



June Gaynor, Noel Raymond's school-girl niece, loved mysteries. She had always wanted to solve one on her own. At last she got her chance—but in the end she was glad of her famous uncle's expert assistance.

By PETER LANGLEY

CHAPTER I

A CATCH—SOMEWHAT!

"**T**HANK goodness to get away from London!"

Noel Raymond, the young detective, spoke with some fervour as he sauntered along the river tow-path, fishing-rod in hand.

It was a blazing summer's day; barely a breath of wind stirred the reeds or ruffled the shimmering surface of the river.

Moored in mid-stream was a gaily-painted houseboat, its deck sheltered by a striped awning; a distant ripple of girlish laughter drifted to Noel's ears—the only sound to break the sleepy silence.

The young detective grinned as he lit his pipe and affixed a fly to his line. A quiet afternoon's fishing—away from the roar and bustle of London—was a luxury in which he was not often able to indulge.

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His first cast was unlucky, the line becoming entangled in the reeds. As he drew it in, a surprised whistle escaped his lips.

Attached to the hook was a dainty white canvas shoe, of the lace-up variety!

It was quite dry—evidently having been lodged in the reeds, above water-level.

"Size four," murmured Noel, as he disentangled it. "Almost brand-new. Wonder how it came to be lost?"

He was still studying his curious "catch," making idle guesses as to its possible ownership, when he became aware of a disturbance among the rushes that fringed the bank some distance away.

The young detective glanced keenly in that direction, his eyes narrowing.

There was someone, or something, moving stealthily among the reeds towards him!

He was about to call out when, abruptly, he checked the impulse. He had caught a glimpse of something white fluttering against the green and brown of the rushes—a girl's dress; the next moment he saw the owner.

A slender, fair-haired figure, she was as yet quite unaware of his presence. In a white drill frock, school blazer and shady hat, she made an attractive picture against the surrounding rushes.

Intent on her task, she did not look up—though Noel gave a stifled ejaculation of surprise and recognition.

"June!" he breathed. "What on earth is she up to here?"

June Gaynor, Noel's schoolgirl niece, was something of a problem to the young detective. She prided herself, not without cause, on her abilities as a sleuth—and her chief ambition in life was to follow in the footsteps of her famous young uncle.

But her restless curiosity and cheerful disregard for risks had more than once led her into danger.

At the moment, her activities seemed harmless enough, though mysterious.

She had a magnifying-glass in hand, and was scrutinising the muddy ground and the trampled rushes—a seriously intent look in her grey eyes.

Noel smiled faintly as he watched her, careful to make no sound.

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He remembered June having mentioned that she was holidaying with a party of chums along the river, but he had not anticipated running across her.

She was evidently intent on following a trail of some kind, and quite oblivious to everything else.

She halted at length with a slightly puzzled frown, as the track she was following was crossed by another.

Noel grinned broadly.

"Sorry, June," he remarked aloud, "that trail's a red-herring—left by a tall, suspicious-looking fellow carrying a fishing-rod!"

June turned with a faint cry, the blood rushing to her face, her eyes wide with surprise and pleasure, not unmixed with embarrassment.

"Uncle Noel!" she exclaimed. "You—here?"

"It would appear so," replied Noel, with a grin. "Sorry if I made you jump—but I just couldn't resist putting in my spoke. What's in the wind this time, June?"

June shook her head at him; she had recovered from her momentary discomfiture—and there was a tantalising half-reproachful look in her grey eyes.

"I've a good mind not to tell you—for making fun of me," she replied.

Noel looked suitably crestfallen.

"In that case," he said gravely, "I'd better get on with my fishing—and you can pretend I'm not here."

June relented.

"I'll tell you," she offered, "if you'll promise not to butt in! You see, it wouldn't be fair if you helped. I'm looking for someone who's disappeared——"

"What?"

"Not really," explained June, smiling. "It's a kind of game. Dulcie Manning—one of my chums on the houseboat—bet me that I couldn't find her if she pretended to vanish; she said she didn't believe in detectives finding clues and working out things from them."

"So you're staying on the houseboat?" inquired Noel, keenly interested.

"That's right—there are six of us girls in the party. We've had a jolly time, but things fell a bit flat last night. We started talking about detective work—and that's when Dulcie made her challenge."

"You took it up, of course?" asked Noel, smiling.

"Rather! I bet her an ice-cream sundae that I'd find her, wherever she hid; none of us really thought she was in earnest—but this morning we found her bunk empty, and a note saying that she'd taken me at my word. Here it is!"



"Why, it's Dulcie's shoe!" exclaimed June. "Where did you find it, Uncle Noel?"

She handed Noel a crumpled slip of paper, on which was scribbled in characteristic girlish handwriting:

"What about it, Miss Sleuth? I bet you don't solve this mystery! Cheerio. Dulcie."

"She must have slipped off before we were awake," explained June. "She'd taken the smaller skiff. The other girls had arranged to go for a picnic—and I promised them that I'd find Dulcie and take her along in time for lunch."

Noel grinned, as he handed back the message.

"Any luck so far?" he inquired.

"Rather," declared June. "I came across in the punt and discovered that track you saw me following; it must have been made by Dulcie, because the reeds are freshly broken. That's a tip I got from you, uncle!" Her eyes twinkled. "I was trying to follow it back to the skiff—which she must have hidden somewhere; but you've spoilt the trail by trampling all over it."

"Sorry," apologised Noel. "Perhaps I can make amends."

He fumbled in one of his capacious pockets—producing the white canvas shoe.

"Recognise this?" he asked.

June started, as she snatched it from him.

"Why, it's Dulcie's!" she exclaimed. "Where—where did you find it?"

Noel explained; a momentary shadow crossed June's attractive face—a shadow of perplexity. Then she gave a quick laugh, her face clearing.

"I bet Dulcie threw it there to spoof me!" she declared. "We were talking about false clues last night, but it's worth looking into."

She commenced to push her way through the rushes towards the water's edge.

"Careful!" warned Noel, as he followed. "The bank's pretty slippery after the recent rain."

He broke off, making a grab at June's slim figure as she stumbled; a cry escaped her lips, but it was a cry of excitement rather than alarm.

"Look, uncle—the skiff!" she exclaimed.

Nestling among the reeds was a small boat, moored to a half-submerged tree-stump.

June scrambled into it, and Noel followed; the boat had been cunningly hidden, and was quite invisible from the river and bank alike.

June turned, her eyes sparkling.

"Pretty clever of her," she said. "I didn't think Dulcie had it in her. Anyway, she's put me on my mettle! I wonder if she's left any clues?"

She went down on her knees and commenced to peer under the seats. Noel, hands in pockets, stared round him thoughtfully; there was a rather puzzled expression in his eyes.

He bent suddenly to pick up the canvas shoe that June had dropped in her excitement; the lace, he observed, was still tied—in a rather careless knot.

His glance wandered to the mooring-line that secured the boat.

"Just a minute, June," he said tersely. "Is Dulcie in the habit of tying her shoe like this?"

June glanced up and smiled quickly.

"Oh, yes; Dulcie's hopeless at knots and things. She always ties a 'granny.'"

Noel raised his eyebrows and pointed to the elaborate reef-knot that secured the mooring-line.

"Yet she appears to have tied that knot," he said. "And I'd have said that was the work of an expert!"

June stared, and for an instant the perplexed expression returned to her face; but it was gone in a flash.

"What a one you are, uncle, for making mysteries out of nothing!" she declared laughingly. "Dulcie must have tied that knot by a fluke. And she's been here all right. D'you see that mark on the bank, close to the tree-stump?"

Noel glanced in the direction she indicated. He saw a rough circle inscribed on the mud, with a dot in the centre.

"What about it?" he asked.

"That's a secret sign," explained June, her eyes sparkling. "We girls used to use it at school when we were tracking; it means 'Ware Danger!'"

"Danger?" repeated Noel sharply.

"Not real danger!" laughed June. "Just make-believe. Dulcie's out to mystify me, but I'll catch her before long."

There was no answering smile in Noel's eyes; an uneasy theory was taking shape in his mind, but he did not wish to scare his young niece unnecessarily.

As Noel straightened himself, he slipped something into his waistcoat pocket—something that had escaped his niece's sharp eyes. It was a cigarette end.

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"There's nothing more to be found here," said June, who was impatient to proceed with the search. "You know, uncle, I've got a theory!"

"What is it?" asked Noel, regarding her keenly.

June's eyes were dancing with excitement.

"It explains the shoe and everything," she said. "Listen. A week ago we girls saw a film in which the hero hoodwinked his rival by taking out a boat to an island, and leaving it moored there while he swam back to the mainland.

"I think Dulcie's borrowed the idea. I noticed that her bathing costume was missing this morning. I bet she rowed here in her bathing costume, just wearing a wrap and shoes; then she hid the wrap, tossed the shoes into the rushes—to mystify me—and swam across to the opposite bank, where she'd probably left her clothes. Don't you see?"

Noel whistled softly, a gleam of admiration in his eyes.

"That's certainly a shrewd idea on your part, June," he said. "What do you propose to do?"

June laughed.

"Why, I'm going to take the punt over to the opposite bank and investigate!" she declared. "You'd better get on with your fishing, uncle. It wouldn't be fair if you helped."

Noel knocked out his pipe; his blue eyes were vaguely troubled.

"Perhaps not," he agreed. "But, look here, June, I'd rather you waited till I've had a hunt round. I've a little theory of my own which I'll tell you later. Will you wait? I shan't be long."

June wrinkled her forehead a trifle impatiently.

"All right," she said. "But not more than five minutes; I'm certain I'm on the trail!"

Noel accompanied June as far as the punt, and set off through the bushes on a search of his own.

June's ingenious theory *might* be right—but the young detective had grave doubts. The finding of the shoe—the curious discrepancy of the expertly-tied knot in the mooring-rope—and finally the cigarette end he had picked up from the floor of the skiff—all helped to strengthen his suspicions.

Had Dulcie Manning met with foul play?

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It was a suspicion only ; he had no definite proof.

No doubt Dulcie had started out with the light-hearted intention of staging a " disappearance " ; but had she carried out her plan—or had some unseen enemy stepped in, taking her unawares ?

Noel's face was rather pale as he made a thorough search of the rushes in the vicinity of the little skiff ; he dared not breathe a word of his suspicions to June without more definite proof.

And, unexpectedly, he came across the proof that he had half dreaded to find.

In a clearing among the reeds, he found the ground trampled—showing clear evidence of a struggle. And lying among the trampled rushes was a girl's school hat !

Noel snatched it up, glancing swiftly at the name in the lining ; then, his face grim, he hurried back to where he had left his niece. It was useless to hide the facts ; June must be warned !

But, reaching the bank, his heart contracted ; there was no sign of June—or of the punt. Tired of waiting for him she must have started out on her light-hearted quest—little dreaming of the lurking danger.

" June ! " shouted Noel anxiously.

His only reply was the startled cry of a moor-hen among the rushes.

Noel raced back to the skiff and sprang on board, disentangling the oars from the rushes ; a moment later he was pulling out towards the opposite bank.

A shadowy figure, crouched among the reeds, watched his departure with a sinister smile.

CHAPTER II THE STRANGER !

JUNE had changed her mind !

" It's no use waiting for Uncle Noel," she decided, with an impetuous toss of her fair head. " Goodness knows what queer idea he's got hold of—but he's been gone for more than ten minutes. I'll just scout round and come back later."

She steered the punt along by the bank, keeping in close to the reeds.

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On second thoughts, she decided that Dulcie might have left the skiff concealed in the rushes and waded along close to the bank, in order to baffle her chums.

That would account for the absence of footprints.

June rather flattered herself on her astuteness; even Uncle Noel could hardly have evolved a more likely theory.

June kept a close watch on the bank, for any tell-tale signs.

A flock of water-fowl rose from the rushes with a noisy screeching—a clamour that completely drowned Noel's distant shout.

All oblivious to the possibility of danger, June plied her pole. There was a gleam of excited anticipation in her grey eyes. Dulcie had certainly put her on her mettle this time!

Suddenly she stiffened, as she noticed part of the sloping bank where the mud had recently been trampled.

Securing her punt, she stepped out gingerly to examine the trail.

The marks were blurred—and a close examination might have disclosed to a more expert eye that the trail had been left by more than one pair of feet!

But June, by now, was completely confident of her theory.

It fitted in with her knowledge of Dulcie's japing tendencies; and she was burning to prove herself even more astute than her chum.

Bearing in mind the advice on "tracking" that she had received at various times from her detective uncle, June set out on the trail.

It was obviously fairly fresh, as the heavy rain of the previous night would have effectually obliterated all traces.

Once or twice she lost sight of the footprints—but an occasional piece of snapped twig or newly-scarred bark enabled her to keep to the track.

The ground rose higher, sloping to a little wooded knoll that overlooked the river.

On the crest of the knoll was an ancient and disused water-tower, covered thickly with ivy. There was a cottage adjacent to the tower—but that, too, appeared to be deserted.

The trail eluded June as she emerged from the trees; the ground was hard and stony, and gave no chance for footprints. But the fact did not deter her.



At the sight of Dulcie tied to the chair, June uttered a cry. Instantly the conspirators were warned.

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She was convinced that Dulcie must have come this way. June approached the tower, staring up at the ivy-covered walls; it was surrounded by a rusted iron railing—and the only means of entrance seemed to be by a door, thickly overgrown with weeds and nettles.

Uncertainly she stared round, her keen young eyes searching for some fresh clue.

Then she stiffened, catching in her breath sharply.

For, pinned to the ancient door, she saw a fluttering sheet of paper!

A moment later June was staring incredulously at the pencilled message scribbled in Dulcie's familiar handwriting:

"Dear Chum,—If you've trailed me as far as this, you're smarter than I supposed! Sorry to disappoint you, but I've decided to take the day off to see a friend of mine who lives at Clinton.

"Hope you'll all have a spiffing time at the picnic. Love,
"DULCIE."

June re-read the note, swallowing rather hard.

She could hardly believe that Dulcie, japer though she was, would have played a mean trick like this!

Her exciting search had all been to no purpose; Dulcie had the laugh of her after all.

Unsteadily she turned away, retracing her steps along the narrow path that led to the river.

And then abruptly she halted in the shadow of the trees, a startled expression flashing into her blue eyes.

Hastily she took out the crumpled note and re-read it more carefully.

A strange suspicion had dawned in her active mind; her attractive face paled slightly.

"Goodness!" she breathed. "Oh—goodness!"

With sudden determination she turned, making her way quickly back towards the tower by a circuitous route, keeping in the shelter of the trees. She approached it from the other side this time, looking swiftly over her shoulder as she approached the rusted iron palings.

The next moment she had climbed the palings, and was standing in the shadow of the ivy-covered tower, her heart beating quickly.

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There came a stealthy movement in the thicket behind her—but June, intent on peering through a narrow, barred window, was scarcely conscious of the sound.

Then something soft and enveloping fell over her head, stifling her frightened cry.

June struggled gamely, in the grip of powerful hands. Even in that dreadful moment she retained her wits. Her feet were free and she kicked out, scraping with her heel on the muddy ground.

A rough circle—a jab with her heel!

It was a desperate and plucky attempt to leave a clue. The next moment she was slung over her captor's shoulder—and everything went black for June as she fainted.

Noel's anxiety was increasing; a swift search of the opposite bank had convinced him that June could not have landed there.

He rowed back, approaching the anchored house-boat and hailing its occupants.

But there was no reply.

The young detective scrambled on board, to find that the house-boat was deserted; evidently the other girls had already started out for their picnic.

With sudden decision, Noel made his way to the cabins—in the hope of finding some small clue that might give him a key to the mystery.

He was convinced that June, in her light-hearted way, had run into danger while searching for her chum.

Yet among the girlish belongings scattered about, there appeared to be nothing that could shed a possible light on the hidden drama.

By the side of each bunk was a small shelf; and Noel quickly discovered Dulcie's shelf by the initials on her writing-case.

Swiftly he went through the books and other girlish treasures; and right at the bottom of the pile he discovered a diary.

Stifling a momentary twinge of compunction, Noel skimmed through the diary—paying particular attention to the record of the last few days.

And there he came across an entry that riveted his attention.

It had apparently been written on the previous night, and it ran:

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"Strange happenings again under the clump of pines. That's two nights in succession! Wonder whether to tell June? On second thoughts, I'll steal a march on her and investigate on my own! I'll slip out in the morning, and leave a message to keep her guessing."

The young detective whistled softly, his vague fears confirmed.

Hurrying on to the deck, he scanned the bank through a pair of binoculars. A moment later he had picked out the clump of pines referred to by Dulcie.

Jumping into the skiff, he pulled ashore—and made his way quickly through the bushes.

In a few minutes he had reached the clump of pines, sheltering a small clearing. A soft ejaculation escaped his lips as he discovered traces in the clearing where someone had recently been digging!

There was a square hole, several feet deep—and the yellow clay had been piled up at one side.

"Something's been taken out of there," decided Noel. "A box by the look of it."

A further search disclosed heavy footprints, following a zigzag track through the trees.

Noel followed them swiftly, his face pale and anxious.

The trail brought him, by a different route, within sight of the old ivy-covered tower and the adjacent cottage!

But the scene was not so deserted as when it had greeted June's gaze.

A curl of smoke was rising from the cottage chimney, and seated in a chair by the open door was a broad-shouldered, bearded figure, clad in a rough blue jersey and puffing at a short pipe.

Apparently he was a lock-keeper, or one of the river boatmen.

He touched his cap as Noel approached, and the young detective was about to pass on when his sharp eyes noticed something leaning against the wall of an outhouse.

It was a spade—and it bore traces of yellowish mud!

Noel stiffened, his eyes narrowing; turning abruptly, he strolled towards the cottage.

"Any chance of fishing round here?" he inquired, casually.

The man removed his pipe, and shook his head.

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"Sorry, sir—it's private property. I'm a keeper here."

"Pity," murmured Noel. His glance wandered to the ivy-covered tower. "Interesting place, that. Fairly old, I should imagine?"

The man grunted in the affirmative, obviously disinclined for conversation.

"Mind if I stroll round?" asked Noel; and, taking consent for granted, he made his way towards the tower.

The other rose to his feet with surprising agility and followed.

"Not much to see, sir," he declared. "Old place has been locked up for years."

"So it seems," murmured Noel.

There was a puzzled expression in his eyes. The door of the tower was overgrown by weeds, and the narrow windows were screened by cobwebs.

Yet he noticed that the ground in the vicinity had been recently trampled.

Then abruptly he stiffened, stifling the sharp ejaculation that rose to his lips.

For on the muddy ground, close to the base of the tower, was a curious, uneven mark. A rough circle scraped in the earth, with a deep impression in the centre.

In a flash his thoughts went back to the mark June had pointed out on the bank.

"That means—danger!"

The young detective spun round suddenly, aware that the bearded keeper was watching him closely.

"I'm looking for my niece," said Noel quietly. "A fair-haired girl, wearing a school hat. Have you see her, by any chance?"

The man's eyes became shifty.

"Not seen anyone around here this mornin', sir."

"Then how's this footprint come here?" demanded Noel, pointing down to the muddy ground. "A girl's footprint, too!"

The man's hand flew to his pocket—but the young detective was quicker. His hand shot out, meeting the other's jaw and sending him sprawling to the ground.

In a moment the man was on his feet, and, locked in a fierce grip,

Noel and his assailant crashed through the bushes within a few feet of the river bank.

There was a shout—and a loud splash, followed by an ominous silence.

The sound of the distant shout came faintly to June's ears as she sat up dazedly, to find herself in pitch darkness.

What had happened?

She pressed her hands to her aching head as memory came racing back.

The search for Dulcie—the tower—the sudden, unexpected attack.

"I—I must have fainted," she breathed. "Oh, goodness! Uncle Noel was right. Dulcie didn't disappear of her own accord. That note must have been faked. Yet it was in her own handwriting!"

She struggled to her feet, her hands groping over a cold stone wall; then, as her eyes became more accustomed to the gloom, she saw a faint chink of light above her piercing a crevice in a boarded window.

She realised that she was inside the old tower!

"I've got to get out!" decided June desperately. "Something must have happened to Dulcie! I've got to find her!"

Though badly shaken by her experience, June's natural courage had not forsaken her.

And even now her active curiosity was urging her to discover the solution of the baffling mystery.

An anxious search disclosed the massive door of the tower, but it was securely locked.

June hammered on it vainly, calling for help. Desisting at length, she endeavoured to explore the tower, and almost fell headlong over a flight of stone stairs that wound, spiral fashion, towards the roof of the tower.

Cautiously, her heart in her mouth, June mounted the ~~steps~~. Nearing the top, she saw a faint chink of light streaming from under a door.

From the other side of the door came a sound of muffled hammering.

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Only for an instant June hesitated, then, taking her courage in both hands, she ventured to push open the door.

Then her heart gave a violent jump and her eyes widened in startled surprise as she crouched back against the wall.

In the narrow turret-room, dimly lit by the faint light that crept through the dusty windows, a dark-haired, rather foreign-looking man was bending over an ancient, iron-bound wooden box; a well-dressed woman knelt beside him, an avaricious gleam in her eyes.

Then, for the first time, June noticed another figure—a slight, dark girl—seated on a chair, her hands and ankles securely bound!

A broken cry escaped June's lips as, flinging caution aside, she darted into the room.

"Dulcie!" she exclaimed. "Oh, you hateful things! What have you done to her?"

With a stifled ejaculation the man sprang to his feet.



"Not seen anyone this morning," grunted the man. "Then how's this footprint come here?" demanded Noel. "A girl's footprint, too!"

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The woman caught June by the shoulder as she made to reach her helpless chum.

"I'll teach you to meddle!" she breathed. "You see what's happened to your friend."

"Help!" called June, struggling desperately.

As the man came to his companion's aid, June stamped sharply on his foot.

Breaking free, she darted to her chum's side, and gripped her by the arms.

"June," sobbed Dulcie, "they brought me here and forced me to write that note——"

A heavy step sounded on the threshold; a tall, bearded figure in a blue jersey lurched into the room.

"Hendry, you idiot," rapped the foreigner, "why didn't you keep an eye on the girl, as I told you?"

"Sorry, gov'nor," replied the other gruffly, "but that detective fellow came snooping round, and I had to deal with him."

He smiled unpleasantly, and the blood drained from June's face as he stepped towards her.

His hand fell on her shoulder.

"All right, June," he breathed, "see to your chum."

He spun round, a revolver glinting in his hand.

"Put your hands up, you two!" he rapped, his eyes glinting as he removed his beard. "I've got your confederate downstairs, and he's owned up. His false beard came in useful."

"Uncle Noel!" gasped June, in mingled amazement and relief.

Noel chuckled, still keeping the two kidnappers covered.

"I saw your danger signal, June," he said, "and acted accordingly. I think we can leave these two scoundrels locked up here while we send for the police. We'll take the box with us, though; its contents may prove interesting."

June was supporting her half-fainting chum; Noel dragged the box to the door and, slamming it quickly behind him, turned the key in the lock.

"All's well that ends well!" he chuckled, as he shouldered the box. "Leave the explanations till later, June; help Dulcie down

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the stairs, and we'll join your other chums. I've an idea that I heard their voices in the clearing just now."

A few minutes later a group of excited, bewildered schoolgirls surrounded the rather dishevelled trio.

"June, what happened?"

"Where did you find her?"

"Who——"

Smilingly Noel held up his hand as June breathlessly introduced him.

"June," he explained, "found herself solving a rather bigger mystery than she anticipated. You see, Dulcie had accidentally seen a group of clever rogues unearthing some stolen valuables that they had buried near the river bank when pursued by the police.

"Realising that they had been seen, they kidnapped Dulcie, and locked her in a disused tower while they made plans to dispose of their ill-gotten gains.

"Unluckily for them, June got on the trail. It's thanks to her cleverness that I was enabled to bowl them out—and incidentally to retrieve a small fortune in stolen gems."

June blushed.

"Thanks to your cleverness, you mean, uncle! I don't know what would have happened if you hadn't turned up in the nick of time."

Dulcie, her face rather pale, was hugging June's arm.

"And I don't know how to thank you enough, June!" she breathed. "I take back all I said last night about—about your pretending to be a detective. What I don't understand is how you saw through that note they forced me to write."

"That's been puzzling me," admitted Noel, as he took the crumpled note from June's hand. "Own up, June! This is in Dulcie's handwriting; it might easily have misled me."

June shook her head, her eyes sparkling.

"That's because you're a man, uncle—and it was a man who dictated that note. No girl would start a letter 'Dear Chum,' though a boy might. And that word 'spiffing,' it's as old as the hills. We girls say 'topping' or 'scrumptious'; 'spiffing' may have been used when you were a boy, uncle, but times have changed."

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Noel's eyes twinkled as a merry burst of laughter greeted June's explanation.

"You've got one over me there, June," he said. "I'll remember that for future reference. And now I suggest that as a penalty I stand a treat all round. How about lunch at a riverside café, with ices to follow? And then June and Dulcie between them will have another little mystery to solve."

"Uncle, what mystery?" demanded June eagerly as the eager acclamations died down.

Noel chuckled.

"The mystery of how best to spend the reward that has been offered for the recovery of those stolen gems," he replied. "And I fancy that it's a mystery that will baffle even June!"

