

# The PURPLE MASK

by Grace Curard  
 Novelized from the Motion Picture Play of the Same Name by the Universal Film Mfg. Co.

## THIRD EPISODE The Capture.

Sphinx Kelly halted abruptly at Mrs. Van Nuys' table, still toying with the handcuffs. Pat sat breathless for an instant, looking Kelly square in the eye.

"Very dramatic, Mr. Kelly," Pat finally said, with a sarcastic smile. "You seem to want everyone in the place to know that you are a detective, or somebody trying to show off."

Kelly's face flushed hotly. He was on the point of making a sharp retort, but his better judgment mastered his impulse to rudeness. Without a word he returned the handcuffs to his pocket, stood looking for a second, straight into the defiant eyes of the beautiful girl and then walked away.

Hastening to the main entrance, Kelly posted one of his assistants at the door and demanded:

"See that no one leaves the place until everybody has been searched." Then the Sphinx returned to Jakobski's table.

The old money shark had only been stunned by the blow that suddenly fell upon his head as the lights in the Cafe Chic were snapped off at the switchboard.

"Do you know if it was a man or a woman who struck you," Kelly asked the still befuddled Jakobski.

"Oh, it was a man—and a strong

man, too," was Jakobski's retort, as he rubbed the lump that had been raised upon the back of his head where the blow had fallen.

Kelly instructed the waiters and attendants in the Cafe Chic that every guest in the room must be searched, and under direction of the Sphinx, the work of investigation rapidly proceeded. While Pat and Mrs. Van Nuys were waiting in the ladies' retiring room to be searched by the girl attendants, Kelly stood near the portieres that formed a protecting screen separating the main cafe from the entrance to the ladies' room.

So intent was Kelly in supervising the search that he failed to notice a small, white hand, as it projected from behind the portieres. There was an instantaneous flash of gleaming pearls, set with diamonds, as they reflected the brilliant light, then the dainty hand quickly deposited its precious burden in the outside breast pocket of Kelly's coat.

Soon Mrs. Van Nuys and Pat emerged from the retiring room and resumed their seat at the table. And when everybody had been searched, the disquieting report came to Kelly, from his assistants, that the Jakobski pearls were still missing.

The baffled detective was the object of derisive jeers and much mocking laughter from the merry throng his actions had so unceremoniously inconvenienced.

Kelly stood the taunting and complaint for some time, and then, he again approached Mrs. Van Nuys' table and said:

"If you will take my advice, ladies, you will soon leave this place. In my insistence upon doing my duty, I have angered the crowd and they are apt to start a general disturbance at any moment. If you will allow me to escort you home, my cab is waiting outside, and I will feel honored if you will permit me to serve you."

The Sphinx was looking steadily at Pat during the time he was speaking, never glancing at Mrs. Van Nuys. The girl seemed conscious of a gentle glow overspreading her cheeks. She seemed to note in Kelly's eyes a gleam she had never seen there before.

"We had better accept Mr. Kelly's offer, auntie dear," said Pat, when the Sphinx had finished speaking. "We have had excitement enough for one evening, I'm thinking."

Mrs. Van Nuys agreed, and the trio moved to the door and made their exit amid an uproar of jeers and cat-calls directed, of course, at the baffled and humiliated sleuth.

When Kelly seated himself between Patricia and Mrs. Van Nuys, the girl was careful to place herself on the side next to the sleuth's outside breast pocket. She knew what treasures the pocket contained and was determined to regain possession of the pearls.

Pat insisted upon conversing, with spirit, as the cab rolled along. Mrs. Van Nuys was not so talkative, and her silence was noticed by the Sphinx who frequently addressed himself particularly to the woman, in order to seem politely interested in her.

Once when the Sphinx turned his head to speak directly to Mrs. Van Nuys, the girl, watching catlike for her opportunity, slipped her slender hand into Kelly's pocket and deftly drew forth the Jakobski pearls. In another instant she had safely secreted them upon her person, and Kelly, the great detective, was once more foiled by his frail and beautiful nemesis.

Safely home at last, Pat securely locked the pearls in her jewel case and retired.

The next day Mrs. Van Nuys received word from Jakobski that he would be compelled to foreclose, when it soon came due, a mortgage he held upon an orphan asylum Pat and her aunt were greatly interested in. Mrs. Van Nuys and Pat discussed the matter, and more than ever Mrs. Van



"Pat" Emerged From the Retiring Room.

Nuys bemoaned the fact that her resources had been limited.

"Never mind, auntie dear," was Pat's consoling remark, when the discussion finally terminated. "I have promised that I will get money to carry on our charities—and I'll do it by hook or crook."

"But you must not let your tender heart impel you to do reckless and foolish things, my child," said Mrs. Van Nuys protestingly.

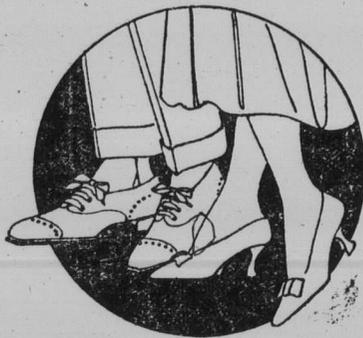
For several weeks after Pat's adventure at the Cafe Chic, the newspapers were filled with reports of various robberies that were baffling the authorities. The disappearance of the Jakobski pearls had been the first of a long series of unsolved mysteries.

Sphinx Kelly had discussed the affair at Cafe Chic with his assistants, and reluctantly admitted that the crime had completely baffled him.

(To be continued.)

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