darkness.

ROBBERY AT THE GARLS

ABOVE the agitated clamour of voices, Noel thought he heard the thin, sharp tinkle of a whistle.

Without a second's hesitation he sprang to the door, whistling out his torch. The brilliant gleam revealed the slender figure of the young impostor standing against the wall behind his desk.

Her face was pale, her lips trembling, but for an instant Noel saw a mocking smile in the grey eyes behind the spectacles—eyes so wide and so innocent.

Then she gave a little bewildered sob, almost drowned by the excited commotion in the ball-room.

"Nunky, you can't be well!" she gasped. "You don't know what you're saying! How can you accuse me—just—of being an impostor?"

The distressed, appealing voice might well have convinced a stranger—but Noel's expression remained grim.

"You're a fine actress, young lady," he rejoined, "and it's plain you must have been studying June. She mentioned in her last letter that one of her suitcases had gone astray, and I presume that it was you who pilfered its contents!"

"Oh, nunky!" "And you can get out that play-acting!" put in Noel sharply. "I've no doubt you had intended to bring off a daring coup, but you hadn't reckoned on my turning up here as a result of seeing you on the television. And the emergency switch-board in that corner was a convenient means of causing a black-out just now."

He stepped forward as he spoke and pulled a switch. The light flickered up as suddenly as they had vanished.

"Well, Miss Secretary?" he asked, with a grim smile.

They stood facing each other across the desk, and Noel saw more clearly than he had before the young impostor's amazing likeness to his niece. Apart from the tell-tale scar on her hand, she might have been his niece's double.

"Nunky, you'll be sorry for this," she whispered, a little catch in her voice.

Noel regarded her keenly, trying to fathom her game.

"What do you hope by keeping up the pretence?" he asked. "It's only to deceive me as Mr. Horton, and you'll be turned out of the house—or arrested for false pretences!"

"But I'm not pretending, nunky!" she protested. "It's you who have made a dreadful mistake. Of course, Mr. Horton will be surprised. You see," explained to him you had a breakdown from overwork—and about your having trouble with your nephew!"

The young detective smiled grimly. "I'm not a fool, however. He could not help discovering the error of the impostor girl he had been deceived. She had certainly had her plans well!"

"You won't get away with this, young lady!" he retorted. "And whatever you say, I'll see that you get a chance to carry out your little—"

He broke off, a startled expression flashing into his eyes. From the ball-room, at that instant, came a hurried cry.

"A jewelled comb! It's gone! Someone—someone's front have snatched it just now when the lights were out!"

"And my pearl brooch!" came another agitated voice. "I thought I'd someone touch me in the dark—"

A clamour of voices joined in, reporting other losses of trinkets stolen during the great black-out. "What did I see you, lady?" The amazing young impostor shook her fair head reproachfully. "You see what's happened? That dreadful crook has got away with all those jewels—thank to you!"

Noel inhaled a sharp breath. He had convinced that June's "double" was in some way responsible for the audacious thefts; but how could she possibly have carried out the trick? Just then there came a swirl of hurrying footsteps, and Mr. Horton burst into the office, accompanied by the almost fearful Sandra.

"Miss Clayton, thank goodness you're here!" he exclaimed. "You've heard what's happened? I guess the thief's been too clever for all of us—"

"Don't you worry, Mr. Horton!" interrupted the girl impudently, smiling. "I'm certain that I'll soon be able to recover the pearls—with nunky's help!"

Noel almost gaped as he encountered the girl's derisive glance. Her cool impudence was matched by her cunning. Though he knew her to be a fraud, he was unable to prove it, and he had not a scrap of evidence to connect her with the daring theft!

"I doubt if the thief can be very far off," he said dryly. "I'm more interested in his methods. He has turned the electric light—First of all, Mr. Horton, is it possible for anyone to have broken into the house?"

"Impossible, Mr. Raymond!" came the prompt reply. "I've inspected the windows, closed to all the windows, and the curtains—whom I can trust implicitly—have been put on their guard. There is a policeman on traffic-duty on the drive, and another in parking the grounds."

Noel paused remembering the faint whistle he had heard. The police outside were doubtless on the alert.

"That means the thief must have creaked from inside the house!" he said, looking steadily at the attractive young impostor. "What about your guests, Mr. Horton?"

"Most of them are known personally to my daughter or myself," replied the American. "In any case, I'll give orders to those who are to be allowed to leave till this unfortunate affair is cleared up."

"Excellent!" Noel smiled grimly at his supposed niece. "In that case, please stop, we may as well make your exit."

"I'm all ready, nunky!" came the cool, alert reply. "But I think you're wrong about the crook. She must have got in from outside, while the lights were out."

"Well so?" said Noel grimly. "To start with, we had better interview the owners of the stolen trinkets."

That was quickly arranged, and half a dozen agitated guests told their stories. Some were much alike. It had been during a trinket or two been stolen that the lights had gone out, and the guests had been standing or sitting in the pajama-covered alcove around the ball-room.

Each of the six unlucky victims had felt someone touch them in the dark, though in the general excitement they had not thought anything of it. And the missing trinkets were similar, too—some of jewellery that could easily be carried in a trouser pocket, a jewelled comb, a pearl tiara, three brooches, and a pearl tie-pin.

What perplexed Noel—apart from the seeming impossibility of the girl having been concerned—was the comparatively trifling value of the loot. It was almost strange that an audacious trickster, capable of planning such an amazing coup, should have been content with such trifles.

Unless there was more to it than appeared on the surface.

More than ever Noel was determined to get to the bottom of the

mystery—and expose the young impostor's game.

They were standing now in one of the pain-strewn alcoves where most of the thefts had taken place. The girl impostor had taken out a magnifying-glass and was examining the polished floor.

Neel smiled grimly. His practiced eye saw at a glance that no clues were likely to be found there.

"I'm afraid you're wasting your time, young lady!" he remarked dryly.

"No, no, I'm not!" came the bright reply. "Just you wait, nunky; your eyesight hasn't been so good since you were six. You didn't spot this glass, for instance."

"Gravel!" exclaimed Neel, as the girl rose straightly to her feet, holding out her hand.

In her palm were a few tiny specks of gravel and moss.

A little murmur of interest rose from the on-lookers, though Neel was certain that the gravel had not been there a moment before.

"Say, you don't miss much, Miss Gayer?" declared Mr. Horton admiringly. "What do you deduce from that?"

"That there is a gravel-path just outside the ball-room," replied the girl promptly. "The crook must have slipped in when the lights went out. Where does that door lead?"

Everyone stared towards a small paneled door some yards away.

"Into the grounds," explained Mr. Horton. "But it's rarely used, and I have the only key."

Neel crossed to the door and tried it.

"It's locked, and"—he smiled grimly, peering to a crevice across the jamb—"even you couldn't have opened the door, young lady, without breaking that."

The girl scratched the web with a slender finger.

"Oh, it's wonderful how quickly a clever spider can weave a web!" she murmured, with a meaning smile.

"I think we ought to look up Mr. Horton's profession a boy, unbuttoning the door. The girl slipped out first, but Neel was close at her heels as she flitted her torch along the gravel path, with its rocky border.

"Not a trace of footprints!" commented Neel.

"Then she must have walked along the rocks?" murmured the girl, unabashed.

Just then Neel saw a white-robed figure looming ahead of them in the dusk.

"Constable!" he called.

"Sir?"

"The policeman approached stolidly, touching his hat to Neel.

"Did you see the lights in the ball-room go out just now, constable?" Neel asked.

"I did, sir. I was on the other side of the grounds, and was coming to make inquiries."

"But by your whistle?" suggested Neel.

"No, sir—not me. It may have been the man on duty in the drive."

Neel passed his finger. His active brain was at work, fighting with a curious, almost fantastic theory—a theory that might explain the bewildering thefts, even though the girl's immediate purpose still baffled him.

He decided to put his idea to the test.

"What was your purpose in bringing me out here, young lady?" he challenged, while Mr. Horton was watching with an attentive eye.

"Surely, nunky—it's as plain as anything!" declared the girl who had been relieved. "The watchman's girl croak was making a get-away from the office with the constable. What would she do? Why, of course, she would hide the jewels—in case they were found in her possession!"

"Jewel's right, now?" questioned Neel, her eyes back lighting with sudden hope. "But where could she have hidden them?"

Neel decided that the game was worth too far.

"You, certain, Miss Horton," he put in, "that the trickster we are after would be far too cunning to abandon her haul so easily. And, in any case, I can assure you that no crook has walked this way since the rain stopped—over half an hour ago."

"Nunky, don't be silly!" exclaimed the young impostor. "Anyone would think I was trying to deceive my friends! Just because your eyesight isn't so sharp as mine, you're getting grumpy. Now—look at that shed!" She pointed to a lean-to building against the wall of the house. "That's just the kind of place she would choose!"

She led the way towards the shed, and Neel followed quickly, determined not to give her the chance to escape.

The floor was littered with gardening tools, packing cases, and other lumber. There was a small, unglazed window near the roof.

Neel watched as the young impostor made a pretense at searching:

"You call me 'Nunky,' but I'm no more your uncle than you're June Gayer!" he declared.



And then he started, with a sharp intake of breath, as he stared at something caught up in the teeth of the jeweled comb.

The girl turned quickly, an anxious gleam in her eyes.

"Have—have you found something, too, nunky?" she asked.

With a grin, Neel transferred a short length of hair to his pocket-walker.

"A little else," he said gravely.

"But after your surprising discovery, I'm afraid I can't tell that."

"Does it tell you anything, nunky?"

"Only that you're the cleverest than I supposed, young lady!" Neel replied.

"Of course June's clever!" exclaimed Sandra. "I know she wouldn't let us down, pop." She turned eagerly to her father. "I guess, after this, you will want me to marry that little task you mentioned."

"Sure!" declared Mr. Horton heartily. "If you'll come along to my study, Miss Gayer—and you, too, Mr. Raymond—there's something I'd like to show you. But first I must put my guests' things at rest."

The young impostor glanced wryly at Neel.

"Sorry, you're looking awfully pale!" she declared in pretended concern. "Could we have some coffee sent to my office, Mr. Horton?"

"Certainly!" replied the American.

THE HORTON HEIRLOOM

It had been perceived before, as he was even more baffled now. As he listened to Mr. Horton and Sandra, congratulating the supposed "June," he realized that the girl had completely got the better of him.

If, after this, he denounced her as a cunning crook, they would all think he was crazy—or suffering from the effects of his supposed recent breakdown!

Thus, surely, his mind turned over those seemingly unconnected games—games which he felt certain were linked in some way.

Why had those shrewd, independent traits been so modern, when many of the games were wearing quite vintage bracelets and necklaces? How had they been arranged out of the ball-room into this shed, in those few minutes of comparative darkness?

Darkness that had not been complete, as a pale moon had been shining outside?

And—finally—who had blown the tin, finally heard whistle—and why?

Marilyn Neel regarded the girl who had been relieved. "You call me 'Nunky,' but I'm no more your uncle than you're June Gayer!" he declared.

But he was more interested in the little window. Looking up through it, he could see a faint gleam of light high above—apparently an open window in the roof of the ball-room—far out of the reach of even the most daring cat-burglar.

"Cat-burglar?" Neel thought, still grappling with his fanciful theory as he placed himself at the girl's side.

At the same instant she gave a cry and turned from gazing on a dusty shelf.

"Look, nunky! Look what I've found!"

Transferringly she held out several glittering objects, and with an impudently agonizing look the young detective snatched them from her. There came a gasp of delight from Sandra and her father.

"The stolen trinkets!" cried Sandra.

"All of 'em—[inter]" exclaimed Mr. Horton. "Say, Mr. Raymond, you must have led to your partner this time. What a young wizard!"

His mind in a whirl, Neel looked up from the recovered trinkets to meet the tantalizing smile of the mystery girl who had been relieved.

"Too—very clever," he murmured softly, and frowned thoughtfully as he spoke.

For some incredible reason she had returned the jewelry that she had gone to all the trouble to steal.

heavily. "You mustn't overdo things," Mr. Raymond. "I'll have more refreshments served along while Sandra and I are seeing off the guests."

Noel lingered by a moment to have a word with the constable. "Come along, monkey!" exclaimed the girl. "You know, I think you're wasting your time here. Now that a vital crook has escaped, and I've recovered the loot, there's really nothing for you to do."

Keeping to open Mr. Horton's eyes to your game?" replied Noel dryly.

The girl laughed, tapping him playfully on the arm. "Don't be so touchy, monkey!" she said. "Why don't you admit that I've beaten you? After all, I've done up here—and everyone will be impressed by June's cleverness!"

Noel's lips tightened, but he made no comment as they walked through the open deserted hall-rooms towards the young secretary's office. Once he passed to glance up at a small skylight high in the painted ceiling—a skylight concealed by cords from below.

The girl smiled, noting the direction of his glance.

"You don't think the crook could have got through there, do you, monkey?" she teased. "Not unless he—or she—could fly!"

"I doubt if even you could manage that," agreed Noel gravely. "Ah—I see that the refreshments have arrived."

A servant had brought in a tray with coffee and sandwiches, placing it on the desk in the little office. While the girl poured out coffee, Noel stood by the door, trying to recall exactly what had happened at the moment when the lights had gone out.

"Sugar and cream, monkey?" asked the girl sweetly.

Noel nodded, crossing the room and taking the cup she handed him. He raised it to his lips.

"I see the best of the guests are fast leaving," he remarked, nodding towards the hall-rooms.

The girl bowed, and when she turned back again Noel was replacing his empty cup on the tray.

"You know, monkey," she murmured, "as I recovered the jewels it really up to you to catch the thief. It's agreed," said Noel. "When I leave this house to-night, young lady, a dangerous crook will be in the hands of the police! Her name—her name—"

He sneezed slightly, wiping a shaft of sarcasm. Next moment he pitched forward with a groan, to the astonishment of the door.

A rippling laugh escaped the lips of the young impostor.

"So much for your meddling, Noel Raymond!" she breathed, looking down at him mockingly. "Sleep well! When they find you later, I'll be terribly upset, of course, and I'll insist on driving you to the hospital in my own car, Noel. All being well—the girl's eyes glittered—all being well, Mr. Raymond, there'll be something more interesting in the car than a sleeping and baffled detective!"

With a mocking wave of her hand she left the room, switching out the lights. The sound of her light footsteps died away.

And slowly Noel's eyes opened a gray circle above his life as he raised himself to his elbow.

"There's money a dip, young lady?" he murmured. "That sweet coffee helped to wake the palms. I only wish the real June could be here to witness the finale to our little battle of wits!"

And quickly making a few preparations, he disappeared across the darkened hall-room.

"SANDRA told me that I could get up to you, Miss Gaynor," said Mr. Horton. "and after your brilliant piece of work this evening I have perfect confidence in your quick wits and your discretion!"

The young impostor smiled noticeably as she watched her employer open the safe and take out a leather case.

"It's really nice of you to say that, Mr. Horton!" she murmured. "I wish nothing could hear you. He decided to rest in the office, so he's heading for the street. Just what is this little task you mentioned?"

"With a smile, Mr. Horton opened the case—and, the girl's delighted gasp was not unearned.

Admiring on a bed of blue velvet was an exquisite lark set with precious stones and with a great diamond above north a tortoise. "The Horton heiress, Miss Gaynor," explained the American, "and it goes to my daughter on her coming-of-age. Unfortunately the circle is a mercer, and a provision I would take it to a jeweller in London immediately after her birthday."

But I guess people plans have been upset," said Sandra. "That's all right," he said this evening makes it necessary for us to visit a distant relative to-morrow, and we mightn't be back for some days. I wish it was a stroke of luck your calling on me— I'm glad the young impostor, though her sister Sandra trembled. "But what can I do?"

Mr. Horton leaned forward earnestly.

"In view of the activities of that audacious crook, Miss Gaynor, I presume I'm more than ever anxious to let the lady safely to the jeweller's—and you're the one person I can trust. I'd be greatly in your debt if you'd take charge of it and deliver it to the jeweller who is expecting it."

The girl drew in her breath quickly, but she appeared to hesitate.

"You say did promise this evening that you'd do anything for me, June?" urged Sandra.

"All right, I—I will!" The girl rose to her feet, glancing her eyes quickly at her promise. "I shall let it come out of my keeping, Mr. Horton!" Sandra frowned.

"But pop's promised that I can wear it for just a trifle while to-night," she said. "I guess I'll see you around."

Laughingly she adjusted the pile-up time on her golden hair.

"I must go upstairs and see Miss June," she said. "I'll see you around."

"Come on pop—and you, June!"

They left the study and crossed the open dim hall-rooms, his step by a pale glimmer of moonlight from the skylight in the mirrored ceiling.

And just then, from somewhere close at hand, came the thin, shrill blast of a whistle.

The girl impostor started violently, and Mr. Horton and Sandra looked on with surprise. They were standing close to one of the palms, and suddenly Sandra screamed, catching at her father's arm.

"Someone—do something touched me!" she gasped. "Oh! My hair! It's gone!"

"There was a scuffling sound, and a muffled thud that seemed to come from far above them. And just then the lights in the hall-rooms blazed up."

"All right, Miss Horton!" came a cool voice. "Your hair is perfectly safe. It has not left this room, and neither has the would-be thief!"

They all started, and a blood chill ran from the young impostor's feet. Standing by the light-switches, waiting a police-constable on the end of a chain, was Noel Raymond.

"You've" swathed the impostor, her voice striking a look of mingled fear and fury in her eyes.

"The trick worked, young lady," said Noel dryly, "even though it was not you who operated it this time. The impostor that has driven again, and has rather upset your plans!"

Mr. Raymond, what does this mean?" demanded the indignant and

agitated Mr. Horton. "What has happened to my daughter's hair?"

"As your secretary, replied Noel, pointing grimly at the supposed June—"the lady seems to have vanished in the same way as the other tributes—the tributes she so cleverly 'found' for you, in order to gain your confidence."

"That girl's hair, is no more!" cried Mr. Horton. "I'm an invalid! Look out! Stop her!"

For the young impostor had made a sudden dash for the door. But already a bulky constable had appeared in the porch.

"I told that girl, constable!" called Noel.

The policeman made a grab at the fleeing figure, but the girl dived down! under his arm, disappearing down the drive, with the constable in pursuit.

Mr. Horton snatched his footstool. "Mr. Raymond, I don't understand—" he began hoarsely.

"It was a clever, cunning trick," jerked Noel, his account watching the door. "I don't blame you for being taken in—even I was deceived by the girl at first. When she realized that the game was up, she made a dash for it, probably hoping to recover the hair later from her confederate. But I've taken precautions. He's still in the hall-room!"

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Horton, starting round incredulously. "Oh! How appeared to take me in and returned to me, except the three of them. Confederate? Where is he?"

"Irretrievable, at present," Noel said surprisingly. "He can't get away, because I've closed the door of escape. I confront him with the spring crook whom the constable with the constable—" Ah! Here they come!"

The bulky constable reappeared, very red in the face, and leading by the arm a pale, protesting figure. "I caught her hiding my foot par, Mr. Raymond—what do you like?" he panted. "What is the charge?"

"False pretences, and attempted theft," snarled Noel. "Bring her here, constable!"

"Bark!" cried the girl brokenly. "What has happened? I don't understand—"

Mr. Horton gave an angry laugh. "You won't take any of it, Mr. Raymond," he declared. "Arrest her, constable!"

"Stop!" Noel strode forward, with announcement in his eyes. "There's been a mistake. That girl is my niece—the real June!"

THE FINAL TRICK

"SAY, Mr. Raymond—are you crazy, or am I?"

Mr. Horton passed an uneasy hand over his forehead as he stared at the attractive girl in the constable's grasp. Apart from a slight difference in hair, she might have been the elusive young impostor herself!

"Niece—please explain," June Gaynor—the real June—turned by the famous detective, his grey eyes sparkling as he watched on Mr. Raymond's television set this evening and—and saw myself on the screen! I phoned you at the flat, but you weren't there, and the list in Mr. Raymond's office was engaged. I thought a bit—down here, and I've only just arrived—"

"It's all right, June!" said Noel reassuringly. "Release her, constable. Our real quarry has got away, but I don't think she'll get far. After all, she's your niece, she won't give up the Horton heirloom without a struggle."

Swiftly he put his niece in possession of most of the facts, while Mr. Raymond, with a glance at the constable hesitated in growing amazement.

"Oh, the cat!" exclaimed June indignantly. "So that's what happened to my missing clothes! Oh! all the cheek—turning up here and pre-

(Please turn to the back page.)

THE MYSTERY GIRL THEY TELEVIEWED

(Continued from page 228.)

leading to be real? But what a bit of luck them televiewing her—otherwise, you'd never have come here, Jimmie."

"But the time, Mr. Raymond?" put in Mr. Weston anxiously. "You say it is safe?"

"Absolutely," replied Noel. "I took a chance when I knew that while Jimmie was here, but he was the only one to come in to check. The unobserved, unperceived, as I had anticipated—permitting the young man's immediate plans."

"Where is this reception, sir?" demanded the world-famous artist.

"Out of your reach, Jim, my friend," Noel replied with a flicker of a smile. "But I'll undertake to open him and recover the items. Meanwhile, you might see what your colleague in the grounds, and make a search for that girl."

"I'll come with you, certainly," said Mr. Horton gravely, and Benoit slipped her hand through Jimmie's arm.

"I guess I'm all in a daze," she declared. "You are the real deal, aren't you? Come to my room, and I'll tell you everything that's happened."

"At a nod from Noel Jimmie departed with Benoit, and Noel watched at the flight.

"The male mascot shone through the skylight among the rafters, lamplight illuminating the hall. Noel walked grimly as he stared up. He had taken the precaution of closing the skylight, and knowing that the mascot was gone that the girl crook's accomplice was hiding among the rafters.

As the far end of the hall three girls in old-fashioned gowns, accompanied by a flight of waiting maids, flashing his teeth, Noel mounted the stairs and, climbing on to the balcony of the gallery, managed to reach the narrow balcony. A moment later he was seated outside it, holding on precariously.

"Just then three chairs hurrying footmen in the hall below, and an anxious maid."

"Simplify! Where—where are you? Are you all right?"

Noel peered down at the worried maid looking up at him.

"I'm all right, Jim," he declared. "Was—has anything happened?"

"Oh, nothing, please be careful!" she gasped, as she caught sight of him. "I'm sure that dreadful girl has got back into the house. Benoit and I found a window open and foot prints on the floor. Please don't take any risks!"

Noel frowned anxiously. "Please—please let me help you!"

"Please—please let me help you!"

"She was hurrying up the stairs to the mistress's gallery at the gallery."

"The night dress she took with her," Noel warned. "The accomplice is wary, and may suspect a trap. I'll try a little experiment."

"He raised the window to his eyes and held on to the sill. There came a scuffling among the rafters."

A shadow, grotesquely enlarged, was thrown on the wall by the skylight. A moment later an agile figure came swinging along one of the beams.

"There came a gasp from Noel's excited companion."

"Oh, goodness—it's a mystery!"

"Exactly," Noel replied grimly. "The young impostor's confidential girl may have intended him to make his lightning dash in obedience to the signal of a whistle. I noticed a wicker basket, containing a very noisy rattle, hanging from the side of the table. And there was a rattling noise which enabled him to reach the skylight."

"Well, mimic, how would he have meant to steal? And how could he have been dropped down among the beams and escaped again so quickly?"

"You forget the jalousie, Jim!" Noel replied. "They take a wicker basket in order for the night porter. And he'd scratch the noise of rattling objects within his reach so as to avoid from the jalousie—oh, like the jalousie cords on which he left one of his hands! Ah, get you, this!"

He seized the narrow monkey as he spoke. It struggled and snarled angrily, attempting to bite him, and Noel held it in his hand and waved a glittering object from the little creature's paw.

"The Boston housekeeper, you see, Jim—made and undressed," he chuckled, slipping it from his pocket. "I'll give the girl—what you don't tell!" she watched him anxiously as he climbed back on to the balcony, holding the straggling monkey under one arm. "Let the help go!"

She reached out a slender hand—

and next moment the professor's hand had been snatched from Noel's pocket.

A stifled shout escaped the detective's lips as a cry of alarm uttered in the moonlight, grouped in the young impostor's steady hand.

"The last girl," Noel murmured, as he breathed. "And I think it is mine! One false move on your part, and you'll be found unconscious on the floor below."

Her grey eyes gleamed with reckless determination as she backed away, holding her forehead with the other. "With a convulsive wriggle, the little mascot escaped, racing along the balcony to join his mistress."

Noel stood motionless, balancing himself on the balustrade, his feet pale and grim. He watched the girl descending the winding stairs, still keeping him covered. Then, as she reached the ground, he made good his escape by a lightning movement.

Following his lead on the floor, he took a daring leap down into the hall-room.

"The girl screamed as he landed close to her, and turned to run. But, recovering herself, Noel caught her by the shoulder—even as the lighte bleared up, to reveal Jimmie standing there, with Benoit, Mr. Horton, and the service attendant."

"Darling, darling!" ejaculated the American, raising his eyes. "Two Miss Gwyners!"

"And no third," cried Sandra indignantly.

Jimmie came forward, catching anxiously at Noel's arm, and showed in mysterious indignation at the impostor. A mocking smile crossed the other girl's pale face.

"How did you find your Jim?" she asked. "I've often watched you, without your suspecting—and I think even your uncle was admitted I played my part well. In fact, I very nearly looked him—but not quite."

Jimie's eyes flashed.

"No one could fool uncle and get away with it!" she declared loudly. "And—ah! I don't think you're a bit!"

Noel grinned.

"You're right, Jim!" he said, his eyes twinkling. "There's no one to equal my young partner—so far as I'm concerned."

THE END

"Masters of the Rainbow Grid!" is the title of next week's thrilling, best complete story of mystery and adventure in *Wendy*.

WENDY AND HER WONDER HORSE

(Continued from page 229.)

Never had Wendy and her father been with a stranger in a man. His presence and material success had surprised her, but he had a quite pleasant in Mr. Dale as Wendy stopped there into the bedroom and closed the door softly.

"It was fifty two minutes before he came out and they were more than astonished at the look on his face."

"Miss Dale," he said, his voice husky and trembling. "I'll never forget what you've done, this afternoon—my wife I ever thought myself as my husband's very much better! Your money more than anything else in the world to me. And she wants me to see nothing but your personal fee to take your grand horse from you."

"As for that horse"—Steven went back at Mr. Dale shamefacedly—"I'm seeing my lawyer about that business. You having the title of that horse transferred to your name, your daughter, it is a promise to her from me for what she has done this afternoon."

Mr. Brent passed.

"I'm just going over for some of Paula's things now. She's still feeling very ill—in the shack, I suppose."

"I'll be glad to see you, Miss Dale. Perhaps you'd best not stay too long, though."

He went out to his waiting horse. Wendy hastened to her, and, climbing the door after her, then she stopped dead, her eyes wide.

"She had expected to find Paula lying white and pallid on the bed. Instead, Paula was sitting up, looking very well, and with a broad, triumphant grin on her face."

"Well, my grand master!" she grinned. "Well, old grand, didn't it? You know, there's only two things I've ever been really proud of. One is winning—and the other is writing. My one ambition has always been to go on the stage. Well, you see, I've done it. Wonderful, wonderful!"

Wendy eyed her blankly. Then all at once she understood.

"The whole thing had been a trick!" Paula had deliberately taken over her horse into the event. She was an expert rider and had never for one moment been in any danger. It had all been done to change her name from a hard business case into a case of sentiment—as Paula admitted to

her later. She had known perfectly well that Wendy would go to her rescue.

And though Wendy didn't quite approve of Paula's little plot, she returned her implicit gratitude and was just as happy. She just couldn't help it.

IT was ten minutes later before Wendy returned to her father.

"Paula's much better now," she announced. "She wants to stay a few days with me, daddy. She's really as well as good now. We've just been planning some lovely things together. It's wonderful how things turn out, isn't it, daddy?"

"It is, indeed, Wendy," said Mr. Dale bravely. "For what that horse has been hanging over my head, and now he's gone, I guess he's a—thanks to you, honey."

"No, not me," smiled Wendy, "but to Micky—and Paula!"

But she never explained why she had taken Paula's horse. That was a secret between herself and the millionaire's daughter.

Another exciting story about Wendy and her Wonder Horse in a fortnight's time. Read week's more feature story of the Red-tail in another extraordinary adventure.

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