

The Daily Noveltie

The Return of the Thief

By A. W. Peach.

It was perfectly evident to Preston that he had been absent from his summer cottage in which he had been staying as a bachelor, somebody had strolled in, noted the typewriter on its convenient stand, and departed with the machine.

His sense of duty as a free-lance writer, but it disappeared at the present situation. That typewriter, an old model of many a year, was a valuable commodity—specially taken while he had been out for a swim.

As he hunched from his wet swimsuit, he called along to the little cottage where the postoffice was located and where the various stores were situated.

He stopped in the postoffice to look over the bulletin board with its odd array of notices and notices. He wrote a notice and pinned it on the board. The notice read: "If the person who stole my typewriter will call again, I will give them or him or her the amount that goes with it."

The next day found him with three suitcases. He went fishing in the morning, leaving his cottage door open. When he returned the suitcases were still there. In the afternoon he started tinkering with his canoe, which had sprung a minor leak.

As he was busy he glanced across the bay and saw a canoe coming in. A sharper glance told him that it was being driven by a dark-haired girl with close smooth shoulders were sending the light canoe along at a steady pace as her arms drove the paddle deep.

Suddenly she swung toward him, and it appeared upon him that she was coming to his dock. "I'm not interested in girls, but this specimen—," he advised himself, and promptly began to remove some of the grime of his life.

The canoe came closer and he saw the fair face of its owner lifted to mark a landing. She smiled in a slightly embarrassed way and said in a voice that was music to his ears:

"I wonder if I may have the typewriter table which I understand you offer."

He started to say something, but only stuttered. The faint laughter in her brown eyes was the last upsetting factor. There was nothing to do, but retreat. He stammered up the dock, to the cottage, yanked up the table and returned. He handed it to her solemnly.

"It is or was a little dear to me," he replied. "I hope you will find it convenient."

She nodded. "I know I shall, and I thank you very much."

"The pleasure is all mine," he started to say but reversed his words and said, "The pleasure you will have with it is worth the trouble to come for it, I hope."

She turned the canoe with a graceful swirl of the paddle, looked up at him with brown eyes that were a bit puzzled and something else, and departed.

He looked after her long. "I can't find it, there's a girl I could tumble into with. She either had an immense amount of gall to swipe that typewriter and then return it, or she had some mystery in it."

At the point, she turned, looked back, and waved. "Bye-bye, that wave of farewell may mean anything but that, I must look her up."

At the edge of dusk a big car stopped at his door. He went out and ran in a second shock of the day. The girl of the canoe was at the wheel, as pretty as a white rose in some twilight garden.

She spoke rapidly. "I wonder what you do think of me? A man called at the house, said he was buying the table and did not want to take his machine. I wanted one, and I bought it. Then he said if I would call at your cottage, where he had been spending a week with you, I could get the table. So I went. Then father told me about your notice this evening, and he made me come over and apologize and try to explain. You see, you keep me much by yourself. I don't really know you, and I didn't know for what the other man really—oh, dear! You see, don't you?"

"I understand fully. I was a bit dazed this afternoon."

"I thought you acted funny—but—but we want you to come over this evening, and let me make amends. Won't you ride with me?"

"I certainly will!" he answered with fervor. When he returned, properly calmed, and climbed into the seat beside her, he remarked, "I am inclined to be grateful to that salesman. He brought better than he knew."

She smiled, and said with some hesitation, "Well, to be honest, I'm rather glad I bought the machine—and went after the table."

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