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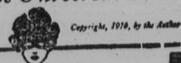
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The PURPLE MASK

by Grace Goward

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



SECOND EPISODE.—(Cont'd.)

An unusual incident led to a final decision. As she lay upon the couch Pat imagined that she heard someone at the door of her boudoir, and to divert suspicious began pacing across the room, coming nearer to the door at each turn.

Suddenly she threw the door open, and Jacques, who had been listening, tumbled helplessly into her room and sprawled upon the floor. Pat shut the door with a quick move and commanded Jacques to be seated.

"There is work for you to do, Jacques, and unless you do as I command, I will turn you over to the authorities." Having said this, Pat remained silent, looking Jacques keenly in the eye, as if to let her remark steep into his crafty brain.

"I saw you steal the jewels last night. I followed you to Chat Noir—and it was I who knocked the jewels from your hand. If I were to surrender you to Sphinx Kelly there would be a long prison term in store for you," Pat continued. And as she spoke Jacques sat silently listening stoically to all she said.

"Give me up, if you like, Miss Pat," he finally mumbled. "I guess I can stand a prison term if you insist."

"But I don't insist," Pat chimed in. And then she made to Jacques an astonishing proposition. The crafty Frenchman's eyes fairly snapped as she unfolded her scheme. And in the end a compact was formed between this beautiful girl and the crime-hardened Apache that was destined to set Paris agog, lead the police a merry chase and, most of all, to involve Pat and Sphinx Kelly in many adventures.

"You must make me queen of the Apaches," Pat demanded. "From the proceeds of our work I will take only a percentage for charity—that is all I am going to work for; that is all I shall demand. My position in society will protect me and your influence with the Apaches will do the rest. Keep this bargain and your reward will be abundant; betray me and I will turn you over to the authorities."

Patricia Montez and Jacques then shook hands, binding their strange compact. And to each, the word of the other was all-sufficient.

"You and I will start working together to-night. The Cafe Chic will be a good test of our skill as a beginning." And Jacques promised that he would be at the Cafe Chic, prepared to do the bidding of his leader.

Old Jakobski drove a hard bargain and devoted his attention to getting rich at any deal where he could turn a banknote. He bought art subjects from struggling students, forged signatures to them and sold to gullible buyers the cheap works at extraordinary sums. He dealt in jewels, made

loans and conducted a general business in securities.

Although he was eager for money his vanity made him anxious to be seen in public places, and to be pointed out as "the rich Mr. Jakobski" and Cafe Chic was one of his favorite haunts. Pat noticed him when she entered with her aunt and took a table near the wealthy broker.

"There's Jakobski now," Pat whispered to Mrs. Van Nuys. "I'm glad he has not seen us"—and as Pat looked toward Jakobski's table she saw him draw from his pocket a string of beautiful pearls.

"Just look, auntie, dear," Pat whispered. "That string of pearls would alone give us money in plenty for charity." And the girl continued to watch closely as Jakobski fondled a displayed the pearls to his companion, with the evident purpose of effecting a sale.

It was a few moments later that Sphinx Kelly entered the Cafe Chic and looked over the crowd, passing carelessly down the aisles, in a manner to attract as little attention as possible. But Pat's quiet eyes discovered him before he had been in the spacious cafe many moments.

"There's the Sphinx, auntie," said the girl, indicating by a glance the direction in which Mrs. Van Nuys might look to find the man who had returned her jewels.

And there was one among the waiters who Pat knew was Jacques:

The brilliantly lighted cafe was a scene of revelry. The space cleared for dancing was filled with flashing



Pat at the Cafe Chic.

dressed denizens of the Parisian cafe. The bands played, waiters scurried here and there filling orders, and the scene was altogether one of gayety typical of night life in the brilliant city.

When Pat raised her handkerchief to her lips Jacques saw her signal and was soon standing behind her chair. Instantly he caught Pat's instruction—to watch and wait his chance to get the pearls that Jakobski was still, his great vanity, displaying to his companion. The two men were interestedly talking, evidently about the pearls.

Jacques moved away. He had arranged that another Apache should be near to respond to signals, and in a few moments the plotters had made their plans. While the band was playing the guests were dancing and the scene of revelry was gayest, the electric lights were suddenly thrown out and the place was thrown into darkness.

There was great confusion, and an instant the Cafe Chic was in an uproar. Sphinx Kelly had seen the Apache approach the switchboard that controlled the lights, but was too far away to intercept the move, and when in an incredible short space of time the lights again flashed up, Jakobski was lying prone upon the table, his head resting on his forearm and his companion making signs of distress as he shouted his alarm.

"He was just showing me his pearls," the man said when Kelly had forced his way to Jakobski's table.

"Did you see anyone approaching?" said the Sphinx.

"Not that I noticed," Jakobski's companion replied. "Suddenly the lights went out; I heard a strange sound, as of someone striking a blow, and when the lights flashed up again there was Jakobski as you see him knocked out."

The bag Jakobski clutched in his hand was empty.

Kelly stooped to the floor and picked up a perfumed handkerchief. A hurried glance disclosed an initial. The Sphinx looked over to the table where Pat and Mrs. Van Nuys were seated and, after a moment's consideration, advanced toward them.

There was a wild, frightened look in Pat's eyes as she saw Kelly advancing. When he neared Mrs. Van Nuys' table the Sphinx reached into his pockets, drew forth a pair of handkerchiefs and stepped up to the thoroughly frightened girl.

(To be continued.)



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