

"DULCIE AND THE HOODED PIRATES"

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EVERY FRIDAY.

One Of This Week's Grand
Stories For Schoolgirls.

Week Ending May 26th, 1934.

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GIRLS' CRYSTAL

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"



"THE MYSTERY DOG
FROM THE WILDS!"



The VANISHING STATUES

A STRANGE LEGEND

"THAT'S a gloomy-looking sunset, June! The sooner we get across to the island the better!"

Jane Gaynor drew a quick breath as she halted on the cliff-path beside her famous detective uncle. The sky was a deep, angry crimson, streaked with clouds, and a strong wind howling over the land whipped the sea into curling breakers.

Barely half a mile from the shore the waves broke on a small, rocky island fringed with trees, through which could be seen a grey, sunlit bay.

"So that's教授 Island?" Jane murmured. "What a strange place for anyone to choose for a home!"

Noel Raymond smiled faintly. "Oh, John Burwickland's a bit of a recluse," he explained. "He bought the island and the old mansion as a retreat for his treasures. The island is a veritable stronghold—enough to deter any would-be thief!"

Jane's grey eyes sparkled with interest as she followed her uncle along the steep path that led up an old stone staircase leading from the mainland shore, to the shelter of the two-roofed villa of "Whitewashed Domes."

"I'm quite thrilled at the thought of spending the night on the island, marks!" she declared. "But why did Professor Burwickland invite us?"

"His wife, I expect—she's—was terribly absent," replied Noel. "But it's possible he wants to consult me about some of his recent finds. He's been excavating on the site of the ancient monastery that once stood on the mainland. And the detective nodded towards the crumbling stone steps they were climbing. As a matter of fact, that used to be part of me."

He broke off, and June caught at his sleeve, a startled expression in her eyes.

"Stony—stones!" she gasped. Noel had already come to an abrupt halt as he, too, heard that eerie, menacing sound carried on the breeze.

It was a blood-chilling sound, whirling as a deep groan and rising to a melancholy wail. June shivered slightly despite her cool nerves.

"Goodness! What—what is it, marks?" she breathed. "It couldn't be—gulls?"

Noel shook his head with a pained frown. "The gulls had died years ago in a hollow valley, and were then lost completely as the wind carried."

"No, not that I've ever heard of has a cry like that," he declared. "It seemed to come from the direction of that tower—"

"Crip—" June gasped as she looked round.

Her exclamation was caused by the

sudden appearance among the bushes of a girl—a girl whose face was deathly pale, and who was running frantically towards them.

"Hold your horses!" she panted, making a placid attempt to restrain June's impulse. "The 'Mourning Tower'—"

They both looked at her—Noel with keen interest, June with feminine sympathy for the girl's obvious agitation.

"We have something," the famous detective agreed. "But what is this about the tower?"

Unusually, the girl explained. There was a legend connected with the tower, born once the "watchtower of the Professor's residence." It seemed days, a band of robbers was marauding, whose stronghold was on the distant island, sealed the cliffs on a dark and windy night and slew the watchman.

They remained the passengers, putting the monks to flight, but without finding the treasure they sought. The old abbot—known as the Black Abbot because of his garb—set a colossus curse on the island, and from that day, according to the story, the professor's dreams might still be based on a wild night, tragic misfortune to any who lived on the island.

A little chill ran down June's spine as she gazed towards the crumbling tower. It looked strangely sinister against the darkening sky.

Noel questioned the girl, and learned that her name was Lucy Hadlow; she had come down from London to meet her fiance, Michael Curtis, who was Professor Burwickland's secretary.

"I say, this is a coincidence!" declared Noel, grinning hopefully; and at once June guessed that he was trying to take the girl's mind off her immediate fears. "My niece and I are on our way to visit the professor, as it happened. You are bound for the island?"

"I—girl shook her head.

"Michael promised to meet me here at the old tower," she explained. "He said in his letter that he had something very important to tell me. I got here at three o'clock, as he arranged."

"Three?" June murmured, placing her watch. "Not it's past six now!"

The girl nodded, her lips trembling.

"I've waited all the afternoon,

growing more and more worried.

Then I heard that horrible moaning coming from the tower, and I remembered the legend Michael once told me about it. All at once I became scared—afraid something dreadful might have happened to him—"

Her voice broke, and June exchanged a swift glance with her uncle. Noel smiled reassuringly.

"I think we'd better go and have a look at this tower," he declared. "The professor's good, but probably gets quite a strong imagination. And I shouldn't worry about your fiance if I were you, Miss Hadlow. Mrs. West likely been detained by his work—if I know anything of Professor Burwickland."

He was leading the way towards the tower as he spoke, and June was conscious of a thrill of excitement as they drew near to the crumbling edifice. Lucy Hadlow's story had quickened her imagination. The wind was sharp, tangy, with a tangy tanginess of the sea-washed Isle, last colour to the legend.

Noel led the way into the tower, the two girls following closely, Lucy's fingers clutching tightly to June's arm.

Inside the building it was very dim, and the sound of the wind and waves were muted. The ancient structure consisted mostly of the thin outer walls open to the sky, and the remains of a crumbling stone staircase.

Noel mounted the steps, to peer out of a narrow window at the top, overlooking the cliff.

"Nothing to be seen from here!" he called, and his voice, sounding strangely hollow, was magnified by echoes. "Where were you standing when you heard that sound, Miss Hadlow?"

"Just outside," replied the girl, who was thinking of Michael and the legend again.

The noise of a stifled cry, and June's heart gave a jump as something fell with a metallic clatter to the stone floor of the tower.

"Hello! What was that?" exclaimed Noel.

"Something—something seemed to fall from up there," June replied, her

In This Exciting Detective Story Noel Raymond And June Gaynor Investigate The Strange Disappearance Of The Bronze Monks From A Locked Room.

voice shaking slightly. "I can see it now."

She started towards an object lying near the feet of the steps, glimmering in the faint light.

"Don't touch it, June!" Noel came hurriedly down the steps, "I must have stepped on it accidentally as I moved from the window."

He whipped out his silk handkerchief as he spoke and carefully picked up the mysterious object, holding it to the light.

"Why, surely, this—it's a sword!" gasped June in amazement.

"A man's sword," agreed Noel, his eyes narrowing. "And it's pretty unusual one at that."

Curious it was, as June could see more clearly now—a miniature crossed broadsword in solid bronze, with a tapering blade and a curiously curved hilt.

"The top of the handle has been snatched off," Noel added, turning the strange object thoughtfully over in his hand. "And it seems to have been used recently, judging by a trace of pliant on the blade. I suppose you've never seen it before, Miss Hadlow?"

"Never," replied the girl, staring at it rather blankly.

"You've been here since three o'clock, you say. Would it have been possible for anyone to enter or leave the tower without your seeing them?" Noel asked.

The girl shook her head emphatically.

"The certain that no one's passed me, and I've been in sight of the tower all the time, she declared.

"Strange!" mumbled Noel, half to himself. Yet the handle feels warm to the touch."

"Hush!" June looked at him quickly. "Do you think that—she pointed to her strange find—"that could have anything to do with the weird meeting we heard?"

Noel shuddered, with a queer smile.

"It seems a bit unlikely, June, but I'm curious. Strickland's an expert on this kind of thing, and he may be able to help us. You'd better go back to town if you like. We'll meet again at six o'clock." His smiling face turned to June. "How about you, Miss Hadlow?" His eyes twinkled. "Suppose you come along with us to the island and have a word with your names-in person?"

"Oh—could I?" The girl's face lit up. "The awful kind of you! I've been so worried, but not hit like Michael to forget an appointment."

They made their way down the steep path that led to the beach. To a casual observer, Noel would seem to have dismissed the strange affair at the Mooring Tower from his thoughts. But to June, the secret glances he darted up at the sharp face of the old, and the thoughtful look in his eyes, she knew that his active brain was still seeking a clue to the mystery.

The professor's launch was waiting for them at the jetty, a rugged crewman at the helm.

"You're just in time, sir!" he declared, placing at the rudder. "It's drawing for a gale, and when the waves are in this direction, the crossing's pretty treacherous. It was bad last night, there being no moon, and I guess it'll be worse to-night."

"Then the sooner we get to the other side the better," declared Noel cheerfully. "Jump in!"

The launch chomped its way across the bay, and as it grounded on the rocky beach of the island Professor Strickland himself came hurrying down the steps that led from the little grey house among the trees.

He hurried, scholarly face flushed slightly with fury at the sheet Noel wrung at him.

"Good you were able to make it, Raymond!" he declared. "I could do with your service. And those young ladies—" He glanced questioningly at the two girls.

"My niece and partner, Miss Gaylor," Noel introduced June. "And this is Miss Hadlow, who came down from London specially to see her

sister. I took the liberty of bringing her across with us, as she was rather anxious about him."

"Her sister—" began the professor with a pained frown.

"Your secretary, Michael Curtis, I understand," said Noel.

The professor's face darkened suddenly, and his hands clenched. "Curtis! He's been dead, though!" The young secretary disappeared from the island last night, leaving no trace and taking with him one of my most precious treasures."

June's heart missed a beat as she heard a broken sob from Lucy Hadlow.

"I don't believe it!" cried the girl, her face pale. "I know something was wrong! It's that hateful legend gone true—the legend of the Mooring Tower!"

THE BLACK ABBOT

"WHAT is the girl talking about?" demanded Professor Strickland, looking across at Noel.

The director's boyish face was grave, and there was a puzzled expression in his keen eyes. June had slipped her arm instinctively round Lucy's shoulder in an attempt to comfort her.

"It's something that happened at the mainland just before we crossed," Noel explained. "In the dark, that is," Strickland. "But what is this about, young Curtis disappearing?"

"It's true enough," replied the professor sharply. "He vanished from our boat at the height of the storm just now, though both he and Lucy are a complete mystery, as he didn't take the launch, and we kept no other craft here. My nephew, who's staying with me, suggested he might have had a secret hiding among the rocks—"

"Just a minute!" Noel interjected. "You say he took something with him?"

The professor nodded grimly.

"A bronze figure standing three feet high and made of solid gold," he replied. "It was one of four similar figures I found in my recent excavations on the site of the old monastery."

Noel's eyes gleamed thoughtfully.

"A pretty ridiculous task—in making off with a weight object like that in a small boat—and during a gale!" he commented.

"I'm simply telling you what happened," said the professor, frowning.

The whole thing is completely baffling, especially as a similar statue vanished only two nights ago, in spite of barred windows and locked doors!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Noel in amazement. "Did you inform the police?"

"Naturally." The professor shrugged. They searched the house on the island without finding a clue. Then he hastened to the dining room, and the door ajar, his voice weak—saying Curtis was missing as well. And to think I'd trusted that lad!"

He broke off, turning abruptly, and it was clear to June that his young secretary's apparent treachery distressed him as much as the loss of his treasures.

Noel's eyes were still thoughtful as his friend led the way up to the next stone structure that resembled a dormitory. June was conscious of a strange uneasiness, mingled with excitement, as she gazed back across the stormy bay.

The seemingly uncanny fullness of the legend of the Mooring Tower—coupled with the baffling mystery of Michael's disappearance and the amazing thefts—gave her ample cause for thought.

The door was opened by a grey-haired maid-servant.

"Yes?" said the professor. "This is Mr. Raymond, who has come to help us clear up the mystery. Please bring some refreshments to my study. By the way, is my nephew, Mr. Conrad, around?"

"He went out a few minutes ago, sir," replied the maid, peering doubtfully. "He mentioned he was going to search for clues."

Noel raised his eyebrows, meeting June's surprised glance.

"My nephew," explained the professor dryly, "blames himself as a bit of an amateur in your line, Raymond, and I must say he's been very helpful in the last few days. However, come into my study and see what you make of the affair."

The room was more like a museum than a study. Pictures hung on the heavy oak walls, and the glow of the stone fireplace revealed a remarkable collection of vases and antiquities on shelves and niches.

But it was in two objects, raised on pedestals in the centre of the room, that June's gaze was immediately arrested, and she heard Noel's soft whistle as he caught sight of them.

They were life-like bronze figures, representing crouching monkeys, and about the height of a man. The robes and heads were made with a border of solid gold, and each figure carried a staff of his own craft—one held a spear and shield, and the other a scimitar and quill, and the other considered a mattock.

"The wife and the gardener," explained Professor Strickland as Noel stepped forward quickly, June at his heels.

The detective took out his magnifying-glass, bending to examine first one of the statues, then the two robust pedestals. Then he lifted one of the bronze figures a few inches from its pedestal and made a wary grimace.

"Your secretary must have been a pretty powerful chap, Strickland," he remarked. "I'll take the other two figures, too."

"You, except for the instruments of their craft," replied his friend. "One, a carpenter; held a hammer; the other, said to be the Black Abbot himself, carried a mason's trowel."

There came a cry from June, and Noel turned sharply.

"A mason's trowel!" he ejaculated. "Anything like this can, Strickland?" And he pulled out the silk handkerchief containing June's strange find.

The professor stepped forward to peer at it in amazement.

"Why, Raymond, it's the identical thing!" he exclaimed, his eyes sparkling. "You can see where it's been taken from the statue of the Abbot! Where on earth did you find it?"

Noel smiled faintly, though there was a glint of excitement in his eyes.

"My young partner discovered it in the floor of the basement, he replied. "The boy, I suppose, confused with the legend of the Black Abbot. And certainly enough, Strickland, I avow that that uncanny sounding sound that is supposed to foretell disaster—"

A splintering crash interrupted his words, and they all whirled. Standing in the doorway was Vassie, the old manservant, his face pallid and a tray of broken crockery at his feet.

"Vassie!" exclaimed the professor irritably. "How could you be so absent?"

"I beg your pardon, sir!" The servant bent to pick up the tray, his hands shaking. "I—I must admit what I had inadvertently overheard, sir," he added—"about the Mooring Tower. If you'll pardon my saying so, sir, it goes to prove what I have thought all along."

"What?" demanded the professor, frowning. "What are you getting at, man? Speak up!"

The manservant coughed, straightening the bent shoulders respectfully.

"I haven't ventured to express an opinion, sir, for fear that it should be misinterpreted or that Mr. Conrad would scoff at me, but it's my belief that young Mr. Curtis was innocent of those thefts."

Lucy's pale face lit up, and June glanced at the old man with new interest.

"You seem very certain, Vassie," said Noel keenly as the professor frowned. "Do you think it possible that an spider could have broken into the house, in spite of barred windows and locked doors—to say nothing of a gale at sea?"

An uneasy expression crossed the manservant's wrinkled face.

"The person I had in mind, sir, would not be deterred by the elements," he mused. "It's my idea that the Black Abbot himself came back to claim what is his own."

The surrounded silence that followed the old man's words was broken unexpectedly by a screeful voice from the doorway.

"Harkum!" it remarked. "You're talking through your hat, Vowels!"

"I may be blind, but I'm sharp-sighted," growled the thin-haired, astute professor, who strode into the room. His expression changed as he caught sight of the visitors, and the professor healthily introduced his nephew, Conrad Beaufort.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Raymond," said Conrad as he shook hands rather gingerly with the detective. "I've read some of your cases in the papers, and I better repeat that I could have solved most of them."

Jane was a little giddy as she stared at the courteous young man. But Noel merely smiled.

"Really?" he murmured. "And have you found a solution to the disappearance of the bronze figures?"

"It's as plain as a pikestaff!" declared the other hopefully. "Young Curtis was the only person apart from my uncle who had the key to the study. As my uncle's friend suggested, no one could have questioned his twice as working at night. He could have carried one of the statues down to the beach and rowed off with it in a boat he'd hired for the purpose."

"Have you tried lifting them?" asked Noel drily.

"Eh?" declared Conrad, sifting forward and grasping the nearest figure.

He managed to lift it a few inches and set it down with a thud, his face mottled red. "It's not so simple," remarked Noel, "and I am sure you've changed the pedestal. One would have thought that Curtis might have left some traces on the other pedestals or on the polished floor, but there isn't a scratch."

"Look here, are you suggesting that someone flew off with those figures?" demanded Conrad sarcastically.

"That's an idea!" declared Noel, glancing thoughtfully up at the ceiling. "In other words, just Vowels' suggestion about the Black Abbot and the Haunting Tower."

There came a rattle of crockery as the maidervessors came in the doorway. "I'm surprised at her uncle's conclusions," said Mrs. Vowels, "but there was a tense look in his blue eyes that day I saw well."

"Open my way, Raymond," burst out the professor. "As a man of the world, you surely don't think there's anything in that old legend?"

Noel shrugged.

"There are more things on earth than we dream of in Shetland," he remarked. "In any case, I think we should take precautions to safeguard our house and its contents until the Black Abbot comes back."

"Old Curtis won't dare to return," said Conrad impatiently. "And if he does I'll be ready for him. I mean to pack the island to-night with Sam Morris, the bootman."

"An excellent plan!" declared Noel. "I'll join you when I've made certain that everything is secure here."

Conrad left the room, followed by the maidervessors. The twilight was setting in now as Jane made rapid inspection of the study, while Jane, her arm round Lucy, looked on with an interest she found hard to explain.

She was thinking of old Vowels' startling idea about the Black Abbot. Could there be anything in the weird suggestion? If not, what was the explanation of the bronze travel they had found in the tower? And why was her uncle so plainly excited?

He was now questioning the host about a small object in the cabinet overhanded, and the professor, rather emphatically, said that the object could possibly have scaled the walls to reach the roof, or above have scraped with one of those weighty figures.

Noel shuddered, and turned his attention to the bronze figures. He seemed particularly interested in the statue with the gold pen and inkhorn. He took out a notebook and his fountain-pen, shaking the latter impatiently.

"Have you a bottle of ink handy, Styrishandy?" he asked.

"Certainly," replied his friend. "There's one on the writing-table behind you."

Noel buried himself in filling his pen, while Jane looked curiously round the room, wondering what her uncle had in mind. When she glanced at him again she could hardly believe her eyes. He was hastily emptying the contents of the ink-bottle into the bronze lamp held by the monkish scientist.

"I think I've done all I can here," Styrishandy said, and the young detective, smiling, said, "You have turned out well." "Dinner'll be in a second of the Island. It'll be another sleepless night, according to my diary, and the other thief, having succeeded twice, may try again!"

exhausted after the previous evening night, had retired to his room, and Vowels and the housekeeper had gone to their own quarters. The hall was in partial darkness, except for the flicker of the log fire.

Jane sat down on the big settle by the fire, turning the pages of a magazine, while she kept watch on the locked door of the study.

Outside, the noisy gulls buffered the windows, and the weird moaning reminded Jane of the wind they had heard in the flat tower—the sound that had ceased so abruptly.

And then she heard something else—something that caused her to start to her feet, her heart thudding. It was a strange halting noise, and it seemed to come from the locked study.

A gleam of excitement in her eyes, she crept closer, trying to identify the noise and tried the handle. But the door was securely locked, as Noel had left it.

The sound came again—an eerie, fluttering, shimmering noise, followed by a dull thud. Then silence.

A cold chill ran down Jane's spine,



The professor gave a startled gasp as Noel unwrapped the queer object Jane had found in the Haunting Tower. It was a man's travel, and it had been broken off one of the bronze statues.

Lucy shuddered, and the professor looked serious.

"I'll leave everything in your hands, Raymond," he said.

They left the study, the professor locking the door and heading for the study. As though anxious to make amends for his strange remarks about the professor, Professor Styrishandy escorted Lucy to the dining-room where dinner was waiting to be served.

After dinner Noel went out with Conrad Beaufort to join the bootman in patrolling the island. The girls had heightened during the meal and the night was pitch black.

Mrs. Vowels, the matronly housekeeper, showed Jane and Lucy to their room—a pleasant room, with French windows opening on to a balcony. Lucy, distressed by the mystery surrounding her fiance, pleaded a bad headache and decided to rest.

But rest was not far from Jane's thoughts. Knowing her mate's ways, she was convinced that his secret acceptance of the weird legend of the Black Abbot contained some positive theory of his own.

It as he suggested, the mystery man might make another attempt, then Jane had no intention of remaining idle!

Leaving Lucy dozing in a chair, Jane stalked downstairs. The professor,

but her pulses were racing. There was suspense—something—in the study. The mystery thief!

Jane's first thought was to raise the alarm, but she was afraid that the uproar would惊醒 the professor and others could possibly hear her. Then she remembered that her own room was directly overhead. From the balcony she might just be able to see the roof of the study and the skylight that had interested Noel.

Silently she sped upstairs and opened the door.

"Lucy—" she breathed, and broke off. Her heart missed a beat.

For Lucy was not in the room, and the French windows leading to the balcony stood open, the curtains billowing in the breeze.

With a sharp sense of premonition, Jane snatched up the lamp from the table and hurried out into the hallway. The moon was dimmed the faint glow of the lamp to Lucy and Styrishandy. Jane stood around her. But there was no sign of the missing girl.

"Lucy!" she called unsteadily.

Carrion on the wind came a sound almost like a hollow laugh, and it came from overhead.

Jane started up, and an involuntary scream escaped her lips.

It might have been a trick of the lamplight, that grotesque figure in

silken robes, seemingly floating in mid-air a few feet above her head.

Noel impaled the lamp-fall from her nervous fingers, swaying it to the balcony and plunging her into darkness.

MYSTERY IN THE LOCKED ROOM

THESE came shouts from outside the house; the glow of firelight. Footsteps sounded in the hall as June raced out of the room and down the stairs, almost running into Noel's arms.

"June!" exclaimed the young detective. "What's happened?"

"Hush—hush!" June gasped. "She's gone! And—and the abbot—the Black Abbot!"

"Shh!" cut in Noel, gripping her arm. "Professor—Professor! Take a look. June. What have you seen?"

As June blurted out her amazing story she became conscious that a little crowd had gathered in the hall. Professor Strickland had come down stairs in his dressing-gown, and Conrad Beasley had entered with the butler. The masterly housekeeper was there, too, a candle in her trembling hand, her face very scared.

"But this—is fantastic," Raymond exulted the professor, his voice shaking. "A black figure hovering in mid-air—"

There came a screeful laugh from Captain Hockenham!

"It must have been a trick of the lamp-light, Miss Gardner," he said to me, the elusive Miss Shadow has slipped out of the house for some reason of her own—"

"Then she couldn't have gone far," interrupted Noel grimly. "There was a tense expression on the young detective's face as his hands tightened on June's arm. "I suspect that you and Norris must suspect someone, Henry Mrs. Prescott!" he turned to the housekeeper—"will you and Towes search the house? If you'll come with me, Strickland, we'll have a look at that balcony."

Accompanied by the agitated professor, Noel and June hurried up to the bedroom and out on to the balcony.

Noel dashed his torch, revealing the shattered lamp lying where June had dropped it and the curtains billowing in the wind.

But there was no sign of the missing girl.

Then June caught in her breath, gazing with startled eyes at the white balustrade.

"Hush—hush!" she gasped. Her eye pointing to some dark, ominous-looking shapes on the platform.

"What is that?" ejaculated the professor.

Noel's eyes narrowed as he examined the shapes, watching them with his torchlight. A grim smile curved his lips.

"Dark!" he announced calmly.

June's heart gave a jump. All at once she remembered her uncle's mysterious action in the study, when he had tilted the inkhorn held by the broom broom.

"Hush—hush," she faltered. "You don't know, you can't know that the broom broom has been up here—"

"What on earth are you talking about, Miss Gardner?" demanded Professor Strickland with a bated stare.

Noel dashed his torch over the balustrade, gazing at the flat, leveled roof space just away on a level with the balcony.

"Stupendous!" he jerked. "This is the roof of your study, isn't it? The broom broom has broken it was opened with a sharp tool. And there are patches of ink on the boards. I suggest we return to your study at once, Strickland. There's not a minute to lose!"

They hurried down to the study. Professor Strickland unlocked the door and switched on the lights.

June gave a strangled cry, and an indigitation about escaped the professor's lips.

The study floor was spattered with

ink around the pedestals where the remaining bronze figures had stood. And now three pedestals layed empty.

The statue of the third monk had vanished from the pedestal even as though it had taken wings and flown!

"But, Raymond, this is unexplainable!" Professor Strickland declared earnestly. "No one could possibly have reached the roof from outside, yet you suggest that Miss Gardner actually saw the thief."

"Placing in evidence," suggested Conrad Beasley, who had joined them. "Are you suggesting that this abomination monk kidnapped Miss Shadow into the banqueting room?"

"I'm suggesting nothing," replied Noel grimly. "But facts are facts. The glass brooch June has disappeared, and so has Miss Shadow. I have complete confidence in my young partner's statement about what she saw."

Conrad laughed sceptically.

"With all due respect to Miss Gardner," he said, "I think she allowed that monkish legend to play on her mind, and I'm surprised that you should believe such a tale, Mr. Macmillan. The whole thing to me seems as clear as crystal."

Noel lit a cigarette, regarding the young man coolly.

"Just what is your theory, Beasley?" he asked.

"That Michael Curtis is still somewhere on the island!" replied the other. "He's got some secret hideout—probably a cave. While the Shadow girl deliberately created a scare he sneaked in with his duplicate key and got away with the third figure."

"But I was watching the study door!" protested June.

"You were upstairs to see Miss Shadow!" pointed out Conrad triumphantly. "That was when he seized his chance. The rest of us were patrolling the shore, and he was able to slip into the house to the back way. Michael Curtis did just the sort of things he intended, and there are signs of a struggle. It's my belief that he was attacked."

Professor Strickland had started.

"Cowardly, right, Raymond!" he declared gruffly. "Well, never the twain shall meet, and we bid you adieu and his girl accomplice!"

Noel glanced meaningfully at June.

"Very well, Strickland," he said. "At that rate Miss Gardner and I will return to the mainland and contact the police. The rest of the storm is over, and we'll continue our search as soon as possible. With your permission, I'll leave the motorcar."

June looked in bewilderment at her uncle as they left the house. It was not like the famous detective to walk out on a case without having solved it.

"Nonsense," she protested as he herded her into the rocking launch and took the oars at the wheel. "You surely don't believe Conrad?" What about those two other men—and the thing I saw from the balcony?

"Don't worry, June," broke in Noel, bending over the controls. "When I get there we'll be waiting. Until we find the man, we'll be here. This is due to the mystery won't be found on the island. Well, and it"—his voice was almost drowned by the roar of the starting engine—"we'll find it in the Moaning Tower!"

Half an hour later they were standing on the cliff outside the flat tower. No robbing sound came from it now. Dark and forbidding, it stood against the night sky—as it had stood for centuries past, while the storm howled around the island.

"Lucy!" he bawled the word on the torch beam, dazzling his torch. "I don't anticipate any danger here, but we must be on our guard. If my theory's correct the tower has served its purpose, but the trail should still be worn."

He halbed as they reached a bend in the stairs, fastening the torch on the wall. June heard his untutored stammering, and saw him take a sleep-knife from his pocket, commencing to grope at the strings.

"I wasn't quite sure what to look for on our last visit, June," he explained as she watched with bated breath. "But now I understand why that bronze statue used to be there. It was used by one of the seafarers to draw the cement from the wall, and it dropped it when he was disturbed by Miss Shadow—All as I thought!"

June caught in her breath, her face pale. Through the old tower echoed a hollow moan, rising to a trebbling wail.

"Hush—what—what is it?" she faltered, white to the lips.

"Come and look!" Noel sniped grimly as he beckoned her. "This ancient stone was filled with loose rubble and cement, which has been recently disturbed. When the wind is in a certain direction it causes that moaning. It's strange."

He pressed a handful of cement into the hollow, and the blood-calling stuff coaxed shrilly.

"It could be worked by someone climbing up outside the tower," explained Noel. "That was why Miss Shadow was certain she saw no one enter or leave the building."

"But, hush—June was excited, but still babble—"How can this be connected with the strange happenings on the island?"

"There's been—been—nothing yet, June," said Noel, but I think I've seen a movement, something out, if I am not mistaken. Someone was making use of the old legend to keep out curious villagers away from this area, and mostly on occasions nights, when the wind has been blowing strongly out to sea—towards the island. Does that give you a clue?"

June's thoughts were racing as she gazed to follow her uncle's reasoning. But she could not understand how the uncanny happenings on the island could be explained by the direction of the wind or the absence of the moon.

"Come on," said Noel, taking her arm. "We'll follow my hunch. We passed a distant quarry on the way back this afternoon. Did you notice it?"

June nodded excitedly, following her uncle out into the open.

It was almost overgrown with bushes, scrubby, and there was a big shed of some kind with whitewashed paint on the roof. I guessed it had been used during the war.

"You've got sharp eyes, June!" said Noel approvingly as they followed a path through the bushes. "But I fancy that she's been used since the war—and for a different purpose. See—hand whitewashed originally on her door." Look ahead, June!" he bawled.

Her pulses quickening, June followed the direction of his pointing finger.

Though the night was moonless, the trowels were visible against the leaden sky. And beyond it a gap among the trees was something that at first looked like an ominous cloud.

"We're close to the quarry now, June," said Noel eagerly. "Wait here while I investigate."

"You're not going without me, mainly June gasped, clinging to his arm. "What—what is that huge shadow—"

She broke off, her heart racing a beat, as from somewhere close to them came the sound of a shifted moon. Noel whirled, fastening his torch among the bushes.

An inaudible cry was torn from June's lips.

Lying flattened on the ground near the edge of the quarry was a gaunt figure, her pale face turned towards the bushes.

The girl was Lucy Shadow!

How Lucy could possibly be here—Lucy, who had vanished on the island—June did not even pause to think, with swift本能的同情, she darted forward.

"June! Look out!"

Noel's hoarse shout of warning was he spoken after he caused June to hasten.

(Please turn to the back page.)

THE VANISHING STATUES

(Continued from page 112.)

late, shivering up. Her blood was cold. Hearing a few feet above her, the black robes flapping in the wind, was the figure of the spectral mount!

A SENSATIONAL SOLUTION

A SILENT bent pestilence over the unconscious girl. Noel going at the menacing figure, he aimed the flapping robes by an inch, but his fingers closed on something—something that had been invisible to his eyesight!

Noel clenched his teeth and continued to scale the ladder in pursuit.

The young detective realized his danger, as he had dropped his torch which could only dimly set the quarry. The rope-ladder trembled as the monkish figure climbed with cat-like agility towards the mysterious shadow that looked along the trees.

Now Noel could see the outlines of that shadow, and a grim smile curved his lips as his amazing theory was confirmed.

But at that moment the figure turned, clinging to the ladder with one hand and grasping under its perch.

Noel caught at his breath, realizing the monk's purpose. Climbing desperately now, in case without reach of the stairs as something gripped to the other's hand.

There was a short of drama, and a shot rang out, almost grazing Noel, as he ducked, rattling himself against the swinging ladder.

Recovering himself, the young detective sprang for the next rung, only to have to duck once more as the monkster fired again.

And then Noel's heart failed. His opposite had almost reached the shadow above the trees now, and suddenly stopping, he got a grip on the rope-ladder with his knees. Shrieking Noel still held his vigil, but both Noel and Noel saw the giant of death in his other hand.

His intuition was clear. He meant to get the rope-ladder, rousing Noel to fall.

PAT OF CURIOS CORNER

(Continued from page 224.)

the Witch and the gipsy to disappear. But Pat had already planned what to do.

Today she would be on the scene and well ahead of the day!

Pat returned home without delay, deciding as she did so that she would keep her intentions secret from Aunt Sarah.

Back in the shop, she studied the mirror.

What was the power that it had—the power which was weapon to the hands of unscrupulous people when they were dealing with others who were superstitious or gullible?

Della was at the upper woman's mercy because of it. Of course Pat could prove that the mirror's usage was just a little bit wrong.

Pat, standing with the mirror in her hand, recalled the gipsy boy's warning. He was not a bad fellow. He had not shifty-eyes nor rags, or speak too friendly, because he was afraid of the old man. And, perhaps afraid of the old woman, too.

But he had said "Keep the mirror in the shop."

What could he have meant? Who should the mirror be kept in the shop? Suppose the took it to the window? But Pat moved to the window, through

Noel had nothing with which to defend himself but suddenly his eyes glowed. Leaving hold of the ladder, he leaped to seize himself back and forth.

The monkster's grip was unsteady. He snarled, then lost his grasp quickly off the rope to save himself from falling, dropping the knife, as Noel had hoped.

Seizing his teeth, Noel gripped up the last few rungs of the ladder, seizing the阶梯 to the wrist.

The other leapt steadily, and the ladder creaked and creaked beneath their weight, as he strove to drag Noel from the perch he held.

Shrieking beside the consciousness of the floor, June clung up in terror.

Only dimly she could see the two struggling figures and there was no way out of her fears for her uncle's safety.

Then another shot rang out. A second bang of flame came from the mysterious thing above the trees.

In that brief glare she could see it plainly, dimly, silvery bulk now armed with bayonets!

Hurriedly it was slowly descended, and with it came the two struggling figures on the rope-ladder. Then جاءوا over the choking gas. One of the figures had fallen, his robes flapping round it as it crashed among the bushes.

Next instant, the other figure gave a sharp leap, landing in the undergrowth close to the two girls.

"Hush!" June uttered, starting towards him.

But Noel was already on his feet, hurried though disoriented. In the glow of the flaring bushes he took hold of both as he grunted at her voice.

"All right, my dear!" he said, grasping her arm. "The intruder shot wide and I am safe below. You stay with Mrs. Haslett while I am away. I can do for the chaps. Layman, we better leave you fall fast."

He hurried away, and June waited with Lucy Haslett. She was now recovering consciousness.

Noel was back in five minutes, and he was not alone. The young detective was holding firmly by the arm a figure in monkish robes, whose smiling face was like the glow of the blazing sunlight.

June gasped as she recognized him. The man was Vardon, Professor Vardon.

which a bar of hot sunburn fell. She stood there for a moment, deep in thought, then she gave a started cry. She drew back from the window and her eyes sparkled.

"I've got it—I've got it!" she cried in wild excitement.

Then she turned and rushed from the shop to Peter's house.

MIDNIGHT had just struck when the old gipsy woman, leading a dog on a long cord, went softly to the gate of Della's house. The house was in pitch darkness. No one was about, and a sound came.

Nevertheless at the upper window of that house, Pat sat with Mrs. Jones, watching. They saw the old gipsy woman disappear.

"There she goes," breathed Pat. "The dog is leading the way—"

"Aha! She found the spot!"

They watched as the old woman stopped and picked something out of the hole in the ground, a small jeweler's box, round with an elastic band and very decorated. Very carefully she replaced the earth. Then she sprinkled some powder over it and strolled away.

Inside the house, Mrs. Jones turned on the light and looked at Pat. Her eyes were wide.

"Well, Pat—it was just as you said," gasped Mrs. Jones. "It was a

land's masterpiece—the "phantom" thief of the island!

LATER that evening Noel and June returned to the island, taking with them Lucy Haslett and a good-looking young man, whose arm circled Lucy's waist as she gazed up at him brightly.

They had found Michael Curtis, bound and gagged, in the shed where the intruder kept the crooked branch that operated the engine's liftoff.

Michael was the engine-man, who had been an old barge手 for experimental purposes.

The engine had rented the disused workshop in the quarry, and they had waited there since till the wind was in the right direction and coincided with a series of moonless nights.

Then the balloon had been launched over the island, with an accomplice who knew a rope-ladder and table as to the best route of the escape.

With the aid of these, Noel had been able to climb up the daiming stones through the open hatch.

Lucy's heart had suggested a plan and kept notes from the spot. Mrs. Vardon had taken him upstairs, and the young man had been knocked out and taken back to the mainland in the balloon.

Lucy's story was similar, except that she had learned at the sight of the eerie figure hovering over the balcony, and her capture had been an easy matter.

The missing bronze figures were returned to the delighted professor, who pronounced his intention of giving Michael an inheritance for the part he had played.

Once the balloon had failed to share in the general happiness, Della grumbled, he left the island the next morning, and June's eyes twinkled as she watched him depart.

"Tom Knows, ma'am," she said. "Lots of people fancy themselves in difficulties—but it isn't everyone who's clever as Noel Raymond!"

"And it's not their detective," Noel chuckled, "who can boast of a young partner like mine!"

THE END.

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wick from start to finish. And I think that, but for you poor Della, would have buried her precious omega there for that awful woman to steal!

"I'd like to see the old gipsy-lady when she opens that box under a street lamp and only finds a little woman for her trouble, and a warning that the police will be told if she tries to work the same trick again!" chuckled Pat.

She took up the Witch's Mirror. She held it near the lamp.

"See!" she said. "The head of the lamp will do the job, as well as the heat of the sun! It brings up that photograph of the old witch, printed in some ancient invisible ink that only her magic vision can see."

Miss Jones could not stop gasping her amazement, as she saw the face—a terrible face now more lifelike from her mind. But all the same she hesitated to look the mirror.

Pat was well pleased with her day and her night—work and rest all day she went about singing. And just for fun she showed Aunt Sarah the important witch's face in the mirror—but quickly told her the secret, of course.

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