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to have walked two miles already; and
always between these dashed hedges!
If only he could get out he knew almost
to a square yard where his ball must
have fallen! He'd been searching too near
to the fence before. He knew it hadn't
gone into the conservatory because
he'd seen it bounce back after breaking
the pane.

Ha! What was that? McCartney
stopped at half-step peering ahead. He
could have sworn he saw something
moving, some object ahead of him in the
lane. A bat no doubt. He proceeded,
still in some doubt, however.

Once again he saw it just as he emerged
for probably the tenth time in the open
space where four avenues met. It whisked
out of sight at the first turning to the
right. Was it bird or beast or—another
human night-bird like himself? Was it
following him or evading him?

He promptly decided to find out, and
cursed his lack of foresight in not bringing
his electric flashlight.

There ensued a strange chase. Mc-
Cartney now in full pursuit, now waiting
in ambush stole silently along between
those high green walls, pausing with ears
sharpened to an almost painful sensitive-
ness, going on again as he fancied he
caught a stealthy footfall. That some-
thing ahead—human or ghostly—seemed
always, will-o'-the-whisp-like, to keep
just out of his reach. At one time his
outstretched hand actually came into
contact with something filmy, ephemeral
as cloud mist, impalpable and yet some-
how rather definite, too, like a bird's wing.
From time to time he tested the vulnera-
bility of the cedar walls. Nothing doing!
Even should he attempt to claw his way
over—through was out of the question—
he'd make noise enough to raise the
Seven Sleepers and Mr. Criddles and the
precinct policeman into the bargain.

But that prowling thing, he must catch
it. He now realized that it wasn't
following him at all but trying to avoid
him. He thought of a fox, of some sly
pet dog, of a strange breed of cat, of—
no not an owl for he'd distinctly heard
footfalls once or twice.

He dashed blindly on, hearing it
moving just over the hedge to his left.
At the first turn he stumbled on a root,
clutched at the cedar to avoid a fall, and
cursed softly. Then he went on with
both arms outspread. Another turn,
but nothing to be heard down that
avenue! He wheeled sharply and doubled
back and took a tack to the right.

Then suddenly something rushed at him.
His body seemed to collide with some
soft yielding mass, his arms closed round
it swiftly and—an hysterical little vocal
sound told him that it was a human being.
It was a girl, in fact, and from the way
she panted he knew that the reason she
hadn't screamed was due to lack of
breath. One whole minute McCartney
held her palpitating, slim form, and
then she became suddenly inert, and he
lowered her gently to the earth. With
true feminine consistency she had swooned
at the climactic point.

But the moon just then chanced to
ride serenely above the wood and by its
pale light he recognized his quarry. It
was Sheila!

He chafed her hands and presently
she came round.

"It's only Jimmy—Jimmy McCartney,
you know," he hastened to tell her as
she struggled to her feet with his aid.
"I came in to get my ball and I got
twisted in this blasted maze—"

"Oh!" she said in evident relief, one
small hand on her heart.

"Don't be scared. I wasn't going to
harm you only I wanted to find out what
you were. You seemed at first to be
dogging me—"

"I'm lost, too," she said in a very faint
voice. "I thought I knew the key but I
guess I've forgotten. Then I saw and
heard you, and once back there when
your hand just brushed my shoulder I
thought you had me. Horrid old maze,
anyway!"

"What are we to do?" he asked,
practically.

She leaned against the hedge, still
panting a little. He somehow felt noth-
ing for her now but a vast pity. He
saw it all. She had come back for her
handkerchief and had wandered into the
maze by mistake.

"I don't believe you recognize me,
Sheila," he began, gently. "Don't you
know me? Who did you mistake me for?"

She shuddered.

"For a stool pigeon," she said. "There's
one at the main entrance. I tried to

get out that way but saw him just in time.
Then I remembered, the old walnut tree."

McCartney took a quick breath. So
they were on her trail already! Foolish
child to come back! It was condoning
crime but he pulled the handkerchief
from his pocket.

"This yours?"

She seized it eagerly, thanking him.

"What—are you doing here?" she asked,
pointedly.

"I told you I came for my baseball.
That cranky butler wouldn't stir a finger
to get it for me, and he watches those
lodge gates like a hawk. So I—"

She had, in turn, drawn something
from her pocket and now she extended
it to him.

"Is this it?"

His eager fingers closed round his
beloved talisman.

"Where did you find it?" he asked,
incredulously.

"In the shrubbery near the con-
servatory. And now let's have another
try at getting out. Two heads being
better than one we ought to succeed."

Gone was the East London accent and
manner. This versatile little crook was
now playing the role of an ordinary well-
bred girl of the great middle class. And
she was in a hurry to be rid of him.
She hadn't deigned as yet to explain
the reason for her presence, or she was
so abstracted in mind she forgot that some
sort of excuse was in order. He wondered
at her. Didn't she realize that he'd
think it odd she should be where she was
and at the hour of midnight? They went
on, Sheila in the lead, her grey frock
quite visible in the increased moonlight.
At the central square she stopped.

"Now I know, it's two left turns and
three right turns and repeat from here,"
she said, thoughtfully. "I must have
counted wrong before. Remember that,
please. It leads directly beneath the
walnut tree."

They went on and after following these
directions found themselves not at the
walnut tree but at the small picket gate
which formed the sole entrance to or exit
from the maze.

"Bother," cried Sheila.

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Mc-
Cartney, taking the full, deep breath of
freedom.

"But the man at the lodge gates you
know."

"Oh, yes, to be sure. I'd forgotten."

He had put out a hand to open the gate.
But she was peering anxiously at the old
grey mansion that bulked large and
shadowy in the middle distance. She
pulled him back.

"Perhaps—if we wait," she said.

"They ought to be through soon."

McCartney gazed down at the girl in
astonishment.

"I don't know what you're talking
about! Are you sure you saw a man
watching for you? Might it not be the
cook's friend or—some loiterer—"

"Oh, he wasn't watching me. I merely
—preferred not to be seen going out."

"Not you! Who then in heaven's
name? And why should anyone be
watched?" he demanded impatiently.

"He's watching to give an alarm I
suppose. You see his companions are in
the house. They're robbing—trying to
rob—the safe in the library."

"Robbers you say? And here we stand
idly by—"

"Stop! Where are you going?" she
cut in, seizing him.

"The police signal box at the corner.
I can get over the wall—"

"And spoil everything!" she wailed.

"If this should get into the papers!
Oh!"

He turned and caught her by both
arms.

"Tell me, are you in league with them?"
he cried sternly.

"I?"

"Yes! Yes! Are you?"

"Sh! Somebody will hear us!"

"Don't try to jerk away! I'm going
to get an answer out of you, you little—"

"How silly you are. It happens that
what they're after isn't there!"

"What do you mean? Are you trying
to—"

"I mean that someone else got there
first," she said, with an exultant little
laugh and freeing herself.

Oho! So that was it, eh? Two rival
sets of criminals. In a daze of wonder-
ment McCartney stood regarding her.
By all the laws of justice and propriety
he ought not to dally another instant
but to go at once and give an alarm and

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